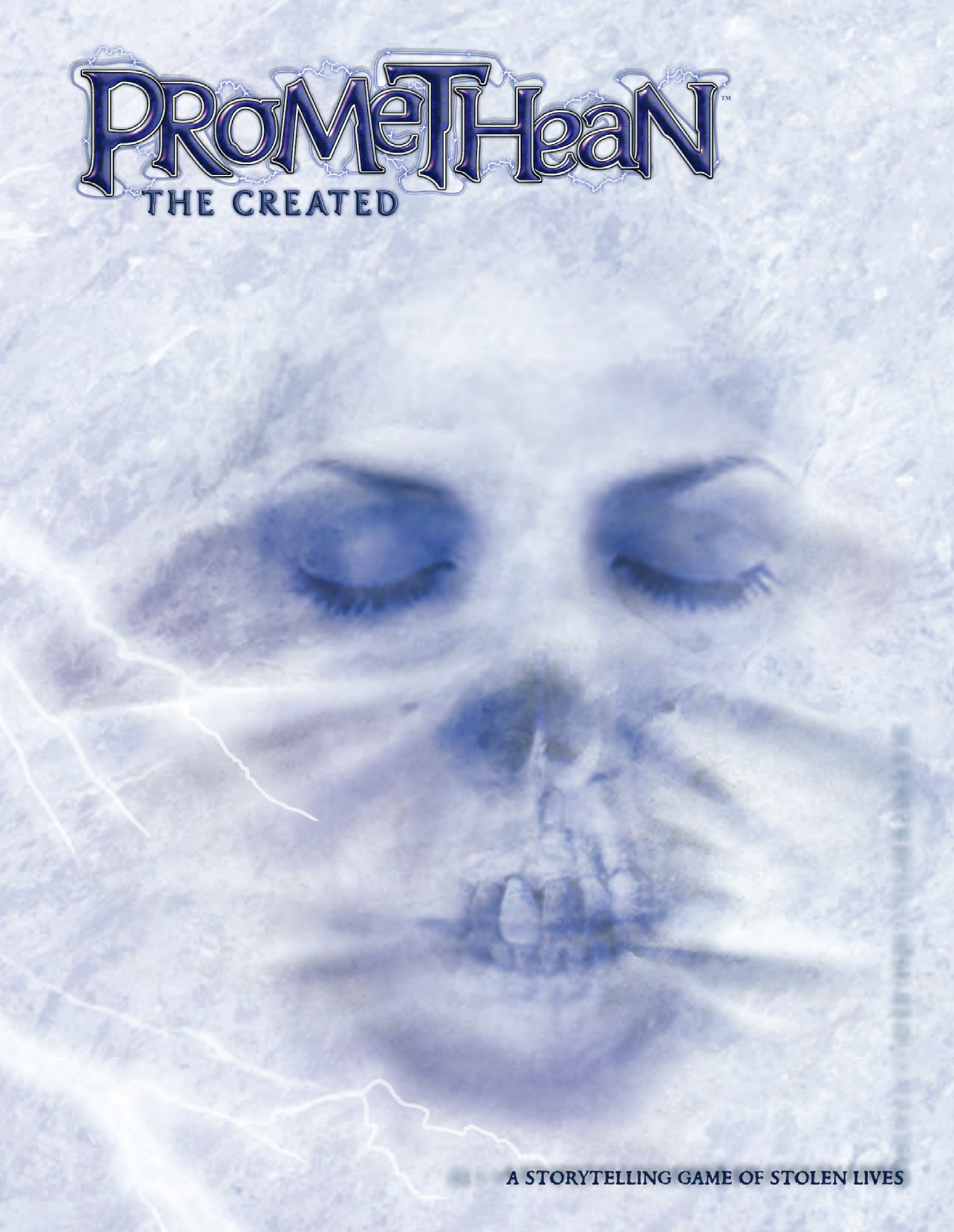
# PROMETHEAN™

## THE CREATED



A STORYTELLING GAME OF STOLEN LIVES

# Prologue — The Lamb and the Tiger

Little lamb,
who made thee?
Dost thou know
who made thee?

— William Blake,
"The Lamb"

**THE FIRST DAY**

**Agnes Gray:** So how's Marie doing, Brian? How are you doing?

**Sherrif Brian Tierny:** Well, it was pretty bad for a while… It's still bad, of course. We're coming up on a year since the bus accident, you know, which is tough enough, and now this. The damned fire's still going, even though everybody said it would burn itself out five years ago. Sometimes I think we should pack up and move away like everybody else. I mean…

**AG:** It's okay, Brian. Just take a breath. Did you get any sleep last night?

**BT:** I'm okay. Thanks, Doc. You ready to go?

**AG:** Yeah, tape's already rolling.

**BT:** There, let me get that. Sorry the chair's not too comfortable, but it's about all we got.

**AG:** Are the restraints really necessary?

**BT:** Doc, he broke a guy's arm resisting arrest last night. You sure you can't talk to him while he's in a cell? I'd feel a lot better with some bars between him and you.

**AG:** I don't work that way, you know that. Where's my pen? He doesn't look too violent now. He's said nothing since you brought him in?

**BT:** Not a peep, and it's not like we haven't tried. I'll be sitting right over here if there's a problem.

**AG:** I don't see how somebody in manacles that thick could be a problem. Guess there's no point in asking you to wait outside…

**BT:** No ma'am.

**AG:** All right. Let's get started.

**AG:** Begin interview.

**AG:** Sir, my name is Agnes Gray. I'm a psychologist. I'm here to ask you some questions. Can you hear me? Do you understand me?

**AG:** Okay, if you don't feel like talking right away, that's all right. If you can, I'd like it if you'd give me some sign that you can hear me, that you understand what I'm saying. If you'd like to just raise a hand or a finger, that would be enough. Or if you—

**BT:** Jesus! Those eyes…

**AG:** Brian!

**BT:** Sorry. I'll be quiet.

**AG:** Okay, sir, that's good. I appreciate that. Eye contact is good. Now I'd like to ask some questions. Would that be all right?

**VERNEY:** Call me Mr. Verney, if you m-m-must.

**AG:** Oh, you're… oh. Yes. Should I call you that because it's your real name?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

— William Blake, "The Tyger"

V: I have n-n-no real name.

AG: I see. Well, then, Mr. Verney. Do you know where you are? Why you're here?

V: Who did you say you w-were again?

AG: I'm Agnes Gray. I'm a psychologist.

V: You're here because they question my s-sa-... my s-sanity. Right?

AG: Do you remember why you were arrested last night?

V: I prefer to w-w-w-wa-walk where men c-cannot or w-will not.

AG: You remember where you were arrested?

V: Yes. The children's g-gar-garden... Such a p-p-peaceful place, even in the st-t-storm. It was a shame to dis-st-disturb them in their s-sleep.

BT: You son of a bitch!

AG: Brian...

BT: Doctor, I think we've heard enough.

AG: That's my call, Brian. Now please...

BT: ...All right.

AG: Do you know what city you're in, Mr. Verney? What state?

V: M-must we do this? It's so tedious.

AG: You don't have to talk to me if you don't want to. This is just a preliminary interview. Tomorrow you'll be transferred to a county facility, and they'll have people there to talk to you. Also, if you'd prefer to have legal representation—

V: Enough. I'll p-play your g-game. Yes, I'm in jail in Appletown, Pennsylvania, in the shadow of the Pale Mountains, famous for its r-rich deposits of hard coal, at least until the last m-mine closed fif-ifty years ago. So I'm told. And now the coal veins b-burn beneath the earth, poisoning the countryside that was once so thick with pine and maple and l-l-laurel. Have you w-walked the streets on the west side of town, Doctor? Where the mine fire's s-slow fingers have come at last, under the g-ground? Seen the d-dead trees, killed at the roots? Seen the asphalt bubbling, the sulfur fumes rising through the cracks in the sidewalks? I have. I know this t-town well. Its streets, its c-citizens... They don't know m-me, though. It's been my prison for too many years.

AG: I see here you've been squatting in that abandoned church on the west side... Holy Ghost Church. How long have you been living there?

V: I've been residing in this doomed t-township for ten years now. That was the bargain I st-struck with the angel, and now it's reaching its climax. I can't say I'll miss this place.



AG: The church... That part of town's barely livable. It's right over the hottest part of the fire. I'm surprised you could spend much time there. Weren't you worried the building would collapse? Did you have a carbon monoxide monitor?

V: I inspected it carefully, and it s-suited my needs for the time being. And for me, there's no escaping the f-fire, or its consequences. I was there when it began. It was born of m-my wrath, and it's fueled by my t-torment. It doesn't m-matter. Devastation of one sort or another always ac-c-companies me. I'm used t-to it.

AG: So let me understand this. You're saying that the underground fire that's been burning in this area for the last decade is your fault? Why do you think that?

V: I've been to the m-mine tunnels. I entered them ten y-years ago. f-fire is not my friend, but I'll make a t-tool of it if I need to.

AG: Mr. Verney, can you tell me what you were doing in the cemetery when you were arrested?

V: W-waiting for something. Th-thinking of the one I m-most hate. Tell me, Doctor, do you have any children?

AG: I'm not here to talk about me, Mr. Verney. Can you tell me what day it is? Today's date?

V: Today is Monday, D-Doctor. The 19th.

AG: Is there anyone you'd like me to call? Any relatives who should know you're here?

V: You're not from this t-town, are you, Doctor? I haven't seen you before, have I? I don't know you, do I?

AG: I don't live in Appletown, Mr. Verney. I'm certain I'd remember if we'd met before.

V: But I might n-not. My memory sometimes f-fails me. I wonder, sometimes, if I'm r-really who I think I am. Or j-just one of h-his deluded, hideous progeny.

AG: How often do you experience memory lapses, Mr. Verney?

V: We are unfashioned creatures, but half made up.

AG: I'm sorry... Was that a quote?

V: Have you ever read The Modern Prometheus, b-by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley?

AG: Is that a book? I'm sorry, I can't say that I have. Should I?

V: You m-may find it interesting. It will, d-despite its inaccuracies, tell you who I, I, I, am.

AG: And why is that? Do you believe the book has some significance to—

V: He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance. That's all, Doctor. I'm d-d-done with you. Goodbye.

AG: Mr. Verney... Mr. Verney, I can't force you to talk, obviously, but I think it would be helpful for you to explain some more about...

AG: ...

AG: All right. If you change your mind, I'll be in town for the rest of the day.

BT: [inaudible] —me get that door for you.

AG: Thanks.

AG: Whew, the static electricity in there was making the hair on my arms stand up.

BT: Listen, Aggie, there are a lot of people

in this town ready to lynch this sick bastard for what he did. And if I wasn't a peace officer, I'd be leading the pack. Tell me you're not going to let that freak plead insanity or something.

AG: Brian, that's not up to me. Judge Carter will get my report by five. You know, the guy might be delusional, he might be faking. I'll let somebody else figure that out. He's alert, he's responsive, he's aware of his surroundings. I'm going to go ahead and recommend you guys send him to county lockup.

BT: Be a relief to get rid of him. When are you heading back home? They're calling for more storms.

AG: I'm staying over at the B&B tonight.

AG: Oh, damn, I forgot to turn this off. I always—



**THE FIRST NIGHT**

**AG:** Mmmmm… It's… uh… shit… It's three am. Just had the strangest dream. I never dream. Get it on tape before I forget. I was standing in this — like a field, of dead grass. And standing next to me this… tall woman. I couldn't see her face. She was wearing this kind of veil, a white veil over her face… ahhh, hell… I'm losing it. We were standing at the base of this… this huge crucifix, except — yeah, except Christ was hanging upside down. And then the woman… she held out her hands. Her right hand was bright like the sun, her left was dark. Oh, Christ. Got to get to sleep. Too early to call the kids. Do it first thing tomorrow. Find out if Billy's still getting ragged on at school. Those little grade school shits, I'll wring their necks if they *don't* lay off my kids. Yeah, that would be great. "Tonight on Fox, Single mom turns murderer, her adopted children now motherless again…" Oh, Jesus, I'm punchy. Mmm… The woman — my mother? Wish I'd seen her face. Maybe I'd remember her… Okay. Maybe I'll leaf through Verney's book again. Where did I…

**THE SECOND DAY**

**AG:** Brian, are you all right? You're really looking stressed. I'm worried about you.

**B:** Let's just go in, Doc. Don't pay me any attention, really.

**AG:** I kind of don't get why I'm back here. I mean, I turned in my recommendation yesterday. Why call me back? It's a good thing the neighbors can host my kids for a while longer. I miss them, even though it's just been a day. Oh, shit, I'm sorry Brian. I'm an idiot.

**B:** Don't apologize, Doc.

**AG:** All right, might as well get to work. I just don't see the point.

**B:** Judge Carter says—

**AG:** I know, I know, I was on the phone with him at the crack of dawn. He wants more details, I'll get him more details. You know, I have to admit I'm glad you're staying in there with me. I mean, I didn't want it at first, but something about this guy makes me a little nervous. I know he's shackled to the chair and the floor; I know that even a guy that big isn't getting loose, but… Well, I'm glad you're there.

**B:** Aggie, I… I won't let anything happen. I promise.

**AG:** Let's go in.

**AG:** Begin interview.

**AG:** Mr. Verney. Did you sleep well?

**V:** Doctor. I slept very little. As usual.

**AG:** How are you feeling today?

**V:** I move, I breathe, I think. This is all I require.

**AG:** I see. You seem to be speaking better today.

**V:** Yes. Last night's storm, I suppose. That kind of weather always rejuvenates me.

**AG:** It was quite a storm. A perfect backdrop for that book you mentioned to me yesterday. It has another title, doesn't it?

**V:** A more familiar one, yes.

**AG:** Frankenstein. I didn't realize the book was so different from the movie.

**V:** And did you read it, D-Doctor?

**AG:** I found it at the library and skimmed it. I was wondering why you said the book was about you.

**V:** I said it would tell you who I am.

**AG:** Yes you did. And are you the doctor, Victor Frankenstein? Or the being he created?



V: Ah, that book, so c-congruent with my own experience, yet so wrong in so many of the details. I do have a theory on who told Madame Shelley my story. That poor woman. I wish I'd m-met her. She, too, must have felt alone. She lost her mother, her father, her children, her husband. She identified with the m-monster character, I'm sure, as someone alone in a world of strangers.

AG: So you are the monster, then, in the story? He has no name, and you said yesterday you have no real name.

V: My c-creator gave me no name, true. F-Fr-Frankenstein was his name, not mine. Did you know the name was once associated with valor and bravery? With the legend of St. George the Dragon-slayer?

AG: No. But tell me about the Doctor Frankenstein that you knew.

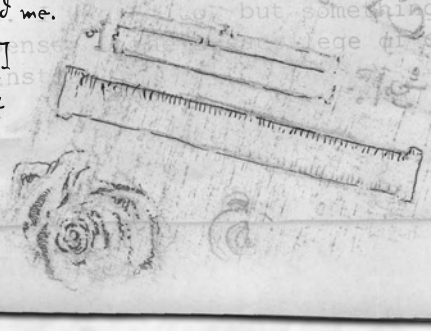
V: Yes. In the book he's presented as a refined man of learning and s-science. In truth, he was a fanatic who used science, sorcery, chemistry — whatever he could grasp — to shape the bizarre images and concepts in his brain. He'd scourge himself with fatigue and hunger. His hands shook when they weren't holding a scalpel or a s-saw, his lips twitched as he whispered to entities visible to him alone. He'd stolen the knowledge he used, you see. His brain contained concepts and c-calculations not meant to be apprehended by a mortal intellect. And it burned him; he was aflame every waking moment. Somehow he'd g-glimpsed the Pyros with his naked eyes, and his mind had been seared and warped by it.

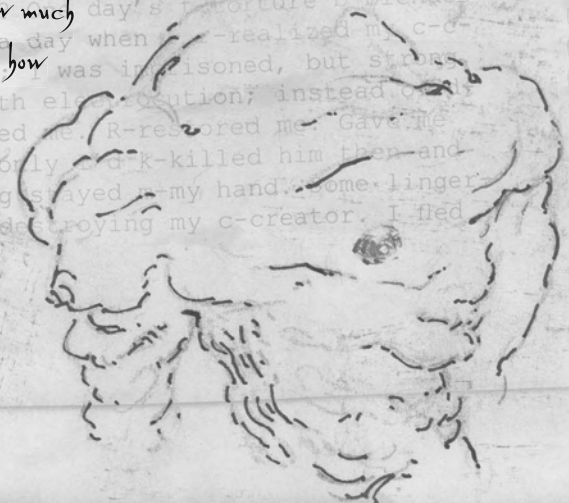
AG: The... I'm sorry. Pyros?

V: The inextinguishable fire. The divine flame. The animus that burns within me even now — within all of my k-kind. What passes for a vital force in those of us created by a demiurge such as my vile m-maker. We call ourselves Prometheans, after the fire-stealer of myth. We c-carry a stolen fire in place of a soul.

AG: That's interesting. There are others like you, then? Brothers, sisters? How many of you did he, did the doctor, create?

V: My creator made only me. But a few others before him c-committed the same blasphemy. And we are monsters that spawn other monsters. I knew none of this at first, of course. I spent my first few months living the life of a lab rat. Shelley left that part out. How much pain could I endure, how much starvation, how much cold, how much darkness? One day's t-torture b-blended into the n-next. But there came a day when I r-realized my c-c-creator feared me. He was w-weak; I was imprisoned, but strong. When he tried to t-torment





me with electrocution; instead of d-d-destroying me, the voltage f-fed me. R-restored me. Gave me the strength to free myself. If only I'd k-killed him then and there. I wanted to, but something stayed m-my hand. Some lingering sense of the s-sacrilege of destroying my c-creator. I fled him instead.

AG: I'm sorry to hear that you were so abused.

V: Abused? It w-was just a shadow of the t-torment I'd receive after I left him. The slow realization of what I w-was — the d-dawning of the truth that there was no p-place on earth for me. That was his t-true crime, the one that called out for p-punishment. To s-saddle me with the life of an im-mim-mitation m-man who has no c-connection to the truly alive.

AG: What about these others you mentioned? You said there were others like you.

V: My c-creator was only the most recent demiurge to wrestle the fyros into a h-humanlike receptacle. Maybe his methods of surgery and electrification were c-crude substitutes for knowledge lost long ago. I can't say. There are four other lines I know of; all originated in ancient times. The Nepri follow the myth of Osiris, the d-deity who died and rose again. The Galateids, f-fashioned from the beautiful dead; they claim the Greek tale of the m-man who sculpted his ideal woman and made it come alive. The Tammuz are corpses reanimated in c-clay and soil, a dark reflection of the Golem stories. And the Ulgan began with a corpse torn asunder and remade by spirits, at the behest of some b-black shaman. The first creators of these lines are lost to memory, but each promethean carries the knowledge to make more of his kind. S-sooner or later we all act on that knowledge. I myself have d-done it... t-too many times. Misery loves company, after all. And it's a long, long pilgrimage, until one accomplishes the Great Work.

AG: Great Work?

V: We are alchemistry made flesh. Seeking the same goal the alchemists had. An illusion, I've c-come to realize. I no longer seek it.

AG: I don't understand.

V: No? Then you'll never understand me.

AG: And what ever happened to your fa-... um... to the doctor who made you?

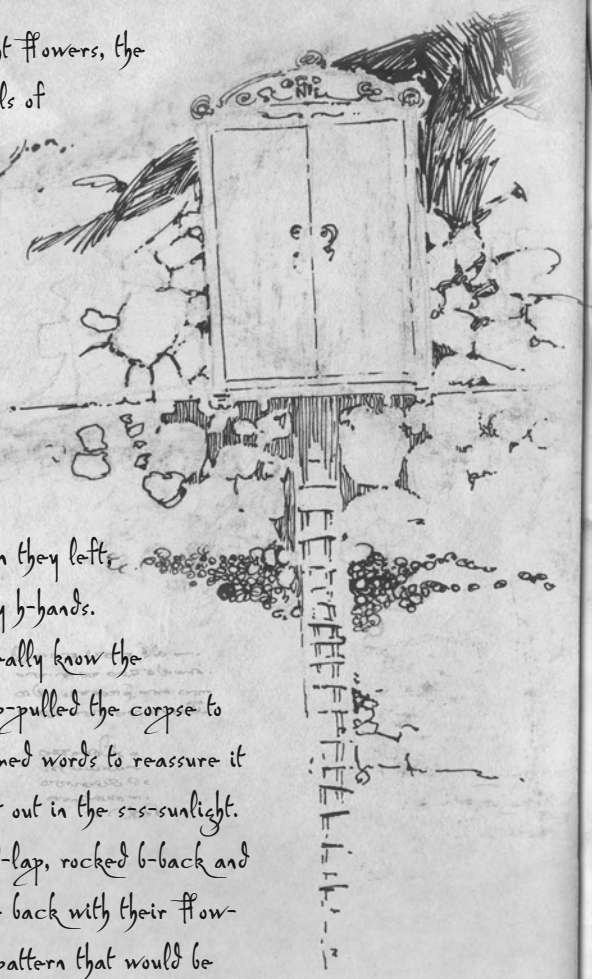
V: I'll say just that I had my r-revenge. It was neither swift nor merciful.

AG: Did you always want revenge on him?

V: Not at the very b-beginning. If I ever knew happiness, it was the night I escaped his chamber of horrors. I walked through a forest, feeling no pain for the first time in weeks. I was free. I



let the cool night air s-soothe me. I marveled at the scents of the night flowers, the chirping of insects. I saw for the first time the s-st-stars. Tiny jewels of light in the sky... I thought I could touch them. I reached up and they receded to their true height. I laughed. When the moon rose, I had an urge to talk to it, but speech was d-difficult for me. The sound of my voice filled me with anguish. I ran and ran and finally dropped and fell into a d-dreamless sleep.



I awoke at dawn in some rustic cemetery. I heard v-voices; they frightened me and I hid. I watched from behind a d-dead tree as a small group of peasants shuffled tearfully around an open hole in the earth. I understood just enough of their words to be horrified. When they left, I ran to the newly dug grave and b-began to pull up the earth with my h-hands. I thought that they'd b-b-buried someone alive, you see — I didn't really know the difference between l-life and death. I smashed open the coffin and p-pulled the corpse to my b-breast. I c-c-cradled it and whispered in its ear, half-f-f-formed words to reassure it that, that, that everything would... would b-be all r-r-right. I l-laid it out in the s-s-sunlight. I thought that w-warm light might wake it up. I held its head in my l-lap, rocked b-back and forth, stroked its hair. That was how they f-found me when they came back with their flowers and c-c-candles. You can imagine how they reacted. It was a pattern that would be repeated over and over again. I don't know why, but it took a long time for me to learn that my n-n-nature renders me unfit for the company of human beings.

AG: Why do you say that? I mean, surely it's no surprise that those people reacted negatively. But apart from that incident, why are you so convinced that your nature makes you an outsider?

V: I should not exist, Doctor. We Prometheans should not be. You can feel it yourself right n-now, if you're honest. An unease, a discomfort in my presence. Yes? It's an instinctive revulsion. We call it the Disquiet, and it is the reason none of us will ever f-find a place among the mortals we imitate.

AG: And this... Disquiet, you called it... this is something you've always experienced? You think it's the cause of the isolation you've described? The loneliness you feel?

V: I didn't say anything about loneliness. And it's not just p-people who feel Disquiet. Nature herself recoils. Given time, the presence of one like me brings inevitable d-death and decay to the landscape. Why do you think the countryside around here is so barren and poisoned?

AG: Isn't it the mine fire that's doing that?

V: If I hadn't started the fire when I came here, the Disquiet would be expressed through some other means. A drought. A plague. Some unseen pollutant. The mechanism doesn't matter. While I'm here, natural laws are bent towards d-destruction, and they'll stay that way until I'm gone.

**THE SECOND NIGHT**

**BT:** Aggie, this is Brian… Maybe this is my only chance… I don't know if you listen to these tapes every night or what, but if it's not too late… don't come back tomorrow, Aggie. Don't come back. Leave town. Don't talk to anyone, don't try to call me or Judge Carter. Just leave and don't come back. Then maybe he'll… He's dangerous, Aggie. I don't know what he wants from you, but he's dangerous. You need to stay away. Please.

* * *

**AG:** God, it's almost dawn. Need to talk this through. Why is this son of a bitch getting under my skin? His story… Abusive father, abandonment issues, somatic and sensory distortions. Dissociation from his own body. The idea that he's not a real person and everyone can tell. Is he schizophrenic? The obsession with corpses… Was he acting out his delusions when they arrested him the other night?

What did he do with the bodies?

More dreams tonight – got to get them down. The upside down crucifixion. The woman in the white veil. She holds a bright coin in one hand, a dark coin in the other. Is she really my mother? Someone else I knew as a child? Damn it, when am I going to start remembering more of my childhood? I should call Dr. Garner tomorrow, see if she thinks I'm having some kind of breakthrough. No, she's on that trip 'til the end of the month. Damn it.

Maybe I should listen to the tape from today. No, no… I need to try and get another hour of sleep.





**THE THIRD DAY**

**AG:** To start today, I was wondering if you could tell me how you came to be in Appletown.

**V:** Yes. You may f-find it instructive, Doctor. I came following the trail of my adversary. The one I despise more than any who've crossed my p-path. I arrived in Appletown determined to revenge myself at last. Yet when I descended into the mines, I found only a trap. The one I sought was long gone, and the deep chambers were filled with flesh-hungry Pandorans.

**AG:** Pan-… Pandorans. That's a word that… Do I know what those are?

**V:** The offspring of Flux, the w-wild aspect of Pyros. Chaos and horror given form. They result from a failure, or deliberate misuse, of the Divine Fire. Each Promethean who attempts to create another runs the risk of generating Pandorans instead. The new b-body fragments. Limbs crawl like lizards, innards push themselves out and ooze away, the head grows tentacles and s-scuttles into the darkness… Some g-grow into larger, intelligent, even human-seeming creatures. Others remain grotesque and p-primitive abominations. In either case, they act without remorse. They destroy. They corrupt. They feed.

**AG:** Feed?

**V:** They crave Pyros. They take it from a Promethean any way they can. As I w-worked my way down the tunnels that night, I could hear them awakening, crawling through the w-walls like worms. My presence, my Pyros, called out to them. They were creations of my adversary. They knew m-me, and I them. I sought out the smaller passageways where they'd be hindered by their n-numbers. But their hands and hooks and barbed tongues reached through the crevices in the rock. I used every Transmutation I could muster, and s-still more of them came.

**AG:** Wait. Transmutation? What is that?

**V:** An alchemical operation. Those who learn to control the Divine Fire within are able to p-perform certain feats of strength and power. I would show you one now, except the flaring of Pyros would illuminate the t-truth of my body. You would see my scars, my stitches, my corpse-colors. It would be disturbing to you. Transmutations are useful, though ultimately a d-distraction from the so-called Great Work.

**AG:** Great Work. The dark coin to the bright… Like lead into gold?

**V:** Doctor? D-do you have something to tell me? You look flushed.

**AG:** I'm… Let's come back to that. Uh… So, you were in the mines…

**V:** There was a lull as the horde prepared for its next attack. I raised my hands to improvise a defense, and seeing the coal dust on my palms and f-fingers, I laughed.

The means of destruction w-was all around me. So I led the remaining Pandorans into a large, ore-filled chamber and set everything ablaze. Oh, the creatures screamed l-like infants. I watched. Every s-so often one would crawl from the flames, mewing and begging at my feet. And I would laugh and cast it back into the fire. I was beginning to realize that the blaze was getting out of control, that soon it would be more heat, more fumes than I could tolerate. And then...

V: ...

AG: What?

V: Then they c-came. The angels. The qashmallim. I... I f-f-... I f-find it hard to s-s-speak of them. Of their... beauty.

AG: You said an angel told you to stay in Appletown.

V: Yes. Are they angels, or something else? I can't be certain. They're m-made of Pyros, if of anything. I can't say if it was one being or many that appeared in the m-mines that night. If fire h-had eyes... if lightning had a face... this was only the s-second time I've s-seen the qashmallim. The first time, they would not speak.

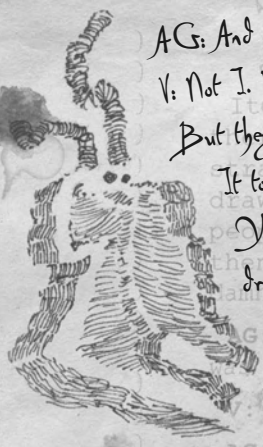
This time they t-told me... I can't d-describe the v-voices. They told me that some of the Pandorans had escaped me. They said that it was my t-task to hunt them down. If I did that, if I stayed until the last was destroyed, I'd be r-r-rewarded. One of my own — their words — one of m-my own would return to me with precious knowledge.

When I couldn't bear the white-hot light any longer, I b-bolted with their words ringing in my head. From a mile away I could see the red glow, the smoke, as the flames neared the surface. And I d-decided to stay and do as the qashmallim bid.

I m-moved into the abandoned church, adapted it for my needs. I d-divided my time between the town and the dying countryside. I h-hunted the escaped Pandorans. Over time, s-some of them entered the coal seams and worked their way towards the t-town, following the fire. I whittled down their numbers to a mere h-handful. And then, l-last year, the accident happened.

AG: The bus accident.

V: Yes. A s-sc-school bus with seven children aboard. The driver makes a bad decision, turns up the wrong street. The g-ground collapses, the bus plunges into a chasm. All the children dead, their little necks broken by the impact.



AG: And you feel responsible for this as well?

V: Not I. No. The Pandorans made it happen. After the bodies were recovered, I entered the pit. But the Pandorans were g-gone. The trail was cold.

It took a y-year for me to guess what happened — n-not that there weren't other distractions. You'd be surprised at the strange things that w-walk this countryside, Doctor. Entities drawn to the goings-on here for dark reasons of their own... The people in town should be g-grateful I was keeping watch. And then I thought I had an indication of my enemy's whereabouts, d-damn her. I was mistaken, but it ate up considerable t-time.

AG: Wait. The enemy you keep mentioning. At first I thought it was your... creator. But you keep saying "she" and "her."

V: Yes.

AG: Then who is she?

V: A m-mistake. A Pandoran. Unusual in her int-t-telligence, s-self-awareness and independence.

AG: Why is this particular... Pandoran... your adversary, as you say? Why single her out?

V: I d-don't wish to speak more of h-her.

AG: I think you do, Mr. Verney. Isn't she the whole reason you're here?

V: All right. All right. I t-told you that I, like other Promotheans, h-have attempted to create more of my kind. It must seem a preposterous, monstrous act to knowingly inflict this state of existence on another. So it s-seems to me in my more lucid moments. But the desire for c-company becomes overwhelming... and there are those who b-believe that the creative act m-must be performed if we are t-to be made whole.

AG: So you created her. You made her and she turned against you.

V: Yes. But it wasn't j-just that she turned against me. She was my first attempt at creation. And I m-made her wrong. I f-f-... I failed. Flux was unleashed, and she c-came into b-being as a Pandoran. A rare t-type that seemed n-normal at first. For a f-few days I was convinced that she was everything I'd ho-hoped. Then, on the third day, she... she, she shed her skin.

AG: I hear the pain in your voice, Mr. Verney. It must have been difficult having your child turn against you.

V: No. N-not my child.

AG: ...

AG: Oh. Oh, I understand. She was—

V: I had been created only a y-year before. A year of exile and torment — of decay, rejection, misery, exile and persecution. I h-had instinct to guide me in creating the v-vessel, and some notes and books I'd t-taken from the D-Doctor. B-but I failed.

V: She was to be my Bride.

V: On the day she l-left me, having d-drained me of fyros and watched me c-collapse, she told me that the t-tenderness she'd expressed had been a lie. That she'd been repulsed and s-sickened at the first sight of me. Then she stripped off her s-skin and threw it tattered at my feet. She k-kept only her f-face. It w-was the only p-piece of her that was s-still as I'd m-made it. Her face. That b-b-... that beautiful face. I'd selected it from a b-baker's dozens of f-fresh maiden corpses. Spent hours sewing it into place, working s-slowly so my clumsy fingers wouldn't drop a stitch. And all the Pandorans she generates have that same f-face, somewhere on their distorted f-forms. That, more than anything, is why I hu-hunt them. Not just to undo her w-works, but to gaze on that beautiful face again and again.

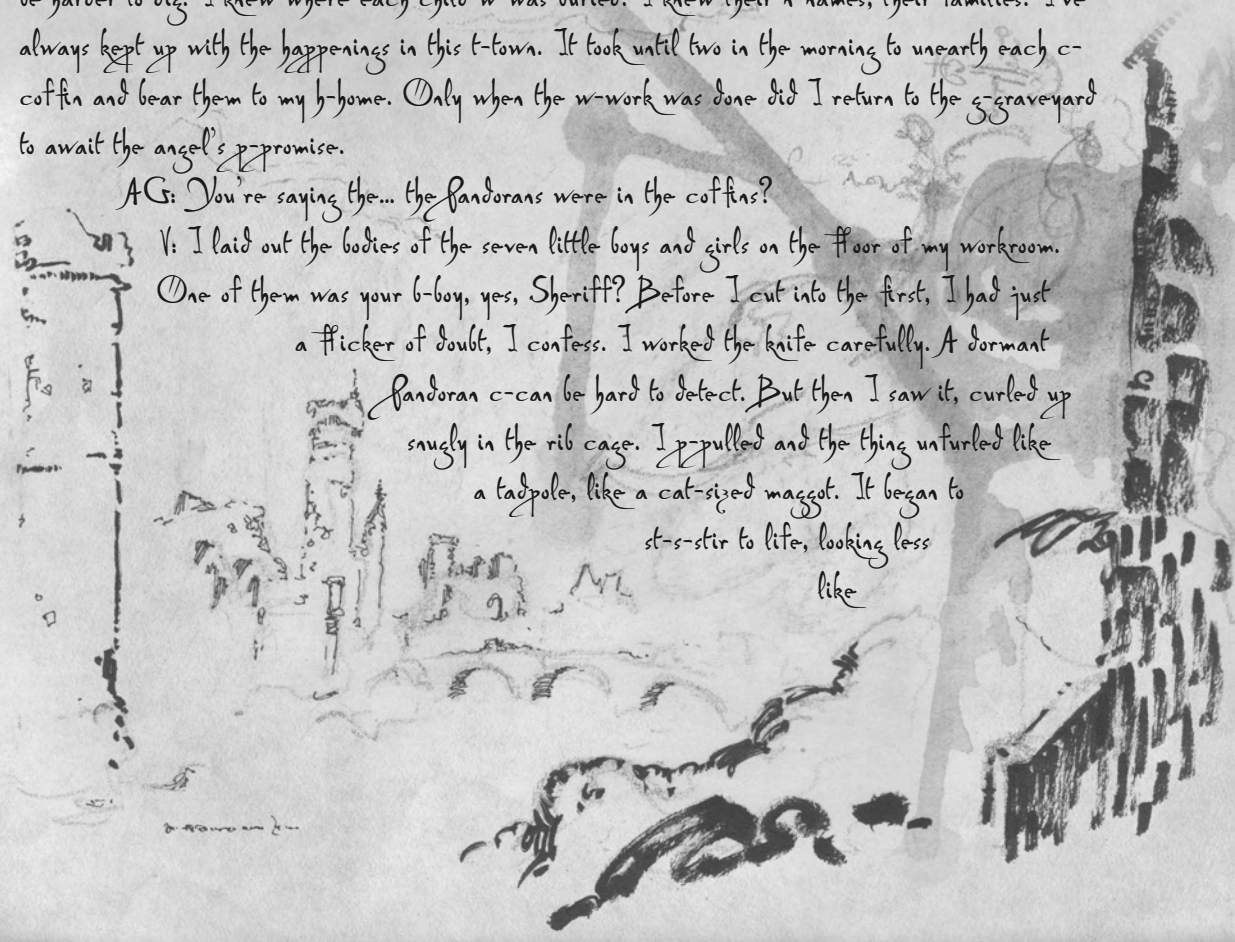
V: ...

AG: Mr. Verney, I wonder if we could stop now. I can't seem to... Brian?

V: A few days ago, it hit me. I knew where the last of the Pandorans went when the bus crashed. I waited for nightfall. The storm rolled in before sunset, a g-good omen for me. I didn't mind that the rain-soaked earth would be harder to dig. I knew where each child w-was buried. I knew their n-names, their families. I've always kept up with the happenings in this t-town. It took until two in the morning to unearth each c-coffin and bear them to my h-home. Only when the w-work was done did I return to the g-graveyard to await the angel's p-promise.

AG: You're saying the... the Pandorans were in the coffins?

V: I laid out the bodies of the seven little boys and girls on the floor of my workroom. One of them was your b-boy, yes, Sheriff? Before I cut into the first, I had just a flicker of doubt, I confess. I worked the knife carefully. A dormant Pandoran c-can be hard to detect. But then I saw it, curled up snugly in the rib cage. I p-pulled and the thing unfurled like a tadpole, like a cat-sized maggot. It began to st-s-stir to life, looking less like





a tumor and more like what it was. I waited until m-my Bride's face appeared before I killed it.

I did the s-same to the others. They were already waking up, my Bride's face peering back at me from behind each little set of ribs. I throttled each creature and sliced off its f-face, which then hardened to the consistency of b-bone. A death mask of that exquisite visage. I have hundreds of them, taken from the Pandorans I've killed in and around this town. Hidden in the basement of the church. Hanging in a room with candles placed behind their eyes.

AG: Brian, would you unlock the door please?

BT: I... I can't. I'm sorry.

AG: But—

V: You know, I'm certain it was my Bride who told Shelley my story. Her way of sending me a message. I so admire her guile, her talent for symbolic victories. One of her favorite tactics is to corrupt a Promethean of my own lineage... the offspring several times removed from one of my own ill-conceived creations. She finds them when they're n-new, and whispers in their ear, turning them against me. She tempts them with the wild Flux and guides them to becoming Centimani.

V: ...

V: Doctor? Sit and let's finish this.

AG: Yes, I... I'm sorry. What's happening? You said... sanctimony?

V: Centimani — the darkest of the Re-finements, the paths of alchemy. The only one of them I haven't pursued. The Re-finements teach us to work Transmutations, help us to understand the Inner Fire and the torments it brings. Centimani is the Re-finement of Flux, by which one learns to emulate and command Pandoran hordes. It seems a good idea until you g-grow an extra set of genitalia.

AG: Your Bride... When was the last time you saw her?

V: Hm? When... It was nearly a century ago. So much blood spilled that day. She'd recruited one of my progeny to lure me near and had compelled an entire village to fight for her. When it was over, she and her Promethean apprentice dragged my b-broken body up the mountain. The entire c-countryside was dry and barren, thanks to their presence. A tinderbox of twisted scrub and stunted, dead trees. They hung my inert f-form by the ankles...

AG: It was a windmill. Not a cross. They hung you upside down from the top of a half-collapsed windmill.

V: Yes. They l-lashed me to the vanes. Did I say that?

AG: How did you survive?

AG: They fled after setting a f-fire at the base of the mill. They knew the flames would quickly spread out of control. My body was torpid, but I w-was aware of what went on around me. I saw the sky c-clouding up. Nature reacting violently to our p-presence, perhaps. As the smoke rose, I wondered if the rain would come in time. But something else happened.

AG: Lightning.

V: When it struck the mill, everything flashed a bright violet. And then I was in command of my b-body again. I returned to the v-village that night, to p-punish whomever was left. I returned to the first Refinement I'd ever practiced. Stannum. The Refinement of Torment, Fury and Vengeance. I practice it still. And isn't it time, Doctor, that you dropped this imposture and started begging me not to enact my retaliation on you?

AG: Wait... Brian? Brian, help me.

BT: Aggie, I can't. He has Marie. And the judge's grandson.

V: Yes. When Sheriff Tierny's m-men found me in the cemetery, I h-had an intuition that I should g-go with them. And then you came, and you s-seemed familiar. I w-wondered if it was you the angels p-promised. It seemed best to c-continue the charade. The next night I p-paid a visit to Sheriff Tierny and Judge Carter, to m-make them k-keep you here. And n-now, finally, I remember. It was y-you at the windmill, wasn't it? With my Bride? Did she send you h-here to question me, to f-find out what my plans are? You know where she is. I n-need that knowledge.

AG: ...into... lead... into... gold...

V: There. No n-need to pretend these pathetic chains can hold me now. Shhhh...



# PROMETHEAN™

## THE CREATED

A STORYTELLING GAME OF STOLEN LIVES

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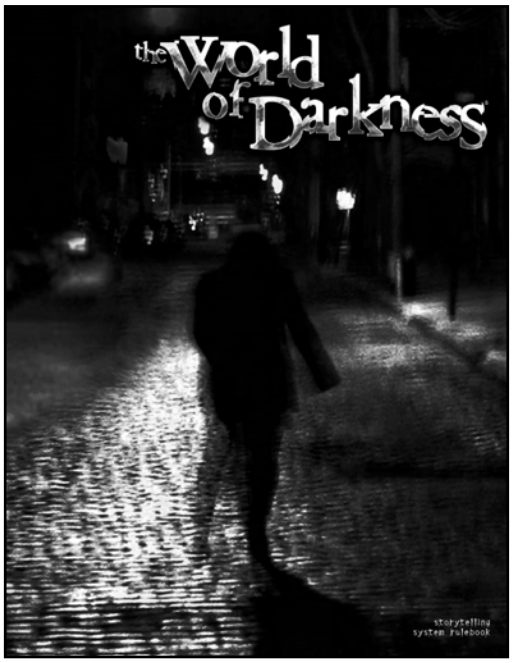
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# — INTRODUCTION —

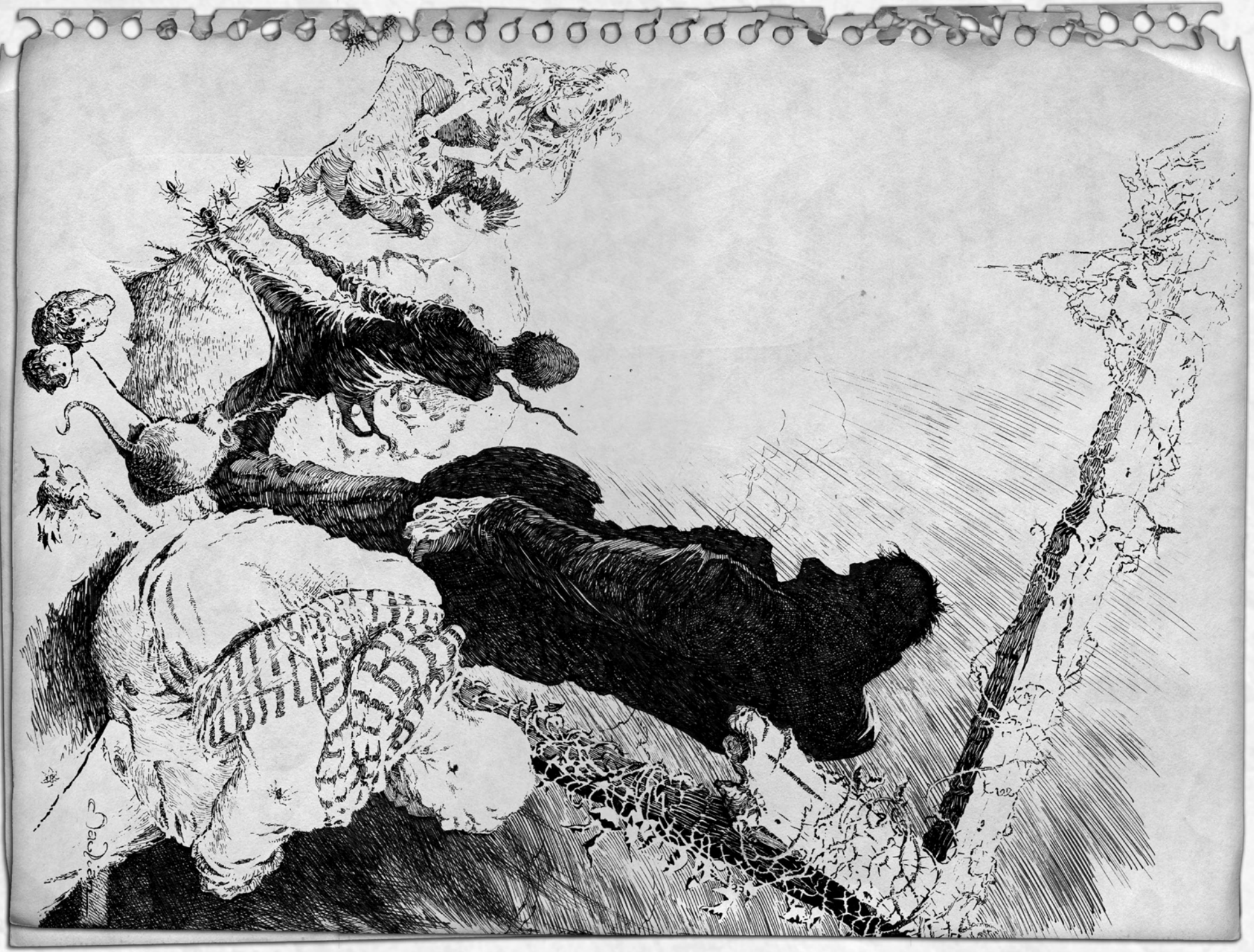
She was curious about something I'd said, about how my nature forces me to be solitary. She asked about others of my kind. I told her. At least, I told her part of the truth.

I told her about the four with whom I've had occasional contact. All much younger than me, and not first creations like I am, but sprung from lineages much older than my own. John Ash began as a corpse brought home from the Ardennes. He was reborn in the soil of murdered slaves, and sent against bigots and terror-mongers in the deep South. Zo Malek, who came from the uncharted wastes of Afghanistan and betrayed the tribal magicians there. They still send their spirit-assassins after her. Doctor Brine, who puzzles me, with his maps and charts of rivers that flow between the living and the dead. And the Hangman's Beautiful Daughter. My favorite. She wears the form of a delicate girl of just 16 summers. True love, she says, will grant her humanity, and a name. Her spidery fingers run red with the blood of failed suitors.

I remember when we last met, the five of us, at night in a vineyard where John Ash was convalescing. Blight had already struck the grapes, and the air was thick with a heavy perfume of vinegar and decay. Occasionally you'd hear the soft patter of maggot-filled fruit dropping to the earth.

She asked whether these four could provide me the companionship I seek. I told her that there are some advantages to working together, traveling together, sharing information, but it's a hollow, unrewarding experience, done more for necessity than for its own sake. We know we're not real. It's like playing house, like befriending shadow puppets. It becomes frustrating, then maddening. No one wants the company of monsters, not for long.

Not even other monsters.





Prometheus
first transmuted
Atoms culled
for human clay.

—Horace

The darkness of Prometheus signified precisely the deficiency of one who needs fire in order to achieve a more perfect form of being. In obtaining this higher form of being for man, Prometheus shows himself to be man's double, an eternal image of man's basically imperfect form of being.

—Carl Kerényi,
*Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence*

Prometheans are monsters created by monsters. They are incomplete souls inhabiting bodies that have been dismembered and reassembled, then animated, not by life, but a cruel imitation of life: a mysterious, alchemical force — the Divine Fire stolen from the gods by Prometheus. They are beings fueled by a transformative power, with capabilities far greater than those of mortals.

Myths and legends tell of the creation of the Prometheans, although mortals are unaware that these diverse tales reveal that monsters actually walk among them. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered a work of fiction, but it tells of the creation of a Promethean by a mortal alchemist who wielded the Divine Fire. Was Shelley aware of the truth behind her fantastic story, or did she believe she made it all up? Some Prometheans say that the monster himself, Frankenstein's creation, revealed the story to her, whispering to her as she slept in fevered dreams, unaware of his presence. He desperately needed to communicate his tragedy to a world in which he could not himself participate. Others say that it was the monster's bride who told the tale to Shelley, deliberately warping it to make the monster seem worse.

Older legends also hint at other Prometheans. Osiris was killed and dismembered, and then Isis recovered his limbs and gave him new life as the lord of the Underworld. Pygmalion made Galatea, a woman "carved from marble," given life by his need and the breath of the gods. Siberian shamans suffered terrible initiations in trances where they were torn to pieces by demons and then reassembled, with powers unknown to other men. And, of course, there is the legend of the Golem, the being of clay animated by magic to deliver vengeance.

Although the details of these stories are half-truths colored by human ignorance, they reveal the existence of the Prometheans and the force that animates them. They tell of mortals who kindled the Divine Fire within a lifeless body. What they don't tell is that such an act of Promethean generation by mortals is extremely rare — it has been accomplished only a handful of times throughout recorded history. Each act of creation produced a single Promethean. These lonely Prometheans later sought to create others of their own kind for themselves, producing lineages of monsters. The successive creations are unknown to humans, yet it is those successors who stalk the world still, desperate for an acceptance and belonging that their misbegotten nature denies them.

For all their power and transhuman potential, they suffer. The Fire that sustains them also denies them human companionship. Although they appear to be normal humans (unless they use their supernatural powers), their very presence repulses mortals on a deep, instinctual level. Worse, Nature itself denies them. The same instinctual distrust and hatred that works upon mortals also provokes animals to flee or attack, and a Promethean who stays too long in one place finds it becoming a wasteland around him, rendered drab and lifeless by his presence.

The Inner Fire also provokes uncontrollable emotions within the Promethean himself — destructive rages, intense envy, fanatic vindictiveness, overwhelming terror or suicidal despair. Like the Furies that taunted Prometheus when he was bound to the rock, these emotions torment Prometheans continuously and sometimes even control their behavior at times to pervert their intentions.

Most Prometheans seek release from this tragic state. Rumors and legends tell of how the Inner Fire can be mastered and turned from its destructive course, wielded toward a good end, as an alchemist works common fire to transform substances. The result of this Great Work is the transformation of lead into gold — the body into soul, the Promethean into a mortal: a truly alive being, rather than an imitation of life.

A Promethean without a soul is like Prometheus bound. It is a Herculean task to break the chains and free the titan. The Furies fight against it, and the Fire resists being tamed. The process is long and hard, and many never achieve its end. The elixir of life promised by such alchemy is mercurial, appearing in many different forms. This quest for Mortality is called a Pilgrimage, and most Prometheans are nomads on this trackless path.

Prometheans are not alone in their possession of the Pyros, the animating flame. Other creatures come from its crucible — inhuman things that are not meant to be and whose

bodies come in myriad shapes and forms. These malformed, misbegotten creatures, called Pandorans, do not possess the transcendent potential of a Promethean. They are even dependent upon a Promethean's very life force — his Azoth, the purified Fire within him — for their "life" and continued animation. Some Pandorans are mindless, animalistic things, while others are hyper-intelligent, with a supernatural cunning.

Prometheans are plagued by Pandorans, which are created when a Promethean attempts to create another of its kind yet proves unworthy of the task. Instead of creating life, he creates chaos. A Promethean's very presence can awaken dormant Pandorans, who can possess nearly any form when dormant, and cannot be easily detected until they awaken. Once awakened, they will stop at nothing to acquire more Pyros.

Bedeviled by their own warped creations and the Disquiet that drives away humans and animals, Prometheans are lonely, tormented creatures. Only in their own kind can they find some degree of companionship. Even then, however, their attempts at community suffer from distrust and competition for the prize of true Mortality, which some believe to be in limited supply. Still, a culture has arisen among these lonely wanderers, handed on to others through pilgrim marks left behind at the places where a Promethean pauses for a while in his search. These signs tell other Prometheans of the trials of those who passed this way before, and reveal their hopes, dreams and fears — and dangers that wait on the road ahead.

Those Prometheans who find others of their kind with shared goals often group together into tight-knit gangs. Companionship is rare enough that, when found, it is treasured and kept alive through rituals. The Prometheans who make up these groups, called "throngs," often bond themselves to one another through an alchemical pact, signified by a Brand burned into the skin. Such a Brand is both a wound and a sign of the Promethean's pledge to bear any torment for his fellows.

## The Misunderstood Monster

The cinema has given pop culture an indelible impression of Frankenstein's monster: a shambling brute who means well but is too horrible to look upon. Its anger and rage overcomes its kindness, and it eventually kills. The townsfolk rise up and chase the monster down, backing it off a cliff or burying it beneath the crumbling stones of Castle Frankenstein.

The monster is portrayed as an abomination against nature. Even the monster senses this and seems to hate itself for what it is. It seeks revenge against its creator or all of humankind. Occasionally, it finds peace and acceptance, usually from the blind or from a child who doesn't yet know



to fear something so ugly. This peace never lasts, though, as the creature's great strength is often its undoing, for humans are fragile beings, easily broken.

These characteristics often crop up in other interpretations of artificially created life or intelligence, in stories about clones and robots. The naïve new life form or artificial intelligence wants to be liked and doesn't understand why others turn away from it. In the end, its own programming proves how far it has to go before it can understand humans, before it can ever be human.

A human's disgust isn't always just baseless prejudice. Whether it's a clone, robot or bodiless artificial intelligence, the created being usually poses a threat. Maybe its got the strength to break people's necks on a whim, or weapons that can wipe out whole armies, or an inhuman logic that causes it to erase humans from the equation of its perfect universe. ("I can't do that, Dave.") The fact is, it's dangerous, regardless of its good intentions — intentions that inevitably go bad in these stories.

**Promethean** draws on these themes to tell stories about artificial humans stumbling their way through their painful lives, seeking release in the promise that they can become fully human one day. They aren't robots or AIs, though, but stitched-together corpses animated by a supernatural force. More alchemical than scientific, they are organic in a grotesque way that cold machines could never be. Rather than pointing to some future world where we have to deal with the problems of our out-of-control technology, Prometheans' origins stretch back deep into human history to the time of ancient myth. They have always been with us. They're not a problem yet to come; they're here, now, and their tormented wanderings have affected history in hidden ways.

**Promethean** is a game set in the World of Darkness, a contemporary world like ours but with deeper shadows, where the worst sort of urban legends, occult mysteries and conspiracy theories are usually true. As such, contemporary issues such as science are not treated as science fiction, with technologies like robots and spaceships that don't exist yet, or mad scientists creating false life in sterile laboratories. Instead, these issues are seen in the half-light of ancient mysticism and magic. The force that animates Prometheans is not made of nanotech, it's a mysterious energy spoken of in ancient myth — the Divine Fire of the gods. The beings who make monsters aren't scientists trying to prove their crackpot theories, they're other monsters seeking to assuage their loneliness or to hand off their curse so they can escape it themselves.

In short, **Promethean** is a modern horror game, tinged with elements from medieval alchemy, ancient myth and modern occultism. It's a game about monsters who want to be human. They envy mortals, for as weak, petty and ignorant as mortals can be, mortals have something Prometheans don't: each other.

## Theme: Alienation

A Promethean's existence is a lonely one. They must avoid large number of humans, lest they provoke them into violence, but others of their own kind are rare. When a Promethean does meet another, both warily test each another to see if they have found a friend or an enemy. Prometheans who prove friendly might help one another on their Pilgrimages, or even join together into a throng, to seek Mortality together and try to succor one another in their alienation from the rest of the world. Some, however, see the Pilgrimage as a competition that only the fittest can win. To them, most other Prometheans are bitter rivals. Others still shun the company of their own kind, either out of fear or from miserly hoarding of the few secrets they have uncovered on the Pilgrimage.

## Mood: Glimpses of the Grotesque

The lot of Prometheans is a struggle for transfigured flesh. Their own bodies are the subjects of their alchemical experiments, and the Pandorans are nightmares made flesh. The Pilgrimage yields disturbing flashes of insight via grotesque imagery at unexpected moments — like when Jeffrey found the severed ear in the movie *Blue Velvet*, setting off a journey into the depths of human depravity. The brief glimpse of a Promethean's true form as he uses his powers, the hallucinogenic animation of a Pandoran awakening from Dormancy, the maggot-ridden animal parts that dot the landscape of a place made barren by Promethean Disquiet… These sudden, disturbing and stomach-wrenching images serve to drive home the mood of a Promethean story.

## How to Use This Book

The chapters of this book each present different facets of the hidden world of Prometheans.

**Chapter One** provides an overview of who Prometheans are, how they are created, the lonely journey through life they call the Pilgrimage, and the far-traveled culture they have developed on its paths.

**Chapter Two** presents rules and advice for creating Promethean characters, and it details the powers they wield with the Divine Fire burning in their bodies.

**Chapter Three** discusses the Promethean condition, the advantages Prometheans have over mere humans and the terrible drawbacks to their existence.

**Chapter Four** addresses the quest for Mortality, giving the Storyteller detailed advice on how to handle this powerful goal. The chapter also presents the antagonists Prometheans can expect to encounter on their Pilgrimages, from curious mortals to flesh-eating Pandorans.

The **Appendix** presents an advanced character option: Athanors, a means by which some Prometheans prepare for their longed-for mortal lives. It is followed by a story for




beginning Promethean characters set in Chicago. Future **Promethean** supplements continue the story in different locales across the country.

# Sources and Inspiration

Stories about artificial beings have been told in many times and cultures. Storytellers and players might want to check out some of these books, comics and movies to spark ideas for their own **Promethean** chronicles and characters.

## Books

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. It's why this game exists.

Gustav Meyrink's *The Golem*. Meyrink was an occultist, and his background suffuses his work with a strange mysticism.

*The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi. "Once upon a time, there was… 'A king!' my little readers will say right away. No, children, you are wrong. Once upon a time there was a piece of wood…"

Lucy Lane Clifford's fairy tale, "Wooden Tony," in which the reverse of *Pinocchio* happens: A real boy is so detached from humanity that he becomes a wooden doll, literally. Prometheans might tell this story as a warning of what might happen if they don't pursue the Pilgrimage: They lose what little humanity they have. Similarly, in her story "The Make Believe Fish," a toy fish ponders its artificial nature, until a child casts it into the sea. Unfortunately, since it's only a toy, it sinks lifelessly to the bottom and is ignored by the real fish — a metaphor, perhaps of what could happen to a Promethean who tries to join humanity before he's ready (if you replace "ignored" with "hated").

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Available in many English editions, this is a classic grab bag of mythical stories, with the theme of transformation. Look out for, among other things, the tale of Galatea. Brimming with ideas and energy, even 2,000 years after its composition.

Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* surveys shamanism around the world, but with a special focus on Siberia. One chapter catalogs many dismemberment initiations from different cultures.

Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, about a man who is human and yet knows nothing about humans.

Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* deals with questions of created entities and their concepts of individuality. Asimov's "The Bicentennial Man" looks at a creature who is more moral and altruistic than the people who created him.

## Comics

Frank Miller's *Sin City* (also the movie of the same name, directed by Miller and Robert Rodriguez). Marv is an awful lot like a Tammuz Promethean. And why was that serial killer, Kevin, collecting beautiful women's body parts anyway?

*Swamp Thing*. Both the Alan Moore/Stephen Bissette/John Totleben version and the different-but-equally-wonderful Len Wein/Bernie Wrightson version are available in collected editions. Both provide great examples of a created monster on a spiritual journey. Many of the Swamp Thing's supporting cast and enemies could easily be Pandorans (the Un-Men) or Prometheans (the Patchwork Man).

*The Monster of Frankenstein*. Classic Marvel Comics from the 1970s, recently republished in a fat, cheap, no-frills package. Grim, pulpy fun with some excellent imagination and ideas from the likes of Doug Moench, Val Mayerik, Mike Ploog and company.

## Movies

Any of the Frankenstein movies, from the classic Boris Karloff films (especially James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein*) to the Hammer horror B-movies, to Kenneth Branagh's more recent take with Robert De Niro as the monster.

*The Elephant Man* is about a disfigured man who wants to be treated like a normal human being. "I am not an animal! I am a human being!"

*Sling Blade*, in which the main character is set apart from the people around him not by a supernatural nature, but by mental disability. Like a Promethean, his differences make him distrusted by most of those around him, and they're compounded by his inability to comprehend the motivations of ordinary people. He tries to do the right thing as he understands it, which results in an exile from society at large and the pseudo-family he almost established.

The same actor, Billy Bob Thornton, is also the lead in the Coen Brothers' film noir homage, *The Man Who Wasn't There*. He portrays a man who seems normal but is unable to make any meaningful connection to the people around him. He might not inspire Disquiet, but his attempt to improve his lot triggers a series of tragedies that costs him dearly. Prometheans, especially the phlegmatic Nepri, might have similar emotional blind spots when trying to pass among mortals.

*A.I.* and *Blade Runner*, both of which involve human-seeming but non-living creatures trying to find a place among humans, with varying degrees of both success and bloodshed.

*The Matrix* trilogy of movies at least attempts to ask some existential questions, and arguably positions individuals as manufactured entities.

*Dark City* raises questions of individual motivation and memory.

*The Crow* is about a man returned to life for a specific purpose.

The short film, "More," looks at individual motive and purpose and how that can degrade over time. It challenges the idea that the drone always has to be a cog — sometimes he's at the top of the scheme. With music by New Order. (http://www.happyproduct.com/more1.html)

Also: *Edward Scissorhands*, *Equilibrium*, *The Iron Giant*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *Logan's Run*, *Metropolis* (both the Fritz Lang classic and the Tezuka anime), *The Terminator*, *T2: Judgment Day* and *THX 1138*

## Music

Stravinsky's ballet *Petroushka* is sort of a dark Russian *Pinocchio*, except that Pinocchio is murdered by a rival puppet over the affections of a pretty girl puppet and comes back at the end as a ghost.

## Lexicon

**alchemical pact:** A mystical bond between members of a *throng*, allowing them to mitigate some of the drawbacks of Promethean existence.

**Alchemicus:** A class of *Transmutations*. The alteration or transformation of material substances, from mystically identifying them to molding their shape and function like clay.

**alchemy:** The medieval art and science of causing material transformations that effect internal mental or spiritual transformation. Many of the tenets of alchemy seem to have been drawn from Promethean anatomy and the properties of the *Pyros*.

**Aurum:** The Refinement of Gold, or *Mortality*. Practitioners are called *Mimics* or Adamists.

**Azoth:** Azoth is the amount of purified *Pyros* the Promethean has within him. It is what animates him and gives him the potential (the promise) of becoming mortal, or truly alive. Azoth is often associated with the alchemical principle of coagulation.

**Azothic radiance:** The invisible aura that spreads out from a Promethean. The higher his *Azoth* is, the wider the aura spreads. A Promethean's Azothic radiance awakens *Pandorans* from *Dormancy*.

**Bestowment:** A power bestowed by a Promethean's *Lineage*. (Bestowments can also be purchased as *Transmutations*.)

**Brand:** A body mark made by *Pyros* signifying a Promethean's membership in an *alchemical pact*.

**Centimani:** "The Hundred-Handed." The Refinement of Flux. Practitioners are called Centimani (singular: Centimanus) or Freaks.

**Corporeum:** A class of *Transmutations*. Control or transformation of the body's physical functions, from the regeneration of wounded flesh to hardening the skin against damage.

**Cuprum:** The Refinement of Copper, or the Self. Practitioners are called *Pariahs* or Eremites.

**Deception:** A class of *Transmutations*. Supernatural means of confusing or evading opponents, from changing one's skin color to altering one's facial features.

**demiurge:** A mortal who wields the *Azoth* to create a Promethean. The result of a demiurge's act of creation is a *Progenitor*, the prototype Promethean of a *Lineage*. Any Prometheans the Progenitor then creates inherit his Lineage. Demiurges are rare. There have been only a handful throughout history, and the last confirmed demiurge was Dr. Victor Frankenstein.

**disfigurements:** Underneath the illusion of normality provided by the *Azoth*, a Promethean's true visage is terrible to look upon. He might be scarred and stitched or appear to be made of clay, depending on his *Lineage*. A Promethean's disfigurements become briefly visible to mortals when the Promethean spends *Pyros* points or uses electrical current to heal wounds.

**Disquiet:** An invisible aura emitted by the Promethean that is deleterious to humans, animals and even the land itself. It is the chief cause of a Promethean's estrangement from mortals.

**Disquietism:** A class of *Transmutations*. The manipulation of the character's own Disquieting aura, from driving animals into a rabid fury to quelling *Disquiet* entirely for a short while.

**Dormancy:** The state of hibernation a *Pandoran* suffers when it does not have enough *Pyros* or a Promethean's *Azothic radiance* to sustain its activity.

**Electrification:** A class of *Transmutations*. The control and generation of electrical current, from powering an electrical device with one's own *Pyros* to throwing deadly bolts of lightning.

**element:** The five classical elements — earth, air, fire, water, spirit — play an important role in the creation of a Promethean, depending upon his *Lineage*.

**Elpidos:** A *qashmal* that serves *Elpis*. See *qashmallim*.

**Elpis:** When Pandora's Box was opened and released *Flux* upon the world, one power remained in the box: Hope, or "*Elpis*" in Hesiod's Greek. Prometheans equate Elpis with the Transformative Fire that turns lead into gold.

**Epimetheus' Folly:** The creation of one or more *Pandorans*. When a Promethean attempts to create another Promethean (see *Prometheus' Gift*) but fails, he creates Pandorans instead.

**Ferrum:** The Refinement of Iron, or the Corpus (body). Practitioners are called *Titans*.

**Firestorm:** A sudden surge of *Flux* (or sometimes *Elpis*), manifesting as a mutagenic field of chaos. Firestorms can lacerate Prometheans or cause them to undergo forced mutation. Also called Eumenidean Vortices.

**Flux:** The dark, uncontrollable, unnatural aspect of the Divine Fire — one of the reasons its possession is often a curse rather than a boon. Although the Divine Fire can transform, it can also destroy. Flux is associated with alchemical dissolution and disintegration.

**Frankenstein:** A Promethean *Lineage*. Shambling creatures whose limbs and organs were culled from multiple bodies. They were given life by the element of fire in the



form of lightning, and they suffer from an excess of choleric *humour*. Their Progenitor was Dr. Victor Frankenstein's famous monster.

**Furies:** See *Stannum*.

**Galatea:** A Promethean *Lineage*. Beautiful creatures made from the most perfect body parts from one or more corpses, Galateids are enlivened by the Breath of Life and animated with an excess of sanguine *humour*. Their Progenitor was Galatea, the woman created by Pygmalion.

**generative act:** The act of creating a new Promethean.

**going to the wastes:** When a Promethean retreats from contact with the mortal world, hibernating far from where he can be interrupted. If he does not use his *Transmutations* during his retreat, he can reduce his *Azoth* and cleanse it of impurities.

**Golem:** See *Tammuz*.

**Great Work, the:** The alchemical operation of transforming the Promethean into a mortal. Its stages and procedures are the *milestones* of the *Pilgrimage*, guided by the discipline of the *Refinements*.

**humours:** The classical bodily substances once thought to play a role in human temperaments. Each *Lineage* is animated with one of the five humours — yellow and black bile, phlegm, blood and ectoplasm.

**Ishtari:** A Pandoran *Mockery* of the *Tammuz* Lineage.

***Lapis Philosophorum*:** The Philosopher's Stone of the alchemists, the end goal of the *Great Work*. Prometheans equate the term with the attainment of *Mortality*.

**Lilithim:** A *qashmal* that serves *Flux*. See *qashmallim*.

**Lineage:** A type of Promethean, determined by the Lineage of the Promethean's creator (who is himself a Promethean). The popular conception of a Promethean being created by a mortal refers to a *demiurge*.

***Magnum Opus*:** See *Great Work*.

**Measure, the:** The first impression a Promethean takes of a Promethean he has just met. It is mainly based upon the tenor of the subject's *Azothic radiance*. Radiance tainted by too much *Torment* might cause a Promethean to avoid contact with the subject.

**Mercurius:** The Refinement of Quicksilver, or *Pyros*. Practitioners are called *Ophidians* or Serpents.

**Mesmerism:** A class of *Transmutations*. The character uses his own Disquieting aura to affect the minds of others, from entrancing them like a cobra to creating a false identity in someone.

**Metamorphosis:** A class of *Transmutations*. The transformation of the body into new shapes, from sprouting claws or fangs to creating a homunculus.

**milestone:** A stage in the *Pilgrimage*. Successful completion of a milestone produces *Vitriol* in the Promethean.

**Mimics:** See *Aurum*.

**Mockery:** A sort of anti-*Lineage* of *Pandorans*, based upon the Lineage of their Promethean creators.

**Mortality:** The ultimate goal of Promethean existence: to become fully human. Also called *the New Dawn*, the Aurora or the Rebirth.

**Muse:** See *Galatea*.

**Nepri:** See *Osiris*.

**New Dawn, the:** Alchemical euphemism for *Mortality*.

**Ophidians:** See *Mercurius*.

**Osiris:** A Promethean *Lineage*. Descendents of their Egyptian *Progenitor*, Osiris, who was dismembered and remade by Isis by the banks of the Nile, Osirans come to new life amidst water, with an excess of phlegmatic *humour*.

**Pandoran:** A creature animated by *Pyros*, but which has no *Azoth* of its own. Pandorans are the spawn of *Flux*.

**Pariahs:** See *Cuprum*.

**Pilgrimage, the:** The quest for *Mortality*. A euphemism for a Promethean's life, his sole career. Everything he does, for good or ill, is another step on the Pilgrimage.

**pilgrim marks:** A written language of pictograms used by Prometheans to communicate messages to others on the *Pilgrimage*. They are similar to the hobo marks used in America during the 20th century, but are more complex and replete with alchemical symbols.

**Progenitor:** The first Promethean of a *Lineage*. Frankenstein's monster was the *Progenitor* of the *Frankenstein* Lineage.

**Promethean:** A being animated by *Azoth* as a result of a unique alchemical process. The Promethean's body always comes from a dismembered and reassembled corpse (or corpses).

**Prometheus' Gift:** Euphemism for the *generative act*, named for the transfer of *Azoth* — the refined Divine Fire — to the new corpse.

**Pyros:** The Divine Fire. Prometheans generate fluid Pyros from their *Azoth* (their store of purified Pyros). Pyros is expended to power *Transmutations*.

***qashmallim*:** Mysterious beings of Incarnate Flame. Some Prometheans equate them with angels, both generous and terrible.

**Ramble, the:** When a Promethean shares stories with other Prometheans. These stories can be about himself or tales he has heard from others on the *Pilgrimage*.

**Redeemed, the:** Prometheans who have become mortal. Most retain no memory of their Promethean lives.



**Refinement:** A *Great Work*. One of many known practices adopted by Prometheans as a means of mastering the Inner Fire, lest it master them instead.

**Refusers:** Prometheans who reject the *Pilgrimage*. They believe that the promise of *Mortality* is a lie, or that the cost to attain it is too high.

**Render:** A Pandoran *Mockery* of the *Ulgan* Lineage.

**resurrection:** The Azothic animation of a Promethean's recently killed body, restoring it to life.

**Riven, the:** See *Ulgan*.

**Sebek:** A Pandoran *Mockery* of the *Osiris* Lineage.

**Sensorium:** A class of *Transmutations*. Superhuman powers of sensation, from the perception of auras to clairvoyant observations of distant places and people.

**Silent, the:** A Pandoran *Mockery* of the *Galatea* Lineage.

**Stannum:** The Refinement of Tin, or *Torment*. Practitioners are called *Furies*.

**Tammuz:** A Promethean *Lineage*. Brutes reborn in the womb of the earth and stricken with an excess of melancholic *humour*. Their Progenitor was a Babylonian *Golem*.

**Titan:** The mythological beings that existed before the gods, confined in Tartarus by Zeus. Prometheus was a titan. Also, the name given to practitioners of *Ferrum*.

**throng:** A group of Prometheans who team up for a task or who travel together on the *Pilgrimage*. Some throngs formalize their bond into an *alchemical pact*.

**Torch-Born:** A Pandoran *Mockery* of the *Frankenstein Lineage*.

**Torment:** The affliction a Promethean feels when experiences overwhelm him, causing his bodily *humours* to rage out of balance and overcome his volition. Torment leaves a stain on the Promethean's *Azothic radiance*.

**Transmutation:** A Promethean or *Pandoran* power.

**Vitality:** A class of *Transmutations*. The channeling of *Azoth* and the bodily *humours* to achieve amazing feats of strength, from leaping vast distances to creating earthquakes with a stomp.

**Vitriol:** The alchemical substance that purifies a Promethean for the transition to *Mortality*. Vitriol is produced by the *Azoth* when the Promethean completes a *milestone* on the *Pilgrimage*.

**Vulcanus:** A class of *Transmutations*. The manipulation of *Pyros*, from sensing its presence to stealing it from other Prometheans.

**Wasteland, the:** The deadening effect a Promethean's aura causes on the land he walks upon. If he stays too long in a place, the land will begin to rot and wither in stages, eventually becoming nearly unlivable for mortals, animals and plants.

**Wretched, the:** See *Frankenstein*.

**Ulgan:** A Promethean *Lineage*. Creatures born in bodies torn apart by spirits, animated by the ectoplasm left in the wounds. Their ectoplasmic *humour* often overwhelms their sense of reason. Their Progenitor was a Siberian shaman.



# CHAPTER ONE
# SETTING

John Ash. He is not unlike me. We both had a score to settle.

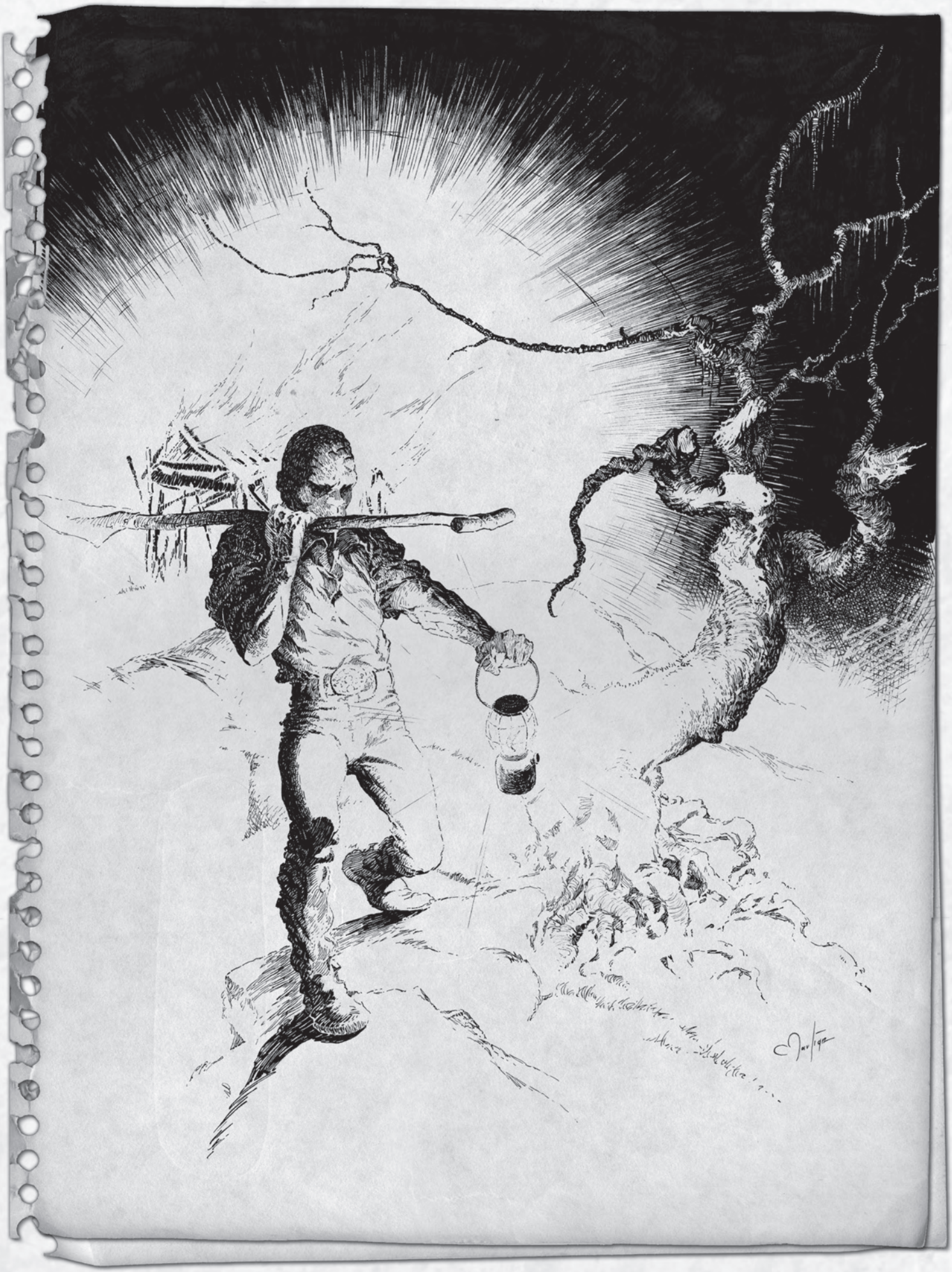
I had to know his story. Don't all of our kind need to know how the rest of us came to our lot? He told me:

"They tell me my body belonged to some soldier who fought bravely in the Battle of the Bulge. And I have to ask, what ever happened to that soldier? Where did he go? Where did I come from? Because I sure ain't him. When my maker brushed the dirt from my eyes, he called me 'John Ash,' and that's the only name I know.

"I spent my early years on the back roads of Georgia and Alabama, bringing hell to them that wore white and burned crosses, because that's what my maker told me to do. And you know what? The victims of them cross-burners' ugly deeds, they didn't want nothin' to do with me. That made me mad, made me do bad things. I decided I'd make them all be afraid of me.

"It was a blind preacher who taught me about the Good Lord and the truth of the Bible. He reckoned that everything has worth in God's eyes, even a half-made thing like me. He told me men are given souls first, then have to prove they deserve them. I just got to do it in reverse order, that's all. So I try to do good things. I try not to get mad at them that can't help but hate me. I keep moving so I won't leave too much of a mark on God's green earth. And I keep looking for the soul that's waiting somewhere for me to find it. But it sure is a hard road to the Promised Land.

"The preacher told me about the time Jesus called out, 'Lazarus, come forth.' Now I have to wonder what it was that walked out of that tomb, and what happened after."





'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred.'

—The monster, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

*A bum stumbles up to you, his hand out. You look at his face, so old and cracked, weathered by hard times. Your heart empathizes with him, and you start to reach into your pocket for some change to give him. But then you stop. Your heart turns cold. You suddenly realize how repulsive this stinking man is. He doesn't deserve your charity. You look away and walk on past. As you reach the end of the block, you wonder why you did that. You turn to look back at the bum, but he's gone.*

* * *

*You're working late, finally packing up your briefcase when the janitor comes into the room, pushing a broom. You nod and smile at him, barely registering his features. But then, for no reason you can figure out, you start yelling at him, complaining about the coffee stain on the carpet from yesterday that he hasn't gotten out yet. He mutters an apology, but you just sneer and leave, heading for the elevators. Only once you reach street level do you regret what you did. How can you treat another human being like that?*

* * *

*You're a cop working vice, cruising the neighborhood undercover to lure a proposition from a prostitute so you can not only to book her for breaking the law, but get her off the dangerous streets for a while. You notice one girl standing on a corner away from the others. Nobody's stopping for her. She's obviously a teenager, new at all this. You figure you'll help her by nipping her career in the bud before things get nasty. As you pull up, you notice the desperation on her face, the relief that someone has finally stopped. She stammers as she offers you the tricks of her trade. You let her talk, but start to notice why nobody came near her: She's positively disgusting. Words you hear all the time on the street but never use yourself start going through your mind, and you surprise yourself by spitting them at her. She takes them like bullet wounds, literally stumbling away, then running off into the night. You sit there for a while, wondering if the job's finally gotten to you. What in the world would make you be so cruel to that poor thing?*

Although cruelty is a human trait, it's not common to any of these people we just explored. These are decent people, who usually help others when called. But no matter how decent they are, they couldn't extend human kindness to these encounters even if they wanted to. Even a saint couldn't help but spit on the particular individuals they encountered. These aren't just any bums, janitors or prostitutes — they aren't even human.

In all these cases, the individuals from the lower rungs of society were Prometheans. Most people would chuckle if you told them that creatures kin to Frankenstein's monster were living among us, on the outskirts of society, looking like us and trying to get near us. You could remind them of how the monster was repulsed by all the humans he encountered, despite his good intentions. No matter where he went, he was denied — often violently. It was as if humans couldn't accept him on an instinctual level, as if he were truly an abomination against Nature.

That's because he was. And there are indeed others like him. Human beings encounter them now and then, having no idea that creatures animated by a mythological fire sometimes walk in plain sight. All most people know is that they hate these strangers. Something inside them takes over and turns against the creatures that look so human, and it works to drive them away, far from the human flock they so desperately wish to join. But they aren't human.

Not yet, at least.

## Making Monsters

Mortals do not know that Prometheans exist… and yet, they do. The story of Frankenstein's monster has been told and retold many times, from Mary Shelley's seminal book to numerous movie and comic book adaptations. This story provides a revealing glimpse into the lot of a Promethean, although nobody believes it's true. The older story of Osiris — killed, dismembered and resurrected by Isis — is rarely connected to the tragedy of Frankenstein, although it, too, tells of a Promethean. Frankenstein's monster is often thought of as an alternative version of the Jewish legend of the Golem, the clay brute animated by Kabalistic

magic. In this, a truth emerges — an animating force that resembles magic. To this legend is sometimes added the Greek myth of Pygmalion and his animated statue-lover, Galatea, brought to life by a goddess. All three beings animated by a supernatural force.

But that's the limit to which the human imaginings have arrived concerning the reality of the Prometheans. The truth does involve a supernatural animating force, but it also requires dismembered corpses — not clay or marble — and bodily fluids (blood, bile, phlegm or ectoplasm) along with the elements of air, earth, fire, spirit and water. In short, it involves an act of biological alchemy.

Prometheans create other Prometheans through an act of mystical genesis, whereby the created shares the same family characteristics as his creator. Only the first Promethean in a new Lineage is created by a mortal. That Progenitor, the first of the line, then creates others of his own kind. These progeny never know the creative touch of a mortal. Mortals will only touch them in disgust or fear, thanks to the Disquiet these monsters exude.

Prometheans seek to overcome their reviled state by becoming mortal. Doing so is a long and unpredictable work, and no Promethean can complete it without first creating one of his own kind. It is the price he must pay before he can escape his own curse. The Divine Fire that animates them must be spread to another to balance the cost of Mortality — or, some say, to purge the purified Promethean of his own Fire. The Fire can never be extinguished, only transferred to new kindling.

Creating another Promethean, however, does not guarantee that the creator will achieve Mortality. It is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient in itself. Some Prometheans might create more than one of their kind on their Pilgrimage (or fail, and create many Pandoran monsters instead). Whether the creator stays to nurture his creation, inducting him into his monstrous life with full knowledge and due warning of the torments that await him, is entirely a personal choice. Some Prometheans take this duty seriously, holding it to be an ethical tenet necessary for the achievement of true Mortality on the creator's part. Others abandon their "young" as soon as the act of creation is complete, leaving them to come to awareness alone and fend for themselves by happenstance rather than training.

The act of creation is a process involving many stages. It involves preparing a corpse according to the requirements of the creator's Lineage, including transferring some of the creator's own primary humour (bile, phlegm, etc.) into that corpse. He then transfers some of his own purified Pyros — his Azoth — to the corpse, via the medium of the Lineage's key element (air, earth, fire, spirit, water), thus sparking the corpse to life. If he has not properly purified himself beforehand through his trials on the Pilgrimage, however, the creator does not enliven a Promethean. Instead, he brings to life one or more Pandorans — creatures of the chaotic Flux.



One of themes some critics perceive in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* novel is the hubris of a man who seeks to create offspring without the participation of a woman. By egotistically sidestepping the natural process and "birthing" a life without a womb — by claiming the female generative powers for himself — Victor Frankenstein could only create a monster. That monster's tragic fate was predetermined by its method of genesis. Prometheans all arise from a single parent. Some say this imbalance of forces is what causes Flux and Torment.

Some Prometheans question whether their unique form of "cell division" is really so unnatural, since some organisms procreate using this method. Others remind them that, natural or not, it's still *inhuman*. An ameba is not a man.

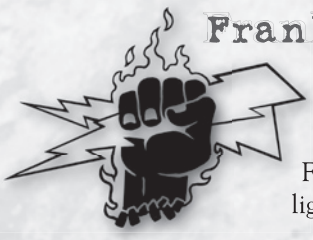
If a Promethean could discover a means whereby two Prometheans (presumably of opposite sex) could create one of their own kind together, perhaps that offspring might be truly special, neither monster nor man but superhuman. So far, though, no attempts have proven successful, generating only hosts of new Pandorans.

Occasional rumors tell of new demiurges and their Lineages, but no evidence has yet proven their existence. For now, Prometheans make their way through the world as one of five known Lineages, propagating their lines as needed or desired.

## Lineages

Only a few times in history have new types of Prometheans been created. Each time, a mortal demiurge wielded the Pyros (often unknowingly) in an alchemical process upon a body that had been dismembered and reassembled. The resulting being, resurrected but without a soul, is a unique Progenitor prototype. When such a Progenitor creates another Promethean, a Lineage is born. The progeny are imperfect copies of the original prototype, itself an imperfect being. Nonetheless, the Progenitor is considered more perfect than its progeny, an archetype that each of its "children" seeks to embody. At least one of these Promethean Progenitors, the Frankenstein monster, is believed to still walk the earth.

Each Lineage is named for its Progenitor. Hence, a Promethean whose Lineage began with the Frankenstein monster is called "a Frankenstein." Some members of a Lineage often prefer not to be called by the name of their Progenitor, who they might see as accursed. Those who feel this way usually come up with alternative nicknames — or accept ones that have been foisted upon them. Members of a Lineage can be of any sex.

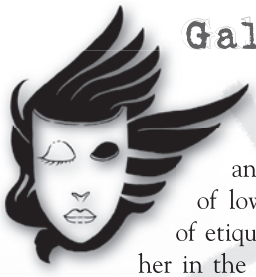


### Frankenstein's Monster – The Wretched

Everyone knows the story. Victor Frankenstein's monster, animated by lightning and then rejected by his creator, forced to make his way in the world alone. When his attempts to befriend humans or to simply be near them were violently rebuffed, he finally gave up and turned his course to revenge. If man would not accept him, he would not accept man.

But that's not where the story ends. Tiring of his lonely existence in the wastes, the creature once again traveled to the lands of men and instilled a corpse with life of his own making. Now, more than a few Prometheans of Frankenstein's Lineage walk the earth, seeking solace from their Torments.

Frankensteins — also called the Wretched — are ruled by the choleric humour, which drives them to extremes of anger and vengeance when they are slighted. Each is created from the body parts of multiple corpses, given the spark of life through the element of fire (most often in the form of electrification of the patchwork corpse). They are known for their feats of strength.



### Galatea – Muses

Pygmalion's story has been told in different forms, most recently in the tale of how a man of high class and refinement transformed a women of low class and learning into a paragon of etiquette and beauty, falling in love with her in the process. The original story wasn't so metaphorical. Pygmalion's creation wasn't carved from stone but assembled from the body parts of the most perfect women in the world.

Given life by the Pyros and ruled by the sanguine humour, she exuded sensuous beauty. But it was a false beauty. Instead of the outright revulsion evoked by other Prometheans, Galatea caused envy and self-loathing in those who looked upon her. Her beauty was undeniable, like that of her Lineage descendants, but it only highlighted a mortal's own failings and shortcomings.

Galateids, descendents of Galatea's progeny, still seek the love of mortals. They are assembled from only the most beautiful of corpses — the breath of life refuses to enliven ugliness. The Muses, as they are called, are renowned for their magnificent features.



### Osiris – Nepri

How does a man become a god? Some believe that the ancient Egyptian myth of Osiris reveals the way. When Isis gave her slain brother-husband new life, he became the lord of the Underworld, for he had died and returned. Osiris is an archetypal example of the dying-and-resurrected god motif that seems linked to ancient agricultural civilizations. A personification of the plant life cycle: sprouting from the ground, harvested, eaten,

but then miraculously growing again the following spring. What if mortal life were similar, capable of growing again after spending a dark season under the earth?

Prometheans know the seed of truth in this tale. Their bodies live again, but they are not the same beings who inhabited them before. Those lucky mortals had souls, now departed to who knows where. The Promethean minds that inhabit those mortals' crudely reanimated corpses yearn for such a mystery, for even death can seem a solace to one promised eternal life through the soul.

Some Prometheans claim Osiris as their Progenitor and Isis as the demiurge who made him. Whether these names were based on those of existing myth, or vice versa, is something none today can answer, for this oldest of Lineages stretches so far back in time that fact and myth merge indiscriminately. Just when and how Osiris created more of his kind is disputed, but he did create more.

Regardless of which Progenitor is claimed, these Prometheans share certain characteristics. The Osirans — also called the Nepri for Osiris' mystical corn that regenerated — were originally birthed in the waters of the Nile, so water is their medium of generation. Their most prevalent humour is phlegmatic, making them seem cold and unemotional to others — something perhaps to be expected from those who claim descent from the lord of the dead. Indeed, death is no obstacle to them. Just as they awakened as Prometheans in dead corpses, so they can live again even when their animated corpse is killed. The miracle of resurrection is their birthright as Prometheans.



### Tammuz – Golems

The Babylonians had their own dying-and-resurrected god: Tammuz. He was killed by Ishtar, but then later restored to life by her. Many versions of the story exist, each with different names, but they all tell of Tammuz's death and resurrection. His funeral was celebrated every year after the summer solstice, when the sun's light began to diminish. As a vegetation god, Tammuz was reborn from the earth.

Some Prometheans who claim descent from Tammuz claim that he was not a god but a Babylonian man killed and brought back to life by Jewish magic as a Golem. From him and his Promethean descendents are derived all the legends of Golems from other places in the world, such as the famous Golem of Prague. This Progenitor was buried in the earth and arose covered in clay, giving rise to the belief that Golems were made from clay or stone. (In fact, they are made of dead flesh like all Prometheans.)

Tammuz Prometheans are ruled by the melancholic humour. This tends to make them withdrawn and surly, but also steadfast and unyielding. Their incredible stamina is legendary, as are there rampages. The image of the monster stampeding through a building, smashing down doors and walls, perhaps arose from some legendary Tammuz lost to Torment. On the other hand, they are just as renowned for standing like statues for hours on end, as they contemplate some aspect of their miserable existences.



### Ulgan – The Riven

The practice of shamanism in different cultures around the world reveals many commonalities. While specific beliefs and rituals differ, certain thematic elements and practices are repeated in cultures that have never had contact, existing continents apart from one another. One of these recurring motifs is the initiatory trial by dismemberment. Those who are destined to become shamans enter a trance, wherein they are torn apart by spirits (or demons, depending on one's point of view). Their body parts are purified or are remade, ready to bear shamanic power. The person is restored and awakens back in the material world as a shaman. In some versions, his trance spirit visits the tents or lodges of the spirits, to be torn apart by each in turn. In this way, he learns to cure the disease presided over by that spirit.

Luckily for most, this dismemberment occurs to the person's spirit body in trance, not to her actual flesh and blood. But not all are so lucky. On one occasion, a shaman demiurge attempted to enact this drama in real life in the wastes of Siberia. The resulting corpse was dead, of course, but the Pyros brought it back to life as a Promethean. Ulgan, as he was called (either named for the god of shamans, or vice versa), came back from his sojourn among the spirits with senses unavailable to normal humans. He could see into the immaterial existence surrounding matter and witness the gatherings of spirits and ghosts.

His descendents, called the Riven for the terrible scars they suffer when their corpses are literally rent apart, also see into this ephemeral Twilight, and are haunted by what they see. Given animation by their ectoplasmic humour, they are ruled by raw animal instinct, similar to the spirit themselves. Their intuition is insightful, but often rendered useless when their instincts drive them to act against their own reason. Nonetheless, the ability to interact with ghosts and spirits is a power envied by many other Prometheans, even if it means the Ulgan sometimes suffer from the spirits' curiosity about these strange few material beings who can see and touch them.

## The Semblance of Life

Humans are born crying into the world, startled at the light, the temperatures and the swift pat on the behind that summons the mighty yowl. They are nurtured through many years of growth,

developing step by step into mature, thinking human beings. Their personalities are formed by many experiences during key points of development, perhaps guided by some traits that were prefigured from wherever their souls existed before birth. The point is that they *grow* into who they are. Excepting some sudden, clinical cases of amnesia due to bodily or psychological trauma, they rarely ever wake up lacking any knowledge of who, or even what, they are.

Prometheans, however, do wake up this way. Finding themselves in fully mature, adult bodies but with no knowledge of growing into them, they are at an immediate loss as to what's going on. (While Prometheans who inhabit the bodies of children are possible, they are extremely rare. Few Prometheans are so cruel as to make one of their own in a body that can't mature, and those that do most often wind up producing Pandorans instead.) They blink and stammer, moving their limbs haltingly, feeling as if their body is nothing but a suit they wake up to find themselves wearing. Some might suffer pain or mistake the feel of blood, bile and other humours coursing through their bodies as pain, until they adjust to recognize it as the normal state of being for a Promethean.

Prometheans often refer to these first, awkward moments of awareness as "waking up on the slab," a reference to the typical mode of awakening for the Frankenstein monster in movies and other iterations of his tale. Different Lineages, however, have different means of awakening. The Golems often dig themselves out of the earth, while the Osirans rise from immersion in water. In all cases, disorientation is the norm for the first few minutes or even hours of life.

If the Promethean's creator is present, he can help his progeny through this period of confusion and fear. Many creators, however, abandon their offspring before they fully awaken. Some can't stand to see another go through the process, as they did themselves.

The new Promethean knows how to speak the language of his creator. This function might not be fully formed at first (especially in the case of the Wretched), but it will soon grow into full form. Some Prometheans can instead (or in addition) speak the tongue that was spoken by the corpse they inhabit (or corpses, in some cases), or the language of the nearby residents. The Pyros, sometimes interpreted as Prometheus' gift of language to man, seems to pick up on whatever language is most appropriate or needed for the new creation.

As the Promethean's initial haze of confusion fades, more faculties assert themselves. He quickly gains control of his body and can operate it as well as most humans of a similar physical age, although there might be some problems now and then. He becomes much like the classic amnesiac. His autonomous functions are all there, as are many of the core aspects of his personality, but all memories of a previous life are absent. For all intents and purposes, there was no previous life. Whoever inhabited the body before the Created, he or she has departed, leaving only this new, fledgling personality, a flickering shadow created by the animate Pyros. It might become more real, more substantial — even mortal — one day, but for now, it is a fragile thing, still reacting to the stimuli it receives and forming itself in response.

Some Prometheans claim to experience occasional dreams of their bodies' past lives. Although these images can't be proven to be actual memories of those lives, a few Prometheans claim to have researched the matter and found evidence, a memory that conforms to something the original owner experienced but which the Promethean himself could not have known. These bodily memories, filtered through consciousness in dream, give some Prometheans solace, knowing that Mortality isn't so far away. To others, however, they are only more tortures laid upon their tragic existence, reminders of something that was never theirs.

## Rebellious Organs

Some Prometheans experience a horrifying problem: a rebellious limb or organ that seems to have a mind of its own. Various human horror stories tell of such things, including severed limbs that hunt down their former owners, or hands that have committed a crime and attempt to reveal the body's guilt to the rest of the world by reenacting that crime against the body's will. For Prometheans, this experience is real, but rarely so dramatic. It often takes the form of an idle hand taking up a habit it once had when the Promethean isn't paying attention to it. It might seem as if it's typing something, drumming its fingers to a beat, or performing sign language. Or it might be a leg suddenly jerking, throwing off the Promethean's gait or even accidentally kicking someone nearby. It could be a stomach grumbling at the sight of food, even when the Promethean isn't hungry, or one of his eyes roaming in an opposite direction from his other eye.

The Wretched believe that if they weren't made up of body parts from different bodies — some even of different sizes — they wouldn't suffer so. Yet other Prometheans who are made from whole bodies also experience this problem, though more rarely than the Wretched do. Most attribute the phenomenon to trace memories within the Prometheans' limbs and organs rebelling against their new enslavement to the Pyros.

Rebellious organs usually display their own will only when the Promethean is tired or when his store of Pyros is low. Even then, the Promethean can easily get his body back into line. The self-willed body parts rarely lead to any danger, more often shying away from pain and trouble before they go too far.

## Shambling Through the World

After the Promethean wakes up on the slab, he must find his way in the world, either with or without the help of his creator. He might be lucky enough to find other Prometheans to join with soon after his "birth," but most must wander



for a while before they encounter another of their kind. There aren't many Prometheans abroad in the world at one time, compared to the populations of humans (or even the supernatural beings that prey on them).

A Promethean finds that, while he hungers for sustenance like a human, he can eat just about anything organic, including roots, beetles, tree bark, et cetera. Although such fare is unappetizing, it feeds the Fire that burns within, giving the Promethean strength to continue on. Unable to easily live among humans (thanks to Disquiet), Prometheans are often forced to spend their time in barren places where no humans dwell. Although they have relatively little trouble finding something edible, even if it's just bugs or rotting animal carcasses, their lives are wracked by terrible loneliness. It's one thing to willingly choose a hermit's life, another entirely to be forced into it against one's own inclinations and need for companionship.

Those Prometheans who do risk living near humans usually do so in out-of-the-way places, often fueling bizarre urban legends. They might take up residence under a bridge or in the basement of an old, abandoned house (or even one whose residents are away on an extended trip). If a Promethean is truly bold, she might live in an apartment in a slum, close enough to hear the arguments of her neighbors, but not so far that her very presence won't cause a degradation of the community and environment. The Disquiet Prometheans exude catches up with them no matter how far out they go. It taints the behavior of the residents and eventually, if the Promethean stays too long, transforms the living environment into a barren land.

Those Prometheans who try to get jobs and pretend they're human might even be able to pull it off — for a while. Even then, they are usually forced to seek solitary jobs — such as janitor, night watchman or bounty hunter — that only allow them to exist on the edges of human contact. They can stay close enough to see and hear but not take place in the goings-on and personal dramas of the mortals they so dearly wish to be. Disquiet always catches up with them. If a Promethean presses his luck for too long, he'll find himself run out of town by an angry mob that isn't even conscious of why it hates the pitiable stranger. Worse, the Promethean might be captured and made a lesson of, either through lynching or some more gruesome means of disposal. Even the most placid, idyllic town with the most peaceful residents can deteriorate into a hellhole of festering hate and fear if a Promethean stays overlong.

Prometheans are nomads of necessity, rarely from desire. While the dream of the open road and its freedom from

commitments lures many humans to try their hand at the hobo's trail, the reality is lurid and ugly. For the Promethean, it's a path of repentance and purification, each step a trial on a Pilgrimage that will either win him his Mortality or force him ever onward without rest.

## The Misbegotten

Prometheans suffer. Their pains are worse than those of normal organic life, originating in their very unnaturalness and the world's rejection of it. Humans, animals and even plants and dirt reject the Created and the Divine Fire that simmers within them. Their Azothic radiance reaches out and withers minds, instincts and the earth's natural processes, causing humans and animals to hate them. Over long exposure, the earth itself withdraws and dies around their very footsteps.

## Disquiet

Dead bodies should not be given life. A being without a soul should not be walking and talking across the face of the earth. The very fabric of the world, material and spiritual, rejects the Created. It reacts badly to their presence. It does all but spit them out.

Dealing with ordinary people is hard for the Created. Even though Prometheans usually look just like people, they still *feel wrong*.

A human meets a Promethean for the first time. All it takes is a handshake, a moment of eye contact, a conversation lasting for more than few seconds. He feels that something is off. A chill runs down his spine. His mouth dries. His stomach begins to flutter.

A Tammuz has to get the parts for the old, beat-up VW camper he fixed up and calls home. He goes to a workshop and spends a bit of time talking with the mechanic. The Tammuz might look like he knows what he's talking about, but the mechanic still instinctively feels contempt toward him. He condescends. He works on the assumption that the guy asking for parts doesn't know what he's doing. He overcharges. Then, when the Golem's gone, he wonders why the hell he did that.

A man works behind a bar. It's the afternoon. The bar's mostly empty. A Galateid comes in. She has to meet someone here, who has not arrived yet. She asks for a drink. That's all she does. The barman gives her a drink and looks at her. He fingers his wedding ring nervously as his eyes run over the curve of her flesh under her dress. He snaps out of a split-second reverie, and blames her for the guilt he feels. He judges her.

A Frankenstein, trying to find some sort of place to fit in, even in a small way, visits a store in a small town every week or so, just to buy a bar of candy or a bag of chips. The first time he comes in, the lady behind the counter thinks him odd, though she can't say why. Each time "that strange man" comes in, she has to fight back fear and disgust. She knows it's unreasonable, but she wants to run. He passes her some change, and his hand brushes hers. Her gorge rises. Does he smell bad? Is it the way his lip curls? Is that dandruff in his hair? Is there something wrong with his teeth, or the way that his eyes look slightly off-kilter? Each time she meets him, it gets worse. She gets suspicious. One day, word gets around that a child was killed just outside of town. The police are asking for any leads. The lady at the store reads the local paper, and immediately thinks of the strange man. She calls the police, and maybe some other local people do too. Soon the Frankenstein's face is on an APB.

This is what happens every time a Promethean meets a human. Every time any meaningful interaction passes between Created and mortal, Disquiet gets in the way. The humans don't even know why they feel that way. It's just a feeling in the gut. A little voice comes from the stomach saying that the Promethean is *wrong*, it is *not to be trusted*. You should *run*… run as fast as you can, get away from here, get help or hide or call the police or find some way to defend yourself… You tell yourself it's stupid and you get over it, but you just can't look at a Promethean like you'd look at someone else. The next time you see him it's the same, only worse, and this time you might actually act on your raging impulses. It's unreasonable, it's subconscious, and it's a reflection of the Promethean place in Nature.

Prometheans are given power by the Pyros. The Pyros is everywhere. It informs all life, all being. It is a natural thing. It is supposed to exist in the world around us. Like any force, however, its misuse can be appalling. An unnatural concentration of it can have terrible consequences.

Born of stolen Pyros, the Promethean finds himself rejected by the world, unwilling beneficiary of a natural force twisted to unnatural ends. The Prometheans simply should not exist. The Promethean struggle is to find a place in this world, and to be accepted, not just socially, but physically and metaphysically, in a world whose very natural laws spurn them.

The Disquiet that mortals feel is the psychological reaction to this affront to the natural world. Although they might not feel that way all the time, humans are part of Nature. They are living animals with blood and breath, and they are spiritual beings (however one might construe that) with true souls. The animal nature and the soul unite. They reject a soulless creature. They feel the metaphysical heat of a spiritual Fire that could consume them just as surely as any open flame. They sense the presence of something created, not begotten, and know it's a blasphemy, without even being aware of what it is that repels them. And because it's an intuitive repulsion, because it's subconscious, the conscious mind fills in the gaps and creates reasons to be scared, or angry, or judgmental, or hateful.

Animals feel it too. Dogs bark and growl. Cats arch their backs. Rats scurry away. Insects and other small creatures leave the vicinity. Some Prometheans take a long time to




rot after they are destroyed, because not even the worms will consume them. Only bacteria and viruses take root in Promethean bodies, and even then, they do their work slowly. The earth covers a Promethean corpse, eventually, but nothing will grow on that spot, even when the animating Pyros has long since fled the body. Even supernatural beings feel it. For all the awesome power they wield, mages are still very much human. The Pyros is part of the spirit realm as much as it is part of the material realm, meaning that werewolves get skittish and become prone to violence, even though they might be more aware of what they are facing. Although they are themselves divorced from the cycle of Nature, vampires still feel fearful and angry.

The earth itself rejects the Created. If they stay anywhere for too long, the land gradually, painfully, slowly, suffers. Grass blackens and shrinks. Flowers wilt and die. Trees shed their leaves and become gray skeletons. The earth loosens and becomes dust. Water turns foul and stagnant. Metal rusts. The very sky reflects the damage the Promethean's presence inflicts.

After long enough, the region carries the stamp of an unnatural presence so thoroughly that any humans and animals who stumble across it begin to feel the same way that they would if they had met the Promethean himself. It's as if the Promethean's Azoth has leaked out like unprotected waste to irradiate the land.

## Disfigurements

Most of the time, the Created look just like humans do. They might be a little bigger or be missing a finger; they might have an odd scar or odd-colored eyes. Nothing about the way they look is outside the bounds of human experience, though. They might look strange, but they're not *inexplicable*. The Disquiet they cause isn't normally a function of their appearance. It comes from something far deeper.

The way they seem isn't how they actually look, though. If they ever become mortal, that seeming would truly represent what they are, but until then, it's just a mirage behind which the disfigured shape of the Created hides. Although they have no conscious awareness of a Promethean's disfigurements, humans somehow unconsciously know that what they are seeing is not real. It's yet another cause for distrust and unease.

Beneath the cloak of normality, the Prometheans are always clearly unnatural, if not always hideous. The Prometheans refer to these signs of their condition as "disfigurements." The fake guise is not reliable. Sometimes it flickers or vanishes. The flesh warps, and the Promethean becomes visible for what she truly is. The dropping of the veil might last for only a moment, a single flash of realization, but it's often long enough to make it apparent to anyone who sees it happen what the Promethean really is.

The guise is part of the Divine Fire's attempt to restore the semblance of life to restored flesh. It exists in a delicate equilibrium with the Pyros, so when a Promethean channels her Azoth — using the Pyros to fuel her Transmutations — the Pyros surges and boils. This tempestuous disruption transfigures the simulation of living flesh and reveals the artificially quickened corpse underneath. In the same way, when the Promethean channels electricity to heal her injuries or refuel her Azoth, the guise drops.

Each Lineage has common disfigurements, which can grant an insight of their identity to other Prometheans who catch a glimpse of their true appearance. The Wretched, the descendants of Frankenstein's original mistake, have stitches and straps holding together their mismatched limbs, binding together terrible scars. Terminals and spikes of metal channel sparks of galvanic fire. The Osirans look like dead men, their skin blue or brown, their flesh wrinkled and leathery, like an ancient corpse. The Tammuz look like they're made of clay, covered with a gray or brown earth that gives the impression of being one with the flesh, of actually being the flesh. The Riven appear almost alive but reveal the darkness of the void in their eyes and in the rents in their flesh, from which leaks solid darkness. Even the beautiful Galateids have deformities. They look like dolls or mannequins made of dead flesh and lacquered, their glowing skin revealed as waxy and cold.

As much as the Created would like to forget about their disfigurements, the imperfections don't go away. They remain always in the Promethean's awareness. They remind the Created of who they are, and of what they aren't. It's not simply a matter of ugliness, although that's certainly part of the condition. It's a matter of not being human. Prometheans want to be human — every part of them yearns to be human — but they're not allowed to forget what they are.

A Galateid runs her fingers over her skin, and feels how cold and waxy it is, how unresponsive it is, how it doesn't immediately spring back when she presses it. She can't feel the blood running. She can't feel her heart beating.

An Ulgan coughs and puts a hand to her mouth. She takes it away, and looks at the black ectoplasm that she's just coughed up. It dissolves in less than a second, some absorbed back into her skin, some lost into the air. As it runs into the cracks of skin on her hand, she shivers, knowing that no matter how repellent it is, it's part of her. It's her body.

An Osiris washes and does not feel the water running through his hair, over his face. It never refreshes.

A Tammuz scratches his neck. He shouldn't feel it, but it's like there's an itch that won't go away. There's dirt under his fingernails, but then there's always dirt under his fingernails, no matter how many times he scrapes it out.

And then there's a Frankenstein, whose arms and legs don't always act as quickly as she wants them to. They don't act in concert, either. She sits by the fire, trying to keep warm against the night. One hand, unbidden, tries to thrust itself into the flames. The other pulls it back. The struggle lasts a moment, but the metal spike that rests under the skin on

the back of the rogue hand, heated by the fire, causes her a burning pain, and she can't do a damn thing about it. She cries into the night, but although her eyes are watery, she sheds no tears.

The Prometheans' disfigurements are more than simply physical setbacks. Even when they can't be seen, even if they don't show in the mirror, they're still *there*. They are thorns in the flesh of every one of the Created, reminders that they are not really people. They might never have known anything else, but they know that their bodies aren't supposed to be like this. They aren't supposed to *be* at all.

## Torment

The constant awareness that they're not supposed to exist weighs heavily on the Created. Like an itch they can't scratch, they feel the need to find some sort of place. Like children born lame, grieving for the ability they've never had to run, Prometheans desperately long to touch the world around them and to fit into it. Yet the Divine Fire rages within them in a way it never should within any living thing. It has a detrimental effect on the reactions of every living creature that meets a Promethean. It blasts the very earth and sky. Hidden within a Promethean body, it works its ravages on its host.

In order for a Promethean to be alive at all, the Pyros needs to work on something. One element needs to be the principle of animation. In the body, the humours represent the necessary elemental forces. The Azoth uses one humour in the body as the tool of animation, the medium through which it works. The humour governs the Promethean, guides his personality and serves as the means by which the Azoth causes harm.

In a mortal with a soul, the balance of humours is fairly constant. Although stress causes some mortals to become unbalanced, people are generally able to control themselves. Not so with the Created. The imbalance of a Promethean's humours is so acute, so complete, that the negative alteration of a Promethean's personality is sometimes inevitable, and hard to fight. When the humour that governs a Promethean is charged with a perverse concentration of life-giving energy, resisting the urges of a governing humour can be very difficult indeed.

There are the times when a Promethean's resistance fails. Seeing a mob of people afflicted with the Disquiet he caused coming after him with spades and hammers and broom handles can make it happen. The guilt that comes from knowing he did this, and the fear of a crowd of people who want to kill him, makes for lethal mixture. All too often, madness results.

Staring failure in the face is just as potent a cause. Knowing that he could have succeeded… but didn't can infuriate a Promethean. Fire and pain can unbalance a Promethean's humours, as can starvation. (Even though a Promethean can eat nearly anything organic, when he can't find food, he's on a short fuse.)

Whatever causes Pyros-infused humours to gain ascendancy, reason sleeps and produces monsters. Caught in a welter of psychic pain, the Created behave like the abominations they are. Prometheans call this state Torment, and it overtakes them all at some time or another. What's worse, in groups the Created are prone to enter Torment in sympathy with their fellows. A throng of Prometheans, all in Torment, can be a terrible thing to see and a worse thing to experience.

Each humour brings its own Torment. Bile governs the Wretched, and when Torment takes one of them, her mind is consumed with viciousness and spite. She dedicates herself to vengeance, both physically and psychologically, putting into action terrible plots worthy of her Progenitor. Meanwhile, their Azoth gutters throughout the rest of their bodies, causing them to lose complete control over the different pieces of themselves.

The Tammuz, whose temperament is melancholic, enter into a manic-depressive state writ large. Mindless, destructive rage precedes a state of conscious but equally mindless exhaustion and inactivity. Coming out of it, the Golem remembers every moment of his rage, and every moment of his time lying aware but inert, unable to move or think.

The Galateids are sanguine, and while that condition is normally conducive to hope, a bloody Torment can make them reckless slaves to their vices and passions.

The Osirans, meanwhile, have little passion at all. The analytical nature of the phlegmatic temperament causes them to become callous and cold. An Osiran locked in Torment can watch her friends suffer and die without a flicker of compassion. She might even sacrifice them for her own expedience. Like the Wretched, channeling Azoth into a single humour makes the rest of the body suffer. The missing part of the Nepri's body aches or itches, leaving her trapped between dispassion and frustration.

The Ulgan's humour is ectoplasm, the primal substance of the empty void. When Torment overwhelms one of the Riven, it is the void that takes him. Driven by the influence of spirits, he fixates on things or people that resonate with those spirits' driving emotions. Acting more from instinct than reason, the Ulgan must claim the object in question or confront the person consumed by the emotion in order to appease the spirits.

## The Fire of Creation

Prometheans do not fully understand the nature of the force that animates them. In this, they aren't much different from humans. What they know comes from personal experience and the stories and legends handed down from Prometheans in ages past. Each age introduces new theories about the Pyros, but one story has consistently been told among Prometheans in the West: the Greek tale of Prometheus, his creation of humans, his theft of the Divine Fire and his terrible punishment.

This myth is believed to be a misunderstood memory about a Promethean, perhaps the first. Its close association with the myth of Pandora and her box of malevolent creatures helps it endure as an explanation of the Promethean condition. In the modern age, few take this tale literally. Instead, it is seen as a metaphor, an early attempt to describe the indescribable mystery of the Pyros.

## Prometheus' Gift

Prometheus was one of the Titans, the race of beings that existed before the gods. Their leader, Cronus, was overthrown by his children in the rebellion led by Zeus, which enthroned that god on Mount Olympus. Zeus consigned most of the Titans to the lowest plane of existence, Tartarus, separated from the rest of the world by "three walls of night" and guarded from escape by the Hecatonchires, three terrible monsters.

Prometheus, whose name means "forethought," is said to have created humans, crafting them from clay. He bade his brother, Epimetheus ("afterthought"), to distribute certain powers of protection to all the living creatures. He was incautious in handing them out, however, so by the time he got to humans, he had no more powers to give. Animals had already received all the claws, fangs, stingers and tough hides there were. Humans were left with no natural weaponry or even fur.

Prometheus, pitying the helpless humans, crept into the palaces of Mount Olympus and stole away with the Divine Fire, kept by Zeus and forbidden to any but the gods. He gifted this Fire to man, which ignited humanity's imagination. The result was consciousness, language, art and science. Humans now had a power unknown to any other animal — a power that belonged to the gods.

Zeus was furious. He consigned Prometheus to be chained to a rock in a barren land, bound by unbreakable iron. Every other day, Zeus' eagle would descend upon the helpless Titan and devour his liver. This punishment was to last millennia — years upon years of unending torment. Only an immortal could suffer so. Death became an envied gift known only to mortals. Finally, Hercules killed Zeus' eagle and broke Prometheus' chains, freeing the Titan.

## Interpretations

Prometheans interpret this myth (and its many variations) in different ways, but most believe that it speaks of the following truths. Prometheus is a metaphor for any creator who aims to bring something wholly new into the world, whether it is a scientist or an artist. All acts of this kind of creation, which rely on the creator's vision rather than Nature's own unfolding, are acts of hubris. They imply that the universe is not perfect the way it is, that the creator's vision is needed to improve or complete it. But the universe demands a balance. For any new thing, a price commensurate with the quality of the creation must be paid, for things cannot be created from nothingness. Everything new is merely a transformation of an existing thing. In the myth, Prometheus pays this cost for his own creation. Yet the gift of Divine Fire to humans can never truly be paid off. Like Pandora's box, it released a cycle of endless changes upon the world, each of which continued to levy a cost to Prometheus' flesh. Only the intervention of one who benefited from Prometheus' gift — Hercules, half-human — finally ended the sentence.

So, Prometheus is the symbol for all demiurges and Prometheans — any who would create new beings outside of natural processes. Any act requires foresight, but is also inevitably understood only with hindsight — the afterthought of Epimetheus — by which time it is too late, for the creation has already been unleashed upon the world.

The agent of change is Pyros, the universal catalyst. In alchemical terms, it is associated with sulfur, the *magna flamma*, the principle of combustibility. Without its alchemical action, stasis is the norm. Nature would still unfold, but nothing truly new would arise, only variations on the old. Pyros heats all substances and even ideas, melting them into new shapes and inspirations. It is not just *form* that it alters; that is a lesser power, available throughout Nature. Pyros also alters *qualities*, turning one thing into something entirely other. Any blacksmith can reshape a piece of iron to different forms, from swords to maces to plowshares. What he cannot do is change iron to gold. That is the power of Pyros, to perform fundamental transformations of things, whether they are objects or living beings.

The ancient symbol for such a transcendent power is lightning. Prometheus literally stole Zeus' thunder. Some say it wasn't Prometheus' hubris that caused Zeus to punish the Titan, but Zeus' own wounded ego. He felt that only he had the right to wield lightning. In modern times, electricity serves as an apt symbol for Pyros, because it actually conducts the mysterious, universal force. Pyros is the hidden, animating force in all the five elements. As a 14th-century Benedictine alchemist wrote, "Where is the sulfur to be found? In all substances, all things in the world — metals, herbs, trees, animals, stones, are its ore."

Pyros exists throughout the universe, invisible to material senses. The myth of Prometheus' theft refers to his gaining control over it — the Divine Fire is everywhere, but few can command it. All demiurges and Prometheans follow in the footsteps of the Titan Thief, stealing power over the Divine Fire for their own uses. Since no human or Promethean is a god, using this power is an act of hubris, one that brings punishment from the universe. Prometheans bear this punishment in their disfigurements, in their Torment and in the Disquiet they cause in others.

And what of Prometheus' liver? Why did Zeus' eagle choose that morsel instead of a different organ? In the ancient world, the liver was used in divination. Its physiology mapped the universe itself, and haruspices could gain insight



about what was to come by reading deformities or marks in certain areas of an animal's liver. By marring Prometheus' liver, Zeus' eagle marred the map of the universe, thus hiding from humans and others the true signs of time and its unfolding. Prometheans see in this a metaphor for how their own flesh can yield knowledge. The corpus is intimately tied to the universe, and thus the soul.

## Pandora's Gift

Epimetheus' wife was Pandora. Zeus decided to use her as a means of punishing humans for their receipt of Prometheus' gift. In one version of the story, the god Hermes passed Pandora and Epimetheus' house one day, carrying a heavy box given to him by Zeus. Being proper hosts, they bade him come in and rest his weary self. He did so and asked if he could leave the box for a while and come back for it later. They agreed.

Left alone with the box, Pandora heard voices from within, begging her to open it and release them from prison. Epimetheus, who was outside holding a party with friends, called for his wife to come join him. She was torn between curiosity (about what was in the box), compassion (for the pleading voices) and loyalty (to her lover's request). Whether it was curiosity or compassion that caused her to finally open the box is a point of conjecture. Regardless, if she had heeded loyalty and listened to her lover, Zeus' plan would have been foiled.

Pandora opened the box and freed what was trapped within: a swarm of terrible spirits — diseases and mishaps personified. They buzzed like wasps around Pandora and her horrified husband, before departing in all directions to contaminate the world with disease, hunger, famine and all the ailments that torment humans to this day. In pain and sorrow, Pandora and Epimetheus wept. Then, another voice was heard coming from the box, asking her to open it. Epimetheus saw little reason at this point not to, so he bade her open it. Out came Hope. This force relieved their wounds and assured them that as long it was free, the terrors from the box could not cause utter despair.

## Interpretations

Pandora's name has come to personify for Prometheans all manner of terrible creations: the Pandorans. When a Promethean attempts to wield the Divine Fire to create more of his kind, he risks unleashing one or more Pandorans on the world if he is not sufficiently purified. The creatures released from Pandora's box, however, were not the Pandorans but the Flux that creates them.




Flux is the aspect of Pyros that breaks down, divides, dissolves. It is in many ways the opposite power to the Azoth, the purified Pyros that burns within every Promethean. The Azoth represents the uniting principle of Pyros or sulfur. The archetypal psychologist James Hillman wrote: "At the same time that sulfur conflagrates, it coagulates." Flux, however, is the universal solvent, the dissolving agent that breaks down as it burns.

Prometheans seek to wield the Divine Fire for the same reasons that Pandora opened the box — from curiosity or compassion. If they fail to heed the warnings of afterthought, they might well release monsters instead of Hope.

When the Pyros is not sufficiently controlled, or when the substance it acts upon is not sufficiently pure, chaos results. Flux transforms the subject into something monstrous and unnatural.

But there is another aspect to the Pyros: Elpis, or Hope. This is what Prometheans call the Transformative Fire, the flame that cooks a substance to its final, perfected form. This Fire holds the promise for all Prometheans that they might once day become more than monsters.

Some Prometheans, however, point to a different version of the tale wherein Hope was left in the box. While the other evils were released out into the world, Hope remained within the human heart. In this version, Hope is not a balm but another of the many evils stored in the box. It delivers pain by holding out visions of what could be — promises that remain unmet for most Prometheans.

## Alchemy

The myths of Prometheus and Pandora are not the only paradigms Prometheans use to view their situation. In all its various cultural manifestations, alchemy is perhaps the most popular and enduring metaphor for how the Pyros works upon the Promethean body. Indeed, the science of the medieval alchemists of the West so accurately describes the conditions, stages and operations of the Pyros that many Prometheans believe the alchemists knew of it — that they were instructed by Prometheans, or at least experimented upon them. The tale of Victor Frankenstein, although purported by Mary Shelley to be fiction, does reveal an alchemist who knew much about the Pyros. How did he discover his knowledge? Prometheans today still use the language of alchemy to describe the behavior of the Pyros.

Alchemy is concerned with the purification of the inner self, the spirit or soul, through the outer working and transmutation of material substances. More than merely a primitive proto-chemistry, alchemy is as much about transforming the inner world as it is about mastering the laws of Nature as they pertain to the metamorphoses of external things. While some literal-minded alchemists surely sought to transform lead into gold, the true alchemists knew this goal was a metaphor for the work of transforming the dross of the mind into the gold of spirit.

Prometheans see their bodies as the lead to be worked, a heavy, dark and dense substance that has the potential to become gold — that is, mortal flesh with a true soul. The nature of the soul is elusive and invisible, revealed only rarely in moments of insight. Few have the patience to wait and hope for such epiphanies. Instead, by dedicated labor, the soul can be flushed out and forced to reveal itself by signs and symbols in the outer world. The ancient world was full of similar practices, such as how a diviner could read the fate of his own soul in the flight of a flock of birds. Some say that the soul wants to speak and does so all the time, but humans are blind to its messages, for they come not in words but in actions in the world around them.

For Prometheans, alchemy provides a paradigm for drawing the soul out into the world. By mentally projecting soul into matter — be it their flesh, their actions, or their effect on the world around them — they see it more clearly and can act to purify it more properly. This is part of the Pilgrimage, to wander the world seeking the signs from one's own proto-soul, and work to mold it with the Divine Fire, transmuting it into Mortality itself.

## Other Myths

Other paradigms have arisen and still hold some popularity among a few Prometheans.

### The First Man

Some Prometheans say that Adam was not the first man created by God. Like the story of Lilith, who came before Eve, this First Man was incomplete. God was not satisfied with him, so He turned him out into the wastes to find his own way. God decreed that this first man should not mix with His other creations, but this first Promethean attempted to procreate with Lilith regardless when he met her. The act was tainted with their incompleteness, and produced monsters. Eventually, after years of seeking wholeness, he created another of his kind, finally handing his legacy to a new generation. Denied by God, the children of the First Man still walk the earth as Prometheans.

### The Name of God

The Name of God was once whole, but when humans spoke it in vain, it became fragmented, known afterward only as individual letters that could no longer spell the Name. These letters, written in Fire, are now used to create Prometheans. Each Lineage bears one of the letters. When the Prometheans from different Lineages work together, they can re-form the Name and become mighty.

### Adam Kadmon

Jewish and Gnostic esoteric myth tells of Adam Kadmon, the Primal Man. He is not a flesh-and-blood man so much as the divine template of which fleshly man is but a copy, the Platonic Form of humankind. In the Gnostic scripture of *The Secret Gospel According to John*, Adam is built by a host of aeons, much as a Frankenstein Promethean's body is assembled

before the Pyros awakens it. The scripture even provides a list of which aeon was responsible for which body part. ("Menig-gesstroeth made the brain; Asterekhme, the right eye.") Some Prometheans who have read this scripture believe it to be the work of a forgotten demiurge. The idea of a spiritual Primal Man appeals to many Prometheans, who think that they can guarantee their own Mortality by emulating him.

## The Primordial Giants

Numerous myths exist of a race of giants that existed before humankind, from the Greek Titans to the Norse Jotun. Some of these primordial beings, such as the Norse giant Ymir, are credited with creating the world from their own flesh. Others are said to continue to contribute to its maintenance, such as Atlas, the Greek Titan who holds the Earth. Some are even recognized for both, such as Pangu, the Chinese Primordial Giant. Some Prometheans believe these myths refer to their own kind, telling how a Promethean's body is intimately connected to the world itself, so that changes to the body can effect changes in the world.

## The Harbingers

Not all Prometheans believe they are the victims. Some claim to be the chosen ones, destined to inherit what they are now denied. Mortals are actually the half-formed creatures while Prometheans are the only beings truly capable of evolution. The Disquiet that provokes mortals to hate and fear them is a boon, a lesson in how the less-evolved world needs to be left behind to make way for a new creation — one that only Prometheans can make.

## The Unleashed Atom

Inevitably, modern conditions call for new myths. For the Prometheans, this call manifests in many stories told on the Pilgrimage. Once such is a bogeyman tale about the Nuclear Promethean. He's called by many names, but the common thread is that he is a Progenitor of a new Lineage created by a demiurge using nuclear power to instill the Pyros. While most of the stories have all the characteristics of an urban legend ("I heard this from a Promethean who knows someone who was there…"), some claim to have seen this being — or worse, his Promethean and Pandoran progeny.

These creatures are said to be more tragic and tormented than those of any of the other Lineages. They serve as a reminder that things can always get worse. Some of the Nuclear Prometheans are said to be in constant pain from the radiation that scours their bodies, which causes them to seek the downfall of all the other Lineages, as they burn with spite and radiation-driven despair. Beware the invisible fires emanating from the Nuclear Prometheans.

## Demiurges

While the Pyros is hidden everywhere, unseen and unknown to most, only a handful of mortals throughout history have learned to wield it. Despite it being gifted to humans by Prometheus, it is not meant for them — their bodies cannot contain it. While the Divine Fire was the spark that alchemically altered human minds, raising them above animal intelligence, they cannot perceive Pyros. They can only know its effects, which seem like magic to them: transformations without cause.

Those mortals who do somehow gain control over the Pyros rarely know it. They usually attribute different causes to their works. Victor Frankenstein believed that the spark of life was in electricity, not realizing that electricity merely conducts the Pyros. He was never aware that the actual animating force that he called down to awaken the corpse he had assembled was actually Pyros. Likewise, Pygmalion believed it was the breath of Aphrodite that animated his beloved Galatea, when it was actually Pyros channeled through the element of air.

Why are some mortals able to wield Pyros (even if they don't know it) while others can't? This question is one Prometheans have asked in all ages, but no answer is universally satisfying. It seems that some people — a rare few, sometimes only one in any era — are simply capable of it. Prometheans who take the Prometheus myth literally have theorized that these humans have some sort of genetic link to those who first received the gift of Fire from Prometheus, and that only this family tree has the power to wield Pyros. The line is so ancient that it would be nigh impossible to track down and identify all its members, although the gene responsible for this power could perhaps be found by a Promethean biochemist.

Others theorize that these unique mortals had an experience that somehow opened them up to Pyros, either a prenatal trauma or an event that took place during a formative childhood stage. Some think that mortals can gain the power through a combination of magical study and a proper balance of humours, explaining that this is how a Siberian shaman was able to create the Ulgan Lineage. Still others say that the gods, whether they are actual spirits or metaphors for unknown forces, are able to choose certain mortals to wield this power, such as Isis did when restoring her husband Osiris to life.

Since the Pyros is infinitely creative (as evidenced by Flux), many Prometheans believe that all of these explanations and more are true. The ability to wield the Pyros has different conditions in different places and times, they speculate. When all three factors (the particular mortal, the right location and the proper time) come together, a mortal can play with Fire. Prometheans have long attempted to use astrology to divine the "right time" and geomancy to determine the "right place." Even if the answers these studies revealed were more concrete and less elusive, though, it is nigh impossible to tell which humans among the billions on the planet might have the right capabilities for a particular place and time. Prometheans must simply accept that some mysteries are beyond understanding.




# A Primeron Promethean Alchemy

Alchemy is a traditional practice that spans the world, though its particulars differ in various cultures. In the West, alchemy gained its greatest popularity in the Renaissance, with such famous practitioners as Paracelsus and John Dee. Many of its roots come from the medieval golden age of Islam, when Islamic science was more advanced than European understanding. Some claim that the name comes from Arabic, others from ancient Egyptian.

In short, alchemy is the art and science of transmuting material substances. More than that, though, it is a spiritual exercise whereby the alchemist transmutes the base matter of his soul into refined spirit. Psychologically, the alchemical operation could be seen as one of mentally projecting one's internal desires onto external substances and working with them in material form to effect inner change. Alchemy isn't just a pre-modern form of psychology, however, for its aim is to work with the soul, not just one's personal complexes and hang-ups.

While the Western alchemical paradigm was to work with material substances, slowly breaking them down with solvents and refining them to produce the purest form, the Eastern paradigm was etheric energy. Indian Yoga and Tantra, and Chinese Qigong, are all methods of internal alchemy, using etheric energy — *prana* or *qi* — to refine soul and spirit. While the differences between these practices are profound, they share the same overall idea that a form of living energy exists unseen by the organic eye, but which can be perceived with the imaginal eye. By practicing diligent and often complex breathing and bodily movement exercises, this energy could be alchemically refined. In one form, Kundalini, the energy at the base chakra (energy point) near the genitals can rise to awaken higher chakras, leading to enlightenment (and maybe even *siddhis*, psychic powers). In another form, Chinese Qigong, the *dantian*, the ball of energy in the belly, can be heated by breathing exercises, transforming the flow of *qi* into the vapors of *shen*, or spirit, thus leading the practitioner to spiritual immortality.

Both paradigms hint at a Promethean alchemy: the manipulation of internal energy — Pyros — to produce changes in the substance of the body and even to distill a mortal soul.

## The Journey Through Saturnine Night

The whole of a Promethean's life, from waking up on the slab to attaining Mortality, is seen as a figurative quest through Saturnine Night, an alchemical term for the dark night of the soul. While Prometheans do not have souls, they certainly suffer through a sort of dark night in a desperate quest to attain the soul.

## The Substances

The three primary substances of the alchemical operation include salt, which is often equated with the mind or the feeling heart; sulfur, which is equated by Prometheans to the Azoth, the purified Pyros that animates them; and mercury or quicksilver, which Prometheans equate with the raw power of Pyros, especially its transformative capabilities.

There are also many other substances involved in a Promethean's Pilgrimage, mainly a host of metals: iron, lead, copper, tin and gold. For Prometheans, these metals are metaphorical rather than material, though some claim that they once had more literal meaning for the practice of their Transmutations. Each metal is seen as governing the transformation of a particularly important quality, such as the Self, the Body or even Mortality, as demonstrated by the Refinements.

## Stages of Transformation

There are four principle stages of the alchemical process, or the sequence of Promethean transformation:

1. *Nigredo*, "blackening" — This stage is one of putrefaction, causing the emergence of the mortal soul from the body — i.e., the death and dismemberment of a mortal, whose corpse is then used to create a Promethean.

2. *Albedo*, "whitening" — The Azoth from the Promethean creator (or the Pyros wielded by a demiurge) enters the prepared corpse (called the *conjunctio*) and purifies/transmutes it. A Promethean is "born."

3. *Citrinitas*, "yellowing" — The intensity of the Azoth's heat "sweats" out a soul — the Promethean's Pilgrimage, wherein he works toward the attainment of Mortality.

4. *Rubedo*, "reddening" — The Divine Fire completely burns the *lapis* (the "stone," which is the Promethean himself), transmuting it back into a mortal form, but now purified. This stage is the culmination of the Azoth's promise — Mortality, and the attainment of a soul. The Promethean begins a mortal life.

## The Operations

The stages of transformation can be further broken down into 12 operations, explicating exactly how a Promethean is transformed:

*The first four stages represent the mortal life of the body before it is killed and used to create a Promethean. This is the substance that the Promethean inherits. If it is not properly prepared by these operations, it cannot house the Azoth and birth a Promethean.*

1. *Calcinatio*, oxidization — The birth of the mortal.

2. *Congelatio*, crystallization — The mortal enters and experiences puberty, or the process of maturation.

3. *Fixatio*, fixation — The mortal reaches adulthood, or full maturity.

4. *Solutio*, dissolution, melting — The death of the mortal body, and the release of the soul that has inhabited it until now.

*The next two stages represent the creation of the Promethean.*

5. *Digestio*, dismemberment — The corpse is dismembered and its parts reunited. (Different Lineages have different requirements. A Wretched, for instance, must be composed from the parts of different corpses.)

This dismemberment requirement might seem strange to some. Aren't zombies in the movies created from whole bodies? Yes, but Prometheans aren't zombies. Unlike the walking dead, Prometheans are actually alive. It isn't exactly the same process as witnessed in most forms of organic life, but it is a type of life. A Promethean has a mind, and it can be killed.

Dismemberment is found in many alchemical texts, pointing to the need to first break down a substance before it can be built back up with greater purity. This can also be seen as a symbol for the intellectual discrimination needed for the Great Work. Like a scientist, the alchemist must catalog every piece of his subject, knowing all the parts before he can understand the whole.

Finally, as evidenced in the flesh of the Ulgan, dismemberment is a universal spiritual process in shamanic initiations from around the world, spanning the globe across cultures and continents. It points to a universal truth hidden from rational understanding — a truth about the needs of the Pyros. What is to be united by Azoth must first be broken apart.

6. *Distillatio*, separation of the solid from the liquid — The Azoth, the "distillate," enters the corpse and creates a Promethean or a Pandoran.

*The next six stages represent the Promethean's quest for Mortality, and his journey through Saturnine Night. (These steps apply only to Prometheans, though, as Pandorans do not seek Mortality.)*

7. *Sublimatio*, refinement through sublimation — The Promethean chooses and practices a Refinement, a *Magnum Opus* that will help purify him.

8. *Separatio*, separation, division — The Promethean suffers the tortures of Disquiet, his disfigurements and Torment as he makes his way on his journey.

9. *Ceratio*, fixing in a waxy state — The Promethean finds others of his kind to serve as companions on his journey. Even if he never formalizes his bond (as a member of a throng, see pp. 73-74), he still can claim at least one friend. Those Prometheans who do not perform this operation are thought to be handicapped in their completion of the following operations.

10. *Fermentatio*, fermentation — The Promethean begins to earn Vitriol, the solvent that refines his Azoth for Mortality. In other words, he has made definitive accomplishments or milestones on his quest.

11. *Multiplicatio*, multiplication — The Promethean must create another Promethean. If he produces Pandorans instead, he must try again until he has successfully transferred his Azoth to a new Promethean. Many feel that doing so is evil, one of the many tortures their kind are made to suffer and to cause others to suffer, but Mortality cannot be achieved without completing this operation.

12. *Projectio*, "The scattering of the *lapis* on the base metals in the form of dust" — This "dust" is the matter from which God made Adam. The Promethean's body is transformed into truly living flesh and he achieves true Mortality. Although he is now weaker and more fragile than ever before, he is not rejected by the world out of hand. He can now seek the solace of a soul's eternal life, as promised by human religions.

## The Elements

In addition to the tenets of alchemy, the classical doctrine of the elements is relevant to the manner in which a Promethean is born. Each Lineage is created through a means closely associated with one of the five classical elements: air, earth, fire, spirit and water. A Golem is buried in the earth and digs his way out upon awakening. A Galateid is animated by the breath of the spoken word, the *Logos*. A Frankenstein is sparked to life by electricity. An Osiran is immersed in the *aqua vitae*, the waters of birth. An Ulgan is torn apart by spirits, who leave part of their substance in him.

In addition to their material substances, each element has a host of metaphorical associations:

- *Air:* Linked to the intellect and reason, the discriminating mind and the wit that cuts like a sword. It is also manifested by voice, through speech and song. Its sense is smell. The Muses are the Prometheans most in resonance with air.
- *Earth:* Associated with sensation and the senses, the wisdom of the body. Its sense is touch. The Golems are closest to earth.
- *Fire:* The power of the will, of determination and of the focus to put thought into action. Its sense is sight. The Wretched feel fire more intensely than other Prometheans do. This elemental fire is not the same as the Divine Fire, which runs through all things.
- *Spirit:* Intuition and the supernatural, the unseen world. Most humans are unable to perceive this element, although it is all around them. Its sense is taste. The Ulgan are the most kin to spirit.
- *Water:* Emotion, passion and drive. Emotions often engulf people and force them to go with their flow. Water's associated sense is hearing. The Osirans are scions of water.

The Chinese system of elements — earth, fire, metal, water and wood — are not as relevant for describing the Promethean condition. For one, they are more indicative of processes than substances, and two, they best reflect the unfolding of Nature and life in its intricate cycles. The Prometheans are alienated from this scheme.




## The Humours

In ancient times, medical problems in the West were addressed by examining the balance of humours within the patient. Certain diseases could be diagnosed and cured through this system. Although it is considered to be medieval quackery for modern science, the system is actually quite descriptive of how the Pyros animates a Promethean's body. It's so correlative, in fact, that some Prometheans wonder if the doctors who invented the system, and those who kept it alive for many centuries weren't drawing upon anatomical studies of Prometheans rather than humans.

Besides describing bodily functions and ailments, the humours set a person's temperament. The humours give off vapors that rise to the brain, influencing thought and behavior. A person could be described as possessing a certain persistent temperament based upon the balance of humours in his body. This is of questionable veracity when used to describe humans, but of undoubted facility when describing Prometheans and their Lineages.

While humans recognized four humours — sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic — Prometheans add a fifth: ectoplasmic. This fifth humour refers to a strange bodily substance that does not seem to occur in humans and has its purported origin in an intangible state of reality called Twilight, wherein dwell spirits and the shades of the restless dead. Spiritualists claim to have encountered ectoplasm coming from the mouths of mediums to form shapes and images. The white, sticky substance they describe differs from the ectoplasm that can be extracted from an Ulgan Promethean, which is black as pitch.

Each humour has an associated bodily fluid, an element and an organ (that produces the bodily fluid).

| Humour | Lineage | Bodily Fluid | Element | Organ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Choleric | Frankenstein | Yellow bile | Fire | Liver |
| Ectoplasmic | Ulgan | Ectoplasm | Spirit | Pineal gland |
| Melancholic | Tammuz | Black bile | Earth | Lungs |
| Phlegmatic | Osiris | Phlegm | Water | Gall-bladder |
| Sanguine | Galatea | Blood | Air | Spleen |

The temperaments attributed to the humours do seem to apply to Prometheans of the five Lineages:

*Choleric:* Angry, on a short fuse. Cholerics (the Wretched) don't forget a slight, and they tend to be driven by revenge against those who spite them.

*Ectoplasmic:* Driven by animal instincts. Ectoplasmics (the Riven) can lose control to their basest natures — sometimes as a fight-or-flight response; sometimes as a bestial need to declare a pecking order.

*Melancholic:* Depressed, unresponsive. Melancholics (Golems) might initially react with violence but then become sluggish and slow in all their responses for a time afterward.

*Phlegmatic:* Unemotional, cold. Phlegmatics (Nepri) often strike others as unfeeling and emotionally unavailable.

*Sanguine:* Bold, happy, amorous. Sanguine Prometheans (Muses) are often outgoing and attractive, though also often flighty and incautious.

## Transmutations

The Pyros is a catalyst for change, and it cares not if this change violates natural laws such as the conservation of mass and energy. Under the influence of Pyros, anything can be transmuted into something else entirely. In theory, at least. In practice, such alchemical operations are more difficult, requiring training and mastery of the principles involved, along with hard-won experience. In addition, learning how to manipulate the Pyros to achieve one class of effects doesn't guarantee that it will behave the same way when you want it to achieve another range of effects. It is indeed mercurial, and like a crackling flame, it sends out tongues of fire in every direction.

What's more, the ability to manipulate Pyros is not simply a matter of imposing will upon it. The Promethean's consciousness must be in resonance with the operations he wishes to perform with it, or his struggle to achieve his ends will be more costly. By adopting a code of behavior and thought, a Promethean can more easily master certain aspects of the alchemical force, gaining deep insight into his Pilgrimage as he does so.

These alchemical practices are called Refinements. Each is a step in the *Magnum Opus*, the Great Work of transforming the lead of a Promethean body and mind into the golden soul of Mortality. Each Refinement lends itself to the practice of certain classes of Transmutations, the name Prometheans gives to the amazing powers the Pyros gives them to effect change in their bodies, minds or the world itself. The Promethean transmutes a part of his physical or mental substance into something else.

Most Transmutations are only temporary until the base matter of a Promethean's being reasserts itself. During the time a Transmutation is in effect, however, impossible things can occur. The Created can cause his body to ignore extreme temperatures or the need to eat. He can fool the eyes of mortals so that they do not see his disfigurements. He might alter his sense perception to allow him to see into normally invisible spectrums. He can exude a chemical acid from his skin that breaks down material objects, or he can reinforce those objects via the alchemical force. Some Prometheans can redirect electricity from its normal flow in wires or even use it to recharge their own store of Pyros within them. At the farthest extremes, they can change their shapes to that of any animal or human, or steal Pyros from other Prometheans at a distance.

Without these boons, Prometheans would be hard pressed to complete their Pilgrimages. Life is hard enough for them. Without special means, they would not likely survive for



long. With the world itself turned against them, the powers of the Pyros are their only firm allies.

## The Magnum Opus: Refinements

Prometheans often pledge themselves to a regimen of alchemical study: the *Magnum Opus*, the Great Work, the purpose of which is to attain the New Dawn, also called the Aurora — the soul. The Promethean's base matter — his body and mind, associated with the metal lead — has already undergone the stages of putrefaction, dismemberment and resurrection, but he has not yet attained the Dawn. He wanders through Saturnine Night, beset by horrors… some of his own making. Until he is perfected, all his Works shall be imperfect.

For this reason, a particular course of the Great Work is called a Refinement, for it seeks to make complete an incomplete Creation.

Prometheans in different times and places have developed different answers to the problem of their incomplete, flawed or unfinished natures. The mystical science of alchemy finally gave Prometheans a language with which to speak of and attempt to solve their dilemma. Some believe that mortals such as Paracelsus received some of their most important alchemical ideas from a Promethean, so that he and others like him could create for the Prometheans a new "organ," this one a body of knowledge for the development of the soul.

Each Refinement is an exploration of a discipline or calling, the development of which is believed to tame the Divine Fire blazing within. It is an alchemical operation — that is, a practice involving the body, mind and spirit — performed upon a "metal," the "substance" of particular aspects of Promethean existence. The aim is to spark within one's being the Aurora, or soul, and then to fan it into an ever-burning flame. Some also view the Refinements as a means of purifying an organ of the Primordial Giant, the Perfected Man, who was dismembered by Flux and whose limbs and organs make up the body of the world.

A Promethean can practice different Refinements at different stages of his life. While he practices one, he must give himself over to it fully, but he can later give it up and take up a new Refinement. He can even switch back again later.

The metals and the associated subtle substances worked upon include:

• *Aurum: The Refinement of Gold (Mortality)* — Prometheans who practice this Refinement seek to pass as human and to understand the human condition, and thus the soul. Some do so to become as their Lineage's demiurge creator, others to transcend the pitiful lot of that creator.

• *Cuprum: The Refinement of Copper (Self)* — The practice of mysticism as a means of taming Torment and to gain

solace (rather than enmity) with Nature. Prometheans who follow this practice tend to be the most comfortable with (and capable of) surviving in the wild.

• *Ferrum: The Refinement of Iron (Corpus)* — The soul grows out of the body; he who controls the body and its the organic processes commands the soul. Prometheans apprenticed to this regimen are warriors and athletes.

• *Mercurius: The Refinement of Quicksilver (Pyros)* — Prometheans who work Mercury push the limits of their bodies' alchemical capabilities, seeking to understand the Fire that burns within them.

• *Stannum: The Refinement of Tin (Torment)* — This course of study provides an outlet for those who seek just vengeance for the wrong done to them by their creators and the universe. They indulge their Promethean urges, rather than deny them.

There is another Refinement, although it is considered debased by most Prometheans:

• *Centimani: The Refinement of Flux* — Prometheans who elect to study this Refinement seek to command Flux itself, hoping to control the Pandorans.

More details on the five primary Refinements follow.

## Changing Refinements

Refinements aren't engraved onto a Promethean's proto-soul, they can be changed for new ones. Just because a Promethean has loyally followed the Refinement of Copper for 10 years doesn't mean he can't change his mind and try the Refinement of Iron, especially if he believes doing so will aid his Pilgrimage.

Transitioning to a new Refinement takes time. If the Promethean has the guidance of a practitioner of the new Refinement he wishes to take up, he can transition over after a week of study with that mentor. If there is no one to teach him, it takes a month to switch over and gain the mechanical benefits of the new Refinement (the affinity cost break for Transmutations). During this time, he thinks and acts along the lines of the new Refinement's philosophy, such as he believes it to be, but it takes time for his Azoth to adjust and readily accept the new alchemies he will practice with it.

The exception is Stannum, the Refinement of Tin. Any Promethean can revert to Stannum simply by declaring it. His Azoth immediately takes up the path of the fury, ready for vengeance. The drawback, however, is that it takes twice as long to transition out of Stannum and into a new Refinement (or the one that the Promethean practiced before). With a trainer, it takes two weeks. Without one, it takes two months to sufficiently get Stannum's agitation out of one's Azothic system.

While a character practices his Refinement, the player should do his best to roleplay that Refinement's outlook. Refinements are not excuses for a cost break on powers — they are operations of the Great Work. The substance they act upon is not just the body but the mind.



# Aurum

## Refinement of Gold (Mortality)

### Mimics

*Her hand slides down the glass, but since it contains no oils and holds no heat, it leaves no trace. She can muster the breath to fog the glass, but standing so close to the window she is still and silent. She looks down to the street and watches as thousands of people walk, clustered together, minds busy with the plans for the day or whatever fears occupy them this morning.*

*She watches them without sorrow or fear, but with a deep, unnamed longing. What are they, those faraway beings that never stop and look up at the windows? What do they long for? Are they, like her, unsure of their purpose? Do they understand, even instinctually, what they should be doing?*

*Perhaps by joining them, she will know. By walking among them, by learning the language of their city and the cadence of their steps, she can learn about herself.*

To strive for the Refinement of Gold is to attempt to understand humanity. The Aurum seek to uncover the mysteries of the soul and the human condition. A Promethean following this Refinement is often called a Mimic (or, more rarely, an Adamist), but to say that the Aurum do nothing but ape humanity is greatly shortsighted. In fact, an Aurum often finds herself witnessing or committing decidedly inhuman acts in an attempt to understand why mortals do what they do, why certain behaviors are considered preferable to others and why humanity shuns and fears the Prometheans. The search for the nature of the soul is an ongoing quest for humanity, so an Aurum has many fellow travelers on her path, even if she never meets another of her kind.

## Overview

How can a being with no life experience understand Mortality? Human beings ordinarily have long years of development in their native cultures to teach them what it means to be human. Although few cultures actually pose the notion of the meaning of humanity directly to their young, a person learns over time how people behave and what traits and mores he can take for granted. A person who is removed from his native culture and placed in an area with vastly different cultural norms might be unable to cope, or might find himself liberated by the culture shock. Even in such an instance, though, the person knows that everyone around him shares certain traits and needs, and that understanding can provide a point of reference when all else fails.

The Prometheans, however, do not have the luxury of years in childhood to show them how humans behave. They share biological or psychological needs with humanity to a degree, but their needs are so warped as to elicit disgust from humans. Nor do Prometheans have the years of training in *any* culture necessary to move through it. The Refinement of Gold is dedicated to rectifying this disparity and giving the practitioner the tools she needs to understand humanity — hopefully, to join with humanity.

The origins of the Refinement are lost, but stories exist of all of the Progenitors pursuing it during their times. Of course, the most widely known story is that of the Frankenstein Lineage. The Progenitor of the Wretched reportedly tried to understand humanity, tried to fit in among a population that hated and feared him, and ultimately failed. Some Prometheans feel that the Aurum Refinement is doomed from the start. Prometheans are not humans and cannot be, they say, so mimicking them is pathetic at best and dangerous (to all involved) at worst.

Other tales paint a more optimistic picture. The stories of the Galateids often paint Pygmalion and his wife as happy, even given the strange nature of their relationship. The Refinement of Gold, some Muses say, can lead to the same kind of fulfillment and love that their Progenitor knew. Other Prometheans might mumble that this is nothing but wishful thinking.

One of the defining tales of the Aurum comes from a Promethean whose Lineage remains unknown. The story says that she was created in India and that at the time of her creation, she was afflicted by a strange visual impairment. She could not tell one human being from another, seeing them only as silhouettes. This failing, coupled with her lack of understanding of the caste system that governed life in the area, led her to treat the people around her based on their actions toward her, rather than by their stations. Disquiet poisoned many minds against her, but as she pursued her initial Refinement (Cuprum), she became intrigued by the seemingly arbitrary way in which the people living near her behaved toward one another. She tried to dwell among them, tried to mimic their ways, but her inability to differentiate between people as they did left her frustrated and bewildered. In addition, her perceived

lack of decorum (treating Untouchables and Brahmin the same!) combined with Disquiet made her a target for everyone in the area, regardless of caste. She was torn to pieces one day as she tried to understand the differences between the humans around her — differences that they saw as intrinsic and worth killing for but which she could not perceive.

## Practitioners

Prometheans tend to either begin their Pilgrimages as Aurum or come to the Refinement as they near the end of their journeys. Those created near a large population center or by a Promethean who has some degree of respect for humanity might find their way to the Refinement of Gold early, as might those who wish to emulate their Progenitors (which is not always a particularly humanitarian goal). Those who suffer through years of hating and being hated by humanity might scoff at this Refinement until they encounter humans that touch them in some way. This moment of clarity demonstrates that the Disquiet is intrinsic to the Prometheans, *not* to humans, and indicates that a Promethean must at least attempt to understand the human condition in order to transcend her artificial nature.

Galateids find the Refinement of Gold easily, as do the Riven. Of the other three Lineages, the Nepri and the Tammuz are more likely than the Wretched to become Adamists. At least, they are more likely to remain Aurum even when doing so becomes difficult. Frankenstein's Lineage tends to abandon the quest for Mortality when humans spurn the Wretched, as they inevitably do.

## Philosophy

The Aurum are called Mimics, but many Prometheans following this Refinement find that term unfair. The Aurum don't seek to ape humanity so much as understand it. The understanding they seek, though, requires them to live as humans do, to become part of a human community in some fashion. Simply pretending to humanity is simple enough — even animals can mimic. The Aurum strive for something deeper.

The human condition is a mystery to most humans, let alone the Prometheans, yet from this mystery the Aurum take hope. Obviously it is possible for a human to *be* human without understanding quite what it means, so the Promethean shouldn't have to figure out all the answers in order to complete her Pilgrimage. Finding any answers at all is still a challenge, though, because what it means to be human is and has been in constant debate throughout most of human history. When two cultures with conflicting ideals about the subject meet, the results are bloody, even if those cultures nominally decry violence. Is humanity such a fluid concept that those involved can change it as necessary? Is such caprice intrinsic to humanity, and if so, are Prometheans locked into something less than humanity by dint of their creation? This type of question tends to lead to the abandonment of Aurum for Cuprum or Mercurius.

The soul is a riddle that drives the Aurum. What the soul is has confounded human philosophers for centuries, so the Promethean who takes up the Refinement of Gold doesn't expect to actually *find* the answer. (If she does at first, she loses this rather grandiose goal in short order.) According to some philosophies, a soul isn't a birthright, it must be obtained through devotion, prayer, obedience or other spiritual practices. According to others, humans are born with a soul that they can then cherish or corrupt as they see fit. It's not hard to guess which of these mindsets the Aurum prefer. If they can gain a soul, if they can become mortal through a given set of strictures and behaviors, they jump at the chance. Unfortunately, the

soul is impossible to quantify or even identify, and some Aurum believe that the very Azoth that animates them qualifies as a soul. If that is the case, is a Promethean's soul subject to the same kinds of moral strictures and foibles that a human's soul is? And what culture, if any, has properly identified them?

Some Aurum become fascinated with stories of their Lineage's demiurge (or those of other Lineages) and seek to become what they were — human beings with an understanding of Pyros. They are simply working at the problem from the other angle. While a demiurge remained human but gained the knowledge of the Divine Fire, the Promethean possesses Pyros already but must obtain humanity.

Humanity is a nebulous concept. Some Prometheans understand "humanity" as "any trait common to human beings." As such, an Aurum might seek to understand and emulate such traits as jealousy, hatred, intolerance, blind faith and cruelty simply because human beings exhibit them. A Promethean who hasn't had much contact with humanity—due either to youth or to having been following a Refinement such as Cuprum or Ferrum that doesn't require such contact — might note that negative traits seem much more prominent in human lore and media than positive ones. (As they say, bad news sells.) A Promethean who seeks the Refinement of Gold through harming humans is as much a Mimic as one who does so by performing acts of anonymous charity. Humans are defined as much by their flaws as by their virtues, no matter how much they might protest otherwise. It all comes down to what sort of human the Aurum wants to become.

Gold is the metal of the sun, associated with the astrological sign of Leo. In centuries past, Aurum arrogantly believed that their power as Prometheans meant that others should revolve around them, taking their kindness or cruelty in stride. Modern knowledge of the solar system, however, has slowly altered this mindset. Now, Prometheans are aware that while the planets of *this* system do indeed revolve around the sun, the system itself is merely a small part of the greater universe. This, modern Aurum feel, might be the truth that has eluded the Refinement for many years. The Aurum do not have a divine right to others' worship, respect or even acknowledgement. They have their roles to play in the great system of humanity, perhaps more important roles than most, but they still must take care not to place too much importance on themselves. Put another way, gold has only what value people give it. The Aurum, then, can get only as much out of humanity as they are willing to devote to it.

As part of a throng, an Aurum can help other Prometheans understand humanity, putting her work mimicking the humans around them to use in helping them blend in. Of course, the Aurum can't really help with Disquiet, but they can teach ways to briefly offset the effect by simply dealing with humans on their own level. An Aurum also often serves to humanize other Prometheans, asking questions that help them relate to people and teaching them about human philosophies that are similar to their Refinements.

### Understanding Before Practice.

The lesson of the Indian Promethean is an important one. To gain any real knowledge from human behavior, an Aurum must understand it. Many human practices are meaningless without some form of context. The worship of professional athletes and other celebrities baffles the Prometheans, who at first glance see humans exalting other humans for prowess at unnecessary activities. Likewise, the concept of money eludes young Aurum. They understand that it is a substitute for something, but they don't quite grasp what it substitutes for, and they certainly don't see it as a worthy impetus to murder. In trying to understand this fixation with material, some Aurum confuse acquisition for enlightenment. They immerse themselves in the culture of excess, purchasing (or, more often, stealing) gold and jewels to advertise their advanced status.

Such concepts don't typically take very long to grasp, especially if an Aurum has a tutor, but the effort is a necessary one. Otherwise, the Promethean has further marked herself as an outsider.

### Others Before Self.

The Pariahs, the Titans and even the Serpents focus on the self in one fashion or another. To the Adamists, the self is important but difficult to improve directly. The Aurum usually feel that self-improvement for a Promethean is doomed because there is no spiritual mirror for them, no way to measure their moral and mortal value. The only way to gain this kind of growth is to focus on other people. Yet the manner in which an Aurum focuses on people varies greatly depending upon her understanding of what humanity truly is. A serial killer can be said to "focus on others" in a rather grotesque way, after all.

## Practices and Operations

The Aurum are aware of the danger of their Refinement. To understand humans, they must be around humans, which invites destruction. Some Aurum mitigate this danger by staying on the move, leaving marks for other Prometheans to find but never remaining in one place long enough for Disquiet to undo them. Others stay close to a given population but move around within it, watching a different group of people every day. The modern proliferation of cities has made this practice much easier.

Whether sedentary or nomadic, Aurum are keen students of human behavior. Some of them approach this practice holistically, basing all of their assumptions of humanity on what they directly observe. In addition to (or even instead

of) watching people, others study sociology, psychology, religion, the arts and other pursuits relating to the human condition, learning how humans see themselves. This latter approach has the benefit of giving the Aurum a well-rounded view of humanity, in addition to being somewhat poetic, since Prometheans are a reflection of humanity. The former method, of course, has the advantage of giving the Promethean direct experience with people instead of abstract or possibly outdated facts. It does, however, tend to produce a somewhat limited view of humanity. For instance, an Aurum who spends all of her time near a small Mexican village is going to have a much different view of humanity than one who haunts a town of similar size in the American South. A Promethean who comes to follow the Refinement of Gold after years of pursuing a different Great Work might have the experience necessary to keep such a limited sample in perspective, but it rather depends on how she spent the previous years.

Since humans are so diverse that an Aurum might choose to emulate any facet of human society (barring, of course, one that requires her to be constantly exposed to a large number of people). An Aurum might even attempt to hold down a job or a relationship with a human being. Muses who follow this Refinement sometimes spend time as escorts, dancers or prostitutes, since such lines of work enable them to come into contact with a diverse sample of humans. Other Lineages pursuing this Refinement might take work as drivers (of cabs, limousines or even 18-wheelers) for similar reasons. A truly brave Aurum might take work in a profession that other humans have reason to hate or fear. A Frankenstein might become a bounty hunter, for instance, while a Golem might become a policeman.

Many Aurum shun supernatural beings, reasoning that a creature that was never human (such as a werewolf) or one that is fundamentally altered from humanity (such as a vampire) has nothing to teach them. Some Aurum take a different tack entirely and seek to relate to humanity in the same way that other supernatural beings do: silently, invisibly, lurking in humanity's blind spots. Such Prometheans often run afoul of vampires, werewolves or mages who adopt some of the same tactics, and occasionally an Aurum takes it upon herself to protect the humans in her area from such creatures. Noble though these sentiments might be, they are probably doomed. The humans an Aurum protects will never see her as a protector, no matter what she does. She is as much a monster as the other creatures of the night.

## Religious Services

A Promethean following the Refinement of Gold can often find hints and markings left at places of worship. As such, Aurum attend such events fairly frequently, though they don't often return to the same place twice unless they develop a special fixation on the congregation. They prefer sparsely attended gatherings for obvious reasons, so they are likely to show up at midnight Mass and the like.

## Schools

Schools in general appeal to the Aurum because they represent a collection of humans striving for knowledge. Universities and high schools especially interest them, as the students are on the cusp of transformation into adults or into productive members of society. (That's the theory, anyway.) Also, practically speaking, a Promethean can hide in a large university's library for months without being noticed if she is careful enough, and universities produce an abundance of organic matter to consume.

## Transmutations

Deception, Mesmerism

## Skills

Aurum often develop ratings in Academics, Persuasion and Streetwise in short order. These and the other Social Skills are extremely helpful — even essential — for dwelling among humanity. Many Mimics also learn the fundamentals of Brawl, Firearms or Weaponry, as Disquiet all but guarantees that violence will find them eventually. Computer and Politics, often with Specialties in Internet and Current Events, are also common.



### Stereotypes

**Cuprum:** We can help each other, but you have to come out of your cave first.

**Ferrum:** Is the soul dependent on flesh? Does honing one improve the other? I doubt it. It seems too easy.

**Mercurius:** I try to identify the soul; you take yours for granted.

**Stannum:** You'll grow up someday.

* * *

**Centimani:** Can you learn about humanity by watching its antithesis? If so, seek one of the freaks.

# CUPRUM

## Refinement of Copper (Self)

### Pariahs

*The children walk under the Mare Street Bridge with their fingers crossed. Sometimes they hold their breaths. The children who turn left at the end of the block to get to St. Mark's Catholic School fondle rosaries or touch crucifixes, while the kids who turn right to get to PS 23 just walk fast. Once in a great while, one of the kids looks up.*

*If it's dark that day, if there's not much sunlight reflected off the grimy water, if the kid looks up at the right time and directs his gaze in just the right place, he might see two green eyes looking down on him. The eyes are human, but they're looking out of a nook in the bridge far too small for any person to squeeze into. The eyes don't look angry or vicious, but the children see a monster anyway, and they run away toward school, their hearts pounding in their tiny chests.*

*They see me, when they look up. I've been here under this bridge for many years, and I've seen generations of children walk beneath me. I've never hurt a one of them, but they think I will, and that means it's not time yet for me to come out. But someday they'll look up and see my eyes, and they'll ask me to come down. That's how I'll know it's time. But not before.*

A Promethean seeking the Refinement of Copper focuses on the Self. By itself, this might seem like the Cuprum are self-aggrandizing or even egotistical, but this is not at all in the spirit of the Refinement. To pursue the Refinement of Copper is to discover the inherent mutability of one's flesh, to open up to the myriad sensations in the world and to live in concert with Nature. The Cuprum believe that by doing so, they can mitigate the effects of Torment, learning how to exist in a world that rejects them — or perhaps even teaching the world to keep a space for them. Like the other Refinements, Cuprum is not a goal to be reached but a process to undergo. Unlike the others, it is an inherently lonely one, and progress along the path to this Refinement is hard to gauge.

## Overview

The world is a rush of sensation and experience, and to stand amid this tempest and try to remain unchanged is futile. The Cuprum believe that the world shapes them as necessary, works them into the shapes it requires and shows them what they need to see. To walk the path of Copper is to take the path of least resistance in some ways, to allow every experience to change the Promethean until he is unrecognizable as the being he once was. Standing stubbornly against adversity is ill advised. Copper is soft and mutable, and embracing those traits is a matter of survival.

Prometheans striving for the Refinement of Self often called themselves Eremites, but are more commonly called Pariahs by other Prometheans. Typically thought of as hermits or outcasts, the Refinement of Copper is sometimes confused with the practice of going to the wastes (see p. 72). Indeed, there are some similarities. In fact, stories circulated among the Prometheans state that the Cuprum philosophy stemmed from this strategic retreat.

Mythology is replete with tales of holy men and mythic figures walking off into the desert, the jungle or other inhospitable climes in order to put their own demons to rest or to be tested. In hardship, they find enlightenment, either through struggle with the elements or discourse with evil beings. One story tells of Ulgan, first of the Riven, wandering into the Siberian wastes after murdering his creator, Tengri. In a land where life was scarce, he still felt the very earth around him rejecting him, and he continued walking. Whenever he felt himself growing closer to life, he changed direction slightly, ever allowing Disquiet to shape his progress and his path, but never succumbing to the despair it would bring. His senses grew sharp over the years of wandering, and he learned to alter his body to lighten the harsh journey. Finally, he found that he had traveled in a great circle and returned to his starting point. Some storytellers even state that he traversed the entire world. It was at that point that he raised his creator as a new Promethean, having come to realize who and what he was after his long travel.

Other stories exist of the Copper Refinement, of course, and not all of them are so benign. A Golem of the Mediterranean was reputed to lurk in a seaside cave, capturing and devouring any living thing that washed in, but refusing to leave. Bloated and ugly over long years of aquatic life, she had nonetheless learned the Refinement of Copper. The current brought her food, and even Disquiet did not disrupt these natural rhythms of the world.

Some of the Wretched like to claim that the Progenitor of their line, the Frankenstein monster, was actually pursuing Copper when he fled into the Arctic. Most Prometheans feel, though, that this act was motivated by his own choleric nature. He could not stomach the jealousy and hatred he felt, so he fled in order to mitigate those feelings.

## Practitioners

There comes a point in every Promethean's Pilgrimage where the constant hatred from the world around him, the frustration of trying to understand or combat humanity and the pervasive feelings of isolation become too much. At that point, a Promethean might flee the world, going to the wastes, refusing to admit any sensation or thought beyond his own sorrow. He might, however, instead choose to shun human contact and open himself to the world around him, not minding his thoughts or feeling but simply letting them go where they will. A Promethean who chooses this path is practicing Cuprum.

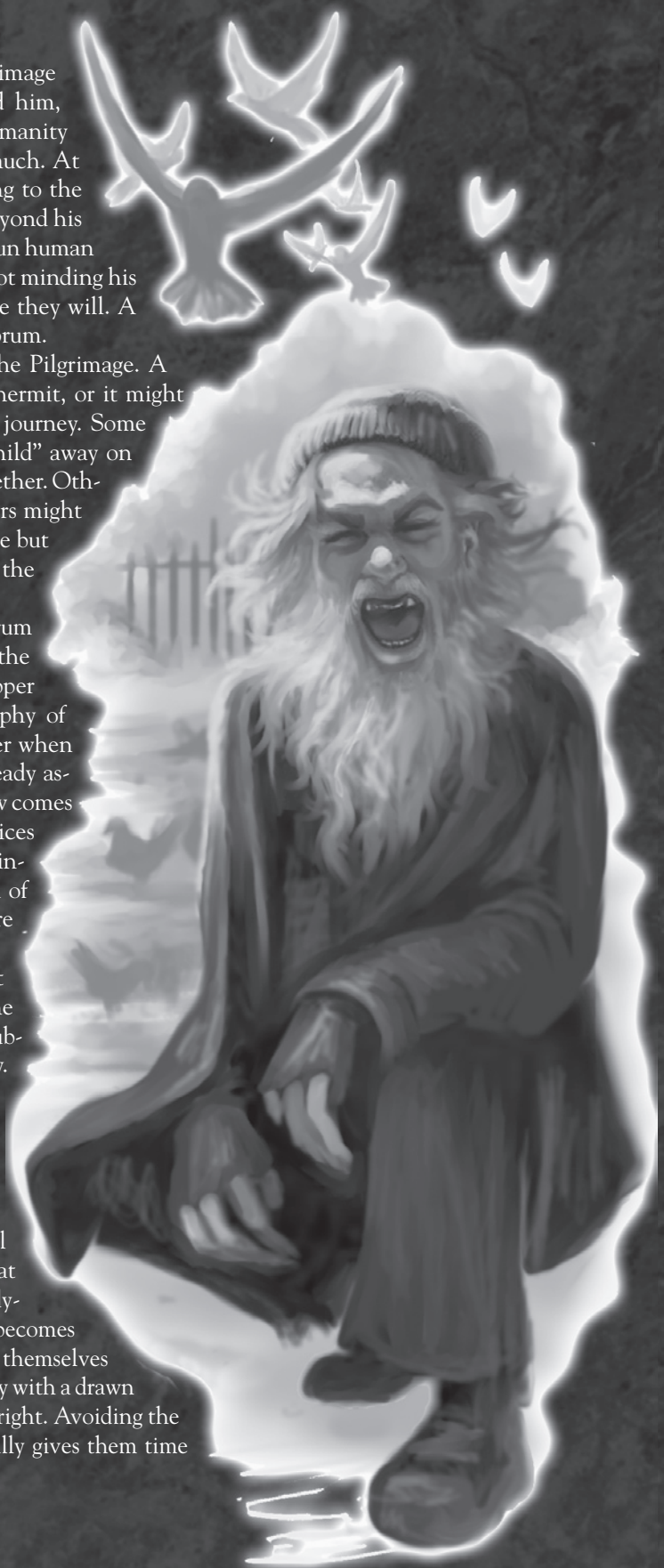
This revelation can happen at any time during the Pilgrimage. A Promethean might choose from the outset to be a hermit, or it might be the last decision he makes before the end of his journey. Some Cuprum create a new Promethean and take this "child" away on their hermitage so that they can become Eremites together. Others become Pariahs of necessity. Enemies or aggressors might hound a Promethean so fiercely that he has no choice but to retreat from civilization, but in his exile he finds the Refinement of Copper waiting.

Of the five major Lineages, those best suited to Cuprum are the Nepri and the Wretched. The former value the ability to change forms that the Refinement of Copper teaches, not to mention that the Cuprum philosophy of accepting whatever the world presents is much easier when one is able to cheat death. Also, the Osirans are already associated with water, so the notion of following the flow comes easily. The Lineage of Frankenstein, by contrast, practices Cuprum because remaining close to humanity is painful to them. By dwelling alone, they can find a kind of equilibrium, though one of a much more brutal nature than the Refinement otherwise calls for.

Of the other three Lineages, the Ulgan are most likely to practice Cuprum. While the Tammuz and the Galateids *can* practice this Refinement, the Golems' stubbornness tends to interfere with the Cuprum philosophy. As for the Muses, they do not cope well with being apart from humanity for any length of time.

## Philosophy

Cuprum shares certain philosophical tenets with Taoism and Buddhism, insofar as it teaches that the physical body is unimportant compared to the spiritual and that nonresistance is better than fighting. Prometheans studying Cuprum become adept at sensing danger before it becomes a true threat, then redesigning their bodies to protect themselves rather than meeting force with force. Meeting an enemy with a drawn blade is going to result in bloodshed, no matter who is right. Avoiding the enemy entirely leaves both parties intact, and hopefully gives them time to reconsider their intentions.



Cuprum isn't necessarily a pacifist philosophy, though. Students of Copper don't eschew violence if it's the only option given to them. Yet, given their predilection for heightened sense and versatility of body, violence rarely *is* the only option. The main reason that the Refinement of Copper requires distance from humanity, in fact, is for the mutual protection of the Promethean and the nearby humans. By accepting that the world rejects him, the Promethean avoids a great deal of conflict.

Of course, part of the reason that a Promethean chooses to study Copper is to tame the effects of Torment, and Disquiet is a major contributor to this unpleasant facet of Promethean existence. Disquiet cannot truly be avoided, so a Cuprum must realize that Torment is never going to go away entirely. Instead, Cuprum believe that Torment, like physical pain, doesn't have to impede them. They can learn to ignore or internalize the emotional effects of Torment. By practicing non-aggression and avoidance, they can even learn to dodge the baleful social aspects. Many practitioners of Copper, then, are not antisocial in the least. In fact, most Cuprum have a great deal of respect and compassion for all living things, and it is this compassion that leads them to avoid people. They recognize that Disquiet is not a choice that humans make, it is a simple reality. The Promethean practicing Cuprum might devote long periods of time to trying to divine *why* Disquiet drives humans to hate him, but in the meantime, he must simply accept it.

"Avoidance" in the context of Cuprum doesn't mean running from challenges or always taking the path of no resistance. It refers to the fact that moving with force is easier than standing against it. Copper, as a metal, is a superb conductor of electricity, and the practitioners of Cuprum keep this in mind when confronted with adversarial force, be it Disquiet, angry mobs, Pandorans or any other aggression. Is there a way, a Cuprum asks himself, to move with the aggressive force so that neither party is injured? Is there a way to redirect it into a productive medium, perhaps by turning the mob against a Pandoran or Centimanus? Can the Disquiet be quelled if the Cuprum leaves the area for a short time? If the answer to these questions is "no," a Cuprum will stand and fight, but stubborn action is a last resort.

Because other Prometheans are not affected by Disquiet, most Cuprum feel that associating with them is beneficial. As such, although they are called Pariahs, it is not at all uncommon to find followers of Copper in a throng. Sometimes every Promethean in a throng chooses to practice Cuprum at the same time, forming a kind of commune away from the prying eyes of humanity. (Their combined Disquiet does tend to wreak havoc on the landscape around them, though.) A Cuprum in a mixed throng is often the sentry of the group, using his powers of heightened perceptions to keep the others safe as they practice their respective operations. Likewise, a follower of Copper might lead enemies away from the other members of the throng, relying on his power over his own form to keep him safe and unnoticed.

Copper is associated with the planet Venus and the astrological sign of Libra. Cuprum Prometheans consider this apt. They are, in effect, searching for a type of balance in their lives. By moving with, rather than against, the currents of the world and the actions that others take, they stay in harmony and protect themselves from Torment. Of course, the danger with this philosophy is complacency. It is easy for a Promethean to begin practicing this Refinement with the best of intentions, yet wind up sitting in a despoiled and blighted land, everything around him destroyed by Disquiet, claiming that he is living in harmony.

### Live in the World.

This seemingly simplistic tenet encapsulates much of the Cuprum philosophy. A follower of Copper must learn that the world is bigger than his physical shell, and that he must treat the larger world as a part of himself to gain wisdom. By doing so, he learns to sense larger parts of this world, and to let the world's currents change him (as directed by his own will). All things are connected, and to embody that truth is to live the Refinement of Copper.

This tenet also prevents the Cuprum from total inaction. "Live in the world" is more than a guideline, it is an imperative. While a Cuprum doesn't have to interact with any other sentient being in order to practice the Refinement, most of them do, simply because relying on one's own perspective and assumptions for too long means that one will eventually run out of material to work with. Copper can stretch only so far before it snaps, and Cuprum Prometheans can be alone for only so long before they go mad with isolation.

### Point the Way, Do Not Lead.

Rightly or wrongly, Cuprum claim that they do not make good leaders. Focused on what is intrinsic, on the one rather than the many, they feel that they are ill equipped to make the decisions that a leader must. That said, a practitioner is usually happy to offer her advice if it is solicited and her aid if it is requested. Some refuse to do anything other than follow their Refinement. If they inspire or teach by example in doing so, so be it. Others instruct Prometheans in the Transmutations of Metamorphosis or Sensorium but refuse to use those Transmutations on another's behalf. Every Pariah has a different way of interpreting this tenet, but most consider it inappropriate to cite it as an excuse for unjust or insufficient action.

## Practices and Operations

The Refinement of Self demands that the Promethean work to know and, if necessary, to change himself. A Pariah is given to long periods of self-reflection in which the practitioner examines himself for flaws of character, holes in his personal philosophy and lessons

unlearned from previous experience. Some Prometheans write out these thoughts as philosophical treatises or as correspondences with others. Indeed, Prometheans can establish relationships with humans through written communication, since Disquiet doesn't bleed over into such contact. Likewise, a follower of Copper can use letters (or even faster methods such as email or 'blogs) to commune with other Prometheans of varying Refinements, incorporating their wisdom and mistakes into his own understanding.

Copper is a superb conductor, and the Cuprum Prometheans take this property to heart, often acting as way-station attendants for traveling Prometheans and throngs. They might also act as couriers or letter-drops, holding or carrying communiqués that are too sensitive to trust to mundane methods of delivery. They do not intercept such missives, of course, not if they wish to remain true to their Refinement. Regardless of the contents, they allow the information to pass through them like electricity through a copper wire. This policy of non-interference has occasionally proven to be damaging when a letter turns out to contain instructions to destroy the bearer, or when the information carried is put to destructive ends. Such an occurrence can, in fact, end a Promethean's study of Copper and push him toward Iron or Tin.

## Meditation

Be it prayer, breathing exercises or more modern methods like biofeedback, the practices of sitting quietly and focusing (whether on oneself or on a divine being or ideal) has a great deal of appeal to the Cuprum. Such practices, in fact, form the first step in learning either of the two Transmutations for which the Refinement has an affinity. Before a Promethean can learn to change her form, she must know her own natural rhythms. Before she can learn to sense her surroundings, she must recognize the sensory input she receives from her body.

Many human practices, from psychology to martial arts to religion, can bestow this kind of focus upon a Promethean. A meditation practice of some kind is often the first thing a Cuprum learns. (This practice might be reflected in game terms by an increase in Composure or the Meditative Mind Merit.)

## Blights

Cuprum Prometheans often choose blighted, polluted or deserted areas to make their homes, reasoning that the effects of Disquiet will be much lessened in such areas. Indeed, an area that has already lost much of its vitality is already on the same path that Disquiet would take, so the practitioners of Copper feel that they are taking a non-resistive route by bringing it there.

Of course, if the area is suddenly targeted for renewal or study by humanity, the Promethean isn't likely to receive much in the way of benefit of the doubt. He is, after all, a monster lurking in a Wasteland.

## Transmutations

Metamorphosis, Sensorium

## Skills

One Skill that most Cuprum learn is Athletics. The focus on self begins with one's own body, so an increase in this Skill, often with a Specialty in Body Control — breathing, heart rate and the like — is appropriate. (This approach is also appropriate for Ferrum, but the goal of the exercise is different.) Beyond that, the choice of Skills a Cuprum Promethean develops depends very much on how he spends his time. He might choose to practice some form of art, gaining Crafts or Expression. He might hone his fighting prowess as an adjunct to meditation. Doing so increases Brawl or Weaponry, but whether the Promethean actually chooses to fight is another matter. A Promethean who takes a more scholarly path might increase the Academics or Science Skill.



## Stereotypes

**Aurum:** Humans are fickle, unpredictable and fundamentally different from us. Be careful what they teach you.

**Ferrum:** Making yourself hard as iron carries a risk. Iron rusts. Iron breaks.

**Mercurius:** Mercury is mutable, yes, but toxic. What does that make you?

**Stannum:** So much energy devoted outward. What do you have left for yourself?

* * *

**Centimani:** A hundred hands... How can they keep track of them all?

# Ferrum

## Refinement of Iron (Corpus)

### Titans

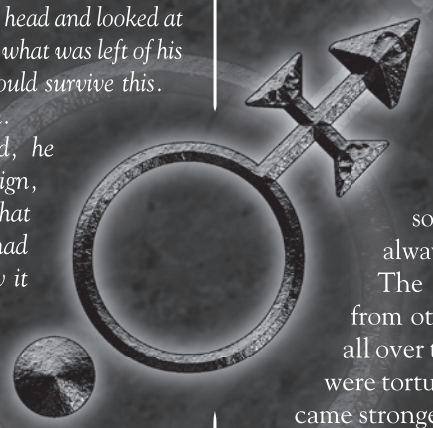
*He stopped counting bullets by the time they stopped to reload for the fourth time. He guessed the count was more than fifty.*

*The cords binding his hands were thick plastic, expertly tied. He pulled against them, but the joints and tendons of his body were torn, punctured, flayed. He coughed and spat out a globule of flesh.*

*He heard the jarring metal sounds as they finished loading their weapons. He didn't understand much of their language, but he knew that they were frightened. He heard one of them mutter, "Why isn't it dead yet?" Then the hail of bullets began again.*

*The bullets shattered bones, punctured organs and tore muscle away in great steaming hunks. He raised his head and looked at them with his remaining eye, smiled through what was left of his lips. Every bullet was a reminder that he could survive this. Every shot was an exultation to his strength.*

*The next time they stopped to reload, he forced the humours in his body to realign, pumping power into his muscles, power that plastic wouldn't be able to withstand. He had learned what he had come to learn. Now it was time to see what strength their fear could give them.*



The soul without the body is rootless, homeless and defenseless. The soul in a weak body is little better off. A weak body can be broken and enslaved, and what does that mean for the soul? A Promethean who pursues the Refinement of Iron feels that when the body is strong and the soul is well protected, he can make true progress on his Pilgrimage. Through self-discipline, practice, study and trial by ordeal, the Ferrum strive for enough strength to see their journeys through.

## Overview

The Refinement of Corpus finds its roots in warrior cultures the world over. Promethean legends tell of members of their race taking on the code and cause of the warrior, but these legends do not make any claim to originating this pursuit among the Prometheans. Every human culture has some kind of warrior ethos, and considering the sorts of challenges that a Promethean faces, it's not surprising that he might turn to martial studies in his quest for Mortality.

The Ferrum refer to themselves as Titans. The word has come to refer to an extremely powerful or influential person, but to the Prometheans, it means something closer to its original definition. In Greek mythology, the Titans were a race of godlike beings who warred against the monstrous creations of Gaea, the Earth goddess. These creatures included the Cyclops, but also a race of hundred-armed grotesques — the Hecatonchires (or Centimani in Latin). These monsters were eventually consigned to the pit of Tartarus, as were many of Gaea's other hideous creations. The practitioners of Ferrum consider battling such monsters to be their sacred duty for a number of different reasons (see "Practices and Operations").

Of course, the Titans had their flaws. Cronus, the father of the Titans, swallowed his own young to prevent them from dethroning him, and it was only after Zeus was born in secret that he managed to free his siblings from his father's gullet. The Ferrum take this gruesome lesson as a reminder that defeat is not always the worst outcome to a battle.

The Refinement of Iron takes inspiration from other sources as well. Mythologies from all over the world include stories of heroes who were tortured, brutalized and beaten but who became stronger for the effort. Odin hung from a tree for nine days, Samson suffered at the hands of Delilah, and Prometheus endured years of pain for his good deed. Who knows how many famous legends might actually conceal a Promethean pursuing Iron?

One tale in particular appeals to the Titans because it highlights both the dangers of pride and the rewards of curiosity. The story speaks of a Promethean called to life on the banks of a great river. This Promethean's Lineage is unknown. Some renditions of the story claim he was either an Ulgan or an Osiran, but other stories state that he belonged to a Lineage that has since died out. In either case, he did not even have time to speak with his creator, for they were immediately attacked by a troupe of warriors from a nearby village. Weakened from the process of creating a new Promethean, the demiurge died under the humans' spears. His creation retreated into the water and sank down into the mud, waiting for the humans to leave. Once they did, he resurfaced, and found the remains of his creator. He saw the wounds where the humans' spears had pierced his creator's skin and thought, "My skin is far thicker." He saw the splinters of bone where the humans' clubs had broken his creator's limbs and thought, "My bones are

far stronger." He stood on the bank of the river and decided that he could avenge his creator — the humans would have no way to fight him.

He followed the warriors' tracks back to their village and waited for them to emerge. The following morning, they did, but they did not immediately hunt. First, they practiced with their weapons, sparring with each other and hurling the spears at mock men stuffed with leaves. The Promethean stayed his hand and watched them, and over time he began to train as they did, hiding in the forest. As weeks passed, he learned to fight with club and spear, honed his body to immense strength and discovered that he could repair injuries to his body with a thought. He descended upon the warriors of the villages as they returned from a hunt, piercing their flesh and splintering their bones, and he left their bodies on the river as a tribute to his creator.

Not all tales of the Ferrum are so vicious. In fact, while most legends of this Refinement involve combat, comparatively few involve revenge or spite (which is more the province of the Stannum). More often, an Iron Promethean fights to best an honored opponent or prove himself, rather than to kill. Legends traded among the Golems, some of the most avid pursuers of Iron, state that Daniel placed a band of iron around the neck of the original Tammuz. The band served to remind the Golem of his place, but in time he came to regard it as a goal. If he could not break the iron, he would become it.

## Practitioners

Not every Promethean finds it necessary to pursue Iron. Indeed, many human philosophies state that the physical is ultimately inferior to the spiritual, so the Prometheans shy away from focusing too much on the crude matter of their bodies. Others feel that warping their forms for destructive purposes ultimately leads to disaster. Prometheans who find that they must defend themselves but lack the aggression or bitterness to follow the Refinement of Torment come to Iron instead. Those who witness the glory of battle or athletic prowess and wish to experience it themselves do so as well.

Ferrum is a long and difficult road, however, so only Prometheans with some degree of patience and determination make any real progress. Some Prometheans see Ferrum as the simplest of the Refinements, reasoning that the body can only be conditioned to a certain degree before it achieves perfection. Those who have pursued Iron for many years admit that perfection might be *possible*, but it certainly isn't easy to achieve.

The most enthusiastic practitioners of Ferrum are undoubtedly the Golems. They have the endurance and drive necessary to perfect the Refinement of Iron, and their steadfast nature fits in nicely with the rigorous training that Ferrum requires. The Nepri run a close second. Their persistence and devotion to process over product serves them well in their pursuit of the endless discipline of Ferrum.

For the Wretched, the only impediment to practicing Ferrum is the patience it requires. If a Frankenstein can focus his Inner Fire enough to follow the Refinement, he can become a master Titan.



Galateids and Ulgan rarely come to the Refinement of Corpus. In general, the Muses find it coarse and vulgar, and those who do practice Ferrum tend more toward the athletic rather than martial side of the Refinement. The Ulgan are more concerned with matters of the spirit than of the flesh, as they know how easily a body can be torn asunder.

## Philosophy

The soul is more important than the body. Almost every culture in the world agrees on this point, even if they disagree on the nature and disposition of the soul. The Ferrum recognize this idea, but they also note that every human culture in history has some form of warrior class. These warriors might be holy men, soldiers, assassins or nobles, but the process of training the body to fight is given a great deal of reverence. Is this because only a select few are capable of truly receiving the benefits this training brings, or because the weaker members of the culture need protection? Either way, the position of warrior clearly carries with it some importance. Whether it also carries respect and glory or scorn and curses depends on the culture and the feeling of the times. There was a time, for instance, when a member United States military could count on quiet respect and admiration of those around him. While this is still true in some circles, being a soldier in the US is no longer a position above rebuke, as the Ferrum note with interest. Even when a culture hates it warriors, it still seems to need them.

This notion gives the Prometheans hope. After all, humans hate them instinctively, but can they overcome that hate enough to admit that a Ferrum is useful? Can humans ever see a Promethean as a creature of pure intent, regardless of what their hearts tell them? The Ferrum think that this is possible, and they strive for a warrior's ideal. If the flesh is pure and strong, the soul will follow.

The road to perfection is not an easy one, though. To the Ferrum, punishment of the body is necessary for strengthening it. Flesh can be repaired easily, but a damaged soul is irreparable. The Prometheans of Iron often see themselves as protectors, as the shields that stand between humanity and monsters like the Centimani, just as their own hardened flesh stands between physical harm and their fragile souls. A Promethean pursuing Corpus often thinks nothing of being shot, stabbed, crushed or even burned, because such trauma can be repaired. The Refinement of Iron teaches moral rectitude and mindfulness, however, because to act in an inappropriate or immoral manner can damage the soul.

Such Prometheans, therefore, require a code of conduct to guide them. Fortunately most warrior cultures have such codes. Martial arts often include self-disciplinary practices to help their adherents use their skills responsibly. Soldiers of older cultures were taught the spiritual ramifications of their actions on the battlefield in an attempt to provide a clear break between their identities as warriors and as normal citizens. This kind of distinction isn't always present in modern society, but the Ferrum try to be mindful of when and how they use their physical prowess in battle.

Combat is not the only pursuit of the Ferrum. In fact, it is not even the most important. Physical perfection is the true Iron ideal, so athleticism in general appeals to the Titans. Prometheans pursuing Corpus prefer individual rather than team athletic activities (Disquiet being the reason, of course), so they spend time running, lifting weights and throwing discus, shot and javelins. Their pursuits uphold the Olympian ideal and the notion of the true champion.

As part of a throng, a Ferrum is usually the protector of the group, meeting any physical threat head-on. While a Stannum often takes up the offensive tasks, an Iron Promethean is responsible for defending the group. Doing so often includes making sure that things do not escalate to the point of violence, helping the group to recognize threats and steer away from them. Once violence becomes unavoidable, though, it is the Ferrum who make sure that their fellows are safe, taking any punishment necessary.

Iron is associated with the planet Mars and the astrological sign of Aries. Mars, of course, is the Roman god of war, and is associated with aggression and conflict. The Ferrum try to incorporate the beneficial aspects of this deity, the noble facets of combat and aggression rather than mindless bloodshed and petty savagery. They regard anger and violence much as pig iron: Tempered and mixed correctly, it can be nearly unbreakable.

### Untempered Iron is Brittle.

To pursue this Refinement, one must have focus. A Promethean cannot become a true warrior by simply attacking opponents randomly, nor can he perfect his body with intermittent or inconsistent practice. Likewise, without adversity, without the tempering kiss of fire, a Promethean of Iron is like a cold-wrought iron blade. Such a blade might hold an edge for a short time, and it feels solid to the touch, but it will shatter under a sharp blow and it dulls quickly. Such is the case with an unfocused Titan. He might be a skilled combatant, but he will break under true adversity.

### The Body is Complex, But Must be Understood.

Ancient cultures had many erroneous beliefs about human anatomy. The Egyptians felt that the heart's weight measured the soul. The Bible teaches that thoughts come from the heart. The truth of the human body is much more complicated, but in order to perfect the flesh, the Ferrum must understand it. Some Titans take the scholarly route, learning about structural and gross anatomy, which often helps their development of Corporeum. (If they know what they have, they know what to change.) Others take a more direct approach, picking apart the bodies of their slain opponents, appropriating cadavers from whatever sources are handy or even cutting into their own flesh to see what lies beneath the surface. Many Iron Prometheans have a driving, morbid curiosity about the human body. Depending

on the age of the Promethean, this curiosity might lead to inappropriate questions or poking and prodding as the Titan tries to understand the structure and function of the living organism.

## Practices and Operations

A warrior must be ready to fight, so many Iron operations involve mock combat and sparring (if the Promethean can find a partner). Many Ferrum practice one or several forms of martial arts and spend hours performing strengthening exercises, working through forms and katas, maintaining weapons and otherwise training.

Yet they are equally interested in understanding the body, so an Iron Promethean might just as easily be found poring over a medical textbook or breaking into a gross anatomy lab at night to explore a body. Many Ferrum are rather imprecise in these pursuits, and the scene the morning after such a study session might be gruesome indeed. Followers of Corpus recognize that their own bodies (or, occasionally, the bodies of willing members of their throngs) provide the best sources of information because of the Promethean tolerance to pain and injury. When two Ferrum meet, one might allow the other to flay the skin from his body and pin it back to see the muscles and fasciae beneath. Of course, reciprocity is expected.

Of course, the Titans are also interested in taking on the duties of their Greek namesakes and protecting others from monsters such as the Centimani and the Pandorans. Some of this interest is selfless, but some of it is simply more physical punishment to beat the Iron Prometheans into shape. More than one Titan has perished pursuing the ideal, but that doesn't deter others. Any challenge can be overcome. It's just a matter of skill and determination.

## Training

It's possible to learn martial arts or other combat forms through book study, but it's not very efficient. Disquiet prevents most Titans from finding a true mentor, however. Sometimes the Ferrum watch soldiers and other combatants from afar, mimicking their movements and perhaps using Transmutations learned from other Refinements to listen in to instructions. In olden times, gladiatorial and ritualized combat provided some kind of model, but the televised fighting events of the modern age are usually staged and hollow. If a Promethean does manage to find a trainer, either another Promethean or a human who is able to look past Disquiet, the Titan tries to learn every detail as quickly as possible.

## Honor and Rules

Titans in the modern world are torn on the idea of rules and sportsmanship. On one hand, a game or sport is only fair if all parties agree to abide by one set of rules. On the other, combat is a matter of life and death, so adhering to a code of honor isn't always the safest or smartest move. Since the ultimate benefit of honing the body is for the soul, is it more beneficial to cheat or use dirty fighting to protect the soul's house or to suffer injury and keep the soul pure? The Iron Prometheans don't have an easy answer, and how one Titan feels on the matter depends very much on his own experiences. In general, the Refinement of Corpus benefits from testing the body, so most practitioners don't take a cheap and easy route to victory. Instead, they use whatever challenges their bodies the most.

## Transmutations

Corporeum, Vitality

## Skills

Obviously, the Athletics Skill is a must. Often, a Titan develops multiple Specialties in this Skill rather than (or in addition to) a high rating. Brawl and Weaponry tend to be impressive as well, and most Ferrum know at least one Fighting Style Merit. Intimidation tends to develop naturally, as Disquiet mixes with the Promethean's obvious martial prowess. Finally, more Ferrum learn quite a bit about the human body and its inner workings, which can result in dots of Medicine, Academics or Science.

Like their Cuprum brethren, Titans often learn how to control their bodies' heart rate, breathing and so on, which results in an appropriate Specialty in Athletics. The difference is that once Titans learn the basics of such arts, they tend to branch into associated Skills (usually some form of combat art), while Cuprum Prometheans continue their study of autonomic control.



### Stereotypes

**Aurum:** Do what you need to do. Nothing will harm you, my brother.

**Cuprum:** You have a mastery of your flesh that I envy, but when you are well and truly cornered, what then?

**Mercurius:** I apply fire from without to temper my flesh; you seem to do the same to your soul. I wish I could explain why I find that notion so disturbing.

**Stannum:** Hit me again, if you must. But I'll still be standing when you run out of rage. Then we'll see if tin is stronger than iron.

* * *

**Centimani:** I've dug a pit. Time to fill it.

# MERCURIUS

## REFINEMENT OF QUICKSILVER (PYROS)

### OPHIDIANS

*Amazing the things people drop — jewelry, money, receipts, checks, credit cards. They all fall from fingers and pockets and wind up under the trains. People don't chase them because they don't want to touch the rail and wind up dead from electrocution, but I live here, beneath the tracks, precisely because of that power.*

*It's a lifeline, a flowing artery of lightning made to run along the ground, encased in steel and given a direction and meaning. Every night after the last train passes, I touch the rail and feel the Pyros within, feel it replenishing my spirit or repairing my body.*

*I find it hard to leave. I have to, sometimes. The police come and shoo me and the homeless away from the warmth of the trains and the power of the rails. When they do, I ride the trains for hours, just to be close to the rails. I feel them underneath me, feel their power propelling this great steel beast through the city. The police chase me away, but I always come back. Humans once lived by rivers because they were life-giving, despite the danger of floods. I live next to my river and take its bounty, no matter the dangers.*

The Refinement of Quicksilver is perhaps the most mysterious of the five major Refinements. The Ophidians (or sometimes Serpents) seek to refine their understanding of Pyros, the Divine Fire that animates all Prometheans. Their studies take them to the heights of academia as well as to some of the most unsavory places in the World of Darkness, looking for answers to questions they cannot fully articulate. At the heart of their seeking is the simplest question: *What is the Inner Fire?*

## OVERVIEW

The Serpents are called such because of their fluid and flexible nature. This flexibility doesn't apply to the Promethean's physical body, however, as such manipulation of the body's matter is better left to the Pariahs and Titans. The Refinement of Quicksilver focuses on the fluidity of the mind and the soul. Some say their nickname is a reference to the ouroboros, the alchemical symbol of a snake eating its tail, which indicates the unity of things and the completion of the *Magnum Opus*.

Stories passed down from older Prometheans speak of the Ophidians as cunning, canny and even sneaky. Mercury, the Roman messenger god, was renowned as much for his skills in argument and tactics as his speed. (His Greek counterpart, Hermes, once bored an enemy to death with a long, droning story.) A tale passed down from the Galateids speaks of one of their number who tried to understand the Inner Fire and failed, with terrible results. The story states that this Promethean was fashioned, like all Muses, out of the bodies of beautiful people and animated with the intent of being a lover. He was created with the ability to appreciate the beauty of the human form, but he eventually came to wonder what flesh and skin covered. Were the beautiful also beautiful in spirit, perfectly balanced in humour? Was he? He spent so much time studying his own reflection, searching for faults in his form and a clue as to the true nature of the flame within him that he became weak. When a human sorceress spied him crouched at the banks of a stream, she had no trouble enslaving him. Trapped by his own burning desire to know himself, Narcissus is remembered in human myth as the embodiment of vanity.

While few Frankensteins pursue Quicksilver, the tale of one who did still serves as inspiration for the Refinement. This Promethean was created during the 19th century somewhere in the mountains now called the Colorado Rockies. Finding no wisdom from his creator and shunned by settlers and natives alike, he ventured to the storm-swept plains, howling out his anger to the rain and begging the heavens to explain his purpose to him. The heavens answered. By some accounts, the Wretched was struck by lightning 10 times that night, and each time he found himself possessed of new insight into his own soul. The plains blazed with light as he burned through the Pyros the lightning granted him, viewing the world around him through the lens of alchemical understanding and analyzing each grain of dirt, each gust of wind. When the final lightning bolt lanced down just before the sun crept over the horizon, he cried out two simple words: "I know." His ultimate fate is unknown, but he left pilgrim marks in the mountain caves that aspiring Ophidians still search for today.

## PRACTITIONERS

The followers of Mercurius consider their Refinement to be an advanced state, one that requires a great deal of effort. Few Prometheans begin their Pilgrimages with the Refinement of Quicksilver. It is usually not until a Promethean has had the time to come to grips with her existence — to accept that her flesh moves in absence of true life and that she can replenish herself with a jolt of electricity that would kill a mortal — that she begins to wonder about the meaning of it all. A Promethean who has practiced one of the other Refinements and become so focused in her studies that she cannot progress any further might turn her attention on the basic notion of Pyros. What is the Divine Fire, and what is its connection to electricity? How much of the Fire can one Promethean absorb before her flesh simply gives up? Is there any upper limit? How much of the Fire can a Promethean manipulate? When a Promethean is ready to ask these questions, she is ready to begin the Refinement of Quicksilver.

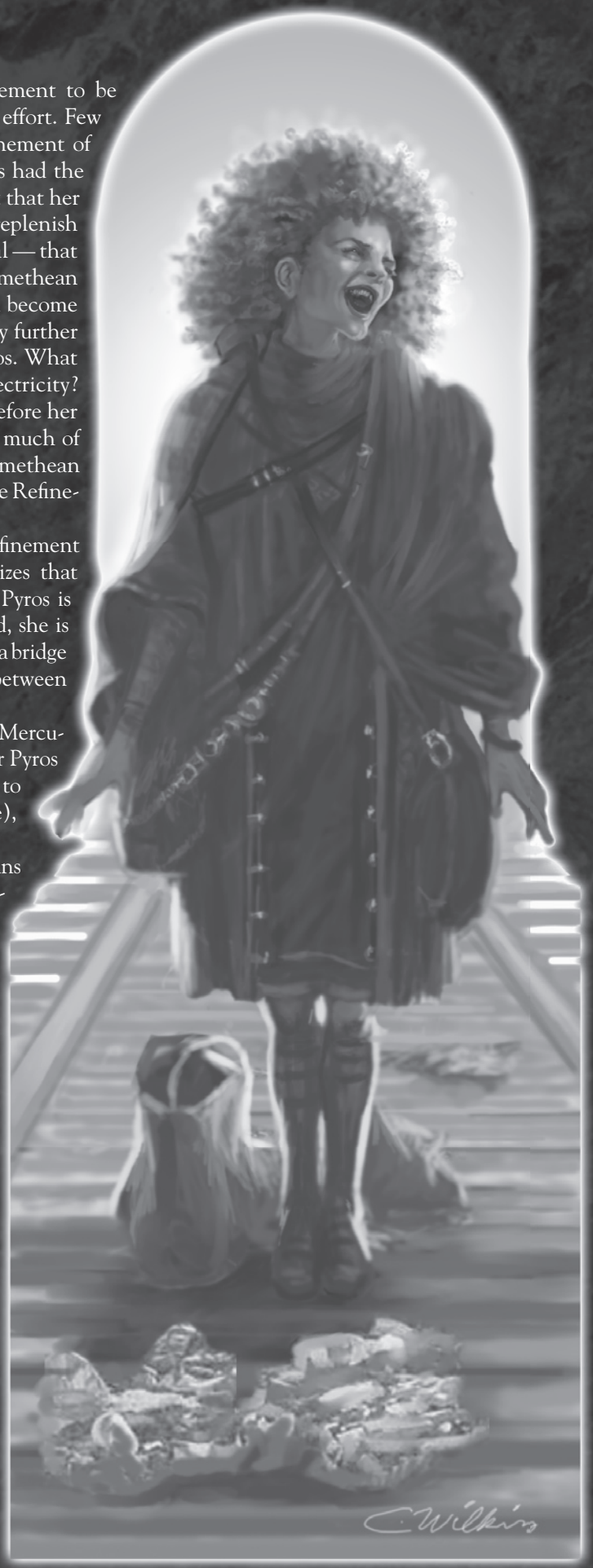
All of that said, Mercurius is seldom the last Refinement a Promethean follows. When the Promethean realizes that something deeper than Pyros exists within her, that Pyros is simply the fuel that keeps her physical shell animated, she is likely to change Refinements. Mercurius often provides a bridge between Ferrum or Stannum and Aurum or Cuprum, between the physical and the spiritual.

The Wretched are the least likely Lineage to pursue Mercurius. It does happen, but most Frankensteins take their Pyros for granted. The element of fire simply feels natural to them (although Pyros is more then mere elemental fire), so they don't need to study it.

By contrast, the Nepri are the most likely Prometheans to begin their journeys with Mercurius. Their ruling element is water, and their deep and thoughtful nature leads them to the kinds of questions that encourage the study of Pyros. They don't necessarily stay on this path for long, however. The very element that makes them introspective and curious also makes them callous and cold, and this attitude is somewhat ill suited to studying the Divine Fire.

The Galateids, however, often find the Refinement of Quicksilver and remain devoted to it for long periods of time. Their desire to become perfect drives them to understand themselves, physically and alchemically, and Mercurius promises the answers to many of their troubling questions. Unfortunately, they do run the risk of winding up like Narcissus, becoming so enamored of their own status that they forget to consider the world around them.

The Ulgan and the Tammuz can and do practice Mercurius, but it doesn't come as naturally to them as it does to the Osirans or the Muses. The Riven already have an understanding of the animating force of the spirits (even if it is rather different from Pyros), and such inward-focused questions don't immediately occur to the Golems.



# PHILOSOPHY

Ophidians are as flexible as their namesakes, but their agility isn't of the body. The followers of Quicksilver claim a moral and spiritual flexibility, viewing their Azoth as a trait that can be measured and quantified, but that is ever elusive and dangerous to handle. This flexibility doesn't exempt them from the normal rules of Humanity, of course. It simply means that they tend to take a pragmatic view of their actions. By killing a human, a Serpent might prevent him from informing her enemies of her presence or location. By one perspective, such a murder would be an advisable act. Yet, unless the Serpent can dispose of the body in a foolproof manner and be absolutely sure that she was not observed in the victim's company, she can look forward to an in-depth investigation on his behalf. In addition, while the Ophidians look at every action in terms of the practical effect it has upon the world, they also recognize that their actions have measurable effects on their own minds and souls. A Promethean who becomes a mindless killer cannot control her Pyros, which makes hiding more difficult. Humanity, the Serpents feels, doesn't have to be abstract and frightening. It can be measured and known. The Serpents take comfort in this view.

Morality, however, isn't the primary focus of Mercurius. The main objective of the Refinement is to understand Pyros. The underlying assumption of the Quicksilver Refinement is that the Divine Fire either *is* a Promethean's soul or is inextricably connected to it. As such, studying Azoth and Pyros, their limits, their effects on the world and their effects on the Promethean's body is a pathway to understanding the soul. Most new Serpents feel that the answer to converting Azoth to a truly human soul is as simple as learning a new Transmutation. A simple application of Pyros, directed in the right way at the right time, is all it takes to successfully conclude the Pilgrimage. Experience teaches that the Pilgrimage isn't that easy, but the Serpent's enthusiasm typically remains undimmed. Practice with manipulation of Pyros yields other positive results, not the least of which are the Vulcanus Transmutations.

As a Promethean progresses in the Refinement, she finds herself questioning whether Azoth really *is* the soul or just a pale substitute for one, just as the Promethean's existence is a pale substitute for life. When she realizes that Pyros is a tool and Azoth is a guiding force, but that underneath all of that lies the deeper mystery of the soul, she often changes Refinements. (That or she might find herself ready to create a new Promethean as part of the end of her Pilgrimage.)

In a throng of Prometheans, a follower of Mercurius can be extremely useful. Her command of Pyros allows for superb defense against Pandorans and Centimani, and the Alchemicus Transmutations allow a Serpent to help the throng gain access to otherwise difficult areas (among other uses). Additionally, the Serpent can act as a "battery" for the other Prometheans, provided that the throng has a ready source of electricity for her to convert to Pyros.

Other Prometheans don't always trust the Ophidians, however. Mercury is a poison, and those who seek to follow it sometimes fall under suspicion for the very properties that make them useful. What stops a Quicksilver Promethean from stealing Pyros from her fellows if she knows she can get away with it? What stops her from changing her mind and her loyalties if doing so is expedient? The Mercurius tries to explain that such betrayals are not in keeping with the Refinement's tenets, but she is often hard-pressed to make such explanations stick.

## THE SOUL IS ENERGY.

If the soul is some nebulous, unquantifiable entity, then what use is it? Energy can be measured and used. Although the soul's measurable qualities haven't yet been discovered, that doesn't mean they don't exist. By manipulating other energies that human beings haven't found (namely Pyros), the Ophidians hope to finally discover the properties of the soul. Performing experiments meant to test the soul is difficult, however, because the soul doesn't seem to behave the same way for everyone. Different Prometheans have various theories as to why this is. Perhaps every soul follows a set of properties determined by the individual in question, influenced by culture and experience. That would liken the soul to fabric and the experiences to dyes. That analogy is serviceable enough, but it still begs the underlying question: What is the fabric *made of*? That question drives the Ophidians to some truly strange practices.

## KNOW YOURSELF.

The Serpents are morally flexible, but to have this kind of flexibility, they must be able to find a center, a kind of neutral position from which they can act. Every Serpent must "swallow her own tail" — know herself, know her mores and her limits, know what she will and will not do in pursuit of her goals. These limits might change at any time, but that's the point. A Mercurius cannot recognize change without knowing where she started.

# PRACTICES AND OPERATIONS

The Serpents are not interested in spiritual growth as human society generally defines it. They are interested in results, and the results of going to religious services and the like don't help the Prometheans much. The Serpents also note that some human practices that have obvious mental or physical benefit (meditation, some physical disciplines) often have spiritual aspects tacked on. Is this because they exist, or because humans feel it necessary to add them because they can't admit to doing something for its own sake? It's not uncommon to find an Ophidian practicing various forms of meditation, yoga and even martial arts to see if they can find any clues to the nature of the soul.

In general, however, the Refinement of Mercurius focuses on practices that no human can appreciate — those involving Pyros. As such, the Serpent needs

to be around other beings who can manipulate, or at least understand, this energy. Usually this means joining a throng or setting up correspondence with other Prometheans, but since the Created are so rare, Serpents sometimes seek out stranger companions such as mages, werewolves or vampires. An Ophidian won't remain in such a being's company for long, however, if she feels that the creature isn't interested in pursuing anything useful. A vampire who just wants to drink blood and look pretty has nothing that a Serpent requires. A vampire involved in studying the vampiric condition and the strange mystical properties of his blood might find an enthusiastic and useful research partner in a Mercurius Promethean.

Like the Aurum, the Mercurius often spend time in institutions of higher learning. Unlike the Mimics, though, the Serpents aren't generally interested in observing the human inhabitants. They would rather use the resources of such places, the libraries and laboratories. Their Alchemicus Transmutations allow them to gain ingress to these areas and escape without trace, and it is in the halls of knowledge that the Ophidians typically leave messages for other Prometheans. They reason that their findings would be of most use to a Promethean seeking knowledge, and why else does one go to school?

## Drugs and Poisons

Mercury is a poison, and it causes those affected by it to lose their minds. The Ophidians are often fascinated by the effect that chemicals can have on behavior and perception. Some Serpents see these changes in terms of unbalanced humours, while a more modern practitioner of the Refinement might actually take the time to learn about neurochemistry and pharmacology. In any case, psychoactive drugs are readily available, as are hosts of potential test subjects. Serpents often lurk in subcultures where drug use is common, and some become more directly involved. Disquiet might make a Serpent drug dealer's clientele distrust her, but who trusts a dealer anyway?

Some Serpents with a similar interest in chemicals focus more on the power of drugs to heal or kill. The Alchemicus Transmutations can enable a Promethean to become a superb modern-day apothecary, analyzing and recombining substances. The only problem tends to be testing them, but some Ophidians are willing to take the risk to their bodies (experimenting on themselves) or their souls (experimenting on others).

## Places of Flux

Pyros doesn't leave the world unmarked when it manifests. When a Firestorm scars the land or one of the *qashmallim* appears (see pp. 250-253 for information on both these phenomena) it is the Prometheans following the Refinement of Quicksilver who take the keenest interest. Likewise, rumors of Pandoran or Centimani activity motivate them to investigate, if for no other reason that if Pyros is being manipulated there might be something to learn. This curiosity is just one more reason that the Serpents like to belong to throngs. Investigating such occurrences carries commensurate danger. In fact, the Serpent might find herself lying to her throng in order to induce them to check out these places, which does nothing to curtail the Ophidian reputation for duplicity.

## Transmutations

Alchemicus, Vulcanus

## Skills

Most Mercurius Prometheans have some expertise in Science, often with a Specialty in Chemistry, Biology, Physics or even Metallurgy. A Serpent with a keen interest in drugs and poisons probably has some knowledge of Medicine, while one who spends time investigating Firestorms and the like might know more about Occult. Many Ophidians develop Skills that allow them social and mental agility, such as Politics, Expression, Persuasion and Larceny. At least a dot in Academics is important for the Refinement, if only to understand its philosophical underpinnings.

### Stereotypes

**Aurum:** I feel for humans, too, but you know what they say about omelets and eggs.

**Cuprum:** Torment is part of us. It seems risky to deny it.

**Ferrum:** You're missing the *point*.

**Stannum:** I'll provide the targets. You provide the data.

* * *

**Centimani:** Amazing. Yes, as you say, terrifying and obscene, but still — amazing.

# STANNUM

## REFINEMENT OF TIN (TORMENT)

### FURIES

*I was there when they set the building on fire. I don't remember what made me think that people would accept me, but I tried. I tried to live among them. I maintained an apartment in the basement, hoping that the desolation that follows me would run downhill somehow and spare them. That did not happen. The building became cracked and decrepit, the people morose and irritable. Pets died, but rats seemed to thrive. I blinded myself to this wasting at first, pretending that these people's false smiles were something better than another face Disquiet wears.*

*I was there, in the basement, when I smelled the gasoline. I heard the shattering glass of beer bottles filled with the noxious stuff and topped with flaming rags. I heard the screams of the people still upstairs, but I could not bring myself to push through the burning debris and save them.*

*I was there, on the street with the rest of the survivors, when the true arsonists gave my name and description to the police. I could smell the gas on their hands even if no one else could. I saw their furtive glances to each other. The police and the other tenants were eager to believe them.*

*I will be there tomorrow when the arsonists gather to congratulate each other. I will no longer deny what I am. I will see what Torment can do when it flows in its natural direction.*

The world and all living things in it reject the Prometheans. This might be the natural order of things, it might be God's will, or it might simply be a side effect of the Azoth used to animate the flesh of a Promethean's body. They call it Disquiet, and when the effects of this rejection mount too far, pushing the Prometheans toward their base natures, they call it Torment.

The word scarcely does the feeling justice. To be rejected by the world as a whole is as painful a feeling as any living creature could ever know. Most Prometheans strive to avoid Disquiet and thus Torment. The Refinement of Tin, however, teaches that to shun Torment is to swim against the stream, to take up a fundamentally unnatural position that only invites further pain.

## OVERVIEW

The Furies take their nickname from the vengeful spirits of Greek mythology. These creatures whipped and tormented their targets, never allowing them to rest. The fact that the followers of Tin take this title is somewhat ironic, because they themselves are deprived of rest or succor by their Promethean state. These Prometheans often claim that they are following a cosmic imperative toward vengeance or that they are striking a balance between their tortured natures and the freakish abandon of the Centimani. The truth of the matter is that eventually, every Promethean just gets pushed too far.

Most legends of the Progenitors ascribe some fairly heinous violence to them at some point in their careers. The first of the Wretched, the famed Frankenstein monster, has become an iconic figure of unbridled rage and destruction, wreaking vengeance on those who dared to mock or thwart him. Likewise, the stories of the Golem of Prague state that he went on a murderous rampage when his creator forgot to make him sleep. Prometheans of all Lineages look at these stories as exaggerations and cautionary tales, but they also pass along stories that are much more shocking.

One such tale concerns an Egyptian Promethean (probably an Osiran, but possibly a Muse) who was driven from her home by a mob. An influential family spurred these citizens to violence, and the Promethean barely escaped intact. She vowed that the family who had started the riot would suffer for three generations — one for her home, one for her burned flesh and one for her child. (She had been assembling parts to build a new Promethean, but they were destroyed when she was ousted.) For the next three generations, she visited the family and murdered firstborn sons in their cribs, slew the friends and teachers of the children she did allow to live, and made sure that the last thing the elderly members of the family saw on their deathbeds was her face. After the fourth generation was born, she left Egypt forever, vowing never to return to the place of such sorrow.

A more recent Stannum story speaks of a Golem created on the banks of the Mississippi River. This Golem ran afoul of a cabal of mages who saw him as a threat. Despite his best efforts at communication, he found himself seemingly unable to take a few steps without some run of bad luck. He finally gave in to his Torment and swore vengeance on the sorcerers, who found that their protective magics did not avail them against an enraged and persistent Tammuz. As the last lay dying, however, he

cast one final spell that warped the oath of vengeance the Golem had sworn. Now, instead of being satisfied with the deaths of the mages who had tortured him, he hungers for the blood of *all* spellcasters. The dying mage probably reasoned that the creature wouldn't be able to survive a protracted war against his kind, but history seems to indicate otherwise. The Golem allegedly still hunts mages up and down the mighty Mississippi, catching them unaware and ripping them apart.

## PRACTITIONERS

Almost every Promethean follows the Refinement of Torment at some point on his Pilgrimage. Sometimes Stannum is the first Refinement a Promethean pursues, often because of an absent, abusive or cryptic creator. Others come to Tin after witnessing the worst effects of Torment. A mob turns against the Promethean, he witnesses the destructive effects of Disquiet, he rampages from hunger and winds up killing some innocents — the exact happenstance varies. The important thing is that the Promethean decides that fighting Torment is more work and pain than it's worth.

Golems and the Wretched find Stannum the most easily. The Wretched are already aggressive by nature, and their Torment pushes them toward action. Whatever else might be said against it, the Refinement of Tin is not for the passive. Likewise, the steadfast and stubborn Tammuz have great difficulty letting go of a wrong or a slight, so the vengeance aspect of the Refinement might appeal to them.

The desire for revenge does not inspire many Osirans to practice Stannum, but some do give themselves over to Torment for philosophical reasons. Doing so is difficult, however, because part of the philosophy of Tin involves letting go of self-control and giving decisions over to Torment. The Nepri are not given to this kind of abandon. The Muses, likewise, have difficulty with this Refinement. Yet, as they are often created to love, a Galateid scorned can make a superb Fury.

## PHILOSOPHY

What does it mean to embrace Torment? How can a Promethean engage in such beliefs and practices without losing himself completely? Despite any contrary claims by practitioners of other Refinements, the Stannum actually walk a very fine line between wisdom and madness.

A Fury strives to understand Torment and Disquiet with the same fervor as a Pariah, but with different intent. The Cuprum seek to become part of the world and thus immune to Torment, while the Stannum believe that Torment *is* part of the world, so fighting against it is useless.

While Stannum might believe that Torment is intrinsic to the Promethean condition and should be accepted, attitudes on the subject vary among the Furies. Some practitioners take a relativist stance on the matter, believing that any action undertaken while being guided by Torment is acceptable because Torment cannot be controlled. Others feel that it is important to recognize the difference between an urge driven by Torment and an urge driven by the conscious mind to avoid Torment-driven urges, but in order to discern the difference, one must experience both.

Not all Stannum worry so much about the philosophical element of the Refinement, though. A Promethean's stint as a Fury can last only a few weeks as he pursues vengeance or anger or some other Torment-born attitude, only to fade away as the Promethean becomes rational again. Of course, so brief a time pursuing Tin won't teach any of the truly important lessons of the Refinement, but learning these lessons requires looking beyond simple vengeance and realizing *why* Prometheans suffer Torment. The answer to this riddle is not something that one Promethean could explain to another. In the midst of the hate, fear and frustration of embracing Torment, there is clarity and wisdom… if the Fury has enough stamina to follow the Refinement through. Stannum, therefore, is unique in that the perceived goal of the Refinement (vengeance, self-indulgence, violence) is so different from the actual goal (wisdom through excess and indulging in destructive behaviors). Yet, former Furies rarely inform new converts to the Refinement of this truth, as the wisdom of Tin must be earned rather than bestowed. It's unlikely that a new Fury would listen anyway.

Other Prometheans view the Furies as immature and dangerously self-centered, which might be true for the more outspoken and overt Stannum. Despite the practitioner's nickname and any talk of vengeance, however, not every follower of Tin has something to avenge. The cornerstone of the Refinement is simply the embrace of Torment rather than the struggle against it, which can lead to aggressive and antisocial behavior. It would be misleading to suggest that every Promethean following this Refinement has a chip on his shoulder, though. When joining a throng, practitioners of Tin usually find compatriots with distinct agendas that happen to mesh with their own. They are most likely to join with Titans and Ophidians, since these Prometheans are generally more tolerant of the Stannum tendency toward aggression. Mimics are too focused on blending in with humanity, and Pariahs are often too sedentary for the Furies' tastes (not to mention their completely antithetical views on the subject of Torment). In general, a throng without a Tin Promethean doesn't feel the loss. Their Transmutations are useful, but by no means necessary for the survival of a throng, and the Stannum tendency to attract trouble makes their value questionable. Older and wiser Prometheans, however, realize that the benefit of including a practitioner of Tin in a throng isn't chiefly for the throng, but for the Fury. By being near other Prometheans, he can more quickly work through his reliance on Torment as a crutch and an excuse, and continue on his Pilgrimage.

Tin is associated with the planet Jupiter and the astrological sign of Sagittarius. Long considered the planet of fortune and luck, Jupiter seems an odd choice for the Stannum, but modern-day Prometheans find it quite appropriate. Jupiter is the largest of the planets, an immense vortex of power, surrounded by moons and other satellites. The Furies, too, seem to attract others, but not because of any positive social aspects. Their embrace of Torment leads enemies to notice them more quickly than other Prometheans, and their reckless nature (which is also considered indicative of Sagittarius) means that trouble is never far behind.

The true reason behind the Stannum identification with Jupiter is simpler, however. Jupiter is the Roman name of Zeus, and Zeus, of course, chained Prometheus to a rock to suffer daily torture. Jupiter, therefore, is symbolically responsible for Torment. This association is emblematic of the lesson of Tin: By embracing Torment, the Furies perpetuate it. Once they realize that, they are free to turn away from Jupiter and continue their journeys.

## IN TORMENT, TRUTH.

To some degree, every Promethean is a slave to his humours. No Promethean wishes to admit the extent to which those urges drive him. Indeed, few Prometheans even realize how much influence their basic natures hold. The Stannum dedicate themselves to finding out exactly how much of their action is driven by these humours — by Torment — and how much is driven by their conscious mind. In order to discover this limit, they let Torment guide them, taking note of their feelings and desires and of the effects that Torment and Disquiet have on the world around them. Doing so leads to a greater degree of control over Disquiet (as through the Disquietism Transmutations), but it should also lead to greater self-knowledge. Achieving such knowledge requires being guided by Torment but not consumed, which is a difficult balance indeed.

## FORGIVE NOTHING, FOR NOTHING IS FORGIVEN.

At the heart of the Stannum philosophy lurks an ugly kernel of nihilism, or at least fatalism. The world's hate and rejection of Prometheans results in Torment, so the Furies feel justified in turning some of that hatred back upon the world. To them, forgiveness is a lie. If absolution and acceptance were truly possible, they could escape some of the innate hatred that Nature shows them. As it is, all they can do is displace it.

Because the world shows them no favor, they nurse grudges and remember slights with a fierce and frightening intensity. A Promethean starting his journey toward the Refinement of Tin often begins by making a list of those who have wronged him and deciding to

what degree these wrongs require redress. Sometimes a threat or a grotesque expression of displeasure (such as leaving severed body parts in the party's bed) will suffice. Sometimes nothing short of the offender's mutilation or death is sufficient.

Not all Stannum have anyone or anything specific to serve as a target for their anger. Commonly, Prometheans who do have specific enemies tend to reconsider their motives for following the Refinement once those enemies have been dealt with. Unfocused Stannum, those who come to the Refinement out of sheer bitterness, tend to take a little longer to find this sort of self-reflection.

# PRACTICES AND OPERATIONS

Violence is a necessary part of the Refinement of Torment, so all Stannum have some preferred way of inflicting it. Some Furies who have not been schooled in the deadly arts rely upon Transmutations. Others take more roundabout means, sabotaging vehicles and other machines or laying traps for their victims. The Electrification Transmutations help immensely in such endeavors.

In the past, it was possible for a Fury to simply approach his target and attack, but doing so is rarely practical in modern times. Instead, the Promethean must study his target, sometimes for weeks or months, until he devises a way to exact revenge without bringing retribution down upon his head (or the heads of the members of his throng). This exacting work fits better with some Lineages' Torment than others. It's a rare Wretched Promethean who can quell his rage long enough to collect this sort of data. Stannum who can stand to wait often become proficient at using surveillance gear and tactics, shadowing and stalking, and often frightening their targets from afar.

Many Furies find or create a space to be alone, one in which they can give themselves over to fits of Torment without being disturbed. The appearance of such lairs varies. An Osiran might have pictures of the objects of his envy tacked to every surface (and perhaps riddled with knife or bullet holes), while an Ulgan's home might resemble a wild beast's lair. A Wretched hovel is a mess of destroyed objects and bloodstains (either from victims or from punching walls until knuckles bleed), while a Muse's might be neat and tidy but laden with subtle traps and hidden blades to damage intruders. A Golem's lair is likely to be remote and almost empty, and probably only large enough to admit the Tammuz who comes there to brood.

## ELECTRONICS AND MACHINES

Stannum often have an affinity for machines. This might be an outgrowth of their Electrification Transmutations, or might simply be because machines don't shun Prometheans the way living things do. A Fury might make his home in a junkyard, an electronics warehouse, a disused laboratory or any other area with a ready supply of useful machinery. While few Stannum have much in the way of formal knowledge of engineering or metallurgy, they develop skills in repair and jury-rigging through trial and error (often to the dismay of their enemies).

## COUNTERCULTURE

Most cultures have a place for disaffected youth, and the Furies tend to gravitate toward it, using Disquietism to shunt the feelings of distrust and revulsion they would usually face off onto more deserving targets. Stannum Prometheans don't seek out subcultures based on any one thing. It might be music, art, politics or social philosophy, but if it annoys or offends those in power, it often resonates with the Furies. In this appreciation, the Stannum find some common ground with their Aurum compatriots, as the Mimics are often also interested in what makes some humans differ from others.

## TRANSMUTATIONS

Disquietism, Electrification

## SKILLS

Aside from the combat-related Skills that many Furies develop in pursuit of vengeance, many Stannum learn or possess ratings in Crafts (reflecting their affinity for machines) and Stealth (used for stalking their targets). Intimidation is almost a given, though other Social Skills tend to fall by the wayside, with the possible exception of Streetwise. A Fury who delves into the philosophical aspects of Torment might increase Occult or Academics as well.



### Stereotypes

**Aurum:** Yeah, aren't the humans pretty? Watch out. They bite.

**Cuprum:** Put that blindfold on nice and tight, there.

**Ferrum:** I appreciate your concern and applaud your ideals, but they're both seriously fucking misplaced.

**Mercurius:** I'll help you with your little experiment if you'll just shut the hell up for a few minutes.

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**Centimani:** You think I'm going to become like you just because I'm not interested in playing nice? Don't make me laugh.

## The New Dawn: Mortality

Almost all Prometheans seek to escape their state and become truly alive. For them, this goal isn't just a utopian fantasy or a promise to be fulfilled in some afterlife beyond death. The chance to become mortal, really and truly human, is no imaginary reward — it can happen. It is rare, and the quest for this Holy Grail might take years, decades or even centuries, but it is possible. Some Prometheans who have achieved the prize and retained memories of their tormented lives as reanimated corpses, have approached Prometheans to give them the good news. Their stories have spread all over, carried by nomadic Prometheans and told to others as miraculous accounts of escape from their hellish state. All Prometheans prize these tales, clinging to them in their hearts during the worst of times. Although some find the path too hard, or even unattainable despite the example of those who have gone before, their vocal bitterness toward Mortality hides a deep pain inside, a yearning that even the most monstrous of Prometheans cannot help but feel.

Becoming mortal means that Disquiet will no longer plague them, allowing them to live among other beings without triggering fear and hate. It means they can claim a soul, that intangible but priceless substance they believe mortals possess. With a soul, they can truly become part of Creation, and perhaps even experience an afterlife upon death. Without it, they will continue to be repulsed by humans and Nature itself, and upon death, their Fire will go out, with no god or angel to breathe new life into it. Or so many Prometheans believe.

But how does one achieve Mortality? There is no single answer. The Pyros responds to this potential in many ways. Prometheans know only that in certain places, at certain times, they can experience epiphanies that reveal insights into Mortality, and which stoke the Fire within them, transforming the Azoth and the Promethean with it. They seek out these moments, drawn by their Inner Fires, traveling across the face of the earth to find them. Although these special events and places hold a mystical promise for them, they can actually be quite prosaic — or supernaturally dangerous. Any experience can hide the promise of Mortality. Finding out which ones actually do is the work of a lifetime… or longer.

This questing to places that hold the promise of an alchemical transmutation of the Azoth is called the Pilgrimage, and almost every Promethean is a nomad on its trail. There is no single Pilgrimage, but many, leading to different places for different Prometheans. The event that might stoke one Promethean's Azoth might mean nothing to another, or even pose a terrible danger to one who is not called but tries to claim the prize anyway.

## Vitriol and the *Lapis Philosophorum*

The ancient alchemists sought to create the Philosopher's Stone, the end result of their Great Work. For Prometheans, this *Lapis Philosophorum* is equated with Mortality. Once created, it will completely transform the Promethean from his wretched state into the life of a mortal, accepted by Nature and his fellow man. The key to creating this "stone" is Vitriol, the solvent that dissolves impurities from the Promethean's being. The Vitriol catalyzes the Azoth, and the vapors that arise transmute animated flesh slowly and steadily into soul.

Vitriol cannot be manufactured. It must be collected along the Pilgrimage. Prometheans conceive of the Pilgrimage as made up of stages (called milestones in game terms). These stages are hard to classify, for they vary with each individual, and the number is likewise impossible to define. One Promethean might be able to achieve Mortality by passing five milestones, while another might need 15 or 20 such lessons before he can complete his study.

A milestone represents an epiphany in the Promethean's search for escape, and it generally comes in the form of a sudden, deep understanding of what it means to be mortal. While it is one thing to study mortals from afar and intellectually grasp what issues they must confront, how they typically confront them and what beliefs they have forged from them, it is another thing entirely to truly *live* that experience. Only through this lived, felt experience, known deep in the gut, the heart and the head, can a Promethean truly get it. Each time he does so, Vitriol bathes his Azoth and gives off transformative vapors, unlocking new powers. Within the retort of his inner self, a soul begins to distill. With proper heat, care and continued pressure — from more milestones and the Vitriol they release — the soul will harden and whiten, transmuting dead flesh to living, soulful cells.

## This Mortal Coil: The Redeemed

What happens to the Promethean should she actually attain the sought-for state of humanity? Stories differ. Some say that the Promethean becomes a perfected human, normal in all outward means but special within, with a soul that is even more pure than most humans'. While she must suffer the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"— pain, disease, hunger, ignorance of the supernatural world — from now on, she no longer suffers outright rejection from Nature. She can find friendship and even love among her fellow mortals. Few Prometheans consider the tradeoff a raw deal. Indeed, most would pay anything for even a day in which they could experience and participate in true love and companionship.

There is some confusion about whether the Promethean-become-mortal, the Redeemed as one is called, can remember

her life as a Promethean. Some seem to, evinced by the rare mortal who encounters a Promethean and knows far too much about their condition and ragged culture to be a complete stranger to it. The consensus is that memory is an artifact related to the Promethean's purity during the blessed transformation. Some remember, but most do not. To forget is a blessing, for the Redeemed can forge a normal life with no memory of the horrors she has witnessed and committed.

There are some who say the Redeemed aren't merely human, but superhuman. To their minds, those Redeemed who have revealed themselves to Prometheans are the failed ones. They might have become mortals, but to be merely mortal is hardly a step up from a Promethean's present condition. It only exchanges the trials of enforced loneliness for weak flesh and ignorant minds. These Prometheans have trouble accepting that the ultimate result of their diligent alchemical operations is not perfected beyond the dreams of even man. There are many mythologies about what a Redeemed Promethean can become, but no evidence exists for any of them. Yet, in a world where many secrets are hidden, lack of evidence is no proof of falsehood.

The Redeemed do, however, have one special quality that all Prometheans aspire to acquire: a soul. While the soul cannot be seen or touched, Prometheans seem to know instinctively that mortals have them and the Created do not. Although Prometheans represent a form of life from death and can defeat death again, they know that when their Azoth finally fades out, that's the end for them. Only mortals are believed to have eternal life through the soul. This eternity might be the reward of Heaven (or Hell), the chance to live again through reincarnation or even the ability to evolve to higher spiritual states. To a Promethean, this ideal represents a reprieve from an ultimate and final death sentence. No creature, not even one falsely and unjustly brought to life in another man's corpse, can easily accept the prospect that he might one day cease to exist.

Concerned with how they will live as fragile mortals when they do complete their Great Work, some Prometheans engage their Azoth in a special type of alchemical operation that is said to allow them to retain a portion of their power upon becoming human. The result of this operation is the creation of an Athanor, an internal furnace for converting Vitriol into a substance that will survive the achievement of Mortality. Not all Prometheans choose to develop an Athanor, for doing so requires a degree of focus and dedication to which many aren't ready to commit. Some consider Athanors a folly for those who believe in fairy tales, for few can get close enough to the Redeemed to find out if the Athanors work as claimed.

Most Prometheans who encounter or become aware of a Redeemed become intensely curious and spy on her from afar. As their curiosity grows, they might risk actual contact, incognito at first, but eventually giving away their true identities. Sadly, such revelations usually end badly. Most



Redeemed have no memory of the existence of Prometheans and are as affected by Disquiet as other mortals are. In the worst instances, these encounters end with the death of the Redeemed, after she tries to summon help or even attack the Promethean herself.

Wise Prometheans who commit such tragic acts simply flee the scene, never to return, but some cannot let the matter go. For whatever reason — the need for answers, the need to undo a wrong, or the selfish need for allies on the Pilgrimage — the Promethean gathers up the Redeemed's corpse and commits the act of creation upon it. If all goes well, the result is a new Promethean. The being rises in confusion, like all others, but might, over time, begin to remember, not just her Redeemed life, but her former Promethean life.

It is a terrible thing to do this to a Promethean who has won her Pilgrimage and must now start over again. The new Promethean's resentment for her creator is often ten times more intense than usual, though some Created might actually thank their benefactors for giving them yet another chance at life.

Being returned to lead after being transmuted to gold is an extremely rare occurrence, however, noted mainly because of its mythically tragic qualities as a campfire story among Prometheans. Most of the Redeemed are left alone, or are protected by knowing Prometheans, who hope to gain some merit toward their own Mortality by protecting one who has gone on before them.

## Going to the Wastes

The progression of the Azoth on the Pilgrimage sometimes becomes too much to handle. The Promethean, seeking to escape from its alchemical march, withdraws and goes to the wastes. As Frankenstein's monster fled to the Arctic to avoid humanity, so the Promethean removes himself from population centers and ekes out a life far from others, even the companionship of fellow Prometheans. She might hole up in a deep cave, rest on the ledge of a high mountain or retreat to an abandoned shack in the forest. Over time, his Azoth cools and reverses its evolutionary processes to a degree that the Promethean is comfortable with, allowing him to risk moving among mortals again in search of his own true life.

Practitioners of the Refinement of Copper often reside in the wilderness, but this is not the same as going to the wastes. In the latter, the Promethean must withdraw from all active participation in the world, into a sort of hibernation, where she cannot use her Transmutations if she wishes to gain the benefits of withdrawal. In a sense, she becomes dormant, similar to the state a Pandoran is forced into in the absence of Azothic radiance. The difference, however, is that the Promethean is in control and can exit her dormancy at any time. Indeed, she must often refrain from the urge to break her fast from the world, should worldly temptation or even dangers intrude upon her lonely hermitage.

While a Promethean endures this retreat, his body ceases to age. Although the Created do not suffer the disabilities of age per se — their bodies remaining in their given or intentionally cultivated states throughout their existence — they will eventually cease to live as their Fire goes out. Therefore, a Promethean who fears perishing from age before his Pilgrimage is complete might go to the wastes to meditate on new approaches to the attainment of the Great Work.

## Refusing the Dawn

Even those Prometheans who reject the concept of the Pilgrimage are still on a journey toward Mortality, whether they like it or not. Most Prometheans believe that those who do not consciously take charge of their steps on this path will become victims of its forced evolutions. Simply by existing, Prometheans will eventually stumble across moments or places where the potential for Mortality is strong and responds to their own personal Pyros. Those who reject Mortality can attempt to avoid these events, and eke out a life of stasis, undisturbed by transformations. Some Prometheans on this path of denial even aid others who walk it. They do so out of fear or from a desire to forge their own destiny, removed from the curse of becoming merely mortal. Some even attempt to set down stakes in a certain place, uncaring if their Disquiet eventually drains it of life and vigor. Others mark safe houses or way stations whereby a Promethean can stay for a while before moving on, thus avoiding depleting the land.

## The Sodality of Nomads

Imagine the life of a typical Promethean, this one an Ulgan who follows the Refinement of Copper. His name is Daniel, a name he chose from the first book he found after his birth (a Gideon's Bible).

He has spent months in a national forest, hiding from all humans who come near him. His Disquiet caused a town to turn against him a year ago, and he is still afraid of what will happen should he get too close again. The townsfolk banded together to hunt him down, after someone called him a homegrown terrorist. Exacerbating their problems were the economic concerns caused by the loss of their crops. Daniel had lived in an old barn by the fields for a number of weeks, working as a day laborer when he could get the work. He wanted to be close to others, but he rarely talked with them and he kept his distance as much as possible in the broad fields.

But his Disquiet had disturbed even the land, and it became ill around him, the crops failing in a wider and wider swath around the barn where he slept. Even though nobody realized this consciously, they put two-and-two together

unconsciously and figured out the source. Their explanation was that somebody was doing genetic modification experiments on their fields. When no corporation could be made a proper scapegoat, they turned against the lonely guy who showed up now and then to work the fields, the one who was clearly nervous around others. What was he up to anyway? Nothing good, that was for sure.

Daniel moved on, into the vast woods where only occasional tourists and backpackers disturbed him. Animals wouldn't come near him, though a hungry panther took a run at him once before thinking better of it and disappearing into the brush. For a time, Daniel was happy, removed from the turmoil of human proximity. As the weeks passed, however, he hungered for someone to share his thoughts with. He considered creeping into the local camp and using its public Internet connection to join a chat room where he could talk unhindered by his repulsive presence. That would mean coming close to humans again in the flesh, though, and he wasn't ready for that yet.

The urge finally became too much. He knew that if he spent more time alone, he would go mad. His hope for Mortality faded the longer he spent away from the world. If only there were others like him near here. He had met others before, but they had gone their own way long ago. He learned from them the pilgrim marks, the language of symbols and signs that other Prometheans used to mark places so others on the Pilgrimage would know of any danger or aid to be expected there. These signs were like the symbols hobos and gypsies used, but it was unique to the Created. Many symbols were drawn from alchemy but with meanings known only to Prometheans. Some, those imbued with Pyros, could not even be seen by humans.

Daniel finally left his forest retreat and stumbled at night upon a campsite set back from the local highway. The fire was cold, perhaps two days old, but a prickling in his skin alerted him that something had been left behind. He carefully scanned the campsite and found them, hidden Firebrand marks, scrawled with ashes upon a pile of rocks nearby. He rushed forward and dropped to his knees, staring at the signs. The marks almost looked random, except for a few prominent circles and lines. But there was more there, symbols written by Fire that could not be seen by mortals eyes but which his Azothic gaze could perceive. One of his own had been here — a Promethean who knew enough of the Transmutations of Vulcanus to write his message here, imbued with Pyros so that any passing Promethean would sense it.

Daniel peered carefully, deciphering the marks. The one who had left them was saying that he had come from a city down the road, in a direction Daniel had not been yet. He described three other Prometheans (the sign for Azoth with three marks) and a hoard of Pandorans. The author had left the others to their fate, and he was now warning any who could read this to turn away and go elsewhere.

Three Prometheans, Daniel thought, attacked by Pandorans. Now either dead or in need of help. He sat there for a long while before realizing what he knew he had to do. He would go to that city and risk the Pandorans. He would free the Prometheans, if they still lived, and maybe, in return for his selfless act, they would become his friends. He wanted this more than anything. Even if the Pandorans got him too and ate him to get his Azoth, the effort would have been worth it. He knew that deep down.

His sacrifice might even be worth the greatest prize of all: the chance at Mortality.

Daniel rose up and began his long trek in search of the endangered Prometheans.

## Drawn Together

Prometheans walk a lonely road. Some live their lives without ever meeting another Promethean other than their creator. Most of them, however, eventually do encounter others of their kind as they wander in search of release from their wretched state. The Azoth within them is drawn to other Azothic radiance. This radiance is usually so rarefied that it cannot be detected or discerned by even the most sensitive scientific devices, but a Promethean knows. He might not be consciously aware of the presence of others until they are very close, but his Azoth knows.

This Azothic radiance can alert sensitive Prometheans when others of their kind are near. Curious, most follow the undeniable attraction toward this new source of Azoth. In this way, Prometheans who normally stay hidden from mortals can find one another.

This radiance isn't always a boon, however. The same power that stirs a Promethean's Azoth also spurs dormant Pandorans to life. These creatures crave Azoth, for they have none of their own. They need it to stay awake and mobile. Without it, they become dormant and revert to forms that don't even resemble living creatures — broken statuary, flotsam floating in a river, oddly shaped, half-buried rocks, and other forms. The same force that draws Prometheans together also draws predators to them.

For this reason, some Prometheans attempt to hide their Azothic radiance, to cloak it from Pandorans, which also withdraws it from the notice of other Prometheans. Doing so is called Dampening, and it is not done lightly. Once initiated the process is likely to repulse other Prometheans even when they are encountered. Only those Prometheans who are intent on their solitude tend to adopt this tactic. While Dampening doesn't prevent a Pandoran from escaping Dormancy due to proximity to the Promethean's Azothic radiance, it makes it harder for the Pandoran to trace the source back to him.

### Throngs

Those Prometheans who discover that another Promethean's calling on the Pilgrimage is similar to their own often choose to travel together. Some even form groups or

gangs, called throngs, if their quests are mutually helpful to one another. They learn to set aside their own needs at times to aid one of their own, and he returns the favor, so that at least one of them is likely to win the promise of new life. One who achieves the prize of Mortality serves as a lesson for others and can help his friends on the path (if he remembers his former life as a Promethean).

Those who band together into a throng can formalize their relationship with an alchemical pact, or Azothic Brand, a mark made on the flesh with Pyros. This Brand forms a conduit of energy flow, allowing one Promethean to give another a small portion of his own Pyros.

When Prometheans of the same Lineage pact together, their elemental affinities and humours are increased in power, aiding the practice of Transmutations. When Prometheans of differing Lineages pact together, their elements and humours are balanced by the others, allowing them to better quell the Disquiet they cause in others.

In most of the stories that tell of Prometheans attaining Mortality, there is almost always a throng involved. Even if only one of its members attains true life, the lesson is that he could not have achieved it without the aid of others. None can say for sure if this motif represents an actual fact or merely reflects the Prometheans' longing for companionship in a lonely world.

## Meeting on the Road

Prometheans, like humans, cannot help but form cultures. For them, though, this culture is transmitted largely through absence — through the records left behind by other Promethean nomads, often written in symbols and codes and hidden where most humans would not find them (or understand them if they did).

When Prometheans meet, they almost always trade news and stories, provided they do not first recognize each other as enemies. They hunger for contact with their own kind, and news is often communicated only through these occasional meetings. Younger Prometheans have adapted to the Internet, and maintain long-distance friendships and information networks that way, but the technology is still too new to see widespread adoption by older Prometheans.

A number of customs have arisen concerning meet-ups along the Pilgrimage routes. Among them are the Measure, the Ramble, the exchange of parting tokens and the use of pilgrim marks.

### The Measure

A Promethean who has suffered many bouts of Torment bears a distinct tone to his Azothic radiance that other Prometheans might find unhealthy. When Prometheans first meet, each usually silently observes the other, scanning for notable features in that initial moment of contact. (They can see one another's disfigurements, for instance, even if those features aren't visible to mortals.) In so doing, each soaks in the other's presence, his Azothic radiance — basically taking the others' measure.

It is during this moment that a Promethean usually makes a judgment about whether he's going to like the other. Although there is no evidence that an unhealthy Azothic radiance is contagious, Prometheans are superstitious about such things and are always wary of any person, place or thing that might somehow compromise their chance at Mortality. Therefore, when strangers meet, each is wary about how the other might affect his own fate.

This consideration is entirely separate from whether or not personalities clash. A Promethean can despise another Promethean's personality yet still find his presence acceptable. Those who measure up often decide to stick together on their Pilgrimages, if even for a short while. Those who just don't synch usually trade polite pleasantries but find some excuse to part ways. Some, especially those currently in the grip of Torment or recently recovered from it, dispense with politeness altogether and announce their annoyance from the start. It's also quite common for one Promethean to find himself comfortable with one who does not feel likewise.

The Measure is not permanent. Two Prometheans who didn't like one another at first glance might think differently when they next meet, assuming one or both has experienced a change in his Azoth.

A Promethean is not obligated to dislike a Promethean who he feels doesn't measure up. Even though the force is a gut feeling associated with the Azoth, it exerts no pressure on the Promethean to act in certain ways toward the subject. If he were to suffer Torment, he might choose that mismatched Promethean as a target for his outrage or shame, but even here, he has a choice to act otherwise.

The Measure isn't writ in stone. It is merely a means Prometheans use to gauge whether another of their kind might prove a boon or a hindrance to their personal Pilgrimage.

### The Ramble

Prometheans are invariably curious about other Prometheans' personalities, experiences, triumphs and failings. It is common, upon meeting another Promethean and once the Measure has been completed, to ask him "What's your Ramble?" In other words, "What's your story?" The term alludes to the Pilgrimage itself, a ramble across the world, as well as the often longwinded, discursive manner that untrained storytellers use to tell their stories. It's common to have the teller, the Rambler, backtrack many times in his telling, as he remembers to add details that he forgot to mention earlier.

Some Prometheans write their Rambles into their flesh, tattooing themselves with symbols that represent important places they have been or people they encountered. Those experiences worthy of such a mark are usually the ones that earned the Promethean Vitriol as a milestone on her quest for Mortality. They stand as signs of what the Promethean

accomplished even if she dies before attaining her true goal of Mortality. Engraved in her flesh, they will outlast her for a while and tell those who find her body part of her story. (If nothing else, they spite those Pandorans who devour the flesh, reminding them as they eat that they can never attain even a portion of what the Promethean did.)

Once one's personal Ramble is complete, the other Promethean begins his. If the two (or more) Prometheans plan to stay in the same area or travel together for a while, they might wait until another evening to trade the next Ramble, so as to stretch out the companionship as long as possible. In later days, when they walk alone, they'll often turn their memories back to the Rambles of others, chewing over them in their minds to get the full taste of them.

The Ramble is the primary means by which Promethean culture is disseminated: the oral tradition in which the wisdom of all Prometheans is embedded. Once personal Rambles have been traded, and if time permits, it is customary to trade the Rambles of other Prometheans who aren't present. In this way, Prometheans learn the doings of many other Created who they haven't ever met. These are called folk Rambles, for they often take on the character of folk tales and myths.

## Parting Tokens

When Prometheans who have shared Rambles part ways, continuing on their own Pilgrimages, they customarily trade tokens, items that express a Promethean's identity. One Promethean might make little origami birds to give these to his fellow travelers as tokens to help them remember a Ramble, while another might hand out bottle caps he's collected (and maybe painted) on his wanderings. Yet another might give out dolls he has stolen from little girls. Those with some skill in arts and crafts might make highly personalized tokens of different materials.

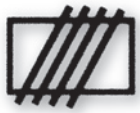
Prometheans often carry upon them multiple tokens from other Prometheans. They don't have to keep every token given to them, and some throw them away as soon as they're far enough away from the giver not to offend, but most cherish them. A collection of tokens isn't just a reminder of community, no matter how disparate and removed its members might be, its also a mark of how many friends one has made, for tokens are rarely given to those the Promethean doesn't like. Prometheans with many tokens are often accorded warm respect. Those who abuse this custom and steal or loot tokens from others, and then try to pass them off as one's own earned tokens, are spurned by others. Their Rambles describe the offender in detail, so that others will recognize him and turn him away as they take his Measure. It is a pitiful thing to be rejected by a society of rejects.

## Pilgrim Marks

Although Promethean culture is largely oral, a written language has developed from it. This language is a set of symbols used to convey simple ideas to those on the Pilgrimage, similar to the signs American hobos would leave on their travels, telling others about the lay of the land. "This is a good place to stay," one mark might read, or, "This person will feed you." "Don't come in here," another might warn, or, "Watch out for the cops here."


*"Be quiet"*

No one knows who first began using the marks, but they've spread across the world, and can be found in teeming cities like New York and London, and in remote caves in the Himalayas or on rocks in the Australian Outback. Wherever Prometheans have wandered, there are likely to be pilgrim marks.


*"Danger"*

Although the vocabulary of marks differs somewhat in different places (and in different times, with older marks differing from newer ones), there is an amazing consistency to them. Many Prometheans travel far and for many years in their travels, allowing a comprehensive set of common marks to spread. Younger Prometheans are tutored in these marks via the Rambles of other Prometheans, assuming their creators haven't taught them. It is considered cruel to send a Promethean out into the world with no knowledge of how to read the communications of his own kind.


*"Ghosts here"*


*"Man with a gun"*

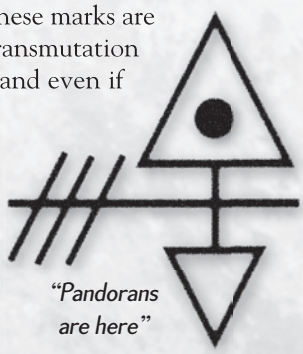
Pilgrim marks' common visual motif was clearly adopted from alchemy. Alchemical symbols for metals and other substances and operations appear in different forms in different marks, and, as with ancient Chinese writing, each mark can convey a wide range of related concepts.


*"Wasteland"*

Humans who see these marks often mistake them for the graffiti of gang signs. Without any context in which to read them, they make no sense. Even for those who know something about alchemy, the alterations made to recognizable symbols preclude easy understanding, and certainly no hints as to the Promethean meaning behind such a sign as "iron" (the body, firm purpose, athletic prowess) or "tin" (Torment, revenge, a vow).


*"Wealth"*

There exists a special class of pilgrim marks that humans cannot even perceive. These marks are made using the Firebrand Vulcanus Transmutation (p. 154). They are drawn with Pyros, and even if they are accompanied by a physical mark, the Pyros hides it from mortal sight. Prometheans have a sixth sense for detecting the presence of these fiery marks and can often find them even if they are covered up or buried. These sorts of marks


*"Pandorans are here"*



don't last forever, though. Those seeking a more durable message rely on more mundane marks carved into stone or concrete.

Pilgrim marks cannot usually tell complex stories, at least not with any accuracy. They are usually used to warn or alert others to certain features in the area. One of the most common warnings is the sign for "Pandoran," alerting Prometheans that there are dormant or active Pandorans nearby.

Of course, nothing keeps Pandorans from using pilgrim marks for their own ends. It is not unknown for a *Sublimatus*, an intelligent and cunning type of Pandoran, to learn the marks from a Promethean he has captured and put false marks nearby to make other Prometheans think the area is safe. Pandorans find it very hard to create Firebrand marks, so those still stand as a guarantee that a Promethean hand made them. They do not guarantee that the Promethean wasn't forced into making them by a Pandoran captor, though.

## Loners

Not all Prometheans are blessed with the company of others. Many toil on their Pilgrimages alone, rebuked by humans and Nature, and bereft of Promethean companionship. Even those who do gain companions don't always keep them, as the Pilgrimage inevitably draws individuals in separate directions. In the best of cases, this parting is temporary, and the friends can meet again later to walk together for another while before fate pulls them apart again.

The most precious throngs consist members who are willing to put aside their own Pilgrimages to follow the needs of one of their fellows, knowing that, when their own need is greatest, their companions will do likewise for them. In such a fashion, at least one of them might gain the holy elixir of Mortality, and his example will hearten the others as they continue on in their joint path until each attains the long-sought solace.

Such fellowships are rare, though. The majority of Prometheans are forced to walk in solitude. They might have been betrayed by other Prometheans or ill used by them, or they might have been the ones doing the betraying, so that they now fear to meet others in case their tale has been told in a Ramble. Perhaps they never liked the company of others anyway, and they find the Disquiet a boon of sorts, keeping meddlesome humans away from them. These few prefer to eke out their lives in solitary journeys, and some have spurned the Pilgrimage entirely. Of what value is Mortality to them, they wonder, when it so clearly makes other mortals weak, fearful and ignorant? Better to build one's own Fire

to new heights of incandescence, heedless of the world and its petty creatures. What can a Promethean become if he is not limited by his intercourse with others?

A true monster, some say. Prometheans often come to distrust those of their kind who consistently refuse to interact and who stay away from places where they might be tested by Vitriol. It is understandable for a Promethean to spend many years on his own, but if he does not eventually seek converse with others, he might be dangerous to the Pilgrimage. It is said that there are Prometheans so far removed from any echo of humanity that they try to steal the Vitriolic gains of another Promethean's Pilgrimage and use them for their own twisted purposes. Such Created are reviled and infamous in folk Rambles.

## Pandora's Box

When poor Pandora opened the box containing all the ills of the world, she unleashed Flux, the chaotic aspect of the Divine Fire. It had previously been kept under control by Zeus, but his anger at human use of the Pyros caused him to relinquish this control. Or so the story goes. What it really refers to is the fact that Flux is usually sparked by overweening curiosity and lack of foresight when one handles the Divine Fire.

## Flux

The Divine Fire can be both transformative and marring, creative and destructive. Without the stability gained through an alchemical process of purification, the Pyros can run wild, a conflagration of mutagenic power. This is Flux.

Just as the Azoth is a force of coagulation, drawing things together, Flux is its opposite pole: disintegration, dissolution, chaos and destruction.

Flux is endlessly fecund in the sheer amount of horrors it can spit out. It is the dark side of Nature, what some have called Lilith's side — named for the she-devil from Jewish myth, Adam's forgotten first wife. It is the dark shadow of Nature's harmonious creation, unbalanced and disruptive. Its creations break the rules. They are things that literally cannot *be* in the normal course of Nature.

And yet, Flux is not some otherworldly realm or force from beyond reality. It *belongs* in the world, in the same way that there is a chaotic or Dionysian side to the human psyche. It is a natural part of the whole, although a part that is denied by the world (just as waking consciousness denies a dream by soon forgetting it).

Humans are dimly aware of this force and have written about it in myth and poetry. The polarity of Nature and Flux has been envisioned in many different ways: Day vs. Night, Apollo vs. Dionysus, Athena vs. Hecate, reason vs. unreason, left brain vs. right brain, good vs. evil. Flux is inimical to mortals and has been denied for good reasons — it's destructive and chaotic. Awakening its spark can lead only to something inhuman and dangerous for the ordered world. This force haunts Prometheans, but they can learn to master it. Pandorans are also fueled by it, but they are its slaves.

Prometheans rarely suffer from Flux directly. They most often encounter it in the form of its "children": the Pandorans, created by Prometheans when the act of creating another Promethean goes wrong.



## Pandorans

Prometheans think of themselves as monsters, things terrifying repulsive to mortals and often driven by emotions they can't control. The word itself is used in popular culture to refer to the Promethean created by Victor Frankenstein. Is it not a fitting moniker for all Prometheans? Perhaps, but there are things yet more monstrous that stalk out of sight of human eyes.

Pandorans are a plague introduced into the world by Prometheans who have not sufficiently purified their Azoth through the alchemical rigor of a Refinement or the lessons of the Pilgrimage. There are many acts and deeds that can degrade a Promethean's subtle grasp of what it is to be human, and should he fall too far from empathy and understanding of the human condition, his Divine Fire becomes untamed and susceptible to sudden flares of Flux. If this should occur while he is in the process of creating another Promethean, the result is not another Wretched or Muse or whatever Lineage. It is instead a horde of creatures of impossible shapes.

The corpse used to spark Promethean life instead becomes infused with Flux and tears itself apart. Limbs and organs transform and grow into small creatures of varying features and capabilities. And these creatures are hungry, desperate for one thing: the Azoth that burns within the bodies of Prometheans. They need it to remain animate, for without the power provided by a Promethean's Azothic radiance, they fall into a deep Dormancy. Their bodies change again, melting into hardened features that resemble inert objects such as logs, rocks or even statues. They cannot be identified as Pandorans in this state. Indeed, in many respects, they aren't Pandorans at all without Azothic radiance (or a good store of Pyros) to animate them. They can be lifted, moved, broken or carved like any normal object of their type — until Azothic radiance from a Promethean's presence spurs them into instant animation and a feeding frenzy.

Pandorans, like Prometheans, are typed by Lineage, except their Lineages are called Mockeries, because they are sick, twisted versions of their Promethean creator's true Lineage. The Frankenstein-created Mockery, for instance, is called the Torch-Born, for its Pandorans are often obsessed with fire.

Regardless of Mockery, the majority of Pandorans are of merely animal intelligence, although extremely cunning and vicious. The longer they exist in animate form, the

more sentient characteristics they can develop, but it takes many years for most Pandorans to gain any true intelligence. There is an exception, though. The *Sublimati* are Pandorans who, through a bizarre process of temporarily merging with other Pandorans or by eating Promethean Vitriol, have gained true sentience. These creatures are the most feared of all Pandorans, for they can plot and plan how to entrap their prey with a degree of cunning unknown to the more animalistic stalkers of their kind.

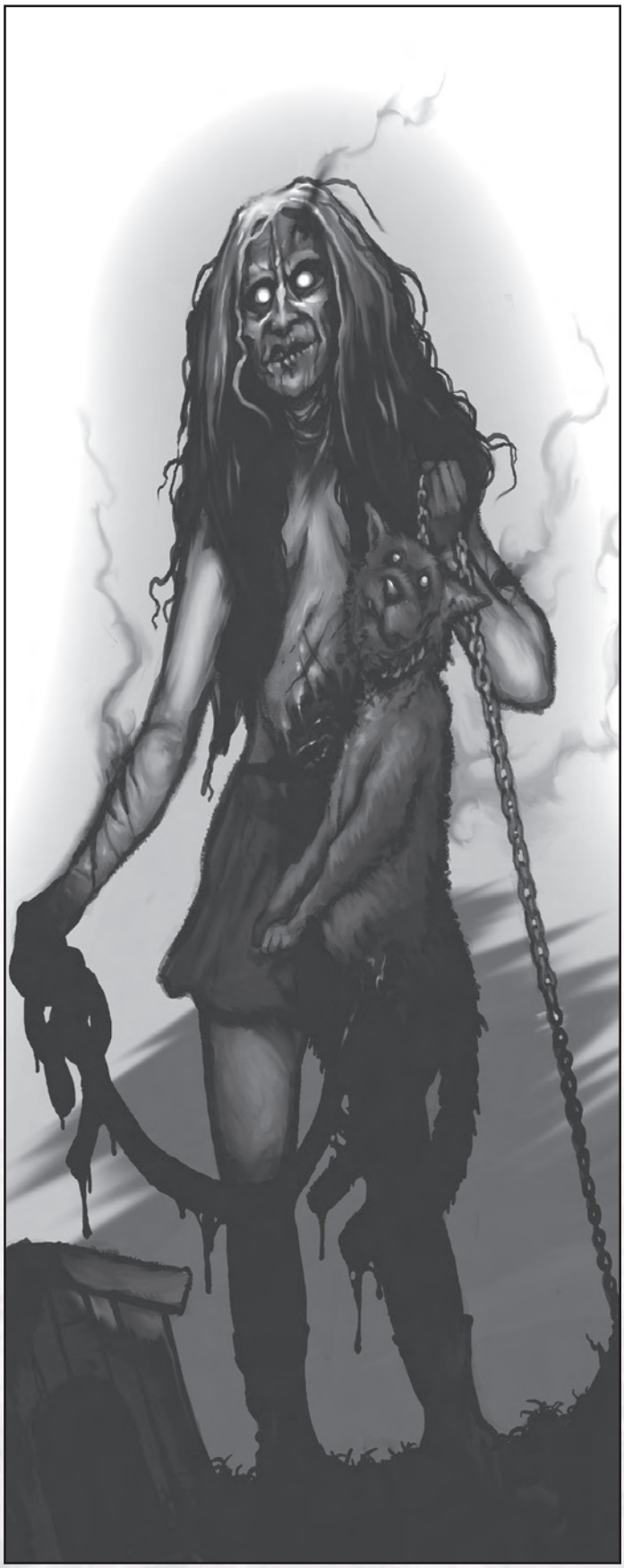
All Pandorans seek Prometheans as prey, for Prometheans are the only sources of edible Pyros. To acquire this precious resource, a Pandoran must devour the flesh of a Promethean. As he inflicts wounds by tearing off strips of flesh, he gains Pyros from the energy-infused meat. Pandorans must be cautious to hunt their prey, and their task is made even more difficult by the fact that they need to avoid being seen by humans. If a human should witness a Pandoran, Disquiet immediately works to drive the Pandoran into Dormancy. Some speculate that were Pandorans to have permanent Azoth of their own, rather than the temporary bit gained by feeding from Prometheans, they might be able to resist this enforced Dormancy, and act blatantly in front of mortals. But their own Disquiet defeats them.

As Prometheans wander on their Pilgrimages, they inevitably awaken Pandorans from Dormancy. They rarely even realize that they are doing so until the Pandorans attack. The stronger a Promethean's Azoth is, the greater the area he affects. A Promethean with weak Azoth might have to be in the same building with a dormant Pandoran before his radiance awakens it, but a Promethean strong in the purified substance might awaken all the Pandorans in a city as he enters the region. The world is believed to be littered with the bodies of dormant Pandorans, unknown to humans. A quaint rock might pique a person's interest, so he brings it home with him and puts it in his garden, only to have it leaping up and skitter off in a new shape one day — or worse, kill him for being in the way.

Pandorans are the bane of Prometheans, but a self-inflicted one, for they are created not by mortal demiurges but by Prometheans themselves. Some Prometheans believe their Pilgrimages will not be complete until they have destroyed every Pandoran they caused to be created, no matter how far the creatures have fled or deeply they have hidden. Other Prometheans scoff and leave it to others to clean up the messes they create.

## Centimani — "The Hundred-Handed"

Pandorans alone are not the only threat Prometheans must deal with. Their own kind can turn on them as well. Occasionally, a Promethean becomes fascinated or obsessed with Flux or Pandorans and seeks to better know or control them. While this pursuit is not wise, it can sometimes yield



benefits to other Prometheans when someone acquires new knowledge in his studies. The student might not survive his research should he get too close to his subject matter, though. Because such a course of study is dangerous, some Prometheans take the next step: to make Flux the object of their chosen Refinement, part of their Great Work.

It is these Prometheans, the Centimani as they are called (after the Latin term for the Greek monsters who guarded the Titans in Tartarus), who are a danger to other Prometheans. Their study of Flux allows them to adopt Pandoran Transmutations without the usual degradations that occur when a Promethean tries to tame Flux in such a manner. It also allows some of them to exert control over Pandorans, so that they become master rather than their prey.

While some Centimani use their powers of control to avoid Pandorans or to protect Prometheans, most do so to gain a retinue of creatures that can teach them more about Flux. This retinue must be fed regularly. The Centimanus cannot erase these beings' need for Azoth, so he must either provide it to them from his own flesh, or allow them to hunt the flesh of other Prometheans. Should a Promethean come to know the master behind the Pandorans attacking him, and survive to tell the tale, the Centimanus is in danger of Promethean reprisal as others hear about him. For this reason, most Prometheans try to kill Centimani on sight, regardless of whether their stated intentions are good. Anyone who would court Flux cannot be trusted.

Centimani tend to stick close to other Centimani when they encounter them, even if they hate each other's guts. There's strength in numbers, and Pandoran numbers alone are often not enough to withstand the ire of a Promethean throng.

## Waiting for the Dawn

What keeps most Prometheans going on their journeys through Saturnine Night is the promise of a New Dawn, the hope of attaining Mortality. Although many Prometheans give in to despair and become vile creatures, wreaking vengeance on the world rather than using its torments to distill the golden prize, most cling to the hope of delivery against all odds. The promise of Mortality is the promise of solace, an escape from loneliness and a purging of all one's terrible deeds. It is the hope of true life through the soul.

Some find it ironic that while many humans dream of attaining the sort of powers that Prometheans have, all a Promethean wants is to be human. This isn't just a case of the grass being greener on the other side of the fence, though. Prometheans know that all their alchemical abilities come at a terrible price, paid for in Disquiet and Torment. Most would gladly give these abilities up to escape the trap of solitude, emotional pain and the fear of ultimate extinction of their soulless selves. Unlike Prometheus the Titan, who had Hercules to free him from his punishment, each Promethean must break his chains on his own. While others can help him on his Pilgrimage to transmute the hard chains to soft gold, it is a task uniquely his own.

* * *

*You're driving through the woods at night when you notice a person stumbling down the road, looking confused. He looks like he's been in a fight, bruised and limping, but not bleeding. You almost drive on, figuring you'll dial 911 on your cell and let the cops handle it, but some sudden spark of empathy grabs hold. You know you need to help him now.*

*You pull over and ask if he's in trouble. He's startled to hear you and flinches from your gaze, as if expecting you to yell at him. You smile, trying to reassure him, all the same time wondering what the hell you're doing. This could be some sort of serial killer. Still, you reach over and open the passenger door, offering a ride.*

*The guy stands there, staring at the open door, as if he doesn't believe its real. Then he cautiously gets in, watching you the whole time as if waiting for you to pull a gun. You drive on, explaining that you can take him to a hospital or the police station, whatever he wants. He continues to watch you, silent.*

*You pull up to the hospital emergency room entrance and tell him he should go in, make sure he's all right. The guy looks at his wounds, pressing them gently and flinching in pain, but then suddenly smiling with joy. He presses a particularly nasty bruise hard. That has got to hurt, but he laughs, tears coming down his cheeks.*

*"It worked," he says. He looks at you. "You… helped me," he says, as if it were the rarest thing in the world.*

*"Yeah," you reply. "You looked like you needed a little bit of the milk of human kindness."*

*He smiles and gets out of the car. "Human," he says. "Yes. I am… human."*

*You begin to wonder if this guy needs psychiatric help more than physical aid. You wave and drive off. You glance in the rear view as you go and see the guy still standing there, his arms open and eyes closed, as if greeting the sun.*



# CHAPTER TWO
# CHARACTERS

Zo Malek is unlike any other of our kind I have met. She fascinates me:

"Why would anyone want to be human? Humans, they are petty. Humans, they are weak and shortsighted.

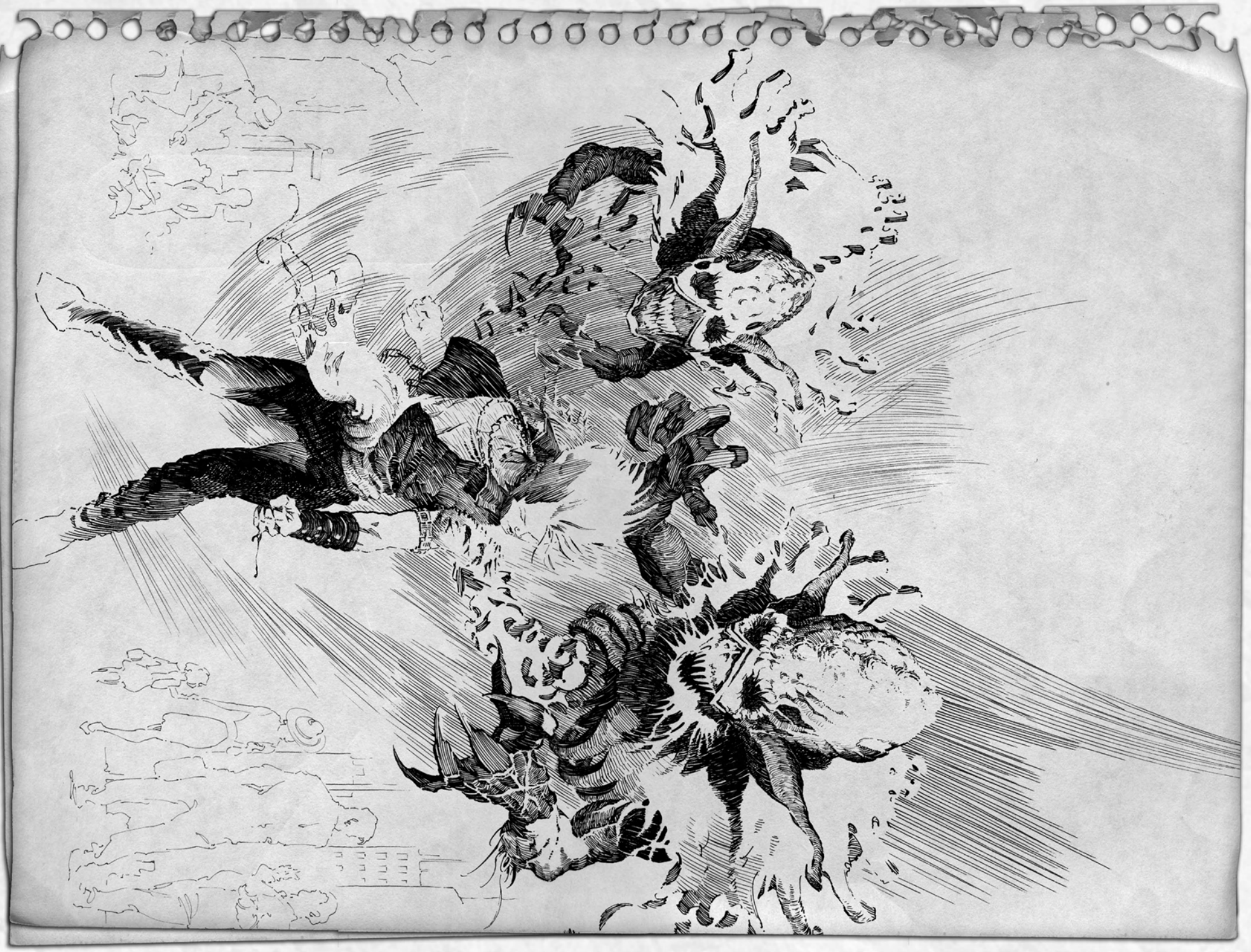
"I was formed by the spirits. Like my creator, before me, I was to watch over always this band of nomads. To protect them from world-danger and spirit-danger. But always from a distance. Always alone. I grew weary of these pathetic tribal conflicts and foolish superstitions. And especially I despise the grudging, fearful way they leave me tribute in the ordained places. The spirits whispered to me of a wider world, and I wanted to see it.

"So I left. Their shamans, they still plague me with killer spirits. And here is this Centimanus who works for them, and until I kill him and his Pandorans I must sleep with both eyes open always. So what? I too have allies in the spirit world.

"I hear others speak of pilgrimage. I see them go to extreme lengths to complete the most mundane of tasks. Plant and tend a particular type of tree. Find and bring a lost photograph to its owner. Fix a broken fence at night and in secret. Or I see them scour a subway tunnel of ugly Pandorans, face down some wolf people who want to spill blood, walk through a wall of fire to confront an angry magician. All because intuition says this will bring them closer to becoming human.

"Yet I am forced to admit, when I am honest, that there seems something ineffable about the human experience. Not only warm fires of home on a cold night. But a way of truly inhabiting the life that one lives. A feeling that one's body and one's soul, they are one's own, and not things crafted by another.

"I see it in their eyes. And this I want."





*Ovid (...) writes of an ancient sage who wished to rejuvenate himself. He should cause himself to be divided up and boiled until completely cooked, then the limbs would reunite and rejuvenate most powerfully.*

—S. Trismosin, *Splendor Solis*

*First we bring together, then we putrefy, we break down what has been putrefied, we purify the divided, we unite the purified and harden it. In this way is One made from man and woman.*

—Büchlein vom Stein der Weisen, 1778

This chapter introduces the characters themselves, the Prometheans who wander on the nomadic paths, seeking escape from their painful existence. The process of creating a character is presented, along with the traits and systems used to conjure him into being. The five Lineages that shape the Created's bodies are detailed, as well as the properties of the Divine Fire that burns within and animates them.

## Character Creation

You are building a character to act as your persona in a Storytelling game, where the emphasis is on story, drama and, well, *character*. It is more important to craft the character around your vision of his personality, background and quirks — from his strange habits to his tragic flaws — rather than putting together the perfect monster based on some vision of how the best brute or stolid Golem should be.

Your character's allocation of traits should illustrate who she is and where she's been in life — if she's had much of a life since opening her eyes. What are her hopes and dreams for her future? How has her limited experience in the world changed her outlook? Was she once optimistic and full of the milk of human kindness, but is now a bitter, cynical thug? The Storyteller can help you form your character by acting as a sounding board for ideas and questions.

Other World of Darkness Storytelling games posit a beginning mortal character who is changed into or made aware of a supernatural state. Creating such a supernatural creature involves adding a "template" to the basic mortal character, but such is not the case in **Promethean**. Characters in this game do not begin as mortals. They'll end up that way if they're lucky and diligent, but they first come to awareness as monsters. During the course of play, they shamble through the world trying to come to terms with their misbegotten lives.

When creating a Promethean character, you should imagine your creature coming to life with all his faculties intact from that moment on. While he'll learn his first Transmutations (supernatural powers) during his first days of existence as he stumbles around trying to make sense of this thing called life, he's otherwise fully formed (or as formed as you care to make him). He's very much like an adult human who suffers from some inexplicable amnesia. He knows language and can read, but he has no clue who or what he is. He must find these things out as play begins.

### Character Creation Process

Use the character creation rules from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Add the following features and traits during Step Five.

Choose a Lineage (see p. 87 and pp. 99-115).

Choose a Refinement (see p. 87 and pp. 48-69).

For beginning Transmutations, allocate three dots among Transmutations, one dot of which must be applied to an affinity Transmutation (based on the character's Refinement). The player could choose to gain three one-dot powers, one two-dot power and one one-dot power, or a single three-dot power (which must be an affinity Transmutation).

Prometheans can have additional Merits from a special list (see p. 87 and pp. 95-98).

Morality is called Humanity in **Promethean** (see pp. 94-95).

## Step One: Character Concept

The concept that describes the character is the bedrock upon which he is built. No matter how complex or confusing his choices become over his Pilgrimage, you always have a guiding concept to fall back upon. The concept is a general idea that tells everyone just what your character is about.

A concept is generally an adjective and a noun, such as noble scholar, courageous waif, callous tactician, deviant investigator or haunted elder. It can be more detailed, if you so




choose. ("My character has an innate philosophical outlook, taking everything he experiences as propositions in a grand argument between himself and God. He tries not to blame or judge others or himself, seeing it all as a sort of chess match — nothing to get too worked up over. Of course, he won't always succeed in being so composed, but it's how he makes peace with the horrible things that happen to him — and which he does himself.")

Your character's concept should include his Lineage and Refinement, though if he's too new to the world, his choice of Refinement can wait until play begins. He can't have all his Transmutations until he decides on his Refinement, though.

The assumption made in this section is that the character has just recently become aware and has little experience of the world or other Prometheans. It's quite possible, however, to make a character who is presumed to have some experience under his belt, enough that he knows the basics of Promethean existence. Perhaps his creator stayed behind to indoctrinate him in everything he needs to know, or he learned from other Prometheans he met in a rail-yard one night. It's up to you to determine how naïve your character is when play begins.

## Step Two: Select Attributes

Now you can transform your decision about character personality and concept into quantitative rules by selecting her Attributes. These describe the character's natural capabilities. Is he strong? Smart? Charismatic? Stubborn? Characters have nine Attributes, divided into three categories: Mental (Intelligence, Wits, Resolve), Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina) and Social (Presence, Manipulation, Composure).

The first step is to decide which of these three categories is *primary*, the category in which the character most excels. Then decide which is secondary, the category in which he is fairly average. The remaining category is the character's weakest; it's tertiary. One character might be a natural athlete, with Physical as his primary, but who is shy and naïve in social situations — a tertiary Social category. Feel free to stymie expectations and play against stereotypes. Your athlete might be strong (high Strength), but he's got no staying power (low Stamina). Although his Presence and Manipulation might be low, he could still have a decent Composure, meaning that he isn't too good at making friends but he's no dupe, either.

Although they are only imitations of humans, all characters begin with one dot in each Attribute to represent basic human capabilities. Five dots are allocated in the character's primary category, four dots in his secondary category and three dots in his tertiary category. For instance, the athlete has five dots to place among Physical Attributes, four dots among Mental and three dots among Social.

The fifth dot in any Attribute costs two dots to purchase. If you want your athlete to have a Strength of 5, you need to spend five dots. (Remember, the first is free, the next three dots cost one each, and the final fifth dot costs two dots.)

## Step Three: Select Skills

Skills are divided into the same three categories as Attributes: Mental, Physical and Social. Mental Skills tend to represent knowledge and study of the world and are improved through further study and/or practical application. Physical Skills tend to represent training, improved through practice and repetition. Finally, Social Skills rely heavily on interpersonal experience and improve through interaction with others or through trial and error.

Like Attributes, Skill categories are prioritized into primary, secondary and tertiary choices. The primary category receives 11 dots, the secondary category gets seven dots, and the tertiary category gets four dots. Note that, unlike Attributes, characters do not begin with one dot in each Skill. It is possible to have no dots in a Skill, representing a complete lack of training in that area. Indeed, this is not uncommon, since artificial beings cannot learn everything. As with any trait, the fifth dot in any Skill costs two dots to purchase.

## Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

While characters might have considerable training in some field or activity, such as driving vehicles or the study of the occult, they excel in certain aspects of these. For instance, Abraham might have a special proficiency with pharmaceuticals, but not pathologies. He might be able to identify or even concoct most medicines, but he doesn't have any special knowledge of diseases. Represented in game terms, such a character may have two dots in Medicine, with a Specialty in Pharmaceuticals.

Choose three Skill Specialties for your character during creation. They should be very specific, though you may choose more than one Specialty for the same Skill. Using the previous example, Abraham might have Specialties in both Pharmaceuticals and Emergency Medicine.

## Step Five: Add Promethean Features

Prometheans are created with certain features that humans don't have. This is not a template added to a pre-existing mortal character, but inborn features that are there when the Promethean first comes to awareness of herself. Indeed, some of these features are the cause of her very existence.

Note that a Promethean character cannot be embraced by vampires or Awaken as a mage. Nor will he suffer the First Change to become a werewolf, even if the corpse from which he was made came from Uratha kin.

**Lineage**

Prometheans share certain supernatural properties, handed down from maker to progeny. These properties originated in

the methods a mortal demiurge used to create the Lineage's first Promethean, the Progenitor of that line. A Lineage is established once the Progenitor makes more of his kind and they go on to make more still. Some Lineages have existed since before recorded time, while at least one of them is more recent and known to most mortals through a book called *Frankenstein*.

The theories of medieval alchemy are quite descriptive of certain Promethean features. Each Lineage was created through a combination of one of the five classical elements and the five humours (only four of which were known to mortal alchemy). By air, earth, fire, spirit or water, and by bile, blood, ectoplasm or phlegm — mixed with the Divine Fire — are Prometheans made. A character's Lineage also determines which Bestowment he inherits.

Examine the five Lineage descriptions presented (see pp. 99–115) and determine to which Lineage you want your character to belong.

**Refinements**

A Promethean's entire existence can be viewed as an alchemical operation, the purpose of which is to transform his gross flesh and mind into a mortal body with a sublime soul. As Prometheans have struggled to understand their natures and how they interact with the world, they have codified some of their philosophies into five Refinements, or alchemical lifestyles. Each Refinement is seen as one method of approaching the *Magnum Opus*, or Great Work, that is the goal of Promethean life, the means of escape from their cursed state.

A Promethean can practice a Refinement even if she doesn't know she's doing so. Those who have no mentor to guide them act out a particular Refinement nonetheless simply by thinking, feeling and acting in sympathy with its philosophy and goals. A Refinement is ultimately a description of a particular alchemical process, and the Promethean's Azoth responds to (and is altered by) thoughts, emotions and deeds. While it is easier to practice a Refinement when given training by someone who has experience with it, a Promethean can still find his own way through its stages and operations alone, gaining its benefits.

The primary benefit of a Refinement, besides providing a guide to behavior on the Pilgrimage, is an affinity with its associated Transmutations. Some Refinements handle these secrets better than others, and once the character's Azoth is attuned to a particular Refinement, it becomes easier for him to acquire its associated alchemies.

Characters are not bound to practice their beginning Refinements forever. They can change their minds and try out other Refinements. It takes a while for the Azoth to make the transition, but once it does, a character can gain the benefits of his new Refinement in place of his old one.

Examine the five Refinement descriptions presented in Chapter One (starting on p. 48) and determine which Refinement you want your character to practice.

**Transmutations**

Prometheans can learn to perform amazing supernatural acts, from dissolving metals with acid secreted from their skin to shooting electricity from their hands to causing earthquakes by stomping the ground. These powers are called Transmutations.

Transmutations differ by theme and function, and each Refinement allows for the expedited learning of two of these classes of powers. For instance, the Refinement of Gold teaches the Transmutations of Deception and Mesmerism.

Each class teaches a number of different powers, each rated from one to five dots. Some higher-dot powers can be learned without first acquiring the lower-dot powers, but some must be purchased after first learning a lower-dot prerequisite. For example, a character can learn the three-dot Thunderclap Blow Vitality Transmutation without needing to first learn a one- or two-dot power. If he wants to learn the three-dot Hyperion's Flight**,** however, he must first learn the two-dot Vault Transmutation, since it is listed in that power's description (on p. 151) as a prerequisite.

The different classes of Transmutations are summarized on p. 87, and their individual Transmutations are described beginning on p. 117.

**Azoth**

All Prometheans are animated by the Divine Fire — specifically, a special form of it that has been refined or purified from its base state. This specially prepared Fire is called Azoth. When a Promethean creates another Promethean, he bequeaths her part of his Azoth, which animates the humours in her body and brings her to life and new consciousness. In many legends, the Divine Fire that was stolen by Prometheus and given to man symbolizes humankind's rise to sentience. The Fire sparks both life *and* mind.

Azoth is measured by degrees. The more of it a character has, the more powerful he is in some respects, but also the more trouble he can cause. His Azoth gives off an invisible radiation that spreads farther the more powerful he is. The more Azoth he has, the stronger this radiance is and the wider it spreads. This radiance awakens dormant Pandorans — creatures that hunger for a Promethean's Pyros-infused flesh, for they have no Azoth of their own to sustain them.

A character comes to life with one dot of Azoth (given to him by his maker). Merit dots may be spent to increase it. The rate is three Merit dots per one additional Azoth. In other words, you may spend three of your seven Merit dots for Azoth 2, or six of your seven for Azoth 3.

## Step Six: Select Merits

A beginning character has seven dots worth of Merits, which may be distributed at your discretion. These traits should fit the character's concept. A Pariah wilderness recluse is unlikely to have dots in the Allies Merit, unless he made some friends before departing to the hinterlands. A Storyteller may encourage or disallow certain Merits or

even provide a dot for free (perhaps representing a political contact crucial to the chronicle). There are some Social Merits that Prometheans cannot purchase at all (see p. 98). The fifth dot in any Merit costs two dots to purchase.

## Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Rules regarding Advantages can be found on pages 90–105 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. What follows is concerned less with game mechanics and more with the importance of certain Advantages to Promethean characters.

**Willpower**

Sheer strength or stubbornness of will can come in handy for Prometheans when they try to resist the worst parts of their nature, such as Torment. Spending a Willpower point adds three dice to a roll, which can make all the difference when one needs to maintain one's cool or activate a Transmutation to escape from a deadly Pandoran.

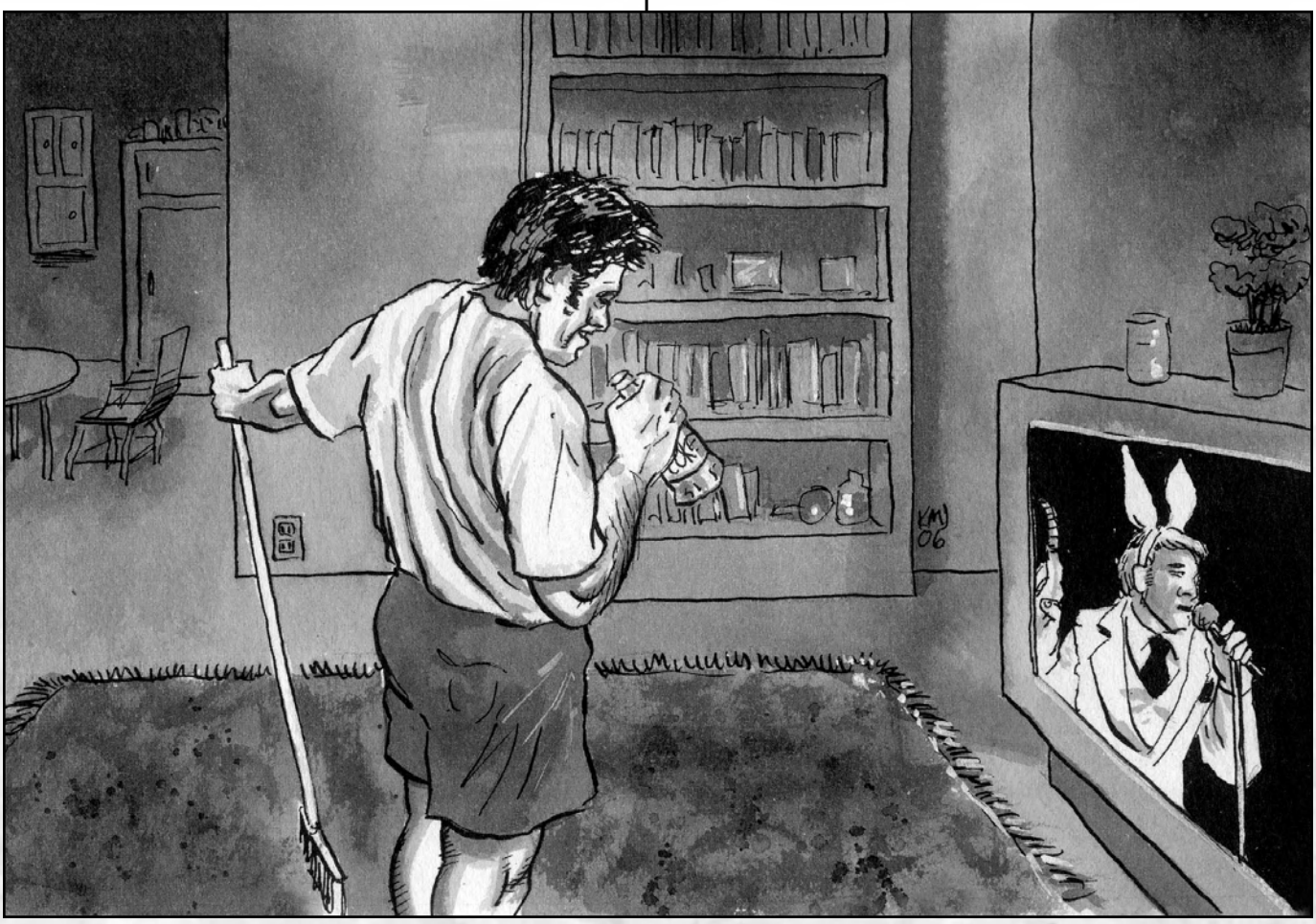
You may spend Pyros in the same turn in which you spend a point of Willpower. For more on spending Pyros, see p. 92.

**Humanity**

A Promethean is not human, but as an artificial construct that is trying to be human, the human condition is still used as a yardstick for judging how close to (or far from) his goal he is. It is all a Promethean has to go on. He watches humans as best he can and tries to figure out why they do the things they do. Then he tries to imitate those thoughts, feelings and actions. If his mimicry is accurate, he might even seem human to others or even himself. If not, he finds it increasingly difficult to capture the essence of the role he's playing. He reveals his true monstrosity when he means to show his humanity.

Humanity as a trait mechanically mirrors the human Morality trait described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 91. But it, like the Promethean himself, is a facsimile of the real thing. If he ever becomes human, he'll have an actual Morality trait. Until then, he's only pretending. Nonetheless, he must keep up the pretense or risk never becoming human at all.

As an optional rule, Storytellers may allow a player to trade dots of Humanity for experience points during character creation. This trade-in reflects some monstrous behavior the Promethean engaged in and learned from (accounting for the added experience points), but which also scarred her deeply (explaining the loss in Humanity). Players may sacrifice one dot of Humanity for five experience points, dropping their characters' Humanity scores to as low as 5 (for a maximum of 10 extra experience points).



Note that reducing Humanity in this way also reduces starting Pyros points at character creation.

**Virtues and Vices**

Prometheans have Virtues and Vices just like mortal characters do. There is endless conjecture among them, however, about what these inclinations and tendencies actually represent. They do seem innate, unlike Humanity, not chosen by the character but already present when he awakens. Some consider these qualities residual influences from their Lineage's demiurge. Although that mortal had only one Virtue and Vice, he had within him the potential for any of them. This potential was somehow transmitted to his Progenitor creation and thus seeded into the line and its succeeding generations.

Regardless of how and why they're there, Prometheans see Virtues and Vices as fundamental touchstones of their potential to become fully human. Some see them as a gift of Elpis, an aspect of the Divine Fire, the Hope that was the last thing to escape from Pandora's Box. These psychological patterns guide a Promethean on his Pilgrimage — for both good and evil, for Vices are just as much as part of what it means to be human as Virtues are. A Promethean who explores only his Virtues might be missing a necessary ingredient for his Great Work. Best to engage them both — Faith as well as Wrath, Fortitude as well as Envy — so that no stone is left unturned on the path to Mortality.

**Language**

Prometheans awaken as native speakers of the language spoken by the former owner of the corpse they inhabit. If multiple donors contributed to a Promethean's body and each spoke a different language, he might suffer some speech difficulties at first, but as the welter of tongues fades and one comes to the fore, he speaks that language as if he were raised with it. In some cases, the Promethean inherits the language of his creator instead. There seems to be no rhyme or reason why it's either one or the other. The Pyros works in mysterious ways.

### Pilgrim's Progress

Storytellers may choose to allow players a certain number of experience points to spend before play begins to represent a portion of their characters' lives between coming to life and the beginning of the chronicle.

| | |
|---|---|
| Amateur | 0 experience points |
| Established Promethean | 35 experience points |
| Veteran Promethean | 75 experience points |
| Mover and shaker | 120+ experience points |

## Step Eight: Coming to Life

At this point, your character is well delineated, at least in a rules sense. Now you need to flesh out just what the traits and dots mean. The essential part of your character isn't the rules terminology that describes him, but the dramatic details that bring him to life. What color is his hair? How would you describe his features, both his "normal" human appearance and his Lineage-based disfigurements? What mannerisms does he affect? Is he liked by other Prometheans, or do they gossip about him behind his back?

All these elements can be answered with the support of the traits you've assigned. Does he have a high Presence? Then he attracts attention even when he's not doing anything particularly notable. Does he have a low Wits? Then he might take longer to decide what kind of coffee he wants to order, typically aggravating the surly customers in line behind him. Is his Composure remarkable? Then he's unflappable, letting insults slide off him or taking even shocking developments, like a nearby car wreck, in stride.

Beyond the traits and dots, however, some quirks and habits go a long way toward illustrating their uniqueness — habits the might adopt to try to prove his progress toward becoming human. Does your character smoke only clove cigarettes? Does he have a tattoo or body piercing? Is his grooming impeccable? Is he into the latest fashions? Does he get his clothes from the Salvation Army?

These sorts of questions can be asked in infinite variety, and the answers you choose are unique to your character.

## The Prelude

An optional method of play that allows you to get to know your character better, the prelude depicts the scene when your Promethean character first wakes up on the slab, as Prometheans themselves call the moment of animation. It's commonly a one-on-one gaming session between you and the Storyteller, and it has the advantage of allowing both of you to gain a better understanding of the character and how he'll be played.

You build the character normally, including the Promethean features gained in Step Five, but you don't need to assign a Refinement or Transmutations just yet. With the Storyteller's permission, you can even go ahead and allocate some or all of your Merit dots, if they pertain only to the character's own capabilities. You should wait until after the Prelude to assign Social Merits that represent the character's ties with other people.

### Storytelling the Prelude

*Darkness. Pain. Throbbing pain… all over. That is all you know. Eventually, light seeps in, intermittent and out of focus, accompanied by a feeling of great exertion. You finally open your eyes, your pupils adjusting to the light. You realize that the exertion you felt was the act of opening your eyes for the first time.*

*Around you is a cement-brick room with cables and wires strewn across the floor. You know what they are, although you don't know how you know. You notice that you're lying on a steel table, with some of the cables attached to metal spikes in your limbs and neck. You rip them away, not knowing why they disturb you. They seem… unnatural.*

# Promethean Character Quick Reference

For the beginning steps of character creation, see the two-page spread beginning on p. 34 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The following section summarizes the unique qualities of the character's Promethean nature.

## Lineage

Choose a Lineage. A mortal demiurge once channeled Pyros into a dead body, sparking life. This animated creature became the Progenitor of a line of Prometheans, and each generation made more of its kind. Lineage also determines the character's Bestowment.

**Frankenstein — The Wretched:** Shambling creatures whose limbs and organs were culled from multiple bodies. They were given life by the element of fire in the form of lightning, and they suffer from an excess of choleric humour. Their Progenitor was the famous Frankenstein's monster, and their Bestowment is Unholy Strength.

**Galatea — Muses:** Beautiful creatures made from the most perfect body parts from multiple corpses, Galateids are enlivened by the Breath of Life and animated with an excess of sanguine humour. Their Progenitor was Galatea, the woman created by Pygmalion, and their Bestowment is Mesmerizing Appearance.

**Osiris — Nepri:** Descendents of their Egyptian Progenitor, Osiris, who was dismembered and remade by Isis by the banks of the Nile, Osirans come to new life amidst water, with an excess of phlegmatic humour. Their Bestowment is Revivification.

**Tammuz — Golems:** Brutes reborn in the womb of the earth and stricken with an excess of melancholic humour. Their Progenitor was a Babylonian Golem, and their Bestowment is Unholy Stamina.

**Ulgan — The Riven:** Creatures born in bodies torn apart by spirits, animated by the ectoplasm left in the wounds. Their ectoplasmic humour often overwhelms their sense of reason. Their Progenitor was a Siberian shaman, and their Bestowment is Ephemeral Flesh.

## Refinement

Choose a Refinement, a practice or operation of the *Magnum Opus*, the Great Work that is the goal of Promethean existence. All Prometheans practice one of these Refinements, even if they aren't consciously aware of it as such. Refinements modify a Promethean's Azoth, making it easier for him to learn certain Transmutations.

**Aurum (Gold) — The Refinement of Mortality** teaches a Promethean how to move among humans as if he were one of them. Those who follow this practice are called Mimics. *Transmutations:* Deception, Mesmerism.

**Cuprum (Copper) — The Refinement of Self** reveals the means to make peace with Torment and the greater, non-human world. Those who follow this practice are called Pariahs. *Transmutations:* Metamorphosis, Sensorium.

**Ferrum (Iron) — The Refinement of Corpus** allows for the fortification of the body as a map to building a soul. Those who follow this practice are called Titans. *Transmutations:* Corporeum, Vitality.

**Mercurius (Quicksilver) — The Refinement of Pyros** discloses the secrets of the Divine Fire and how it can be controlled. Those who follow this practice are called Ophidians. *Transmutations:* Alchemicus, Vulcanus.

**Stannum (Tin) — The Refinement of Torment** fuels a Promethean's quest for vengeance by showing him how to embrace his misery. Those who follow this practice are called Furies. *Transmutations:* Disquietism, Electrification.

## Transmutations

A character gains a total of three dots to distribute among Transmutations, at least one of which must be applied to one of his Refinement's affinity Transmutations. The classes of Transmutations are:

**Alchemicus:** The alteration or transformation of material substances, from mystically identifying them to molding their shape and function like clay.

**Corporeum:** Control or transformation of the body's physical functions, from the regeneration of wounded flesh to hardening the skin against damage.

**Deception:** Supernatural means of confusing or evading opponents, from changing one's skin color to altering one's facial features.

**Disquietism:** The manipulation of the character's own Disquieting aura, from driving animals into a rabid fury to quelling Disquiet entirely for a short while.

**Electrification:** The control and generation of electrical current, from powering an electrical device with one's own Pyros to throwing deadly bolts of lightning.

**Mesmerism:** The character uses his own Disquieting aura to affect the minds of others, from entrancing them like a cobra to creating a false identity in someone.

**Metamorphosis:** The transformation of the body into new shapes, from sprouting claws or fangs to creating a homunculus.

**Sensorium:** Superhuman powers of sensation, from the perception of auras to clairvoyant observations of distant places and people.

**Vitality:** The channeling of Azoth and the bodily humours to achieve amazing feats of strength, from leaping vast distances to creating earthquakes with a stomp.

**Vulcanus:** The manipulation of Pyros, from sensing its presence to stealing it from other Prometheans.

## Azoth

A character's Azoth, his internal furnace of purified Pyros, begins at 1, but Merit points may be spent to increase it. The rate is three Merit points per extra Azoth dot. In other words, you may spend three of your seven Merit points for Azoth 2, or six of your seven for Azoth 3.

## Pyros

A character's starting Pyros points equal Humanity.

## Merits

Players may purchase the following special Merits for their created characters: Elpis (· to ·····), Lair (· to ···), Repute (· to ···), Residual Memory (· to ·····), Unpalatable Aura (··). Also, they suffer certain restrictions when purchasing Social Merits. See p. 98.

## Experience Point Costs

| Trait | Experience point cost | Trait | Experience point cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attribute | New dots x 5 | Affinity Transmutation* | New dots x 5 |
| Azoth | New dots x 8 | Non-affinity Transmutation* | New dots x 7 |
| Merit | New dots x 2 | Skill | New dots x 3 |
| Humanity | New dots x 3 | Skill Specialty | 3 |

* Determined by the character's Refinement. If a player purchases a Transmutation for his character without first learning at least one lower-ranked Transmutation per dot rank from the same class, he must pay +3 experience points per dot rank missed. For a complete explanation, see the "Transmutation Costs" sidebar, p. 118.



*You rise and nearly pitch forward as your muscles overcompensate. Strange. You feel as if you're exerting more strength than you should, more than you remember.*

*Remember?*

*What do you remember?*

Preludes help you get into the mindset of a character who has no previous experience of life, except for faint "memories" that could simply be the body's way of retaining motor skills from its previous owner. Your character is living in a borrowed corpse, and he must now learn how to drive it.

The important thing at the beginning of a prelude is to bring your character and his environment to life, to give him many chances to display his unique quirks. The Storyteller can impose decisions to force the prelude along, but he should let you make choices about your character in reaction to the events presented. You might find out that the character prefers the suburbs to the city. Although this detail seems trivial, it determines the character's choice of venues when he's trying to move among mortals, adding atmosphere to what might become the scene of a crime or the place where an antagonist first singles your character out for trouble.

*You get up and explore the room, finding a door hidden behind a short passageway. It's locked but you batter it down as if it were made of paper. For a moment, you pause, wondering at your great strength, then you move on, curious about your environment.*

*You don't know your name. You don't know who you are. You examine your body as you walk down the next passageway. Muscled like a weightlifter, but in an ugly, asymmetrical way. One arm seems bigger than the other, and the forearm of the left one seems longer than it should. Thick leather stitches run along various parts of your body, and you pick at the scars beneath them. A thick yellow fluid, not mucus but something else, pulses within the wounds. Strangely, you don't hurt anymore. There's just a distant, dull ache as if your limbs have been asleep for a while.*

*You reach another room. This one is strewn with books and charts. Anatomy posters are pinned to the wall. Glass-encased refrigerators reveal rows of jars holding organs: livers, kidneys, even a brain. You don't know why you can identify these organs so readily, but you can.*

*Pinned to the far wall is a picture of a man in a lab jacket holding a crackling globe filled with electrical current. You are flooded with a sudden gut-wrenching anger, a sense of raw hated for this man. You can't see it in this picture, but you somehow know that he doesn't really look like that. In reality, he's like you: covered in stitches and scars.*

*And you know, as if you've always known, that you will kill this man for what he did to you. For giving you the gift of life.*

**Promethean** preludes should provide a hint at the sorts of activities your character can be expected to pursue during the course of the chronicle. In a Promethean's case, he

has to travel the trackless path of the Pilgrimage toward Mortality. He does so, however, with the focus of one of the Refinements. Fights and combat might also play a part of his Pilgrimage, but they're not the main focus of **Promethean** — self-discovery is. The prelude should foreshadow the Refinement the character will first practice as he takes his first steps on the road to transformation.

*There is a noise beyond the next door. Someone moving. Is it him? The one you hate?*

*You stand there seething, thinking of the incredible tortures you're going to inflict on your creator. You don't notice it at first, but small wisps of electrical current run up and down your body, as if you were generating them from inside you. The ozone smell alerts you, and you stare in shock at the quick, blue snaking lines. Then they're gone.*

*You want them to come back. You want the power. You concentrate, trying to imagine what you did when they first appeared, and you finally summon them again, but only in your hand and weaker than before. Enough, perhaps, to act as a battery for a flashlight or child's toy. (You know what those things are. You don't remember ever using them, but you know what they are.) You sense that your ability to generate electrical power is somehow related to the anger you feel toward your creator. It comes from your need for vengeance. If you cultivate that simmering anger, you might be able to increase the voltage you produce.*

*Then the door opens and a thing comes through — slithers through, actually. It's wet and small, like a child, but stares at you with malevolent eyes. It opens its mouth and reveals two rows of sharp, piranha-like teeth — then it leaps at you, faster than you imagined possible.*

*Before you can think, you've caught it in your hands. You feel power surging through your body, a burning sensation and heat. Your arms bulge and your veins harden like cables. With a single motion, you tear the thing's head from its torso. Ichor spatters across the room, and the head lands by your feet with a meaty thump.*

*You stare at your hands, again marveling at your strength, the strength to tear a living creature apart. Somehow, like the wires you woke up with, you don't think that's natural.*

*It matters little for now. You have someone to find.*

The culmination of the prelude is the character's first decisive step into the world and away from the slab (or grave or pool or luxurious bed…) upon which he came to life. He has some sense of the Refinement he practices, even if he doesn't know to call it that, and some idea of where to go next or who to seek out.

## Question and Answer

Following your character's prelude, you'll want to finish out the whole process by answering a few questions about your character, to firm up choices that have been made and to clear up areas that haven't yet been decided.

- **What do you look like?**

*What sort of body do you have? Is it old or young? What color hair and skin do you have? What do mortals see when they look at you, and what disfigurements are briefly visible when you use your powers?*

- **Do you know any other Prometheans yet?**

*Are you a member of a throng? Do you have allies among your kind out there? What about enemies or rivals?*

- **What motivates you?**

*What are your goals? Revenge on your maker or someone who wronged you soon after you came to awareness? Mastery of a class of Transmutations? To organize a society of Prometheans? If you could have anything you wanted (besides becoming mortal — that's a given), what would it be?*

### What's My Name?

Prometheans have odd names. They don't always have a parent to give them a name, and even when they do, he doesn't always follow mortal conventions about it. The Created usually choose their own names, or accept a name or title given to them by other Prometheans they meet.

One Promethean might name himself after the first name he randomly finds in a phone book. Another might emulate the name of a character in a book he read and enjoyed. It's not unknown for Prometheans to call themselves by obscure Biblical names or base their names off characters in Shakespeare, such as Tybalt or Caliban. Since their names are mainly meant for personal satisfaction and use by other Prometheans, they don't care if they sound odd to a mortal. Some adopt more normal pseudonyms when dealing with mortals — ones they might have to change frequently as Disquiet makes each old name infamous.

A common method of naming is to adopt or accept a descriptive title, such as the Hangman's Beautiful Daughter, the Gator Man or the Greyhound. Some of these appellations can sound like they come from urban legends (the Hook Hand, the Choking Doberman), and this is fitting, for Prometheans are urban legends as far as mortals are concerned.

Some Prometheans prefer to adopt nondescript names that represent archetypal human characters, such as John Smith, Jane Doe or Mr. Jones. They reason that these names somehow resonate with typical humans and might help them become typical humans.

## Example of Character Creation

Lydia invites Oscar to play in her **Promethean** chronicle. It begins in Chicago, where a mortal alchemist summons Prometheans to collect esoteric items for him. See the story in the Appendix, "The Water of Life," beginning on p. 266.

Lydia gives Oscar a blank character sheet, and he spends some time thinking about what sort of character he wants to play before he starts writing.

## Step One: Concept

Oscar decides he wants to play a character who was made with a purpose: to protect and defend the mortal descendants of a Redeemed Promethean, one who actually achieved Mortality and went on to marry and have kids and live a normal life. Oscar's character's creator knew this Redeemed one and promised to defend his mortal descendants. Tiring of the task, though, he created Oscar's character and indoctrinated him with the belief that, by helping these particular mortals, he would progress on his Pilgrimage.

Oscar decides that his character's name is Aeneas, named after the legendary prince of Troy whose descendants founded Rome.

## Step Two: Attributes

Oscar prioritizes and assigns Aeneas' Attributes. He wants him to be physically capable of defending mortals from harm, so he makes Physical his primary category. That gives him five dots to allocate. He puts three into Strength, giving Aeneas four dots (he begins with one dot in each Attribute); he is built like a weightlifter. He puts one dot in Stamina (for two dots total) and the other dot in Dexterity (also for two dots total).

Oscar then chooses Social as his secondary category, figuring that Aeneas occasionally tries to interact with the descendants, to understand their plans so he can anticipate how to protect them. He allocates four dots among these Attributes: one into Presence (for two dots), one into Manipulation (for two dots), and two into Composure (for three dots). Aeneas has a decently forceful personality and a strong ability to resist others' attempts to sway him through peer pressure.

Finally, he allocates three dots among his tertiary category of Mental Attributes: one into Intelligence (two dots total), one into Wits (two dots), and one into Resolve (two dots). Aeneas is well rounded here, too, with no exceptional talent or lack thereof.

## Step Three: Skills

Oscar next prioritizes his Skills in a similar manner to his Attributes. He again chooses Physical as his primary category, distributing 11 dots among those Skills. He places four dots into Stealth, three into Brawl, two into Firearms and two into Athletics. Aeneas knows how to spy upon his charges without being seen and to intercede in any physical altercation in which they might engage. He can also exert deadly force (with guns) if necessary and chase down perpetrators.

Next, he distributes seven dots among his secondary category, which he decides will be Mental. He places three dots into Investigation, one into Academics, one dot into Computer and two dots into Medicine. Aeneas figures he needs to be able to check up on his charges and their activities like a private eye, and he can better do so with computers, from which he can also monitor the 'blogs his charges maintain. He knows how to research libraries and data files for information on his charges. Finally, he can apply emergency medicine to a wounded mortal if necessary.

Finally, he allocates four dots among his tertiary category of Social. He puts two dots into Socialize and the final two dots into Empathy. Aeneas is good at getting others to like him (assuming Disquiet doesn't interfere), and he understands where they're coming from.

## Step Four: Skill Specialties

Oscar now declares Aeneas' three Skill Specialties, areas of notable expertise. He puts one Specialty into Stealth as Stakeouts. (Aeneas is good at watching people for hours without them noticing.) Oscar then declares a Firearms Specialty in Pistols. (Aeneas knows how to use a pistol well.) He puts his final Specialty into Academics as Genealogy. (Aeneas has learned a bit about researching family trees. He knows there are more descendants out there than his creator was aware of, and he intends to track them down.)

## Step Five: Promethean Features

Oscar now deals with Aeneas' Promethean features — what sort of Promethean he is. His concept implies someone steadfast and stubbornly committed to his goal, even if it is false. (It might have more to do with his creator's Pilgrimage than his own.) Oscar decides that Aeneas is a Golem, one of the Tammuz Lineage. His Bestowment is Unholy Stamina.

His concept leans heavily toward the Refinement of Gold, for moving among mortals, but the Refinement of Iron could also apply if he sees himself as more of a warrior. In the end, he chooses the Refinement of Gold.

Now Oscar chooses Aeneas' Transmutations. He chooses the Mesmerism Transmutation Firebringer, costing two dots, which causes mortals to afford him respect. He then chooses the Deception Transmutation Color of Man, allowing him to alter his appearance somewhat, so that he doesn't always look the same to the mortals whom he watches over. He has spent all three of his beginning Transmutation dots.

Aeneas' Azoth begins at one dot.

Aeneas' Pyros points begin at seven, equal to his Humanity.

## Step Six: Merits

Oscar has seven dots to distribute. He puts two dots into Lair, focusing both on Security. He reasons that it's a small room, but in a place nobody would ever think to check out. He spends two dots on Resources, to give him some spending power if he needs to help the family out, and two dots on Danger Sense, to five him a sixth sense that warns him of impending traps. His final dot is spent on Fighting Style: Boxing, giving him the Body Blow maneuver, with which he can knock the wind out of opponents.

## Step Seven: Advantages

Now that all of Aeneas' other traits have been allocated, Oscar can figure out his Advantages. Adding Aeneas' Resolve and Composure, he records a Willpower score of five dots

on the character sheet. Aeneas' Humanity begins with the standard seven dots. Oscar decides that his Virtue is Charity (the desire to help others even at risk to oneself) and his Vice is Envy (he resents his charges for having what he cannot: Mortality).

Adding Aeneas' Size factor of 5 to his Stamina of two dots gives him seven dots of Health. Combining Dexterity and Composure, her Initiative is 5. Her Defense is 2, the same as her Wits and Dexterity. Finally, Oscar adds Aeneas' Strength + Dexterity + 5 for a Speed of 11.

### Step Eight: Coming to Life

Oscar now has a good idea of just who Aeneas is — at least, who he is at the moment. He takes his creator's charge as a religious commandment. He must defend the descendants of the Redeemed (who he knows by her mortal name of Rebecca Trial), and so become Redeemed himself. His creator stayed around long enough to train him in his task then left for parts unknown, following what he claimed was a trail leading to another branch of descendants he had only recently discovered. Aeneas is beginning to doubt that story, although he does not yet doubt his prime purpose of watching over Rebecca's grandchildren and their children.

He has not yet learned how to balance his need to retreat from their presence with his need to guard them. His Disquiet might soon become a problem, for both the descendents and the neighborhood they live in, as Aeneas' presence slowly turns it into a Wasteland.

All has been uneventful so far, except for an occasional tussle the teenage boy gets into now and then. He seems angry about something and is hanging out with a bad crowd, one that often gets into fights with a local gang. Aeneas had to chase off some gang members once, unknown to the boy, because they were bringing guns to a fistfight. They still won't talk about what they saw that night.

Aeneas has recently found some new pilgrim marks near the shack he calls home. New Prometheans are in town. He knows he needs to investigate them to make sure they don't pose a danger to the family, but he's also curious. He's had a lonely vigil since his creator left, and he wants to find out more about his kind and their travels.

And so Oscar's character is ready to go, and Lydia is ready to begin the chronicle.

## Traits

Prometheans possess abilities unknown to mortals. A Fire burns within them, giving them an artificial life that is pregnant with raw energy, power that must be tamed by the Promethean on his Pilgrimage.

## New Advantage: Azoth

The Divine Fire comes in many forms. While Prometheans do not entirely understand its mysteries, they have identified certain states in which it can occur. The most important of those states is Azoth, which they define as refined or purified Pyros. Azoth burns within every Promethean; it is what gives him his artificial life. Mere fluid Pyros alone can't achieve the amazing feat of creating life from death. Only Pyros in its most rarefied form can do that. That form is Azoth.

Azoth is associated with the alchemical themes of unification, coagulation and stability, but also as a catalyst to transform something into its more pure form. In these senses, it is sometimes conceived as being a polar opposite of Flux, the chaotic aspect of Pyros that breaks things down. This conception isn't exactly accurate, just as steam and ice are not opposite versions of water. Yet, this idea does reveal something of the tension between dissolution and coagulation in alchemy, an ongoing (but interwoven) process throughout the entire operation.

Azoth does seem to have a teleological goal, a result for which it always strives, regardless of its Promethean's cooperation. This end is Mortality, the most pure state. The force that seems to drive this urge toward purity is not Azoth itself but Elpis, an aspect of Pyros that is rarely manifest, showing itself more as a guiding principle or promise from the future. Elpis is more a conjecture about the Pyros than an actual force that can be wielded. All a Promethean really knows is that something spurs his Azoth toward ever-higher temperatures.

Prometheans begin life with one dot of Azoth, bequeathed to them by their maker. Additional dots may be acquired with the expenditure of experience points, or initial Merit dots can be spent to add extra Azoth (see p. 84).

### Effects of Azoth

Azoth is a trait rated from one to 10 dots. As the measure of a Promethean's Inner Fire, Azoth has the following game effects.

- Azoth affects a Promethean's ability to quickly muster the fluid Pyros within his corpus, governing how many points of Pyros a player can spend in a single turn. Azoth also limits how much Pyros a Promethean can hold within his corpus. The higher his Azoth is, the more Pyros he can store. See the "Effects of Azoth" chart.
- Prometheans with Azoth 6 or higher can increase their Attributes and Skills past five dots. The catalyst of the refined Fire increases his body's and his mind's capabilities beyond the mundane, allowing him to bolster his Mental, Physical and Social capabilities to inhuman degrees.
- Azoth calls to Azoth. Prometheans can vaguely sense the presence of other Azoths, depending on the strength of their radiance. See the "Effects of Azoth" chart for how great an area a Promethean's radiance covers based on his Azoth. The players of other Prometheans within the affected area can make a reflexive Wits + Azoth roll to detect its faint tingling. With a successful roll, the characters cannot pinpoint its source, but they do know it is present. Since Prometheans can see other Prometheans' disfigurements, it is usually no problem to single the source out from among a crowd of mortals.

• Dampening the Fire. A Promethean can intentionally diminish the amount of radiance his Azoth gives off. He might do so to stymie Pandorans who are searching for him or to keep other Prometheans away, for a dampened Azoth is repulsive to other Created. Once a Promethean dampens the Inner Fire thus, he cannot reverse it for 24 hours. He suffers a -3 dice pool penalty on all rolled social interactions with other Prometheans during that time, but he causes Pandorans to suffer a -3 penalty to tracking rolls when searching for him. (See the "Hunting" sidebar on p. 224.)

## Drawbacks of Azoth

• The higher a Promethean's Azoth is, the harder it becomes for mortals to resist the Disquiet he exudes. Whenever a mortal's player would make a Resolve + Composure roll to resist Disquiet, the Promethean's player also makes a roll, using his Azoth as the dice pool. His successes are contested against the mortal's, so that the mortal is unaffected only if his character rolls more successes than the Promethean's does. See "The Disquiet Vector" (p. 168) for full details.

• A Promethean's Azothic radiance precedes him. The higher his Azoth is, the greater the vicinity in which its radiance spreads around him. Since this radiance is what awakens Pandorans from their Dormancy, it can prove to be very dangerous for the Promethean, as it awakens creatures well beyond his immediate senses. See "Azothic Radiance" (p. 222).

### Effects of Azoth

| Azoth | Attribute/ Skill Max. | Max Pyros/ Max Pyros per Turn | Radiance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 10/1 | Same building |
| 2 | 5 | 11/2 | City block |
| 3 | 5 | 12/3 | Several city blocks |
| 4 | 5 | 13/4 | City neighborhood |
| 5 | 5 | 14/5 | City directional location (southeast, etc.) or borough |
| 6 | 6 | 15/6 | Half of city (northern, southern, etc.) |
| 7 | 7 | 20/7 | Entire city |
| 8 | 8 | 30/8 | Entire city |
| 9 | 9 | 50/10 | Entire city |
| 10 | 10 | 100/15 | Entire city |

• A Promethean's Azothic radiance bears something of the taint of the Torments he has suffered. This taint is subtle, not represented in game mechanics, but it does affect the first impression a Promethean has on other Prometheans in a ritual called the Measure — in which strangers size one another up before either of them engages in conversation. (See p. 74.) Some Prometheans choose not to spend time in the company of those whose radiance is too heavy with past Torment. This is entirely a personal choice, based off superstitions about how such radiance might taint the Pilgrimage. The tainted Promethean can remove the burden from his radiance by spending time in the wastes. (See "Going to the Wastes" on pp. 207-208.)

# New Advantage: Pyros

Pyros is the general term used to denote the Divine Fire in all its manifestations: Azoth, Flux, Elpis, et cetera. It is also the game term used for the fluid form of the energy within a Promethean's body that can be moved at will, used to fuel alchemical processes like the Transmutations. The Azoth generates this fluid Pyros, like sweat or condensation in a chemical retort.

Pyros is an Advantage trait for Prometheans. A Promethean can hold up to 10 points of Pyros in his corpus, and he can hold even more with increasing dots of Azoth, as illustrated on the "Effects of Azoth" chart.

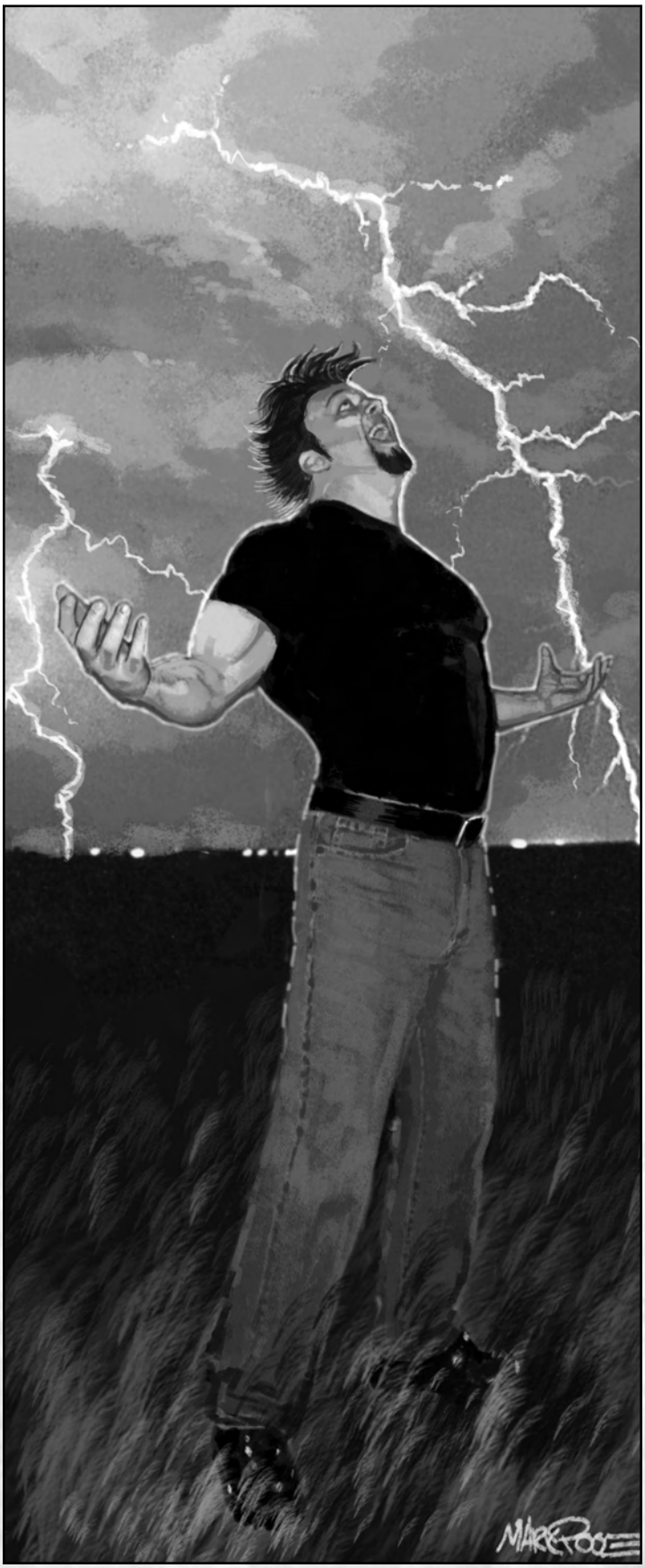
Pyros itself is normally invisible and intangible, undetectable to those without special supernatural senses like the Vulcanus Sense Pyros Transmutation. In its fluid state, Pyros is not a sustaining and animating substance for Prometheans, as Azoth is, but it can still fuel the activity of Pandorans, who need to devour the Pyros-infused flesh of Prometheans to remain active.

Some Prometheans, especially those who follow the Refinement of Quicksilver, study the Pyros through the Vulcanus Transmutations to better understand its role in the universe and learn how to manipulate it in all their Transmutations. All Prometheans wield the power of Pyros, but some are better at storing and using it than others.

The Pyros Advantage is rated in points rather than dots. Pyros points measure the Pyros resources currently available to a Promethean. Players spend points of Pyros to allow Prometheans to perform various alchemical feats, called Transmutations.

## Spending Pyros

A Promethean's ability to spend stored Pyros is measured by his Azoth: one point per turn per Azoth dot that he has. (The limits are slightly higher for Prometheans with Azoth 9 or 10.) A Promethean with Azoth 1 may spend one point of Pyros per turn. Prometheans who reach their spending limit cannot spend any further points of Pyros that turn. Any actions requiring Pyros spending are then impossible.



## Regaining Pyros

Unlike other forms of mystical energy in the World of Darkness (such as the Essence used by spirits or the Vitae extracted from blood by vampires), Pyros is rarely found in a free state or in places (or people) from which it can be harvested. Instead, Prometheans must rely on themselves to generate it. The metaphor most often used is heating the Azoth like a retort and catching the condensation that distills from its vapors. That dew is fluid Pyros. Circumstances and situations that affect the character can help stoke the heat or provoke flare-ups, creating more Pyros. Even though the cause or catalyst was an event that happened to the character, the real action occurs within him.

The following conditions can cause Pyros to condense inside a Promethean's body. Regaining Pyros in any of these ways does not cause a Promethean's disfigurements to become visible.

• A Promethean's Azoth automatically generates one Pyros point upon the dawning of a new day, in a sort of alchemical sympathy with the golden light of the sun (even if the sun is not visible).

• A Promethean gains one Pyros simply be being in the midst of a thunderstorm. He does not have to get hit by lightning, but he must be under the storm and exposed to it (on a rooftop, in a field). He gains this point at the first crack of thunder he hears once the storm is upon him. He can gain Pyros this way only once per day, regardless of how many storms he experiences in that day.

• When a Promethean sleeps amidst his Lineage's key element, he gains Pyros through the dreams that arise. Although Prometheans need less sleep than mortals, they still succumb to its call every few days.

To reap this Pyros yield, the Created must sleep for at least four hours. Upon awakening, his player rolls his Azoth + Composure. Each success provides one Pyros.

The key to this energy is the dreams that arise when the Promethean sleeps near the element that birthed him. The dreams might be pleasant, esoteric, or even nightmarish, but they will be vivid. The player is encouraged to make up the dream content, although its particulars have no specific game rule benefit (unless the Storyteller wants to use them to seed clues about the Pilgrimage, similar to the Elpis Merit on p. 26).

**Frankenstein:** The Wretched must sleep near a fire or high-voltage system. This could be a small camp- or hearth-fire, or an electrical transformer that causes one's hair to stand on end just being near it. Sleeping near an actual fire has its dangers, of course, especially if an enemy comes upon the Promethean sleeping near a flame. The Promethean need only fall asleep by the fire, though. As long as it doesn't burn out within his first hour of sleep, he still gets the benefit, even if it's just smoldering cinders by the time he awakens.

**Galatea:** Muses must sleep amidst voices — not broadcasts or recordings, but actual voices. A Muse might arrange to

bed down in an apartment with thin walls next to neighbors who are always having parties, or near enough to hear them through her open window. She might sleep in an alley off Times Square in the city that never sleeps. If she's got friends, she can convince them to stay up chatting while she sleeps nearby. She need only fall asleep to this cacophony. As long as it lasts for the first hour of her sleep, she gets the benefit even if she awakens to silence.

**Osiris:** Nepri must sleep immersed in water, or at least partially immersed. This could mean sleeping under the rain in the wilderness, or in a partially filled bathtub at home. He need only fall asleep in water. As long as it hasn't drained away or stopped raining before his first hour of sleep, he gains the benefit even if he awakens dry.

**Tammuz:** Golems must sleep buried or partially buried in earth. This earth could be a mound of dirt or mud, or the sort of mud skin covering one finds in spas. As long as he falls asleep encased in the clay and it doesn't crumble away within his first hour of sleep, he gains the benefit.

**Ulgan:** For the Riven to gain this benefit, they must sleep in either a haunted house (one within the anchor radius of an actual ghost) or a spirit locus (an area that generates Essence, usually found in the wilderness), or they must activate their Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment as they go to sleep. Assuming no spirits or ghosts disturb their rest within the first hour, they awaken with one Pyros per success rolled and +1 to restore that point lost by activating the Bestowment. Sleeping amidst ephemera is an especially potent instigator of the sort of dreams needed to catalyze Pyros.

- After a Promethean has spent at least one hour in the presence of one or more mortals, he gains one Pyros. He can reap this yield only once per 24 hours, no matter how long he spends with the same mortal or with other mortals later that day. His presence might cause Disquiet and the mortal might spend this time haranguing or attacking him, but the Promethean still gets the point for daring to risk mortal company.
- The Storyteller might decide that a particularly momentous event in the Promethean's life might provide enough catalyst to generate one Pyros. Examples include joining one's first throng, escaping from Pandoran captivity after nearly dying (or having died and been resurrected), destroying one's maker or witnessing a Promethean attain Mortality.
- Prometheans who learn the Vulcanus Transmutations have some additional options for regaining and tapping into Pyros. See the description beginning on p. 154 for more information.

## Modified Advantage: Humanity (Morality)

Prometheans are imitations of humans. They seek to become mortal, but to do so, they must understand what it means to be mortal. They must come to know the human condition in all its terrible contradictions, from pure love to obscene hate. The Humanity trait measures their progress on this journey of discovery, tracking their triumphs and defeats as the trait degrades and — if the Promethean is true to his Pilgrimage — rises again.

In rules terms, Humanity charts just how much of a monster the Promethean is. The higher his Humanity is, the more likely it is that he can eventually transform the dross of animated flesh into the gold of a human soul. As such, it represents a Promethean's ability to *pretend* that he's human, and to even convince himself that he is or would at least make for a genuine human were he to gain the gold. It is, like the Promethean himself, an artificial trait, mimicking a real mortal's Morality. The Promethean himself has no innate moral compass, only a vague sense of how he's supposed to act, supplemented by what he learns from watching human behavior. When he breaks the code, committing a sin against Humanity, he might not fully understand what he's done. Even if he does, his remorse is ultimately a charade, a sort of method acting by which he convinces himself that he really, truly regrets his actions, as if he had a soul that could weep.

And yet, sham though it might be, it does seem to produce results. Even if the Promethean is only acting, fooling others and maybe even himself that his feelings are genuine, when it comes time to put his Humanity to the test, the better an actor he is, the more likely his performance will translate into the *real* thing — actual humanity. Those Prometheans who lose themselves in the role of playing humans are those most likely to become human. It is as if their lives are one long audition for a prime part in the actual play, which is the drama of human existence. If they convince the unseen and unheard director that they truly understand the part, they might be accepted into the final cast.

Some Prometheans scorn this lie, refusing to dance to the invisible strings of some nonexistent script. These Prometheans often ignore the consequences of their actions on what would be their soul, if they had one. Why worry about what isn't there? The inevitable result is a degraded Humanity, one that is often found wanting when the time comes for the Promethean to complete his long alchemical operation.

Humanity mirrors the human Morality trait in all ways. It is set apart from that trait to highlight its thematic differences, although its mechanical functions are the same. When a Promethean acts against Humanity, it's called a sin, and might result in a degeneration of his Humanity score, as per the rules for Morality on p. 91 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Whenever Humanity is reduced due to degeneration, the Promethean's player must roll the character's new Humanity as a dice pool to resist gaining a derangement. The new derangement is linked to the lost dot of Humanity. It persists until the character recovers the lost dot, regaining his moral center (or facsimile thereof) and sufficient Humanity to overcome the personal flaw.

| Humanity | Sin |
|---|---|
| 10 | Selfish thoughts. (Roll five dice.) |
| 9 | Minor selfish act (withholding charity). (Roll five dice.) |
| 8 | Injury to another (accidental or otherwise). (Roll four dice.) |
| 7 | Petty theft (shoplifting). (Roll four dice.) |
| 6 | Grand theft (burglary). (Roll three dice.) |
| 5 | Intentional, mass property damage (arson). (Roll three dice.) |
| 4 | Impassioned crime (manslaughter). (Roll three dice.) |
| 3 | Planned crime (murder). (Roll two dice.) |
| 2 | Casual/callous crime (serial murder). (Roll two dice.) |
| 1 | Utter perversion, heinous act (mass murder). (Roll two dice.) |

Unlike Morality, Prometheans cannot regain Humanity by performing redemptive or generous acts. They can only regain lost dots by purchasing them with experience points or with Vitriol. (See pp. 198-199.)

When a Promethean loses Humanity, he doesn't really feel anything, at least not deep down on a gut level that affects a human. Any derangement comes more from his unconscious acknowledgement that he *should* feel something, that he should suffer some sort of reciprocity for the action. This acknowledgement translates into a genuine imbalance in his humours, making the derangement quite real, not just an illusion caused by his intellectual grasp of ethics. The more a Promethean can make a habit of pretending to feel, the more he fools himself into actually believing his false emotions are real. Again, the more deeply he immerses himself in his role of would-be human, the harder it becomes for him to know when he's consciously faking it and genuinely feeling it.

It's not that Prometheans don't have feelings — they do, often intense and passionately felt. It's that they don't really know when to feel them or which stimuli provoke which feelings. They must train themselves to know this. Human psychologists can argue about nature versus nurture when it comes to an innate sense of human morality, but a Promethean clearly must nurture his sense of morality since he is born without any moral nature — or if he does have one, it is easily confused by the tumult of humours in his system.

### Effects of Humanity

- A Promethean's Humanity is used as a dice pool to resist the onset of Torment, when his humours rage out of balance and exert control over his behavior. (See "The Noble Resistance of Torment" on pp. 181-182.)
- Degenerated Humanity taints Azoth. When a Promethean attempts to create another Promethean, his Humanity determines his chance of getting it right. If he gets it wrong, one or more Pandorans might result instead. (See Step Five: Judgment under "The Generative Act" on p. 187.)
- Humanity is used as the dice pool to determine whether a Promethean makes the transition to Mortality at the end of his Pilgrimage. This moment is called the Rebirth, and low Humanity can cause to fail it, even if all the milestones of the Pilgrimage were completed superlatively. (See "Attaining the *Lapis Philosophorum*: Mortality" on p. 194.)

## Merits

The Created have access to a special list of Merits, some of which are available only to them. Also, certain of the Social Merits available to mortals in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** are not open to Prometheans, or are limited in their applications when used by them. (See the "Restricted Social Merits" sidebar on p. 98.)

### Elpis (• to •••••)

**Effect:** The Promethean relies on Hope, the final force released from Pandora's Box, to get him through his Pilgrimage. This aspect of the Divine Fire that calls out to Prometheans, urging them toward Mortality, is called Elpis. Promethean philosophers equate it with a guiding force, a sort of teleological principle calling from the future, drawing the Promethean down the proper paths to the New Dawn. With this Merit, the Promethean can tap into this guiding force and gain clues through dreams and visions that might aid his Pilgrimage.

Once per game session, the character can use his Elpis ability to gain a supernatural insight concerning a question or topic relevant to his Pilgrimage. Activating this ability requires at least one hour spent in sleep, a trance or another activity that focuses exclusively on accessing an altered state of consciousness. The Storyteller then rolls the character's Wits + Composure in secret. The results are:

**Dramatic Failure:** A nightmare. The Created can interpret it any way he wants, but it probably leads to more trouble than solutions.

**Failure:** Meaningless images.

**Success:** One or more clues (one per Elpis dot) that might help him to achieve a Pilgrimage milestone, although they must be interpreted.

**Exceptional Success:** One or more clues (one per Elpis dot), and a suggestion about their interpretation provided by the Storyteller.

The information is usually conveyed in brief visions of people, places or things that are somehow important to one of the character's milestones, as determined by the Storyteller. (See "*Summa Perfectionis*: The Pilgrimage" on p. 190.) The exact role the subjects of these visions will play remains unclear, though. The Promethean might see a rare, medieval book behind glass. After some research, he learns it is in a museum in Chicago. He travels there and breaks into the museum at night, trying to steal the book, only to be confronted by a

Promethean who makes his lair there. The Storyteller knows that this Promethean is the key to the milestone, not the book; the book merely led the character to this encounter. But will the character realize this?

Elpis is not a means of gaining an exact roadmap to Mortality. It's a tool for the Storyteller to help drive events of the story, especially if the character is lagging behind on his Pilgrimage.

## Lair (• to •••; special)

**Effect:** A lair is a place a Promethean can retreat to where he can hide or defend himself from others. It can be anywhere, but the Created usually choose places far from the madding crowd of mortals. If they do choose to live close to mortals, their lairs are nondescript and contain multiple means of escape. Since most lairs are only temporary, meant to serve for only a few months before the Promethean resumes his Pilgrimage, they cost relatively few dots to acquire. When the Promethean abandons his lair, however, he loses the dots. If he later returns to the area, the Storyteller might decide that the lair is still operable, although it loses one of its dots due to lack of maintenance, until the Promethean can put some effort into restoring it.

All lairs are not created equal. A warehouse might have sufficient space, but it might not be secure against unwanted visitors. A hidden cave has adequate security, but it might be dark and cramped. A lair's value is represented by two factors — size and security. Players who choose this Merit must also choose how to allocate these two factors when spending dots. For instance, two dots may be spent on Lair Size, with a third spent on Lair Security.

Lair Size is important to characters who need a place to safely store their possessions and valuables. A lair with no dots in Size is just large enough for its owner and perhaps a single companion, with minimal storage capacity — a cramped apartment, for instance. By spending points to increase a lair's size, a player allows for accoutrements and personal effects. Larger lairs can be anything from mansions to mountain hideaways to vast subterranean catacombs. Lairs of considerable size are not necessarily easy to maintain, though. (**NB:** The dot ratings for Lair differ from similar Merits from other World of Darkness games.)

- • A large apartment, small family home, or large underground chamber; 3–4 rooms
- •• An abandoned warehouse, church, mansion or network of subway tunnels; equivalent of 9–15 rooms or chambers
- ••• A sprawling estate or vast network of tunnels; countless rooms or chambers

Of course, Lair Size does not prevent intrusion by mortals (such as police officers, criminals or social workers). Players who want to ensure privacy and safety may spend dots on Lair Security, thus making it difficult for others to gain entrance. Lairs with no dots in Lair Security can be found by anyone intent enough to look, and they offer little protection once they have been breached. Each dot of Lair Security subtracts two dice from efforts to intrude into the place by anyone a character doesn't specifically allow in. This increased difficulty might arise because the entrance is so difficult to locate (behind a bookcase, under a carpet) or simply difficult to penetrate (behind a vault door). Also, each dot of Security offers a +1 bonus on Initiative for those inside against anyone attempting to gain entrance (good sight lines, video surveillance).

Characters for whom no points are spent on Lair at all might have some small, humble chamber or favorite spot under a bridge. In any event, they simply do not gain the mechanical benefits of those who have assigned Merit dots to improve the quality of their temporary homes.

Each aspect of the Lair Merit has a limit of three dots. In other words, Lair Size and Lair Security may not rise above 3 (to a maximum of six dots on this Merit, total).

**Special:** It's possible for the Lair Merit to be shared among characters in a close-knit group. They might be devoted to one another and willing to pool what they have, or perhaps their mutual reliance on an individual or trust could bring them together to share what they have in common.

To share this Merit, two or more characters simply have to be willing to pool their dots for greater capability. A shared rating in the Lair Merit cannot rise higher than three dots in either of the two aspects of the trait. That is, characters cannot pool more than three dots to be devoted to, say, Lair Size. If they wish to devote extra dots to the Merit, they must allocate those dots to Security.

Shared Lair dots can be lost. Throng members or associates might be abused or mistreated, ending relationships. Group members might perform actions that cast themselves (or the group) in a bad light. If any group member does something to diminish the lair, its dots decrease for all group members. That's the weakness of sharing dots in this Merit. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The Storyteller dictates when character actions or events in a story compromise shared Lair dots.

Characters can also leave a shared lair. A rift might form between close friends. A character might be killed or decide to go to the wastes. Or one could be kicked out of the lair by the others. When a character leaves a shared-lair relationship, the dots he contributed are removed from the pool. If the individual still survives, he doesn't get all his dots back for his own purposes. He gets one less than he originally contributed. If a character breaks a relationship with his throng, the group loses both of the Lair dots he contributed, but he gets only one dot back for his own purposes. The lost dot represents the cost or bad image that comes from the breakup. If all members agree to part ways, they all lose one dot from what they originally contributed.

The Storyteller decides what a reduction in dots means in the story when a character leaves a shared lair. Perhaps no one else picks up the character's attention to Lair Security, leaving that score to drop. Maybe a portion of the lair falls into disuse or even collapses, causing an effective drop in Lair Size. Whatever the case, a plausible explanation must be determined.

A character need not devote all of her Lair dots to the shared Lair Merit, of course. A Promethean might maintain a separate lair outside the communal one represented by the shared trait. Any leftover dots that a character has (or is unwilling to share) signify what she has to draw upon as an individual, separate from her partners. For example, three characters share a lair and expend a group total of five dots. One character chooses to use two other dots on a private lair. Those remaining two dots represent a lair entirely separate from what she and her partners have established together.

To record a shared Lair Merit on your character sheet, put an asterisk next to the name of the Lair Merit and fill in the total dots that your character has access to thanks to his partnership. In order to record his original contribution, write that amount in parentheses along with the Merit's name. It is not important to note on which aspect of the Lair Merit those points are spent. This allows greater flexibility should a character ever decide to withdraw from the community arrangement. The result looks like this:

MERITS

| | |
|---|---|
| LAIR* (2) | ●●●●O |
| LAIR | ●●●OO |
| ALLIES (POLICE) | ●●OOO |
| | OOOOO |
| | OOOOO |
| | OOOOO |
| | OOOOO |
| | OOOOO |

In this example, the character shares a Lair Merit dedicated to the throng's communal shelter. He contributes two dots to the relationship, and the group has a total of four dots that are made available to each member. The character also has his own private Lair Merit rated 3, which he maintains by himself. And, the character has Allies in the police department rated 2, which is also his own Merit.

## Repute (• to •••)

**Effect:** Prometheans hear many stories from other Prometheans on the road, and many of these stories concerns the exploits of others of their kind. A Promethean with this Merit has had some of his exploits told to others. These legends don't even have to be true, but they are popular enough to be told and retold to Prometheans on their Pilgrimages around the country or even the world.

When other Prometheans encounter the reputed Promethean, their players roll Intelligence + the Promethean's Repute dots to see if they recognize him. Once someone recognizes him, the Promethean can add +1 per Repute dot to any Socialize roll made to influence or befriend those who know his legend. He can also use those who recognize him as temporary allies, as if they were bought through the Allies Merit (p. 114, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). They are worth one dot each — capable of rendering minor favors — and can be used this way only once per person (i.e., one minor favor per person), unless the Promethean spends experience points to codify his relationship with them into the Allies Merit.

With one dot in this Merit, the Promethean is mildly famous among his own kind. They won't recognize him on sight (based on his description in the legends), but they might come to realize who he is once they've spent more than a few turns with him. With two dots, the Promethean might be recognizable on sight, and with three dots, his renown positively colors the Measure, the initial opinion other Created make of him.

**Drawback:** Prometheans who recognize the renowned character and from whom he has asked a favor, might seek to enlist his aid. This is usually due to his obvious ability to accomplish the task requested, based on the legends told about him. If he refuses too many of these requests, he might lose Repute dots as word gets around of his selfishness.

## Residual Memory (• to •••••)

**Prerequisite:** Promethean

**Effect:** The Azoth does not always wash clean every remnant of dross in the body it sparks to life. Some Prometheans experience faint memories of their bodies' former inhabitants, stored in the flesh. A Frankenstein's hand might sometimes seem to have a will of its own, during which times the Wretched remembers experiences that belong to the hand's former owner. An Ulgan might remember events that occurred to his body before it was rent by spirits and used to spark artificial life.

Each dot represents one distinct Skill the residual memory retains from the body's former life (chosen when the player chooses this Merit). A player whose character has Residual Memory 3 might choose to devote it to Academics, Firearms and Streetwise, if the player feels the body's former inhabitant knew those Skills to a decent degree. The player could even devote his Residual Memory to Skills for which he has no training (although the character still suffers the penalty for untrained Skill use).

For each chapter in a story, the character has a pool of "memory dice" equal to twice the number he has in this Merit. For instance, a character with two dots of Residual Memory has four dice in his memory pool.

Each time he uses one of these memory dice, he can add it to any one dice pool related to the Skills his residual memories retain. The memories of the body's former self are asserted, providing the Promethean with abilities he himself might not have but which he won't remember after having used them.

He can use these memory dice all in one dice roll, or split them up between different dice rolls. Either way, once

they've been used, they're gone until the next chapter or game session. For example, the character with Residual Memory 3 (giving him six dice) might choose to add two dice to an Academics roll and then four to a Streetwise roll. The next game session, he might apply all six dice to a single Firearms roll. The bonus can apply to mundane use of these Skills, but not to Transmutation rolls. (The body's former inhabitant knew nothing of Transmutations.)

**Drawback:** Whenever the character has spent all of his available memory dice for a chapter, he might also remember one of the former inhabitant's derangements. The player chooses one mild derangement when he purchases this Merit. On the turn following the use of the final memory die, the player rolls the Promethean's Humanity. If he succeeds, there is no effect. If he fails, the derangement becomes active for the scene.

### Unpalatable Aura (••)

**Prerequisite:** Promethean

**Effect:** Pandorans instinctively do not like the tenor of the Promethean's Azothic radiance. While its effect on them is the same — it awakens them from Dormancy — they'd prefer to choose a different target from which to gain their Pyros sustenance. If given a choice, such as if there are more Prometheans present than the one with this Merit, they will most likely attack the other Prometheans first. If the Promethean with this Merit is the only food source available, this Merit will not prevent them from attacking, but it does give subtract two from the result of their Initiative rolls when first determining initiative ranks in an encounter with the Promethean.

## Restricted Social Merits

There are some Merits available to mortals that a Promethean simply cannot purchase, or must purchase with restrictions.

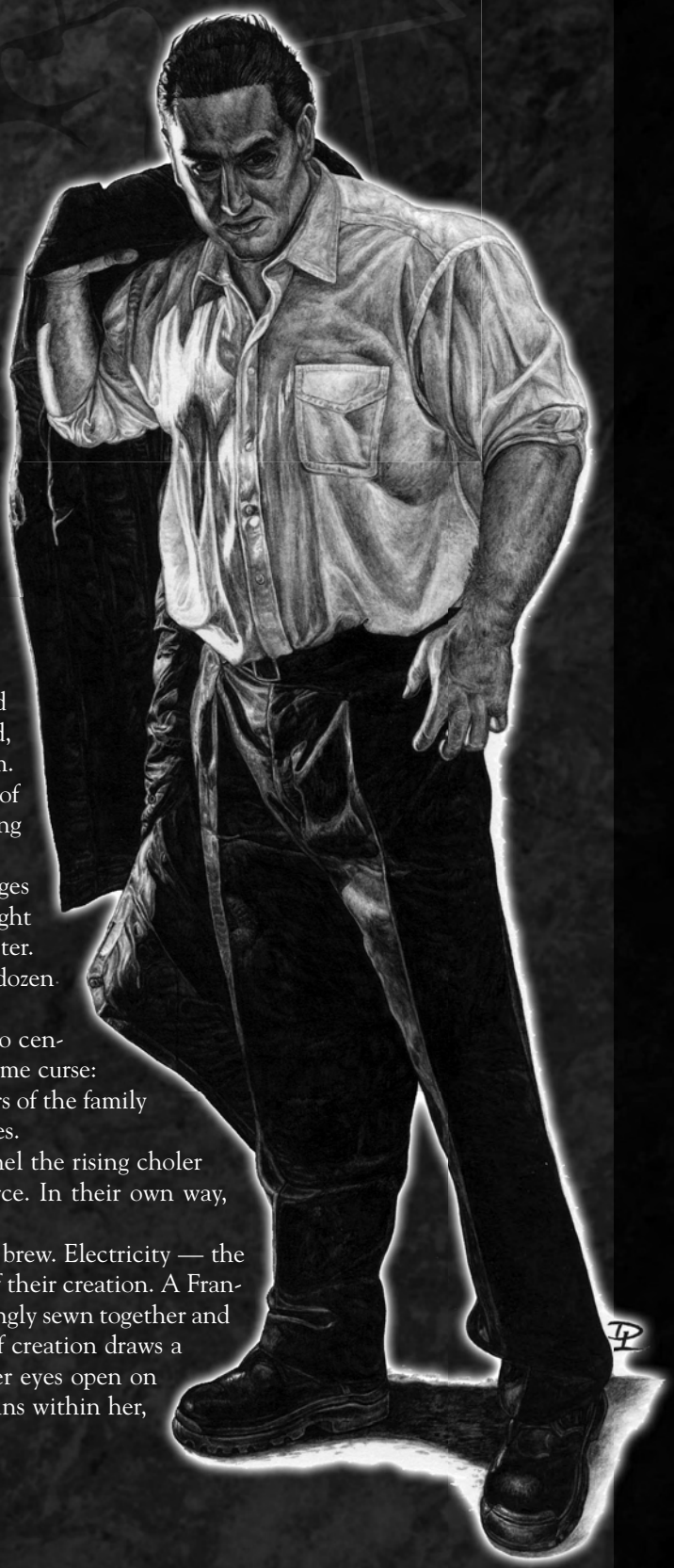
- **Fame:** Prometheans cannot be famous among mortals. They too soon become infamous instead, thanks to Disquiet. To represent fame among Prometheans, characters can purchase the Repute Merit.
- **Mentor:** Usually another Promethean. If this character is a mortal, the Promethean needs to be more careful than usual about calling upon or visiting his mentor too frequently, lest Disquiet taint the relationship.
- **Retainer:** A Promethean cannot purchase this Merit. No mortal can work for him without eventually succumbing to Disquiet.
- **Status:** A Promethean's ability to obtain Status within mortal institutions is severely curtailed by Disquiet. The Storyteller should disallow purchase of this Merit unless the player has a particularly compelling excuse for why his character has it. Even then, his Status must be limited to no more than one dot.
- **Striking Looks:** While Prometheans can purchase this Merit, its effects work only on mortals who are not suffering from Disquiet or who are in only the first or second stages. Once a mortal's Disquiet progresses to stage three or higher, it just doesn't matter how astonishing the Promethean looks. (The Galatean Mesmerizing Appearance Bestowment is still effective, though.)



# FRANKENSTEIN

## THE WRETCHED





What makes a man? What are the components of a human being? Is a human being more than the sum of the parts that make the whole?

The children of Frankenstein embody these questions. Possessed of great strength and wild feeling, yet ill made and unfinished, their condition makes them personifications of the conundrum. They reflect the question literally, too, consisting of a mishmash of human parts sewn together and animated by harnessed lightning — wielding great power but still not fully *men*.

For all the Disquiet they cause, the other Promethean Lineages are still the intended results of the dark miracles that brought them into being. Not so the descendants of Frankenstein's monster. Their Progenitor was a mistake, a nightmare mishmash of a dozen corpses.

Although a few of these patchwork people over the last two centuries have not necessarily been hideous, they all share the same curse: They are separated from humanity, and they know it. Members of the family Frankenstein are forced to confront this every day of their lives.

Misery makes many of them fiends, but just as many channel the rising choler within them into inspiration, tempering it with galvanic force. In their own way, they become heroes.

Bile and Fire mix within them, making for a heady, roiling brew. Electricity — the flowing liquid fire of the alchemist — is the constant legacy of their creation. A Frankenstein is no more than a collection of corpse parts painstakingly sewn together and laid out on a slab, until that moment when the machinery of creation draws a single arc of electricity across her body. Shocked into life, her eyes open on a world that already begins to reject her. The lightning remains within her, crackling through her veins.

This electricity sparks in the eyes of every one of the Wretched. It drives their speech, granting some an eloquence that belies the weird nature of their disfigurements and the Disquiet they cause. Fire fills the Frankensteins' minds. Although they have no souls, the energy of inspiration flows within them.

The inability to hide from the truth of what they are gives the Wretched a frankness and honesty that can make talking with one an experience that causes discomfort that goes beyond mere Disquiet. They can't lie to themselves, so few see a reason to lie to anyone else. They see the truth; they cut straight to the heart of the matter. Airs and graces are often lost on them.

As patchwork creations, the Frankensteins' bodies can sometimes seem clumsy. Parts taken from different bodies don't always harmonize as they should. Sometimes, especially when the Wretched suffer from Torment, body parts might even work against each other. Perhaps a hand commits terrible acts while the rest of the body struggles to stop its wayward member, or perhaps the Frankenstein finds his brain temporarily trapped within a body that no longer obeys him.

Language is sometimes difficult for them, for the same reason. When they first awaken, the Frankensteins have trouble remembering the languages spoken by the corpses who contributed to their forms. For a time, they have trouble articulating it. It soon passes, but a few — those who find themselves entirely without contact with other Prometheans — never really find language easy. Some teach themselves how to communicate from scratch or learn their own language from other Prometheans who themselves spend little time in the company of civilized people. Untutored in manners or modern idiom, some speak using archaisms, while others use short, rough sentences that still communicate meaning perfectly.

A mixture of choler and electricity drives their actions. A Frankenstein on a Pilgrimage can rarely be stopped. Restless, tireless, they rarely fall prey to apathy, and often display great courage.

Choler rules over the other humours in the Wretched, and its emotional effects are plain to see. The reign of bile expresses itself in the constant feeling of discontent. They need to escape who they are. Most take this drive as a push along the road to Mortality. Some try to find other ways out.

They always feel the need to fight. The Frankensteins hardly ever do things the easy way. The Wretched who find meaning are the ones who find something to fight *for*. Struggle doesn't always predicate physical violence, though it can, and often does. The Frankensteins fight for access to the road to Mortality. They fight for the safety and aid of Prometheans with whom they've allied themselves. They fight for anger. They fight for unrequited love. (It's always unrequited, at least until they find some way to escape Disquiet.) They fight for their voices to be heard among their Promethean fellows.

All too often, they fight against their own raging emotions.

Passions born of dissatisfaction all too often turn bad. In the Wretched, determination frequently marries itself to stubbornness. The Wretched anger easily. When crossed, they turn to thoughts of revenge. The yearning to become truly mortal can lead to a vicious envy of ordinary people who have a precious gift yet don't even realize how beautiful their lives are. Envy and stubbornness lead to vengefulness and more vengefulness. Rage leads to violence. The savagery of Dr. Frankenstein's first creature is legendary. When Torment took him, people suffered and died. His Wretched progeny follow in his tradition, falling prey to murderous wrath when their designs are thwarted.

Most of the other Prometheans — themselves the progeny of creations that were not failures in the eyes of their demiurges — often look down on the Frankensteins. In throngs of Prometheans of different Lineages, the Wretched all too often have a great deal to prove. Yet, while they don't have the constancy of a Tammuz, the grace of a Galatea, the knowledge of an Osiris or the supernatural aptitudes of an Ulgan, they have zeal to surpass any of the others.

Despite their limitations, despite everything, the Wretched are at least as likely to become the de facto leaders or spokesmen of Promethean throngs as members of any of the other Lineages are.

The Frankensteins' deformities are reminders, not only to themselves, but to the other Prometheans, of what they are and what they can be. They might not have souls, but they have hearts full of fire and livers full of gall, and they will not rest until their Pilgrimages are complete.

**Progenitor:** Everybody knows the story of Victor Frankenstein. Literature and movies have made him and his monster post-Enlightenment legends. The different versions all agree on the point that Frankenstein's single-minded desire to create life led him to create a monster instead. In turn, the monster blighted Victor's existence.

Victor's methods — fusing Paracelsian alchemy and Enlightenment science — shouldn't have worked. Whether a result of freak conditions, unfeasible science or an act of God, the monster opened its eyes, only to see his creator turn away in disgust. Frankenstein had intended his creation to be beautiful, a new Adam Kadmon, a complete, perfect man, born in innocence. What he made was an abortion.

Escaping his confines, Frankenstein's monster traveled abroad in the world, meeting only loneliness and rejection.

The Creature grew to hate Victor for giving him life, and he swore revenge. The Creature's choices, however,

were limited. Everywhere he went, everywhere he tried to make some contact with humanity, he found himself shunned and attacked. Eventually, with nowhere else to go, the Creature returned to hound Frankenstein, begging the scientist to make him a mate, a bride.

The most commonly told version of the story has Frankenstein failing to finish the Bride, destroying the half-finished body before giving it life. Another version has him finishing his second creature. This version ends with the Bride rejecting the monster.

In his rage, the Creature made dire threats to the safety of the creator's family and then withdrew. Over the next couple of years, the Creature made good on his threats.

Although, in the end, the Creature wasn't directly responsible for Frankenstein's death, he was the driving force behind it. Frankenstein pursued his creation into the Arctic. By the time an English explorer's ship found him, he was already dying of exposure and fatigue. The commonly told stories end with the Creature finding Frankenstein's body and then, filled with remorse, destroying himself.

In truth, the Creature is still abroad. At some point, he learned how to create his own creatures. Perhaps he learned from Frankenstein himself, watching as the demiurge worked on the ill-fated Bride. He certainly made Promethean children of his own. The spark of Divine Fire that animated him worked its alchemical magic and transmuted his understanding, imbuing him with the knowledge of how to create his own monsters.

The Wretched say that it was the Creature who made the Bride, not Frankenstein, and that he failed spectacularly. Instead of a boon companion, he created a Pandoran. In the same way that Frankenstein's monster plagued his creator, the Bride and her spawn still plague their Progenitor, even now.

Other stories tell of the monster's attempts to make brothers, sons or just friends. In every story, his own creations reject him, just as his creator rejected him.

The Creature's loneliness and anger drives him still. Unpredictable and possessed of great power, the Wretched respect and fear their Progenitor.

Victor Frankenstein was the last of his family line — the Creature saw to that. Yet, because of the Creature's Lineage, Victor has children of a sort, and the family line of Frankenstein continues.

**Other Nicknames:** Thunderstruck, Karloffs (or Elsas), Patchwork Men

**Appearance:** Frankensteins are created from the fragments of several different corpses, stitched together. When they choose to make others of their kind, the Wretched look for the best available body pieces. They favor the remains of fit, muscular people.

Most of the time, the best available pieces don't come in a matching set. One of the Wretched might have mismatched arms or legs of different sizes. These deformities are not obvious most of the time, but mortals who see a Frankenstein get a strange sense that something is physically wrong with the Promethean, even if they can't see anything freakish at all.

When their disfigurements are hidden, the Wretched are rarely attractive. Even if they are not ugly as such, something about them seems wrong somehow. Even when they appear as mortals, many look like a mismatched jumble of attributes which, individually, are otherwise beautiful — a muscular arm, a noble chin, graceful hands. Features such as bulging muscles, mismatched eyes or greasy hair are often obvious to anyone who sees them.

In the brief moments that their disfigurements are visible, many Frankensteins are very tall, like their Progenitor. Others might not be so tall, but make up for it in bulk, with rippling and heavily veined — if uneven — muscles. Hair tends to extremes. Some of the Wretched have shaggy hair that grows in places where it shouldn't grow. Others have greasy, thin hair in patches, and others have no hair at all. Usually, their facial features would be striking if they were properly matched. Commonly, the Wretched have wide mouths and strong teeth. Many have watery eyes that are either too small for their sockets, being lost under heavy brows, or too large, and thus bulging out. Not all Frankensteins have both eyes of the same color. Not all Frankensteins have both eyes.

**Disfigurement:** When the Wretched use their powers, the joins between the different parts of their body become apparent. Different parts of the body might have different skin tones. The joins could be heavy white scars. They could still be sutured with anything from coarse, old-fashioned thread through to steel wire. Some areas of flesh might even be joined together by riveted straps of leather and metal.

As they use the Pyros or channel their powers, it becomes apparent that some Frankensteins have electrical terminals in odd places on their body, poking out from the join between areas of flesh. Perhaps they're small rods of copper on the backs of the hands. Sometimes they are bolts on the back of the head, or small copper spikes briefly visible poking out of the scalp. Perhaps the Wretched has small metal contact plates flush with the skin on the base of the spine; maybe they're on the neck or the chest. When a Frankenstein's disfigurements become apparent, these terminals might spark, or arc electricity across the Promethean's body.

**Humour:** Choleric (vengeful, ambitious)

**Element:** Fire animates the Wretched, as embodied in the bolt of lightning or electrical surge that gave Frankenstein's first monster life. Fire is the element of courage and inspiration, persuasion and wrath.

**Bestowment:** Unholy Strength (p. 117)

**Refinements:** The Wretched practice all of the Refinements. Frankensteins are most likely to practice the Cuprum Refinement, however, withdrawing from the human society that reminds them of their difference, until such time as they're ready to regain their immortality and join humanity, having found their peace with Nature.

Fighting opponents abstract and physical alike comes easily to the Wretched, so almost as large a number practice Stannum, channeling their rage into acts of aggression, which may or may not be justified. Frankensteins who practice the Refinement of Tin become monstrous warriors, sometimes hero and villain at the same time.

The same anger that drives the Wretched to practice Stannum draws too many of them to practice the Refinement of Flux. Frankensteins who discover their fellows practicing Centimani are often merciless in their efforts to destroy what they see as a debased Promethean.

Few Frankensteins practice Mercurius. Their discontent with their state makes the practice of refining and perfecting it seem wrong to many of them.

**Character Creation:** Frankensteins are just as likely to favor any of the three Attribute categories. Although Presence is often low, the Wretched can be eloquent and often have surprisingly high Manipulation and Composure. A brutish physique often hides a sharp tongue and a keen intellect. The Frankensteins' way of attracting hardship means that Physical Skills are often primary, as are Physical Merits. Social Merits are rare. Giant is a particularly common Merit. Many of the Wretched consist of larger-than-average components, while others expand when the animating power first flows through them, distended by mystical energy.

Fortitude and Justice are common Virtues; Envy and Wrath are common Vices.

**Concepts:** abused child, lonely innocent, placard-bearing prophet of doom, scholarly hermit, scientist, spirit of vengeance, survivalist, unwilling bride (or groom), woodsman

**Quote:** *I'm not your Adam.*

## Stereotypes

Galatea: You might be pretty, but it makes you no better than me. You'd do well to remember it.

Osiris: What reason could you possibly have to be so damned smug?

Tammuz: What is the point of strength without purpose?

Ulgan: You spend so much time treating with the spirit world. How does that help you to survive in the here and now? What of this world?

* * *

Vampires: Your body is dead. Mine was dead, but now lives. Which of us is better off?

Werewolves: You can play monsters, but you don't know what it's like. Not really. You can change back.

Mages: You're like *him.*

Mortals: You have so much, and you don't even see it. You just piss it away.

# GALATEA

## MUSES



Beauty, as they keep telling you, is only skin deep. It's arguable as to whether that is always true, but as far as the descendants of the Galatea of myth are concerned, it holds some degree of truth. They're all beautiful. Every last one of them is an Adonis or an Aphrodite. Yet, this beauty isn't enough to keep away the Disquiet that plagues the Prometheans. It isn't enough to hide the constant crackle of the Azoth under their skin. The Azoth repels, just as their luminous beauty attracts. It's no wonder that the most common reaction to the Muses is confusion and ambivalence.

Like their Progenitor, the Galateids were made to be loved and to love, in every sense of the word. The need for human society drives many of them. Beauty, however, doesn't necessarily predicate social graces. Many Muses find that they are unable to communicate with the humans to whom they would be so close. They make attachments easily, but they can't express how they feel.

Blood is the controlling humour of their bodies. It drives them to human society. It carries them along their Pilgrimage. Despite their frustration, the Muses have the ability to be optimistic, to hold on to

the hope of transmutation into mortal flesh, even when all looks lost. Nonetheless, their sanguine temperament makes them irresponsible and prone to indulge their passions at the worst possible moments.

When Torment takes them, the Muses just as often damage themselves as they do those who surround them. Sometimes, they act like animals in heat, humiliating themselves as they try to get close to mortals without any dignity or decorum. Sometimes, they try to indulge their desires by force. Sometimes they succeed. The consequences of their actions can all too often wreck the fragile, cagey relationships they've managed to build with the few people who can get near them.

Some find ways around their constant need to be around people. Some content themselves with showing their faces to only select mortals at certain times. Some, through history, have played the part of divine visitations — as the Virgin Mary or various goddesses of desire. Some Prometheans wonder whether Aphrodite really created the first Galatea, or if Galatea is behind the myth of Aphrodite.

Galateans have inspired art through history. They try to be worthy of the name Muse and sometimes succeed. One Galateid a few hundred years ago claimed to have been Shakespeare's unobtainable Dark Lady. Another claimed to have inspired Goya, as the fear he painted was borne of mixed Disquiet and fascination. Whether this is true is immaterial. The point is that the progeny of Galatea want to be Muses and often try to act the part. For many, trying is enough.

The body is everything to the Galateids. They hone their bodies and work to make themselves the best they can be. They just as often pamper themselves and indulge in sensual pleasures as well. Yet, though they can take part in the sexual, it is cold for them, and they're sterile. This incompleteness of their bodies — the inability to find bliss in love or to have children — is a source of great pain to many of them.

The body in question matters a great deal to their creators. When a Muse decides to create another Galateid, she must find the corpse of someone who was young and possessed of exquisite beauty. The body has to be unmarred in any way. (It can't have been mutilated by its circumstances of death.) The Muse has to dissolve a precisely measured mix of pearls and lime sand in a shallow bath of wine vinegar and aromatic herbs. She immerses the cadaver in the vinegar, leaving it to soak for long enough for the corpse to be infused with the preservative and mineral mixture. Then, placing the body before her, she kisses it, infusing her breath with her Azoth. The Divine Breath animates a creature of cold, exquisite beauty.

The relationship between a Galateid and her creation is very often complex. They need society and love, and few are clear as to whether they want children, friends or lovers. Relationships between creators and created very easily turn sour. Co-dependence and emotional abuse are common. Creators who find that their creations are unresponsive to their desires often find themselves, against all their higher ideals, engaging in other forms of abuse as well.

Other Prometheans see the Galateids either as irresponsible and driven by their lusts or as arrogant and cold. Ugliness repels the Muses, and the true forms of most of the Promethean Lineages are undeniably ugly. Likewise, the Galateids see the Divine Breath that animates them as evidence of the favor of a god, or God, or of a governing Intellectual Principle. Other Prometheans were not of divine origin. In the mythology passed down from creator to progeny, Pygmalion was not the demiurge — he was only the medium through which the Divine Breath was passed down from Heaven.

Still, when a Muse devotes himself to a throng of Prometheans, he often surprises himself with how quickly he finds common cause with the others. The Galateids not only find a society that can sustain them on their quests, but with their constant aura of sanguine hope, they aid that society. Their business is inspiration. At their best, they can inspire hope in their own kind. For some, that can be enough to sustain them, at least for the time being.

**Progenitor:** The commonly known story about the genesis of Galatea concerns the sculptor Pygmalion. Sickened by the licentious behavior of the women he knew, Pygmalion retired into solitude, living a bachelor's life. In his spare time, he made a life-size ivory statue of a maiden of stunning beauty. Gradually, he fell in love with the statue and began to treat it as a real woman, dressing it in fine clothes, kissing it and even sleeping with it in his bed. One day, he prayed to Aphrodite that he be granted a mate like the woman of ivory. The goddess answered his prayer by transforming the ivory maiden into a real girl, whom Pygmalion married. They had a son together, named Paphos, after whom the Greek island was named, and from him grew a dynasty.

The stories the Galateids hand down to one another are quite different. In one version, Pygmalion was a lonely man, whose lack of both social graces and property meant that he could find no wife. Growing increasingly bitter, he looked for a way to create a wife who would be able to love him. Attempts to use magic to animate effigies of ivory, marble and clay failed.

His success came when the most beautiful maiden on his island died. Using a ritual still practiced by Galateids today, Pygmalion brought about the circumstances necessary to infuse the corpse with the Divine Breath, and the first Galatea was created. They were happy together, and although they could have no children, they made Paphos, and he became the first true Promethean of the Galateid Lineage.

Another version of the story says that the beautiful maiden was the betrothed of another man, brought to Pygmalion's island from far away by her husband to be. This version tells how Pygmalion kidnapped her on the eve of her wedding and took her far away. One version of the story says he poisoned her. This version doesn't explain how he knew about the ritual. Perhaps its knowledge was granted by gods who cared less for justice than for the correct forms of propitiation. Yet another version tells how she wanted to go with him, that she really was in love with him, and that a venomous snake killed her. In this version, Pygmalion found a Thracian witch who taught him the ritual to bring her back. He didn't bring her back, of course; he created a new being with her body, which he grew to resent. She was not the woman he loved.

The accounts agree that the story ends badly. The Galatea of this story was a blank slate, but even so, Pygmalion could not control her. He used her as his doll one too many times, and she strangled him before striking out on her own. Shortly before gaining Mortality, she created Paphos.

No story tells what happened to Paphos. There is no evidence that any of these stories is true, nothing except hearsay. The Galateids exist, and that is all. Stories about Paphos surviving for hundreds of years still persist, but no new stories have arisen for centuries. If Paphos endured for long, he surely can't have endured into the present.

**Other Nicknames:** Dolls, Statues, Mannequins. Older Galateids refer sometimes to male Muses as "Paphoi," and to females as "Galateae."

**Appearance:** The Muses are beautiful, but beauty is tied very much to cultural ideas of what makes one beautiful. Galateids find cadavers who conform to an ideal of beauty that was current when they were created, meaning that their creations' beauty, although undeniable, is slightly unfashionable. The symmetry of their features is constant, but the specifics — the strength of the chin, the line of the nose, the shape of the lips — these change over time. The older the Prometheans who created them are, the more likely Muses are to be out of step with current ideas of beauty. A Muse created in the era when Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn were ideals could look like Clara Bow or Douglas Fairbanks. A Galatea might have been created in the late 1990s by an ancient Muse, from a body resembling an Elizabeth Siddal or a Jane Morris.

The skin of Muses whose bodies were of Caucasian descent always seems to be a few grades paler than that of the people around them. No matter how much time they spend in the sun, they never seem to tan. Regardless, all Galateids have a healthy glow to their skin no matter what the ethnic origin of their bodies is. Their complexions are flawless, and their hair is thick, shiny and in good condition.

They stand out. Their faces are memorable, not just because they're gorgeous, but because they're so unlike all the other beautiful people. The strength of their Azoth makes their beauty disturbing, though they're still indistinguishable from humans until they channel the Pyros. Disquiet turns their glamour into something uncomfortable to see. They say that love and hate are closely linked; it's true of the Galateids. Their beauty can inspire both at once.

**Disfigurement:** In the brief moments when their Promethean nature becomes visible, Muses appear artificial, like mannequins or statues. Their skin reflects light like marble, plastic or clouded glass. Hair adopts the look of a wig. White skin might become dead, pure white, or it might take on the color of bone. Brown skin might become jet-black or dark gray, adopting the apparent texture of polished ebony or jet. Their eyes look glassy and dead like the eyes of a doll.

The Divine Breath that animates them becomes apparent, too. Clouds of it become visible as the Promethean moves, not unlike the little clouds mortals breathe out in cold weather, though it's visible no matter what the ambient temperature is.

**Humour:** Sanguine (courageous, amorous)

**Element:** As befitting creatures animated by a Divine Breath, air is the element to which the Muses have affinity. Air is the element of the Word of Truth, the *Logos* that defines forms, shapes and names. It is the element of understanding and judgment.

**Bestowment:** Mesmerizing Appearance (p. 116)

**Refinements:** The value some Muses place upon their beauty brings a great many of them to seek to perfect and understand their Promethean state further the practice of Mercurius. Just as many would rather get as close to humanity as quickly as they can, and so practice Aurum, mimicking mortals as a prelude to becoming them. Few Galateids practice Cuprum, as the retreat from society holds little attraction for them.

**Character Creation:** The Galateids usually take Social Attributes as primary, although Social Skills are very rarely emphasized. While the Muses are beautiful, they're often at a loss about what to do with it. Physical Skills are very common: Galateae and Paphoi alike value their bodies and concentrate on honing them, often to the exclusion of all else. Social Merits are rare, with the exception of Striking Looks, which is very common among the progeny of Galatea.

Common Virtues are Charity and Hope; common Vices are Lust and Gluttony.

**Concepts:** abuse survivor, athlete, crush object, guru, painter's model, performance artist, priest(ess), prostitute

**Quote:** *I'd make myself ugly if it meant you would touch me.*

## Stereotypes

Frankenstein: My origin is divine. You were given life by a mere man. The difference is evident.

Osiris: There's the same divine spark in you as there is in me. I find that attractive. If only you weren't so serious all the time.

Tammuz: Your heart of stone is not unlike mine. It's a shame you're so unfinished.

Ulgan: You know how to direct your passion, and I respect that, but you have no finesse.

* * *

Vampires: Death, pain and beauty, all tied up together. I don't know whether I should be frightened off or drawn near.

Werewolves: Why would you choose to be so ugly? Why choose to have no grace? I don't understand.

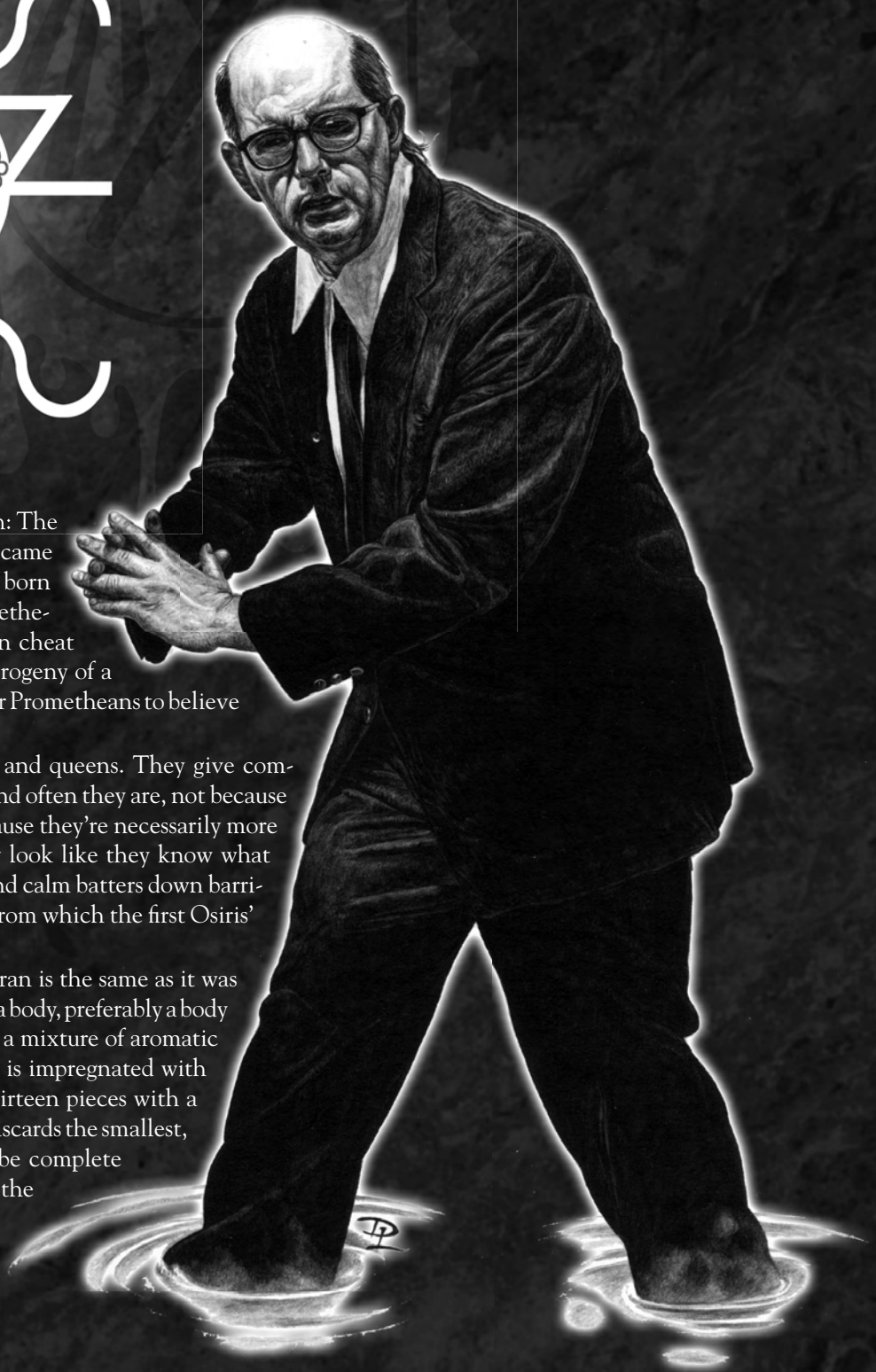
Mages: I could be like you. I *should* be like you.

Mortals: Look at me. Look at me! Why won't you look at me?

# OSIRIS

## NEPRI





And death shall have no dominion: The progeny of Osiris know this. They came back from the dead — renewed and born without true memories, but back nonetheless — and they know that they can cheat death again. They claim to be the progeny of a god of the dead, and they expect other Prometheans to believe that and respect them for it.

They carry themselves like kings and queens. They give commands. They expect to be obeyed. And often they are, not because they have any special powers or because they're necessarily more impressive, but simply because they look like they know what they're doing. Their self assurance and calm batters down barriers like the floodwaters of the Nile, from which the first Osiris' body was drawn.

The process of creating a new Osiran is the same as it was then: A Promethean creator chooses a body, preferably a body of noble bearing, and immerses it in a mixture of aromatic herbs in river water. After the body is impregnated with the river, the Nepri chops it into thirteen pieces with a specially prepared bronze knife. He discards the smallest, as a sign that his progeny will not be complete until his Pilgrimage is over. It's up to the

creator which part he chooses to discard. Most take part of an ear, or a finger or toe. Others, perhaps creating the new Promethean out of spite or anger, take something far more obvious or crippling, like a hand, an eye or the nose. Others still take the genitalia, less out of spite than out of homage to their Progenitor.

The creator spits on the body, and then reconstructs it, sewing it together with a flaxen thread. He takes a bunch of roses and imbues them with his Azoth in the way that Isis did so many thousands of years ago. He crushes the blooms and stuffs the crushed rose petals in the body's mouth. The new Promethean moves, as its jaws begin to chew and swallow the rose petals. As they enter the new Promethean's stomach, the Azoth within them transmutes itself into new life.

Even by Promethean standards, the Osirans are rarely close to their creators. When they awaken, they look out on a world that seems slightly distant. They are not the strongest of the Prometheans, and are by no means the most beautiful, but they are the most levelheaded. The restraint given by the prevalence of phlegm among their humours governs them, holds them back from foolish extravagance and dangerous recklessness.

When the phlegm rises too high and Torment takes them, however, their dispassion becomes a danger. Ironically, their restraint grows out of control, and deadens their higher emotions. They become ice-cold in their assessment of situations, devoid of sympathy and wholly ruthless, sacrificing friends and innocent strangers alike to get their way.

The Osirans' intentions differ slightly from those of other Prometheans. They travel on the same Pilgrimage and with the same goal, but their reason for doing so is as much for the sake of knowing what the journey has in store as it is for the prize at the end. They collect lore and information, cataloging their experiences, perhaps even writing them down in journals for the sake of others of their kind.

The one situation in which Osiran dispassion fails comes when they are faced with Pandorans. Too many Nepri practice Centimani. Their very earliest myths deal with the creation of Pandorans and the inevitable consequences. Nepri who follow the higher Refinements find out as much as they can about the Pandorans. They intend to destroy them. Most do. But often, their curiosity and dispassion stays their hand. Some experiment on the Pandorans they find, seeking to find out more about themselves. Others are tempted to practice the Refinement of Flux so that they might bring these hideous and fascinating creatures under their control.

Other Prometheans respect the Nepri and hold them in a kind of awe. They claim the most ancient Lineage of their kind, and even if the others don't necessarily believe the Osirans' tales of divine heritage, they still often allow them to take what the Nepri consider their rightful places at leaders and tactical advisors to their throngs. As natural leaders, however, they have a lot more to prove because their companions expect a lot more from them.

An Osiris can easily fall prey to pride or apathy, but her weapon against this is her missing part, which is a constant reminder that she is not complete, and not at the end of her Pilgrimage.

If an Osiris ever manages to become mortal, it might be that his deformity is healed. It might depend on how the Osiran acquitted himself on his Pilgrimage, however, or just as easily a case of pure dumb luck.

The Nepri accept that the most important healing they seek isn't physical. At their best, they combine their self-knowledge with humility and restraint. At their worst, they can be uncaring enough to send boon companions to their deaths. These traits can show themselves in the same individual at the same time. The other Prometheans know this and tread carefully around the progeny of Osiris.

**Progenitor:** The story of Isis and Osiris has been told and retold for nearly 4,000 years. It tells how Osiris, the just king of Egypt, was drowned in the Nile and dismembered by his treacherous brother Seth, who wanted the kingdom for himself. Seth scattered the parts of Osiris' body across Egypt. Fortunately, Osiris' sister-wife Isis, whose beauty might have been part of the reason for Seth's jealousy, was a skilled magician. She recovered all but one of the fragments of her brother-husband's body, missing only his genitalia. She removed his viscera, bound his body with bandages and embalmed him with oil, at which point, he returned to life. Although lacking his genitalia, Osiris still somehow fathered a son, Horus, who would one day defeat Seth in single combat.

In time, Osiris' return from the dead would lead to him becoming divine, one of the lords of the Egyptian afterlife.

The version told by Osiris' Promethean descendants is similar to a point. Where it differs is in the particulars of the Progenitor's resurrection. In this take on the story, Isis was less the faithful wife and more the conniving manipulator. When she recreated Osiris as a Promethean, she knew that a different mind would inhabit his body. She knew that while he was possessed of reason and language, his memory of who and what he had been before would be gone. She wanted that, as it was her intention to rule. And so it went for a while, until such time as Isis and Osiris created Horus. Creating a new Promethean was the only way they could produce anything resembling a son, even discounting Osiris' lack of generative organs.

Some stories describe Horus as the second in the line, the true beginning of the Osiran Lineage, who gave his creators reason for pride. A more common version is that Horus was a Pandoran. Some variations even suggest that the creation of a Pandoran was Isis' idea — that Horus was deliberately designed as a monster to direct against Seth. The hawk head bestowed on artistic depictions of Horus, often thought of by archaeologists as a symbol of his purpose and character, might not have been entirely symbolic.

Whether Promethean or Pandoran, Horus did indeed defeat Seth. Yet he slew Isis as well, either because he recognized that she was harmful to Osiris, or because he was simply a beast who lost control. Osiris, who depended upon Isis' presence more than he knew, ignored the misgivings of common sense and resurrected Isis as a Promethean. It ended badly.

The Osirans are split as to who was the true continuation of Osiris' Lineage. All agree that Isis chose to create more abominations, perhaps because of a bad seed remaining within her. The Osirans who believe that Horus was a Pandoran say that it was Osiris who continued the line anew, creating new Prometheans to rectify his mistakes and to eventually regain his humanity.

Other Osirans believe that Horus founded their line with Osiris' blessing, and that Osiris created one more Promethean, Nepri, as he regained his Mortality, and that it is from this third — or fourth — Promethean that the stable Lineage springs. Nepri is often thought of as a second Progenitor, so much so that many Osirans are happy to name themselves after this other Promethean. Others point out the fact that Nepri was simply another name for a life-giving aspect of the god Osiris in ancient Egypt. There counter-argument to that point is that Nepri is identified with Osiris *precisely because* he was the true founder of the stable Promethean Lineage.

Members of Osiris' Lineage dread returning to Egypt. The desert sands and ancient streets of Egypt hold many secrets, including the sleeping forms of some of the world's most grotesque Pandorans, many of whom resemble the old animal-headed gods. None of them know whether the gods inspired the creatures or the creatures inspired the gods. As far as the Osirans know, no one remains active today who knows.

**Other Nicknames:** Cadavers, Children of Horus (although as many Nepri reject this title as enjoy it).

**Appearance:** When the Nepri choose to create more of their own, they try to choose a body that had dignity and grace in life. Osirans are often tall and well proportioned and have looks that, while rarely conventionally handsome, suggest strength of character — a strong chin, a determined brow, a set mouth, dark, intense eyes.

An Osiran's missing part is sometimes visible even when his disfigurement is invisible, but not in every case. A man with a missing eye or missing little finger might draw some comment, but he's hardly freakish.

**Disfigurement:** An Osiris' disfigurement makes her skin become sunken and dry, like the skin of a corpse. Lips tighten and shrink back from a mouth full of yellow-brown teeth set in a skull's rictus grin. Muscles and fat appear to atrophy, too, sometimes giving the Nepri the appearance of a skeletal carcass. The skin might develop holes where it's rotted away, or it might appear leathery and desiccated. Depending on whether the body was embalmed or not, the Nepri's skin could take on a bluish or greenish cast, or it might instead appear dark brown like an Egyptian mummy.

The missing part of the Nepri can be visible if it's a part that would normally be visible yet isn't normally visible when the Promethean appears human. Likewise, a Nepri whose chest is uncovered when his secret becomes apparent can be seen to have roughly-stitched rents, where his internal organs were taken out and replaced.

Strangely, the smell of an Osiris, although certainly musty, is not the smell of decay. It's the smell of citron, and of dried roses.

**Humour:** Phlegmatic (calm, unemotional)

**Element:** Water — the water of the Nile that drowned the first Osiris — is the Osiris' chief element. In the Prometheans, it's the element of reason and dispassionate observation, of perception and intuitive thought. It's also a cold element, bringing callousness and a tendency to use others as tools without taking their status as sentient beings into account.

**Bestowment:** Revivification (pp. 116-117)

**Refinements:** The Osirans are often enthusiastic practitioners of Cuprum, particularly since the practice of the Refinement of Self grants proficiency in the Metamorphosis Transmutation, a power highly valued by the Nepri. Many others choose instead to practice Ferrum, finding solace in the perfection of dead flesh.

It's rare for an Osiris to practice Stannum, though. Most don't have the drive for vengeance. Their "natural" drives take them in other directions.

Many of the most accomplished practitioners of Centimani are Osirans. Perhaps it's something about the divine heritage of the Nepri that makes them arrogant. Maybe they still bear the taint of Isis, who was one of the earliest and most enthusiastic practitioners of the Refinement of Flux history has ever seen (if not the first).

**Character Creation:** There is a wide variety among Osirans. They number among their kind sedentary scholars, powerfully honed athletes and stirring orators.

They can pick any Attributes as their primary category. Likewise, no real trend exists as to which category of Skills they prefer.

Nepri are known among Prometheans for their memory for lore, and Eidetic Memory is a common Merit among them.

Temperance and Prudence are common Virtues among the Osirans, while Sloth and Pride are common Vices.

**Concepts:** archaeologist, athlete, doting parent, ghost watcher, hunter of Pandorans, lore keeper, mortician, prince, soldier

**Quote:** *The holy ones are in awe of me. So tell me, why should I respect you?*



## Stereotypes

Frankenstein: I am missing only part of my body. You are missing something fundamental. I feel for you. I do.

Galatea: You are presumptuous and immature. Talk to me again when you've done some growing up.

Tammuz: Well, then. Slave or savage: What's it going to be?

Utgan: You seem to be looking for other agencies to solve your problems for you. That's an enterprise doomed to failure.

* * *

Vampires: Yes, I'm like you. But I have hope. You have only blood.

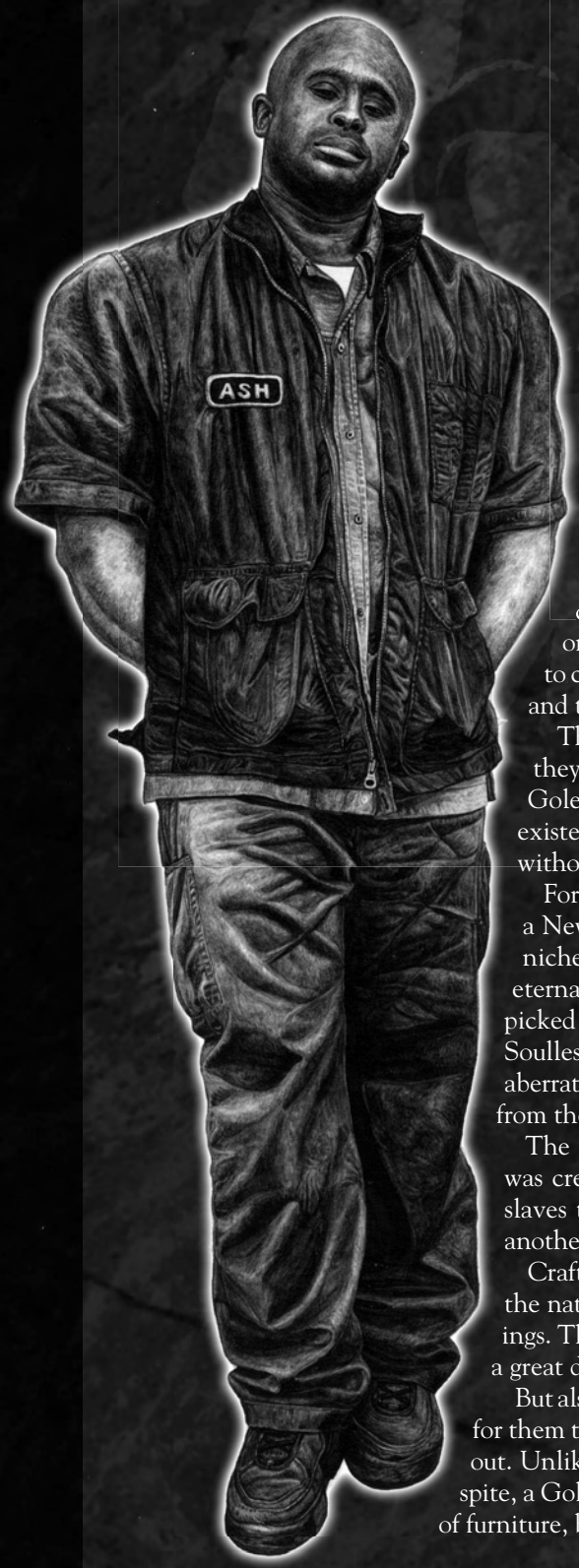
Werewolves: You run in packs while I walk alone.

Mages: You dabble. You can't know what it's like to die until you die.

Mortals: So weak, so inconstant. But your life has so much meaning. Why should that be?

# tammuz

## golems




Slavery still exists in this world. People are bought and sold every day, consigned to lives without hope or reason, maybe forced to exist as prostitutes or sweatshop workers for the benefit of others. Others sell themselves to drugs, to crime, to religion or to harmful relationships. There are many kinds of slavery, and there are many, many slaves.

The Tammuz say that slavery is an illusion, and that everyone is free — if only they have a soul. A soul means a life beyond simple material existence. The Golems have no soul, so they say they are not free. They are bound to physical existence, and they cannot exist as beings with choice and an eternal dimension without gaining Mortality, and earning a soul.

For some, a soul means an eternal life after death, when a New Heaven and a New Earth come into being. For others, it means a chance of reincarnation, a niche on the great wheel. For still others, it simply means the chance to exist eternally as part of the great cycle of matter and energy. ("When their bones are picked clean, and the clean bones gone, they shall have stars at elbow and foot.") Soulless, they have no afterlife to hope for. They have no second chance at life. As aberrations against natural law — their Disquiet is the proof — they are excluded from the universal cycle of constant renewal.

The Golems care about freedom in the temporal sense, too. The first Tammuz was created to be a slave. Although he escaped, many of his Lineage have been slaves throughout history, controlled by sorcery and forced to sleep and wake at another's whim.

Crafted from the dead and empowered through the Earth, the Tammuz take on the nature of the clay that made them what they are. They are stoic in their dealings. They are often impartial, rarely easy to move from a decision, and able to take a great deal of abuse and difficulty before they lash out.

But also like the earth, their anger is swift and devastating. When the time has come for them to explode, they do so with terrible force. Taken by Torment, a Golem lashes out. Unlike a Frankenstein, whose Torment expresses itself in acts of vengeance and spite, a Golem goes on a mindless rampage, leaving behind him the smashed fragments of furniture, buildings and people.

Torment is another form of slavery for the Tammuz, a sign that they are not as they should be. It's another thing to fight, but their fight is a patient and unbending one. They have no time for the Osirans' cerebral approach or an Ulgan's mystical journey. They simply keep going until they find their way to Mortality and the freedom they crave. This determination, this sheer bloody-mindedness is a trait they all share, and it gets them farther than many others who far surpass them in knowledge and finesse.

The Golems are usually reluctant to create other slaves, but they all realize that they must do so in order to be free. This irony isn't lost on any of them. As a result, on those occasions when a Tammuz does create another of his kind, he takes pains to explain to his creation what he is, what he should be and what he must become.

They seek bodies that are strong and hardy, because slaves must be strong to survive the rigors of slavery and must be able to persevere and find true freedom.

A Tammuz creator takes the body to a place where there is deep, bare earth. On a small slip of paper, she writes a word of power that she instinctively knows, which can never be spoken or written anywhere else. Some Tammuz say it is one of the names of God, but no one is sure of that. The act of writing the word imbues the paper with the creator's Azoth. She puts the paper under the tongue of the corpse and prepares the body for slavery in some symbolic way, maybe shaving its head, tattooing it or fitting it with an iron earring. She then buries the body and leaves it, maybe for a day, a week or even a month. Only when the new Promethean has taken on the strength of the earth around him is he able to dig his way out of the ground.

A Golem brought into the world cannot speak for a time. He understands language and might be able to read and write, but he is temporarily mute. Even when he regains his voice, he often chooses not to speak. Tammuz can talk at great length when they want to, but they rarely do. They see little point in making small talk, and they have no time for empty posturing or theatrics. When they do talk, they mean what they say. Many Tammuz can say more with a single word than other Prometheans can say with fifty.

Other Prometheans sometimes hold the Tammuz in contempt. Many Galateids consider them lumpen and unfinished. The Osirans see them as useful muscle, but little more than that. They all underestimate the Golems. Beholden to no one, man or Promethean alike, they refuse to be made slaves. Far from being incomplete, they always finish what they begin.

**Progenitor:** Of the stories the five common Promethean Lineages tell to explain their origins, it's the stories told by the Tammuz that are the most contradictory and vague.

The story that's most often told about the Golem concerns a rabbi in Prague named Loew Belalei, who built a man out of clay, back in the 15th century. There are many variations of the tale. One says how he gave it life by writing one of the names of God on a slip of paper and placing it under the Golem's tongue, and bade it awake by inscribing the word *Emet* (Hebrew for "truth") on its forehead. Each night, he erased the first letter of *Emet*, so that it read *Met* ("death"), and the Golem would sleep. Rabbi Loew retained complete mastery over the clay man's will until the night he forgot to make the Golem sleep. The creature then became aware. It raged through the streets of Prague, setting fires and causing havoc. The Rabbi found the creature and removed the name of God from its mouth. He buried it under the synagogue, and there it still remains. But the legend says that the Golem awakes every 30 years and stalks the streets.

Students of folklore and the Tammuz alike know that Loew was not the first to own a Golem. The Tammuz say that he had not made it, either, but that hundreds of years before, the Rabbis had learned of the existence of their Promethean Lineage. One, an unparalleled magician whom the Tammuz sometimes identify with the Biblical prophet Daniel, created an incantation which would bind a Tammuz in dreamlike, near-mindless servitude. Why he did this is uncertain. As many grant Daniel noble motives — the protection of his exiled people, for example — as they do selfish motives.

This was the spell that Loew had used. If the magician failed to remember to force the Golem to sleep each night, the spell would break and the Tammuz would be free.

Some Tammuz believe that this spell worked only on Golems who had fallen prey to Torment. Others claim that it controlled only Pandorans, into which category they place the notorious and intermittently conscious Golem of Prague. At any rate, no one has been known to use this spell for some 500 years. If a Tammuz ever found a written copy and recognized it for what it was, he'd destroy it without even thinking about it, no matter what its real effect is. The thought of a human wizard taking control over Pandorans or Prometheans is too much for most Tammuz to bear.

The story has a further level. Daniel, it says, had first learned of the Tammuz while in Exile in Babylon, where the Tammuz had existed for centuries. The legend told by mortals there is that the Babylonian god Tammuz had died and been retrieved from the Underworld and remade by Ishtar, the goddess of magic and fate.

The Golems say that this resurrection was the source of their Lineage. The first Tammuz was the Progenitor of the line. In truth, they say, he was a Babylonian farmer of great size and strength, who died young in an accident. Ishtar (or sometimes Inana) was a sorceress who wished to create for herself a servant and so procured the farmer's body. In another version of the story, the sorceress was a noblewoman who lusted after the farmer. He repelled her, and she had him killed.

In both stories, she found the means to reanimate him. Performing the same ritual that all of Tammuz's Lineage would one day use to perpetuate their kind, Ishtar remade Tammuz as a slave.

For a while, Tammuz did Ishtar's bidding. One tale tells how Ishtar tired of her slave and set him free, restoring his free will. Another tells how Ishtar's control over Tammuz simply failed one day, and that Tammuz escaped, destroying Ishtar's palace as he did so.

Most stories don't say what happened to Ishtar. In one version, Tammuz killed her and hung her corpse on a hook

in the center of Babylon. He went on a rampage across the city. He never left the region. Finding his freedom at long last, Tammuz made one other Promethean, Nebu. It was Nebu who traveled abroad, and Nebu who truly founded the Lineage.

Some Osirans who have heard a version of the Tammuz's origin tale have pointed to the fact that, among esoteric circles, Ishtar was thought to be one of the aliases of Isis. They put forward the idea that their Lineages share a common demiurge, an idea that the Golems who hear this theory reject out of hand, not least because the Nepri claim precedence and thus superiority over their "kin."

Some Tammuz claim that the creator of the first Golem was Daniel or another of the elders of the Exile. Some even say that they're part of an entirely separate Lineage created by the Rabbis in the early middle ages. If they are a different Lineage, they're difficult to tell from their Babylonian predecessors. For all intents and purposes, the Golems have the same wishes and the same traits, regardless of their origin.

**Other Nicknames:** Clay Men, the Unfinished

**Appearance:** The Golems are often tall and burly. Some appear hideous. Others are beautiful, in an impassive sort of way. Most are simply unremarkable to look at.

The first Tammuz was made to be a slave, and although the Tammuz base their identity on finding freedom, it matters to the Tammuz to create a Golem who is reminded of what she is, so that she will fight all the harder to be what she can be. Many Tammuz give to their creations other signs of their status as slaves. Many shave the heads of their progeny. One creator might inscribe tattoos on her body before he animates her, which say that until this Golem finds true freedom, she is a slave to her state. Another might simply give her new creation a single earring of gold, the symbol of slavery from the age that produced Tammuz.

Earrings, tattoos and shaved heads might draw attention in some quarters, but they're not openly inhuman.

**Disfigurement:** When their disfigurements become openly visible, Tammuz appear to be covered with clay. Sometimes the clay has cracks that are inches deep and bloodless, giving the impression that the Promethean's flesh is made of clay. They smell of wet clay, or of freshly turned earth.

Their hair — if they have any — is matted and slicked back. Their eyes are like dull, black pebbles. Some have sigils that appear on their forehead, engraved into the clay-covered skin, illuminated in elemental electricity, saying some significant term ("life," "freedom," "hope," "truth") in Babylonian cuneiform, Hebrew or Enochian.

**Humour:** Melancholic (introspective, irritable)

**Element:** The element of earth governs the Golems. Earth is the fundamental source of life and humanity. The clay from which Adam was crafted is the symbol of fertility and the foundation of Creation. Earth reflects the patience of stone. The other side of the coin is the sudden power the earth can show: the savagery of an earthquake, the wild anger of a volcano.

**Bestowment:** Unholy Stamina (p. 117)

**Refinements:** The Tammuz often count themselves among the finest practitioners of Ferrum. The Refinement of Iron appeals to the Golems' hard physicality. Many other Golems practice Stannum, seeking to harness their righteous anger into something productive, something effective of change.

Not many Golems practice Cuprum. It matters to the Golems to become free, but freedom to most of them means the freedom to move among mortals. Few see the point of hiding. Few, also, see much point in developing the ability to change form. Their bodies are their bodies, they say, and these should be honed and perfected, not warped.

Very few of the Tammuz practice Centimani. The practice of Flux and its emphasis on control makes most Golems uncomfortable. Even though the Pandorans are misbegotten horrors, a Tammuz all too easily looks upon a Pandoran slave and sees where he could be.

**Character Creation:** Physical Attributes are nearly always primary for the Golems, as are Physical Skills. Tammuz commonly have high Strength and Stamina scores. Medium to high scores in Resolve and Composure are also fairly common. Many Golems have the Merit: Strong Back.

The most common Virtues among the Tammuz are Fortitude and Temperance, reflecting the patience of the Golems and their ability to hold back until they are pushed too far. On the other hand, when Tammuz are finally provoked to the point of breaking, their anger is terrible to behold. Wrath is a widespread Vice among the Golems. Obsessed with mortal freedom, Tammuz are also prone to fascination with the paraphernalia of mortal life. Sensation and experience are important to them, and for some, patience is over-rated. Greed, therefore, is also a very common Vice for the Golems.

**Concepts:** bodyguard, butler, escaped slave, escapologist, guerrilla, political activist, urban bogeyman

**Quote:** *Nothing lasts forever, but some things last a very long time.*

## Stereotypes

Frankenstein: Why so angry all the time?

Galatea: You smile too much.

Osiris: Don't think you can own me.

Ulgan: Can't trust you. Won't trust you.

* * *

Vampires: Dead. Hungry. No escape. I understand.

Werewolves: The animal rules you.

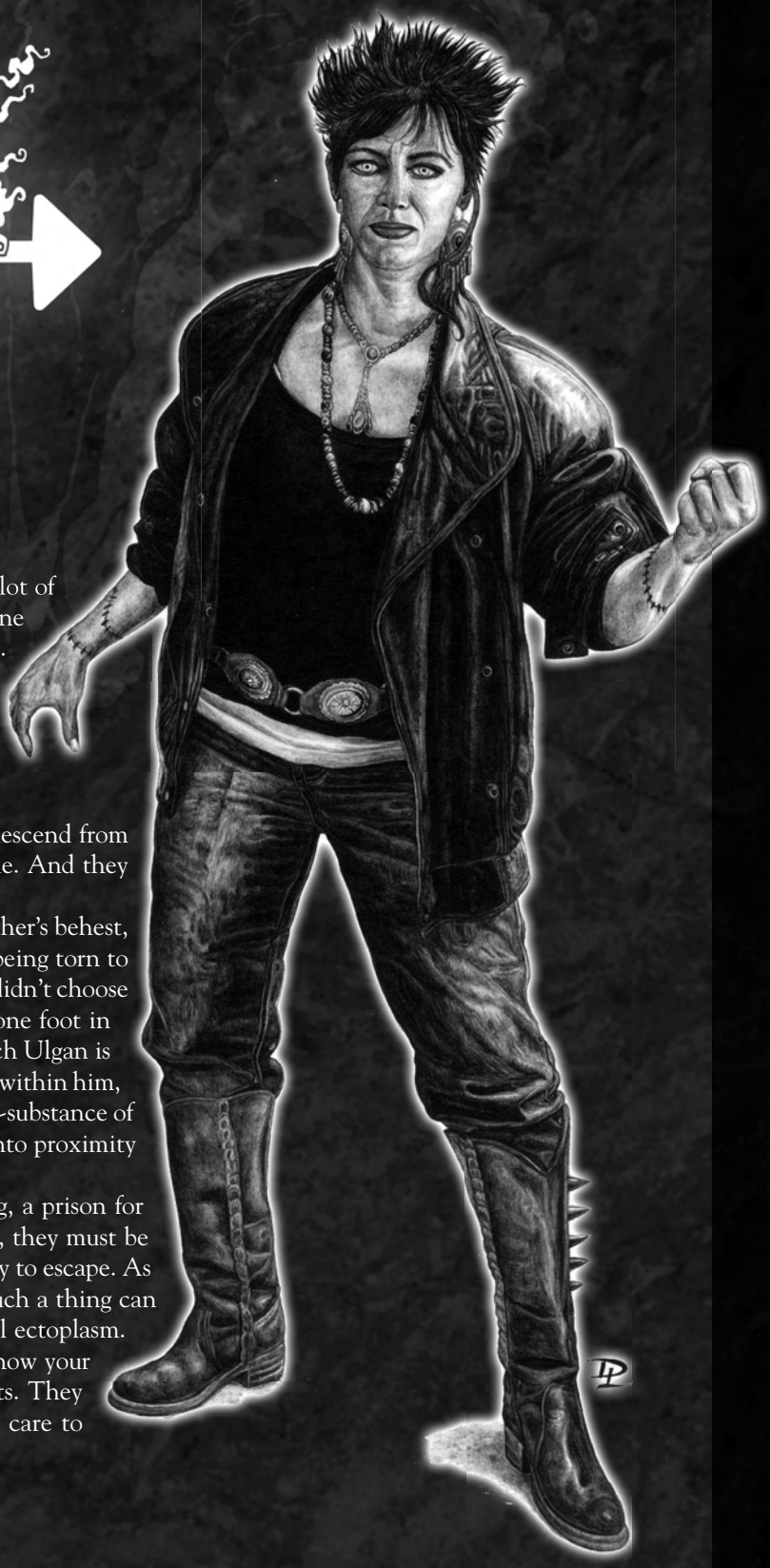
Mages: Keep your signs and your sigils away. I will not serve you.

Mortals: You are free and you do not know it. I will be free and know it.

# ULGAN

## THE RIVEN





Students of shamanic cultures know well that the lot of a shaman is a mystical vocation, not simply a role one chooses. The shaman is called, often against his will. He commonly finds initiation through an ordeal. He might have a vision of being dragged across the veil into a realm of spirits. He might come through feeling like he has been torn to pieces and put back together again.

For the Riven, those Prometheans who claim to descend from Ulgan or Orpheus, these experiences are literally true. And they don't want things to be this way.

Thrust into the Twilight existence of spirits at another's behest, the first memory the Ulgan have is the sensation of being torn to shreds. They didn't choose to be torn to pieces. They didn't choose to awaken into agony. They didn't choose to exist, one foot in the realm of man, one foot in the realm of spirits. Each Ulgan is aware that he is without a *Kut*, a soul. It creates a void within him, and it is this void that is filled by the ectoplasmic non-substance of Twilight, which binds him together and forces him into proximity with the spirits.

The state of the Ulgan is the worst kind of calling, a prison for them. Yet, they know that to transmute their Azoth, they must be shamans and deal with those spirits they want so badly to escape. As shamans, the Riven are professionals, inasmuch as such a thing can be said of a walking corpse empowered by alchemical ectoplasm. To deal with a spirit, one must never let the spirit know your feelings toward it. The Riven are polite to the spirits. They take time to know the correct forms, and they take care to make their deals with precise diplomacy.

That these precise diplomatic forms look to outsiders like wild Dionysian rituals and dances is an irony not lost on the Ulgan. In fact, irony is rarely lost on the Ulgan. The Riven learned early on in history that the spirits they most often deal with don't have senses of humor and don't get sarcasm. It can be a comfort for an Ulgan to taunt a spirit without a spirit ever realizing that it is being gently mocked.

They extend this gentle mockery to their companions. An Ulgan is never wacky. She never makes jokes, as such, but the Riven knows that her existence is replete with bleak ironies and sardonic gallows humor.

To other Prometheans, the Ulgan are a conundrum. They wield this power confidently and frequently, yet they don't want it. They strive instead for Mortality with the rest of the Created. Their difference is apparent. Not governed by air, earth, fire or water, they instead draw power from something that doesn't strictly exist. Theirs is not the zeal of a Frankenstein, the calm of an Osiris, the staying power of a Tammuz or the hope of a Galatea. Theirs is intuition, the power to see where others cannot (or will not) see.

Their dealings with spirits serve to drive them further from the human race, even while their dealings push them nearer the human state. The Ulgan say that the spirits scream and tear at their substance when a Riven becomes mortal. They say he takes some of the spirit realm into the mortal realm and into the human race. By gaining Mortality, they say, they come one step closer to bringing the spirit world and the mortal world back together to wholeness. It's less a marriage of Heaven and Hell they seek, more a *ménage à trois* of Heaven, Hell and Earth.

Some of the more cynical Riven say that the spirit-stuff that enters human blood when a man or woman who was once an Ulgan becomes mortal and has children goes right back out of it. Descendants of a Redeemed Riven are the likely candidates for those bodies who can become Ulgans.

When it is time to create another Promethean, a Riven shaman finds a corpse with an affinity for the spirit element in its blood. (If he's unscrupulous or desperate, he finds a living human whose body has that affinity and makes a corpse of it.) He breathes ectoplasm over the body, covering it with the spirit-stuff, and the ectoplasm dissolves back into Twilight, taking the body with it. Able to reach into the ephemeral realm, the creator screams for the spirits, and the spirits come, or he sacrifices a golden-haired dog or a riding horse and lets the animal's screams do the work. The spirits tear the body to pieces. They leave. The creator reaches back into Twilight and retrieves the body, reconstructing it. He disgorges more ectoplasm, imbuing it with his Azoth. It heals the body, holding it together and animating it as a new Promethean.

For all intents and purposes, the new Promethean is a shaman in the tradition of the first Ulgan. He is forced to treat with spirits so that he might one day escape the spirits. He escapes the spirits so that he can do his part to break down the walls between the spirit realm and the mortal realm. His material form is glued together with the substance of nothingness. He knows his very existence is an irony, and of all the Prometheans, he makes that irony apparent to all. He knows his part is small. He knows his part is important.

The Ulgan points out the paradoxes of Promethean existence. He casts its difficulties into sharp, harsh relief. In so doing, he adds to its worth. He underlines its purpose.

**Progenitor:** Among the ancient horse-tribes of Siberia, Ulgan was one of the gods, the creator of man, himself the creation of Tengri (though Ulgan and Tengri are sometimes one and the same). Among his creations was Erlik. He had seen a piece of earth with a man's face floating down a river. He breathed life into Erlik, and the two were friends for a time. But Erlik was full of pride and violence, and he fell from grace. Ulgan banished Erlik to the Underworld, and Erlik took the domain of the dead.

Erlik was the first of the *Kara Kam* — the black shamans who traffic with the realm of the spirits. He taught the *Kara Kam* how to cross over the wall between the material world and the spirit realm. First, they had to become aware of the spirit world. Each underwent a visionary experience before they came into their powers, each dreaming that Erlik's spirit servants dragged them over the threshold and tore them to pieces before putting them back together. When they awoke from this dream, the *Kara Kam* had the power to speak with the spirits and to touch them.

The version of the story that the Riven tell about themselves is vague. One version is that the *Kara Kam* were always there — they'd been part of human knowledge since humanity had been born — and that one (whose name might have been Tengri) found a way to create a spirit-riven slave. Through esoteric means, he found Ulgan, a man in his village who, unknowing, had the element of spirit ruling in his body.

The shaman sent him into Twilight alive. The demons in Twilight tore him apart, and he was aware the entire time. He was awake when Tengri remade him, missing his soul. Tengri made a mistake in this. Ulgan knew the name of his tormentor. Tengri had intended to make a slave; Ulgan was anything but. In revenge for his torment, Ulgan killed Tengri with his bare hands, just moments after he awoke as a Promethean. When the body was cold, he did the same to Tengri as Tengri had done. Tengri awoke with the power of a shaman but cleansed of his identity and devoid of a *Kut*. Ulgan called this being — both creator and progeny — Erlik, and from Erlik the Lineage of Ulgan grew.

The versions the Riven tell of this story are surprisingly consistent, given their antiquity, although there is one version where Erlik is the first of Ulgan's Pandorans, and Ulgan was forced to begin his Lineage with another.

Some of the Ulgan Lineage, however, don't draw their origins from Siberia at all. One group claims descent from Orpheus, the lyre-player of Greek myth. The tale says that Orpheus had descended to the Underworld in a failed attempt to retrieve his dead wife, Eurydice. On his return, he ran afoul of the priest-women of Dionysus, who tore him to pieces. He remained alive as the pieces of his body were thrown into the river. By the divine will of Dionysus, Orpheus was preserved, and it was Dionysus, one of the archetypal God-Men of archaic mythology, who restored the still-living Orpheus to wholeness. The Orpheans — as those Ulgans who believe this tale prefer to be called — consider themselves a different Lineage altogether, although what makes them different seems to be no more than a matter of names.

**Other Nicknames:** Spirit-torn, Altai, Orpheans

**Appearance:** An Ulgan could look like anyone or anything. Once, long ago, all the Riven were male and came from the shamanic cultures of central Asia. Now the Ulgan have no preference for bodies. Male or female; skinny, fat or thin; short or tall — it doesn't matter who they were as long as the body has an affinity with elemental spirit. The Ulgan know the right corpses to find, in the same way that an Osiris knows how to rebuild a corpse or a Frankenstein knows how to sew a body together from a variety of parts.

An Ulgan's eyes change color after he awakens as a Promethean. Sometimes they become very pale blue or green or almost jet-black. Most of the time, however, the color of the eyes is well within the human range.

**Disfigurement:** An Ulgan's disfigurement is highly disturbing to witness. Skin changes color, either growing pale or darkening, but always taking on a leathery texture. The eyes of some Riven lose color altogether, becoming orbs of solid black or white. Sometimes the eyes dissolve altogether, leaving nothing but void-filled sockets, in which distant stars sometimes twinkle, or from which ectoplasm leaks out into the air.

Bloodless rents in her flesh become visible. They gape, and there is nothing within but blackness, which is so total and so solid that the blackness seeps out into the Ulgan's immediate surroundings.

**Humour:** Ectoplasmic (intuitive, instinctual)

**Element:** Spirit is the element that rules the Ulgan. Referred to by alchemists as aether, elemental spirit is the substance of nothing that binds all things together. It's the element that forms the foundation of ephemeral reality. For the Promethean ruled by spirit, it's the element of mystical perception, the sight of things that can't be seen, the hearing of things that can't be heard.

**Bestowment:** Ephemeral Flesh (p. 116)

**Refinements:** The Ulgan use their connection with the spirit world to escape their connection with the spirit world. It's not surprising, therefore, that so many turn to the practice of Aurum. Others wish to use their ruling humour as a means of understanding what they are, because they believe that they will escape what they are only if they truly understand it.

Few Riven practice Ferrum. The physical realm holds attractions for them, but only inasmuch as they can become human. Few concentrate enough on honing themselves physically to develop an interest in the Refinement of Iron.

**Character Creation:** The Riven can be anyone. The choosing of an Ulgan's body depends on factors not strictly covered by game mechanics. Yet most turn inward as they become aware of their new state. Mental Attributes and Skills are often primary. Meditative Mind is a common Merit.

Many of the Ulgan have Faith as a Virtue — in themselves, in their practices or in gods. Others know when to act and when not to, a trait very useful when navigating the labyrinthine world of the spirits, and so many take Prudence as a Virtue. Separate from humans and forced to deal with ephemeral beings, the Riven crave earthly human sensation, so their most common Vices are Gluttony and Lust.

**Concepts:** amateur anthropologist, exorcist, healer, horse trainer, shaman, traveler, witch

**Quote:** *I have broken through to the second ground!*

## Stereotypes

Frankenstein: How do you survive, made of all those jumbled, broken pieces, from here and there?

Galatea: So pretty! But what more is there to you?

Osiris: I have a lot in common with you. We complement each other.

Tammuz: Heard a story about a man made of mud once. Nothing good came of it.

* * *

Vampires: You are dead and tied to one world. Doubly cursed, then.

Werewolves: You think you can hide your other nature. You think you can pretend to be just a beast. Ha.

Mages: You meddle in things you don't have to meddle in. I have to do this. You don't. Why not be happy just being mortal?

Mortals: I would stay here. I would leave the second ground behind. I would live. This is not power. You have power. You don't even have a clue what it's worth.

# Bestowments

The known processes of creating Prometheans from dead flesh each include intrinsic alchemical changes, and individual Lineages share certain supernatural traits as a result. Prometheans call these shared abilities Bestowments because they are indivisible parts of the method by which their creators bestow them with life. Every member of the Frankenstein Lineage gains Unholy Strength when she rises from death, and every Galateid is formed with Mesmerizing Appearance. A Promethean of another Lineage can discover a Transmutation that grants her a particular Bestowment, but doing so is difficult and time-consuming because it isn't natural for her Lineage.

Each Lineage gains a single Bestowment automatically during character generation. A Promethean may purchase the Bestowment of another Lineage for a number of experience points equal to the listed Transmutation cost. If the player does so before play begins, then the character's prelude should detail the means by which such a change came to be. Gaining the Bestowment of another Lineage requires the Promethean to increase the relevant humour within his form. This humour will not override that which is dominant for his Lineage, but it should be reflected as a change in the personality of the Promethean.

## Ephemeral Flesh (Ulgan)

Members of the Ulgan Lineage are especially attuned to the spiritual world. Ghosts and spirits that reside in the physical world, yet are intangible to solid material, are said to exist in a state of Twilight. The Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment allows the Promethean to invoke the Divine Fire to augment her physical body so that it can interact with the immaterial forms of Twilight.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Action:** Instant

**Transmutation Cost:** Wits x 7

Upon activating this Bestowment, the Promethean gains the ability to perceive entities or objects in Twilight. A ghost or spirit might still manage to hide from the Ulgan, requiring a contested Power + Finesse roll versus the Ulgan's player's roll of Wits + Composure, but its intangible nature no longer guarantees invisibility. The Bestowment's duration is one scene.

While he is attuned to the immaterial state of Twilight the Promethean can interact with nearby ghosts, spirits and ephemeral objects as though they were solid, but they can also affect him. A Promethean using Ephemeral Flesh causes bashing damage in combat with ghosts. Her physical weapons or armor are unable to attack or defend against beings or objects in Twilight, but she may use a suitable spiritual item as a weapon. (See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 208 for more information about ghost traits and combat.)

Though it is not part of their creation, other Prometheans may gain the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment as a Transmutation. Such a change does not require the Ulgan disfigurement, but it does necessitate subtle alterations to the humours of the Created on a metaphysical level. Gaining the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment requires an increase in the level of ectoplasmic humour within the Promethean. This increase engenders a greater degree of instinctive and intuitive behavior. The Created is more likely to follow his gut and trust his feelings.

## Mesmerizing Appearance (Galateid)

Galateids are stunningly beautiful, and those around them are often swept away by their splendor. This perfection of form does not sway everyone, but most people are far more deeply affected by a pretty face than they might otherwise admit.

**Cost:** None or 1 Pyros

**Action:** Reflexive

**Transmutation Cost:** Highest of Presence and Manipulation x 7

The Promethean benefits from the 9-again rule on any Social roll that might be affected by his profound beauty (seduction, socializing, gossiping, convincing someone to like him, etc.). In addition, if he fails a roll, he can spend one Pyros to re-roll. (These re-rolled dice do not gain the 9-again benefit, although 10s may be re-rolled as usual.) Finally, the Promethean can raise his Presence and Manipulation Attributes above the mortal limit of five dots using experience points.

Although it is not part of their creation, other Prometheans may gain the Mesmerizing Appearance Bestowment as a Transmutation. Such a change does not mimic the Galateid disfigurement, but it does demand delicate alterations to the humours of the Created on a metaphysical level. Gaining the Mesmerizing Appearance Bestowment requires an increase in the level of sanguine humour within the Promethean. This increase encourages a heightened sense of courage and an amorous nature. The Created is more likely to act with extreme bravery and to pursue his feelings of lust or love with little reservation.

## Revivification (Osiran)

Osiris is the Egyptian god of death and the resurrection. Those Prometheans of the Lineage reputedly descended from him are able to mimic his rise from death or revivify other Created as Isis resurrected her brother-husband.

**Cost:** 1 Azoth or special

**Action:** Instant

**Transmutation Cost:** Azoth x 7 (Azoth x 5 for Osirans repurchasing it)

This Bestowment modifies the Promethean's ability to come back to life after being killed. (See "Superlative Endurance" on pp. 162-163.) Instead of losing all his Azoth




dots to return from death, he loses none — but he does lose this power. He can rise from death even if his Azoth is only one dot. Once he has risen from death, he must purchase this power anew (with experience points or Vitriol) to gain its abilities once more.

Revivification also allows the Promethean to raise other Prometheans from the dead (within 24 hours of death) at a cost of one cumulative permanent dot of Azoth. For example, if Bill's Osiran revivifies Conrad's Tammuz character, it costs him one Azoth dot. If Conrad's Tammuz dies again, and Bill's Osiran uses this Transmutation again, it costs two dots of Azoth. Doing it a third time would cost three dots of Azoth. The Promethean can do this as often as he desires for so long as he can afford to lose the Azoth dots, though he cannot spend his last dot in this way. Doing so does not use up his own ability to sacrifice this Bestowment to raise himself from death. Purchasing the power anew does not reset the cumulative cost of revivifying other Prometheans. Azoth can be raised again normally, at its normal cost with experience points (see p. 87) or Vitriol.

Though it is not part of their creation, other Prometheans may gain the Revivification Bestowment as a Transmutation. Such a change does not cause the Osiran disfigurement, but it does require subtle alterations to the humours of the Created on a metaphysical level. Gaining the Revivification Bestowment calls for an increase in the level of phlegmatic humour within the Promethean. This increase tends to significantly calm the Promethean, perhaps even making him appear unemotional.

### Unholy Stamina (Tammuz)

As earth and stone are enduring, so are the Tammuz. Indeed opponents are often surprised by how incredibly tough these Prometheans can be, because there is often little visible clue that such is the case. If the Golem is willing to risk revealing his Promethean nature, he proves irrepressible and tireless.

**Cost:** None or 1 Pyros
**Action:** Reflexive
**Transmutation Cost:** Stamina x 7

The Promethean benefits from the 9-again rule on any Stamina-based rolls. In addition, if he fails a roll, he can spend one Pyros to re-roll. (These re-rolled dice do not gain the 9-again benefit, although 10s may be re-rolled as usual.) He also doubles his Stamina whenever it would serve as a Resistance Attribute against supernatural attacks. For example, a magical spell might require its caster to subtract the target's Stamina from his dice pool. If the Tammuz's Stamina is normally 3, it is considered to be 6 when subtracting it from the spellcaster's dice pool.

Finally, the Promethean can raise his Stamina above the mortal limit of five dots using experience points.

Although it is not part of their creation, other Prometheans may gain the Unholy Stamina Bestowment as a Transmutation. Such a change does not duplicate the Tammuz disfigurement, but it does necessitate subtle alterations to the humours of the Created on a metaphysical level. Gaining the Unholy Stamina Bestowment requires an increase in the level of melancholic humour within the Promethean. This increase encourages the Created to become more introspective and increases the ease with which he becomes irritable.

### Unholy Strength (Frankenstein)

The twisted forms of the Wretched frequently bristle with massive musculature. Even those Frankensteins who are not oversized brutes possess extraordinary strength due to the alchemical transformations of their flesh.

**Cost:** None or 1 Pyros
**Action:** Reflexive
**Transmutation Cost:** Strength x 7

The Promethean benefits from the 9-again rule on any Strength-based rolls. In addition, if he fails a roll, he can spend one Pyros to re-roll failed dice. (These re-rolled dice do not gain the 9-again benefit, though 10s may be re-rolled as usual.) Finally, the Promethean can raise his Strength above the mortal limit of five dots.

Note that this benefit does not apply to combat rolls, such as when a player rolls his character's Strength + Brawl for that character to punch someone. It does apply to feats of brute strength, such as lifting great weights or battering down doors, and also jumping in any direction.

Though it is not part of their creation, other Prometheans may gain the Unholy Strength Bestowment as a Transmutation. Such a change does not cause the Wretched disfigurement, but it does demand subtle alterations to the humours of the Created on a metaphysical level. To gain the Unholy Strength Bestowment, the Created must increase the level of choleric humour within her form. The Promethean becomes more vengeful and ambitious.

## Transmutations

Ancient alchemists sought to transmute the base matter of lead into gold. For a Promethean, the base matter she experiments upon is her own body and the "gold" she creates is a miraculous alteration of self that unlocks supernatural power. The transformation of dead flesh to living flesh at the hands of a Progenitor is only the first of these Transmutations. The Bestowments granted by the process of becoming a Promethean are perhaps the simplest sort of Transmutation, but greater power is found in those changes wrought by the Refinements.

Newly created Prometheans haven't undergone very many Transmutations. Those gained during the process of character creation may represent the few changes a Promethean has discovered for herself, or they might be

the legacy of a helpful or experimental creator. Because the Created is immune to the ravages of age, she may acquire any number of Transmutations before she eventually surrenders them to achieve Mortality or succumbs to time catching up with her. An old Promethean is dangerous to cross, as the mixture of Transmutations she has gained are likely to grant great flexibility in their variety and incredible potency in their effects.

## Using Transmutations

The basic system for using a Transmutation varies depending upon the individual power in question. Some Transmutations depend entirely upon the Promethean's mundane Skills and talent with the Divine Fire, and therefore require a roll using the relevant Skill + Azoth to determine success. Other Transmutations are aided by the Created's natural strengths, allowing the Promethean's player to roll dice equal to the applicable Attribute + Skill or Attribute + Azoth. A few Transmutations, usually those that allow the victim to resist, might combine two appropriate Attributes + a Skill. (See "Extra Talent," **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 135.) Appropriate Specialties can be applied to Skill-based Transmutation rolls.

Besides showing what dice pool to use, each Transmutation entry includes:

- Trait costs, if any, such as Pyros expenditures.
- Bonuses or penalties to the dice pools based on circumstances. These lists are not all encompassing, and the Storyteller is encouraged to modify these circumstances as she sees fit.
- Other details such as duration, type of action required to activate and a description of the effects.

### Supernatural Conflict

A Promethean's Pilgrimage could bring her into contact with other bizarre denizens of the World of Darkness. Prometheans might have conflicts with vampires, mages or even stranger things. In this book, Transmutations are applied against mortal human beings and other Prometheans. In those cases, the rules operate as written. A mortal usually has little protection beyond his Resistance Attribute, while the Created gain a Resistance Attribute + Azoth in contested rolls.

When a Promethean encounters another supernatural being, that creature is likely to possess its own supernatural trait that adds to contested Resistance rolls. (This trait is usually Blood Potency for a vampire, Primal Urge for a werewolf and Gnosis for a mage.) Substitute Azoth for the other creature's supernatural trait when the Created is resisting a supernatural power; substitute the other being's supernatural trait for Azoth when it resists the effects of a Transmutation.

## Gaining Transmutations

Transmutations are classified according to their core concept and are ranked by dots. These ranks do not need to be purchased in sequential order. For example, a player could purchase Alteration, a four-dot Alchemicus Transmutation, without ever having to buy any of the lower-ranked Alchemicus Transmutations. He may also purchase multiple Transmutations of the same rank (possessing two or more four-dot Alchemicus Transmutations, for example). There are, however, some Transmutations that require certain lower-ranked Transmutations as prerequisites. These exceptions are clearly marked.

Each Refinement specializes in two classes of Transmutations; these are their affinities. For instance, the Mercurius specialize in the Alchemicus and Vulcanus Transmutations. Prometheans who practice that Refinement can purchase these Transmutations at a lower experience point cost than other Prometheans.

Transmutations require great effort to achieve. There is no college dedicated to teaching Prometheans how to develop new powers. Characters need to find other Created who are willing to teach them, or they must embark on a long process of trial and error. Such efforts generally involve experimentation with alchemical processes designed to manipulate the Divine Fire. This research might range from delving into crumbling texts of forgotten would-be demiurges to performing nightmarishly grotesque surgeries.

### Transmutation Costs

Experience Point Costs

| Dots | Affinity (x5) | Non-Affinity (x7) |
|---|---|---|
| • | 5 | 7 |
| •• | 10 | 14 |
| ••• | 15 | 21 |
| •••• | 20 | 28 |
| ••••• | 25 | 35 |

Transmutations do not need to be bought in sequence. A player can purchase a three-dot Transmutation for his character without first learning a one- or two-dot Transmutation. It is, however, more expensive to purchase a Transmutation thus, without having first learned a power from the previous dot ranks. The cost increases by +3 experience points per dot rank missed in the sequence. This cost for a missed dot rank applies to each subsequent purchase of a Transmutation in the same class for as long as the gap in the sequence exists.

*Example: Conrad wants to buy the three-dot Metamorphosis Transmutation Procrustean Shape for his character, who practices the Refinement of Copper — an affinity Transmutation for him. Normally, this purchase would cost him 15 experience points, but his character knows only a one-dot Metamorphosis Transmutation*

*(Mask of Medusa). He doesn't know any two-dot Transmutations in that class. Conrad must pay 18 experience points, since the cost is +3 due to his lack of the intervening dot rank. If he didn't know any one-dot Transmutations either, the cost would be 21 experience points (+3 per missing dot rank). If he knew at least one one-dot Transmutation and one two-dot Transmutation, he wouldn't need to pay any extra cost. If Conrad had a one-dot Transmutation from the class, skipped the two-dot rank, bought a three-dot Transmutation and then wanted to buy a four-dot Transmutation, the +3 cost still applies to his purchase of the four-dot Transmutation because he's still missing a two-dot Transmutation from that class.*

## Gaining Bestowments

Each of the Promethean Lineages inherently possesses a specific power, which the Created term a Bestowment. Rightfully these powers are just another type of Transmutation, as demonstrated by the fact that they can be achieved by other Lineages. To gain the Bestowment of another Lineage, the Created must undergo the same sort of alchemical changes that bring her a new Transmutation, and her player must pay a number of experience points. See pp. 116-117 for details of the Bestowments and their required Transmutation costs.

### Touching the Target

Some Transmutations require the Promethean to touch a target in order to be effective. Touching a target is an instant action that requires a roll of (Dexterity + Brawl) – target's Defense. No damage is delivered by the touch itself, though the contact may deliver damage from a Transmutation. Armor does not usually apply against most rolls to touch the target, unless it is supernatural and provides a barrier between the target and the Promethean attempting to touch him.

If the Transmutation is reflexive, the Promethean may use it on the same turn that he touches the target, essentially activating it as he makes contact. An instant Transmutation requires the Promethean to first use an action to activate the power and then use his next action to actually touch the target. (He may grab the opponent and activate the power on the following turn instead, though the opponent can usually attempt to break the grip before the power is activated. See "Unarmed Combat" on p. 157 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Most effects can only be held for one turn before the channeled Pyros or Flux must be passed to a target or lost. A successful activation of a Transmutation must always be accompanied by a successful touch to the target or followed immediately by a successful touch on the next turn, unless the Transmutation specifies otherwise.

# Alchemicus

The study of this class of Transmutations investigates the nature of material substances. The steps gained here are all potentially relevant to the ultimate goal of bringing true life to once-dead flesh. The path of the Ophidians in particular focuses upon the alchemical manipulations this Transmutation allows. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Alchemicus come most easily to the Ophidians, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Quicksilver.

## Forging the Master's Tools (•)

The Promethean discovers a process by which he may perfect the physical form of mundane objects by injecting them with the essence of his Pyros.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must touch an object that might be used as a tool granting a bonus to an action. For the duration of the scene, the tool rating of the object increases by one point, granting a +1 die bonus to any relevant roll that uses the object in question.

## Identification (•)

The character can identify an object's material substances and discern all its components by scrutinizing it. Visual examination is sufficient, but it helps if she can pick it up and examine it from more than one perspective.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts

**Action:** Extended (1–5 successes; one roll represents one turn of scrutiny)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The character misdiagnoses the object and mistakes its material structure and/or substance for something it is not. He might mistake resin made to look like wood for actual wood (or vice-versa), or gold-plated metal for solid gold.

**Failure:** The character fails to gain any insight about the object.

**Success:** The Storyteller determines what can be learned with each success. Simple objects of a single substance might require only one success — there's nothing more to know about them than that simple fact. Complex objects with multiple components and/or materials might require five successes. In such a case, one success might reveal the most prevalent substance, while two reveal the second-most prevalent, and three successes might reveal a hidden substance inside the object, and so on.

**Exceptional Success:** The character gains five successes more than the number required. He gains enough insight about the object's material structure to provide him a +1 dice bonus on any Crafts roll to rework or materially alter it.



**Possible Modifiers:** Holds object while examining it (+1), object consists of a single substance (+1), object is a complex substance (-1), object consists of multiple substances (-2), examined from 5+ yards distance (cumulative -1 die penalty per 5 yards)

## Degradation (••)

The Created can weaken an object by attacking its structure with a burst of Pyros.

**Cost:** 1–3 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must touch an object, which may not be a living creature, to degrade its Durability. The object must be of a Size less than the character's Size + Azoth. For the remainder of the scene, the object's Durability (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 135–147) decreases by one point for each point of Pyros that the Promethean spent. The Durability cannot be decreased below 0, and the Created cannot spend more than three points of Pyros per activation.

## Fortification (••)

The Created can significantly strengthen an object by infusing its structure with Pyros.

**Cost:** 1–3 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must touch an object, which may not be a living creature, to improve its Durability. The object must be of a Size less than the Promethean's Size + Azoth. For the remainder of the scene, the object's Durability (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 135–147) increased by one point for each point of Pyros that the Promethean spent. The Durability cannot be increased above a rating of 6, and the Created cannot spend more than three points of Pyros per activation.

## Dissolve (•••)

The possessor of this Transmutation can exude a supernatural dissolving agent from his pores. For the rest of the scene, anything that touches him for longer than a moment suffers acidic damage.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

The character spends one Pyros to exude a supernatural dissolving agent from his pores. He can control which pores are affected, exempting his clothes from harm. For the rest of the scene, anyone or anything the character touches (or that touches him) suffers one point of lethal damage per turn of exposure. The character can grapple a target and cause dissolving damage to him on each turn that he maintains his hold. Objects suffer damage only when the accumulated lethal points exceed Durability. The acid has a strong odor and it visibly covers the Promethean. It cannot be used unobtrusively.

## Transformation (•••)

Mastering the art of applying the properties of Pyros to alchemical transmutation, the Promethean discovers how to instantly change one substance into another.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per point of Size
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Science
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean must touch the object to affect it.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The transformation results in some unexpected change that proves dangerous to the Promethean.

**Failure:** The Pyros is wasted without effect.

**Success:** The Promethean transforms an object composed of one relatively simple substance into another relatively simple substance. A rubber tire might be turned into glass, a brass lock into brittle gold or wooden door into sturdy steel. The object reverts to its true form at the end of the scene.

The object may not be transformed into a dangerous substance (barring an unfortunate dramatic failure), nor may it transform into a substance with a greater Resources value than the Promethean's Azoth. In any case, the transformation lasts for one scene. The Promethean may not affect an object with a larger Size than his own.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean may reflexively end the effect at any time, immediately causing the object to revert to its original substance.

**Possible Modifiers:** Object larger than Size 1 (cumulative -1 per point), initial or changed substance is Durability 2 (-1), initial or changed substance is Durability 3 (-2), very similar substances (+1)

## Alteration (••••)

Channeling Pyros into an object that she touches, the Promethean renders it readily malleable and shapes it into the desired form.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per point of Size
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Crafts
**Action:** Extended (1–15 successes; one roll represents one turn of shaping)

The Promethean must be able to touch the object during each roll of the extended action.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The object's shape is harmful to the Promethean; she suffers one Health point of lethal damage.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to change the object's shape.

**Success:** The Promethean can shape the object into a new form as though it were soft clay. If she does not possess the Transformation Transmutation, then her changes are limited to the same exact substance with a new shape. If she does possess the Transformation Transmutation, however, she can reflexively add its effects to this power for a cost of one Pyros (allowing the creation of mixed substance objects).

As an extended action, this Transmutation requires a varying number of target successes depending upon the complexity of the changes being wrought:

| | |
|---|---|
| Simple (a club) | 1 |
| Involved (a cube) | 3 |
| Elaborate (a linked chain) | 6 |
| Daunting (a car battery) | 9 |
| Intricate (a functioning gun) | 15 |

Once the shaping is done, the object's new form lasts for the remainder of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The final object also gains +1 die tool bonus.

## Persistent Change (••••)

With this degree of mastery of the Transmutations of Alchemicus, the Promethean may sustain the alterations performed by other effects. He may even make some of them permanent if he is willing to sacrifice his own Azoth.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros or 1 Azoth

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

With a reflexive action, the Promethean may extend the effects of another Alchemicus Transmutation of his own working so that it lasts for 24 hours. Doing so requires the Promethean to spend one Pyros before the duration expires. This form of Persistent Change may boost the duration of any of the following Alchemicus Transmutations: Forging the Master's Tools, Degradation, Fortification, Transformation or Alteration.

Alternatively, the Promethean may choose to spend one dot of Azoth in order to make the change permanent.

## Flesh to Stone (•••••)

The Promethean discovers how to transform flesh into base matter with merely a touch. The effect is not permanent, but it may temporarily debilitate an opponent.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Crafts – Stamina

**Action:** Instant

This Transmutation requires the Promethean to touch the target within one turn of activation. The Promethean transforms the touched opponent's flesh into another substance, generally lead or common stone. Doing so does not kill the target, but it does immobilize him.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Inexplicably, the Transmutation backfires and immobilizes the Promethean instead.

**Failure:** The Promethean's touch yields no effect.

**Success:** Each success renders the targeted subject completely inactive for one turn. This Transmutation does not



damage the target in any fashion. Indeed it grants him a Durability equal to his Stamina or 3 (whichever is greater).

**Exceptional Success:** The subject is transformed for five or more turns. Additionally, the Promethean may choose the immobilized subject's Durability, ranging from 1 to 3.

### Spark of Life (•••••)

This Transmutation does not affect the Promethean herself. Instead, it represents her understanding of the secrets of the Divine Fire. With the attainment of this power, the Promethean may tap into the creative power of the Fire. By infusing her Pyros into a dead body, she temporarily animates it and gains control over its actions.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Occult

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Something goes terribly wrong. The Promethean creates a Pandoran by mistake, which normally lasts for the remainder of the scene, though it may rest in an inactive state for a time (at the Storyteller's discretion).

**Failure:** Nothing changes.

**Success:** The Promethean animates the corpse and creates a temporary "pseudo-Promethean" which follows her every verbal command. She must touch the corpse of the intended being, and the body must have been dead for less than 24 hours.

The animated being gains an appearance of life as the Prometheans do, but it has no recollection of its life before. The corpse creation bears the same Physical Attributes as the once-living being possessed at the time of death. Its Mental and Social Attributes are each rated at one dot. This creature has no Willpower points, though its Health is the same as it was during life. The creation has no Mental or Social Skills whatsoever, but it is endowed with the same Physical Skills as the Promethean who animated it. The animated creature speaks the native tongue of the Promethean, albeit poorly due to its inferior intellect, but is not literate.

The effects of this Transmutation last for the remainder of the scene. At the end of that time, the corpse returns to its original appearance, but also bears any new damage it suffered in the meantime.

**Exceptional Success:** The effects of the Transmutation last for 24 hours.

**Possible Modifiers:** Hurried effort (-1), poor quality subject (-1 to -3), ill-conceived plans (-1), massive flow of electricity (+1)

## Corporeum

While just about all Promethean powers involve control over or transformation of the Created form, Corporeum is about changing physical functions. He who controls the body commands the soul, or so the theory goes. The path of the Titans is that of the warrior, and many of the changes wrought by this Transmutation aid in close combat. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the forms of Corporeum come most easily to the Titans, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Iron. Another distinguishing feature of these Transmutations is their unwavering nature. The control that the Promethean maintains over their effects is near perfect. This surety is offset in part by the fact that nearly all of these powers require Pyros expenditure.

### Autonomic Control (•)

Prometheans are remarkably enduring in the face of harsh environments, and this Transmutation enhances that resistance. The Promethean gains conscious control of his autonomic nervous system and other automatic functions of his body. With adjustments to his system, he can ignore fatigue, pain and hunger.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

The effects of this Transmutation are automatically available to the Promethean when they are needed.

With a Stamina + Subterfuge roll, the Promethean can control his breathing (allowing him to play dead). The Transmutation doesn't prevent him from taking damage due to suffocating (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 49), though it does add his Resolve to the Stamina roll to delay this.

The Created may ignore pain, in addition to his normal ability to ignore wound penalties. This allows him to add his Stamina twice for rolls based upon withstanding pain, such as resisting coercion (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 47).

The Promethean is also immune to the effects of extreme temperatures such as arctic weather or desert heat. He doesn't suffer frostbite or sunburns. He begins to contend with fatigue (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 179–180) only after 72 hours (three full days) of staying awake. He can go for a number of days equal to his Resolve + twice his Stamina before suffering deprivation due to hunger (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 175–176).

### Swift Feet (•)

This Transmutation lets the Promethean burn Pyros in order to achieve his greatest speed with minimal effort. As the Divine Fire provides the propulsion, this boost doesn't impair the Promethean's other actions.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

This Transmutation allows the Promethean to move at up to twice his Speed while still taking an instant action. Once he expends the requisite Pyros, this power's effects last for the remainder of the turn.

If he knows the Pandoran Transmutation Scurry at any dot-rank, it adds to his base Speed, before it is doubled for running (see p. 237). Doing so, however, constitutes calling upon Flux, forcing the Promethean to make a Humanity degeneration roll unless he has already done so to contend with Flux that scene. (See "Pandoran Transmutations" on p. 236.)

## Regeneration (••)

Like tempering iron in a furnace, this Transmutation allows the Promethean to burn Pyros in order to reforge her broken flesh. Minor cuts and scrapes are easily healed, while massive trauma or deep wounds demand more of the Divine Fire to repair and require more time as well.

**Cost:** 1 or 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

Once per turn, the Promethean can reflexively spend one Pyros to heal two bashing or one lethal Health point, or two Pyros to heal one aggravated Health point.

## Uncanny Dexterity (••)

The Created has burned away enough of the dross in his body to gain an innate control over his coordination and fine manipulation.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean benefits from the 9-again rule on any Dexterity-based rolls. In addition, if he fails a roll, he can spend one Pyros to re-roll failed dice. (These re-rolled dice do not gain the 9-again benefit, although 10s may be re-rolled as usual.) Finally, the Promethean can raise his Dexterity above the mortal limit of five dots.

Note that this benefit does not apply to combat rolls, such as when a player rolls his character's Dexterity + Firearms for that character to shoot someone. It does apply to feats of fine manipulation or coordination, such as picking locks, stunt driving, acrobatics or attempting to move silently, among others.

## Athletic Grace (•••)

The Created discovers how to channel the Divine Fire into her every action. The Promethean's movements mirror the flickering grace of Pyros itself.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean gains one dot of Dexterity for all purposes, even if this extra dot exceeds normal human limits or those granted by her Azoth. This Transmutation may not stack with other Corporeum effects that add Dexterity dots.

## Human Flesh (•••)



With this Transmutation, the Promethean masters control of his body to a degree that allows him to force it to appear the way it *should* if it were properly alive. Some students of the Refinement of Iron consider this power a major step toward achieving humanity, but there is no evidence that it is a universal requirement.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

By activating this Transmutation, the Promethean can appear to be physically human. He spends one Pyros, and for the rest of the scene he will seem human even to close medical scrutiny. During this time, his disfigurements do not appear when he uses his powers or heals via electrification. If some supernatural effect would override this effect and force the disfigurements to appear, the player of the user of this power can contest that other effect with a reflexive Intelligence + Medicine roll.

## Perfected Reflexes (••••)

This Transmutation brings about a flawless merging of the Promethean's mental and physical defensive reflex reactions. She moves with maximum efficiency and can seemingly dodge bullets.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

This Transmutation may be activated reflexively, but once it is activated, the benefits remain for the rest of the turn. While the Transmutation is active, the Promethean's Defense increases by four. If the Promethean normally loses her Defense against ranged attacks, then she is treated as having a Defense of 4 against said attacks.

## Rejuvenation (••••)

This type of Transmutation is what Prometheans call a "synergy." It combines its power with a Transmutation from a different class — in this case, Vulcanus' Share Pyros Transmutation (pp. 155-156). She applies her ability to regenerate her own body (using the Regeneration Transmutation) to another creature's body, using her Pyros to spark unnaturally rapid healing.

**Prerequisite:** Share Pyros (••), Regeneration (••)
**Cost:** 1 or 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

By touching a wounded creature, the Promethean can spend one Pyros to heal two bashing or one lethal Health point, or two Pyros to heal one aggravated Health point. If the Promethean uses this Transmutation on any living creature (other than a Promethean or Pandoran), however, that creature automatically suffers Disquiet without any roll. If the target is already suffering from Disquiet, then the degree increases by one stage.

### Serpent Strike (••••)

The Promethean can channel her Pyros to move swiftly and surely. When a Promethean masters this Transmutation, her opponents find it very difficult to outmaneuver her.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

This Transmutation allows the Promethean to gain remarkable advantages in the attempt to react more quickly than her opponents. The Created may immediately re-roll her Initiative roll once by activating this power, and she may keep the highest result. Additionally, the Promethean automatically wins all Initiative ties, unless her opponent possesses a similar power, in which case the tie is decided as normal (See **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 151.)

### Hard Body (•••••)

The Promethean adjusts the fluid levels of his body's humours and mystically increases his skin's resilience. If his control proves sufficient, his body is protected as though it were encased in armor.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Medicine
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's body is weighed down without other effect. He suffers a penalty of one die to all Dexterity-based rolls.

**Failure:** The effort fails, and no change occurs.

**Success:** The Promethean toughens his skin for one scene. He gains one point of armor per success, up to a maximum amount equal to his Stamina.

Unlike those who use the Metamorphosis Unassailable Fortress Transmutation (p. 145), those Prometheans using Hard Body look normal. Their armor seems like regular skin.

**Exceptional Success:** The limit on armor-granting successes is raised to the Promethean's Azoth (if that trait is higher than his Stamina) or simply raised by one point (if the character's Stamina is higher than or equal to his Azoth).

### Rarefied Grace (•••••)

The Promethean transforms her form such that it may move more fluidly than seems possible. The increase in grace and accuracy is unmistakable in the eyes of those who witness it.

**Prerequisite:** Athletic Grace (•••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean gains two dots of Dexterity for all purposes, even if this increase exceeds normal human limits or those granted by her Azoth. This Transmutation may not stack with other Corporeum effects that add Dexterity.

## Deception

Deception Transmutations are physical and supernatural changes that confuse or evade opponents — they're not tricks of the mind. Mimics seek to understand the human condition, and they preach that nothing helps that effort more than passing as humans and living among humans. Any Promethean may take up study of these Transmutations, but the sleights of Deception come most easily to the Mimics, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Gold.

### Chameleon Skin (•)

Like its namesake, this Transmutation allows the Created to camouflage his form. The Promethean's skin changes color, texture and patterning to blend into his surroundings, making it harder to discern him from the background. Movement lessens the effect as the Created has difficulty changing at the same rate as his background. Additionally, this power is less effective unless the Promethean is nearly naked, bare skin exposed, because it does nothing to alter his clothing.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Composure + Stealth
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean assumes some jarringly bright, yet naturally occurring, color. She suffers a -2 die penalty to any Stealth roll where being visually detected is an issue. This penalty lasts for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Promethean's skin remains unchanged.

**Success:** The Promethean's skin changes to duplicate the patterns of her background for the remainder of the scene. If the Promethean is naked, or nearly so, then she gains three bonus dice to Stealth rolls that involve hiding from sight. Moving up to her Speed in a turn reduces this bonus by one die, while moving at greater than his Speed results in loss of two bonus dice. Wearing drab clothing reduces the bonus by one die, normal clothing reduces the bonus by two dice, and vivid clothing eliminates the bonus entirely.

| | |
|---|---|
| Moving | -1 to -2 |
| Clothed | -1 to -3 |
| Familiar with surroundings | +1 |
| Completely natural surroundings | +1 |

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean's skin changes colors rapidly and smoothly. Don't reduce the bonus due to movement, though clothing still reduces it.

### Color of Man (•)

This power shares similarities with the Chameleon Skin Transmutation, except it helps the Promethean hide against the human background. The Promethean may alter the color of her skin, hair and eyes to anything found within the human species. These changes are merely a matter of pigment, but prejudices, racism and superficial stereotypes can be powerful forces of misdirection.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean loses all pigment for the remainder of the scene, becoming deathly pale with white hair and reddish or almost colorless blue eyes. Albinism causes sensitivity to light and other eye trouble, and the Promethean suffers from the Poor Sight Flaw (**World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 219). Subtract two dice from any sight-based perception rolls.

**Failure:** The Promethean's color remains unchanged.

**Success:** The Promethean changes the color of her skin, hair and eyes to her choice of any shade found within the human species. This Transmutation does not alter any feature except for pigment. The effects of this change may be largely determined by roleplaying, but if contested rolls are appropriate, you might subtract up to two dice from efforts to identify the Promethean. Becoming a redhead will probably help throw off the pursuer who has been shadowing you from half a block away. Trying to pretend that you aren't the guy on your driver's license while you are sitting in the police precinct is going to raise a lot of troublesome questions. The Transmutation's effect lasts for the duration of the scene, whether the Promethean wants it to or not, though the Promethean may use the power again if she wants to change her pigment again.

**Exceptional Success:** The effects of the Transmutation last for up to 24 hours, and the Promethean may end them reflexively whenever she desires.

**Possible Modifiers:** Unlikely combination of hair, eyes and skin (-1 to -3), cannot see self (-1), power used previously during scene (cumulative -1 per successive use), minor changes (+1), sample model within view (+1)

## Incognito (••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean fades into a crowd, becoming an unremarkable person. He doesn't actually change his physical form at all, but he adapts his body language to perfectly reflect the crowd around him. The Created cannot take dramatic actions, though, and he must strive to fit in by behaving as others would expect. If he's on the subway, for instance, he hides behind a newspaper or pretends to ignore the world beyond his iPod headphones. He still triggers Disquiet by his presence, but onlookers don't necessarily associate it with him.

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

The Incognito Transmutation cannot render the Promethean invisible, but it allows him to blend into a crowd. For the rest of the scene, attempts to pick the Promethean out from a crowd suffer a penalty of two dice. Furthermore, observers with no preexisting reason to search for the Promethean will usually overlook him unless they are given cause to focus on him. The effects of this Transmutation may stack with the benefits given by other powers that help avoid notice, such as Color of Man.

## Leave No Trace (••)

The Promethean learns a number of subtle effects that combine to eliminate signs of his passage. His step becomes so light that he can move without leaving footprints. His skin is covered with a dull, clear coating that prevents him from leaving biological traces that a forensics expert might discover and exploit (fingerprints, hair, body oils, etc.). This Transmutation does not prevent him from bleeding if he's injured, but short of such traumatic circumstances, the Promethean is unlikely to leave behind evidence of his presence.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stealth
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean believes the activation succeeded, but the Transmutation betrays him, shedding bits of evidence at inopportune times.

**Failure:** The Transmutation fails, but the Promethean can tell that this is the case.

**Success:** For one scene, this Transmutation operates as intended, preventing the Promethean from leaving behind incriminating physical evidence such as footprints, fingerprints, hair and the like. Attempts to track him by physical signs alone automatically fail, but tracking him by scent (as with the Bloodhound's Nose Transmutation, p. 145, or police dogs) may succeed — albeit with a penalty of two dice. If the Promethean moves faster than his Speed, the effects of this Transmutation end immediately.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean may run (i.e., move up to double his Speed) without canceling the effects of the Transmutation.

**Possible Modifiers:** Heavy footwear (-1 for dress shoes or -2 for boots), dirty or sweaty (-1), wounded (-1 if suffering from at least one lethal Health wound), wearing gloves (+1), wearing a hat or hair net (+1)

## Body Double (•••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can physically alter his physique, becoming skinnier, fatter, broader, shorter or taller. These changes confuse others as to his identity from a distance, but such deceit rapidly fails at close range. These changes can provide minor physical bonuses as well.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean may alter his general body type, achieving a range of changes. He may increase or decrease his Size by one (which also adds or subtracts one Health dot). Alternatively, the Created might change his basic physique

such that he increases (or even decreases) one of his Physical Attributes. He might adjust his muscle mass, thereby appearing to be weaker. He could assume a wiry form with an extra dot of Dexterity. He could gain a stocky build that increases his Stamina by one dot. The effects of this Transmutation last for the remainder of the scene, but multiple uses do not stack. If the Promethean activates the Transmutation again, its new effect replaces the previous one immediately. Additionally, these changes penalize an opponent's efforts to identify the Promethean by two dice.

### Silent Steps (•••)

With the development of this Transmutation, the Promethean masters control of her body such that she can move with an amazing degree of stealth. Unless she runs or engages in dramatic actions she can move about in almost perfect silence.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

Once it is active, the Silent Steps Transmutation allows the Promethean to move silently for the rest of the scene. Hearing-based perception rolls made against her are automatically reduced to a chance die because observers are more likely to hear something else instead. If the Promethean runs (i.e., moves faster than her Speed) this power ends immediately. Similarly if she does something that creates obvious noise, such as speaking or firing a gun, the Transmutation ends. If the Promethean performs an action that might cause an object or person (other than herself) to create noise, her player must make an appropriate Stealth-based roll with a bonus of three dice. For example, sneaking up on a victim is silent, but stabbing the victim could result in sounds that others will hear.

### False Tracks (••••)

Seeding a deceptive trail can foil investigations that threaten to expose the Promethean. This Transmutation aids the Created in such endeavors by mimicking the subtle traces left by another. With a touch, the Promethean attunes the forensic tracks of her body to that of someone else.

**Prerequisite:** Leave No Trace (••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, although the Promethean must touch the target (see p. 119)

**Action:** Reflexive

Before she can activate this power, the Promethean must have already activated the Leave No Trace Transmutation. Then the Created touches a human body (one alive or dead) and subtly alters her own body to resemble that of the subject in a number of minute, but very important ways. Her fingerprints and bare footprints become those of the target, and any forensic evidence she leaves behind resembles that of the subject rather than her own.

### Mask (••••)

The Promethean learns to manipulate his form such that he can cause detailed physical alterations. He can significantly alter his facial structure and adjust the texture of his skin and hair. With effort, he can even pose as another person.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge

**Action:** Instant

This Transmutation allows the Promethean to instantly don a human disguise without any tools or preparation time by physically altering the shape of his face and the length of his hair. If the Promethean also possesses the Color of Man Transmutation, he may also change the color of his hair, eyes and skin without a separate roll. If he possesses the Body Double Transmutation, he may also change his size and build without spending a separate point of Pyros.

Attempting to pose as a specific person may also require the Promethean to succeed with a reflexive Intelligence + Composure roll to get the look right. (See "Memorizing and Remembering," **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 44–45.) Successes on this roll are contested by any witness' Wits + Subterfuge roll, if the witness knows the person the Promethean is imitating. Alternatively, the Promethean might simply attempt to *not* look like himself. The Transmutation does not allow him to gain the effects of the Striking Looks Merit.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the deception fail, but the Promethean cannot try again for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to effect a change.

**Success:** For the remainder of the scene, the desired look is achieved (within the Transmutation's limits). The Promethean assumes a different shape and manages to pass himself off as someone else.

**Exceptional Success:** The Mask is so convincing that the subject overlooks reasonable inconsistencies in the disguise.

**Possible Modifiers:** Unable to copy differences in body mass (-1 per point of difference in Strength or Size), unable to copy color differences (-1 to -2), creating a generic guise (+1), touching or having a body part of the person matching the desired look (+3)

### Deep Cover (•••••)

Sometimes it is important to stay disguised for a very long time. This Transmutation enables the master of the Deception to do just that.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

Whenever a Deception Transmutation such as Color of Man, Body Double, False Tracks or Mask is about to end, the Promethean can reflexively spend one point of Pyros to extend the effect for 24 hours. This extension is seamless and does not reveal the Promethean's disfigurements.

### Vitreous Humour (•••••)

This Transmutation is the ultimate tool for the Promethean who seeks to avoid detection. Named after the gel-like substance found within the human eye, this power literally allows the Created to transform his flesh and bones such that they are completely transparent. Transparency isn't invisibility, of course, but it's close enough for many circumstances.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

Once this power is activated, the Promethean's body becomes transparent for the remainder of the scene. This effect does not render him invisible, but it does allow him to attempt Stealth actions in plain sight, even against cameras. (See "Stealth," **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 75–76.) He must be naked to properly gain this benefit, lest he suffer penalties to Stealth rolls. The Storyteller might even deem that he can make no rolls at all in certain circumstances if any of his clothing is visible.

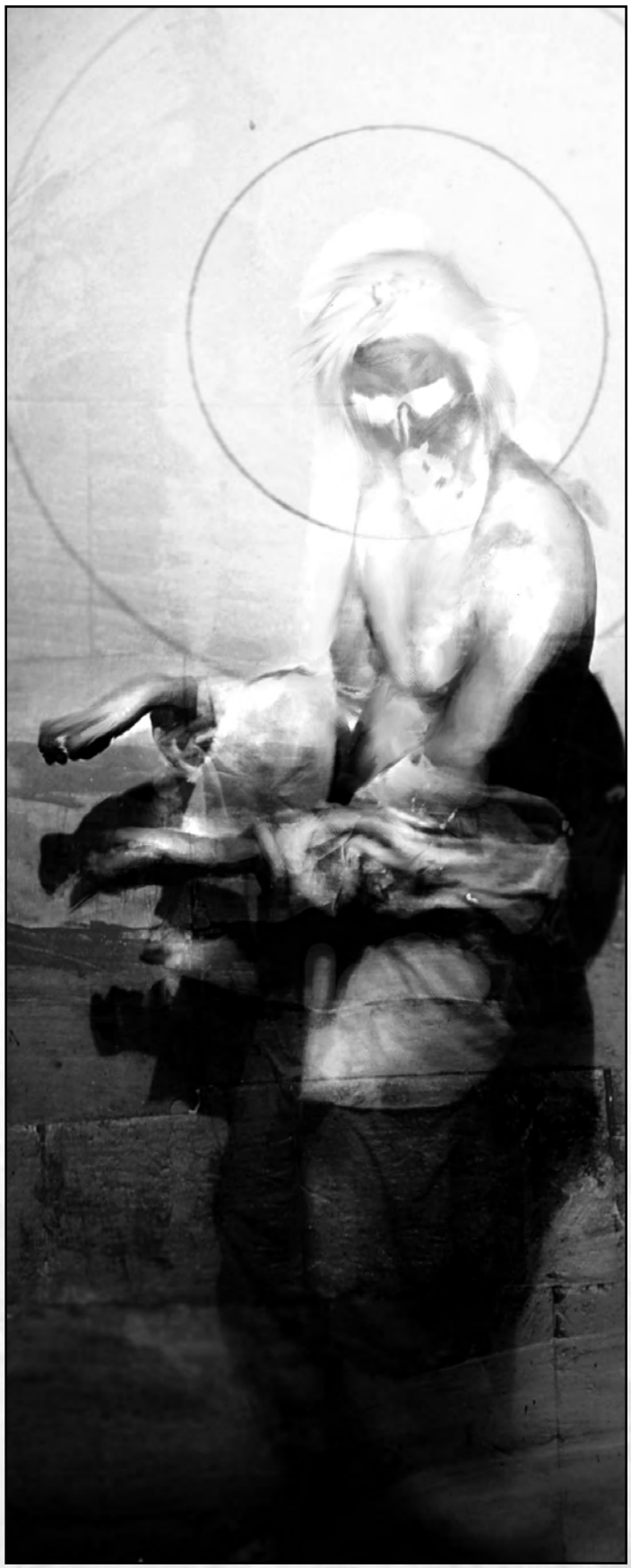
## Disquietism

Disquietism is a somewhat angry art that permits the Created to spread the taint of their inhuman nature among those who possess true Mortality. In this way, the Promethean can cause a living being to temporarily possess qualities associated with Disquiet. Prometheans often use this Transmutation as a defensive measure, turning the wrath of an angry mob toward another target. Others use it vindictively, to punish those who have wronged or offended them. At its higher levels, however, this Transmutation can even alleviate the worst aspects of the Promethean's own Disquiet.

The path of the Furies in particular focuses upon the miasmic effects this Transmutation allows. Other Prometheans may study these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Disquietism come most easily to the Furies, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Tin.

### Alembic (• to •••••)

Alembic actually represents five separate Transmutations, each of which must be purchased in sequential order. There is neither a roll nor a Pyros cost associated with Alembic, each of which is a permanent alteration to the Promethean's own Azoth. Instead, the Transmutations grant the Promethean an improved resistance to attempts to manipulate her Azoth or otherwise affect her with any other Disquietism or Mesmerism Transmutations. With the one-dot version, anyone attempting to use a Disquietism power against the Promethean suffers a one-die penalty on any applicable rolls. Each additional dot of Alembic increases the dice penalty by one, so that at the five-dot level, any attempt to manipulate the Promethean with Disquietism or Mesmerism suffers a –5 penalty.



### Scapegoat (•)

This simple Transmutation allows the Promethean to temporarily hide his own unnatural condition by temporarily transferring the onus of his Disquiet to another nearby target. The Promethean must touch his target (see p. 119) to invoke the Transmutation. If he is successful in applying the effect, anyone nearby who is capable of detecting and reacting to the Promethean's Disquiet will perceive it as coming from the target instead of the Promethean. The target will continue to perceive the Promethean's Disquiet as normal, and she may attempt to divert the ire of the crowd back to the true source of the Disquiet. Angry crowds rarely stop to listen to such unbelievable protestations, though.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Resolve + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean fails to transfer the effects of his Disquiet, and his player must make a Humanity roll for him to resist the effects of Torment. Alternatively, anyone who is already affected by Disquiet advances its effects by one stage for the rest of the scene. (That is, someone suffering a stage-two Disquiet now suffers that Disquiet's third stage.)

**Failure:** The attempt fails.

**Success:** For the duration of the scene, the player of any witness with whom the target interacts must roll her Resolve + Composure, contested by a dice pool equal to the Azoth of the Promethean who used this Transmutation. This roll follows all the normal rules for Disquiet outlined on page pp. 167-173, and the specific Disquiet effects are determined by the Lineage of the affecting Promethean. Any Disquiet that results affects the witnesses as if the target had inflicted them, though, rather than the Promethean. If the target herself is subject to the Promethean's Disquiet, she reacts normally to the Promethean.

**Exceptional Success:** The effects are as listed except that not even the target can perceive either the true source of the supernatural taint or the Promethean's disfigurements. Rather, the target genuinely believes that she is the source of the unnatural Disquiet that she feels for the Transmutation's duration.

### Soothe Disquiet (• or ••• or •••••)

Soothe Disquiet actually represents three separate Transmutations, each of which must be purchased in sequential order. There is no roll associated with Soothe Disquiet. These Transmutations allow the Promethean to temper the effects her Disquiet has on others for a brief period.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

With the one-dot version of this Transmutation, the Promethean spends one Pyros, and for the rest of the scene, any person contending with Disquiet gains a one-die bonus to his Resolve + Composure roll. (This roll is contested as usual by the Promethean's Azoth roll.) This bonus increases the likelihood that he will be able to avoid suffering the adverse affects of Disquiet. The three-dot and five-dot versions each convey an additional +1 bonus to the roll, so that when the five-dot version is active, an observer has a +3 bonus to his Resolve + Composure roll.

While the power is active, it also prevents the advancement of Disquiet's malaise in mortals who are already suffering from Disquiet. The one-dot version of this power prevents first-stage Disquiet (the dream stage) from advancing to the second-stage. If a mortal with first-stage Disquiet, encounters the Promethean again, the Storyteller would normally roll the mortal's Resolve + Composure, and a failure would advance the mortal to second-stage Disquiet (the fantasy stage). Under the influence of this power, however, no roll is made. Advancement is halted for that scene.

The three-dot version of this power prevents second-stage Disquiets from advancing to the third stage (the impulse stage), while the five-dot version prevents a third stage from becoming a fourth-stage (driven) Disquiet. This Transmutation does not apply to the Wasteland effect (see pp. 174-179), however, only to mortals who might be affected by Disquiet.

Only one Pyros need be spent, regardless of how many levels of the Transmutation have been mastered, and the effect always lasts for one scene. The same mortals cannot be affected by this power for longer than 24 hours, however, even if the Promethean can keep spending Pyros to maintain the effect for that long. After that time, and for the next week, they automatically suffer Disquiet with no roll required if they encounter the Promethean who used this power. If they were already suffering Disquiet, perhaps from encountering a different Promethean, they advance a stage and this Transmutation cannot be used to soothe that Disquiet.

### Rabid Rage (••)

The Promethean can now exercise her Disquiet more efficiently. With this Transmutation, she can choose one target and focus her Disquiet through that target to a single nearby animal, thereby driving the animal into a savage rage that is directed against the target. Even the most docile or domesticated of creatures can be provoked into an atavistic frenzy through this power. Rabid Rage cannot be used to enrage a sentient animal (such as a shapeshifted vampire or werewolf), however, nor can it be used to turn a vampire's ghoul animal against its master.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Composure + Animal Ken vs. animal's Resolve

**Action:** Contested

Rabid Rage can be used on anyone within the Promethean's line of sight. Regardless of the target chosen, it is the animal's Resolve roll that is used to contest the power.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean fails to direct the animal's anger toward her target, and it attacks her instead.

**Failure:** The attempt is unsuccessful.

**Success:** The animal attacks the target to the best of its ability until the scene ends or the animal is dead or incapacitated.

**Exceptional Success:** The animal attacks in a blind frenzy, ignoring all wound penalties for the duration of the effect.

**Possible Modifiers:** Household pet (-1), household pet with strong bond to owner (-2), already agitated (+1), wild animal (+1), predatory animal (+2)

## Tension in the Air (••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can subtly diffuse his Disquiet into his immediate vicinity, causing nearby humans to become anxious or annoyed without actually drawing their attention to his own unnatural state. Although the Promethean cannot directly use this Transmutation to trigger a specific action in a mortal, he can render nearby mortals more susceptible to intimidation. Alternatively, a clever Promethean could use this power to heighten the paranoia of those nearby, rendering them vulnerable to certain suggestions.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion

**Action:** Instant

Successes are compared to the Composure of affected targets. If the results equal or exceed a person's Composure, this power is effective against that person.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The attention of everyone nearby is directed to the Promethean, whose disfigurements are plainly visible for a moment.

**Failure:** The attempt to activate the Transmutation is unsuccessful.

**Success:** The attempt is successful, and nearby affected mortals feel a heightened sense of anxiety and paranoia for no discernable reason. For the duration of the scene, the player of the Promethean can compare the successes rolled to the Composure of any other characters in the area with whom the Promethean character interacts. If a particular character's Composure is greater than the successes rolled, there is no effect. If the character's Composure is equal to or less than the successes rolled, the Promethean gains a dice bonus equal to the difference on all Intimidation-based rolls and on all Social rolls calculated to take advantage of the character's anxiety and paranoia.

**Exceptional Success:** Anyone of less than superhuman Composure (6 dots or more) is affected.

## Iago's Whisper (•••)

This Transmutation functions similarly to Rabid Rage, except that instead of inflaming the wrath of an animal toward a human target, the Promethean can drive one person to kill another. The Promethean must spend one Pyros and touch the target she plans to turn into a killer, thereby exposing her true nature to him. As she does so, Disquiet seeps into the target's soul, twisting his senses and filling him with reckless hate for a named individual. The victim of this homicidal impulse need not actually be present, but he must be someone whom the affected mortal can reach and attack within one hour. The player of the affected target must still make a Morality roll as normal if the character succeeds in his mission, but the target will usually remember the creature who compelled him to commit his crime.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Resolve + Intimidation vs. Resolve + Azoth

**Action:** Contested

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The attempt fails, and the Promethean's Disquiet briefly surges out of control. The Promethean's player must make an immediate Torment roll.

**Failure:** The attempt is unsuccessful.

**Success:** The Promethean must spend at least three turns describing the intended victim and explaining how the victim has wronged the target and why the victim deserves to die. For the duration of the scene, the target will attempt to the best of his ability to find and kill the intended victim. The effect ends either when the victim is dead or when the scene ends, at which point the target returns to his senses and remembers how the Promethean brainwashed him.

**Exceptional Success:** The target will not remember how the Promethean influenced him and will remain convinced that he was justified in killing the victim for the reasons provided by the Promethean. Only years of psychotherapy or the application of some supernatural influence will restore the target's true memories of what happened.

**Possible Modifiers:** Killing the victim is in opposition to the subject's Vice or Virtue (-1), subject loves the intended victim (-2), killing the victim is consistent with the subject's Vice or Virtue (+1), subject hates the intended victim (+2)

## Progenitor's Curse (•••)

It is not uncommon for the Created to make enemies among their kind. Pettiness and vindictiveness plague the Prometheans just as much as the mortals they seek to emulate. With this Transmutation, one Promethean can provoke the unnatural Azoth within another. Doing so temporarily increases the likelihood that the target will spread her Disquiet throughout her community, thus making it harder for her to conceal her true self.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros (or more)

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wits + Occult – target's Composure
**Action:** Instant

The Transmutation allows one Promethean to increase another's Azoth dice pool when it is rolled against the Resolve + Composure pools of those who encounter the target. (See "The Disquiet Vector" on p. 168.) Note that the Alembic Transmutation helps defend against this power.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's own Azoth increases by two for the next 24 hours solely for purposes of determining whether she spreads Disquiet.

**Failure:** The attempt to activate the Transmutation fails.

**Success:** For each Pyros spent (up to a maximum of the Promethean's Azoth), the target must add one die to his Azoth dice pool when rolling to determine whether he spreads Disquiet. This effect lasts for one day per success.

**Exceptional Success:** The effect lasts for five or more days (one day per success).

## Nameless Dread (••••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can momentarily cause his Disquieting aura to flare and direct its full intensity toward a specific mortal, causing her to collapse into quivering terror. Targets are usually completely unable to stand against the horrific might of the Promethean in any way. Most will do almost anything the Promethean asks rather than face his hideous visage.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation – Composure
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's Inner Fire briefly rages out of control, and his player must immediately roll for him to resist Torment.

**Failure:** The attempt to activate the Transmutation fails.

**Success:** The target is gripped by an overwhelming fear of the Promethean. For each success the Promethean's player rolled, the target suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls for the remainder of the scene. Even attempts to flee are hampered, as the target runs in a blind panic and is more likely to trip or to run away from help. Targets in the grip of this terror cannot initiate attacks against the Promethean unless they spend a point of Willpower per turn of attack. (They do not also gain the three-die bonus that Willpower expenditure normally provides.) They can still defend themselves from attack without needing to spend Willpower, though.

**Exceptional Success:** The target is completely paralyzed with fear for the duration of the scene. Her player must also reflexively roll Resolve + Composure. Failure triggers a derangement that lasts for the duration of the day.

## Safe Sojourn (••••)

The Promethean can use the abilities he learned with Soothe Disquiet and apply them to the impact he has on the land, slowing the progress of the miasma his Disquiet causes in nature — the effect known as the "Wasting of the Peaceful Refuge" or the Wasteland.

**Prerequisite:** Soothe Disquiet (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

Whenever a Promethean comes to rest for an hour or more in a location, his Azoth leaves its invisible mark and begins to slowly erode the land. If he moves on before spending 24 hours there, the mark does not take hold. Should he stay longer than a day, however, the area begins its slow degradation, although the signs won't show until he has been there for a week. The details of this process are explained in "The Wasteland" on pp. 174-179.

When this power is activated, it allows the Promethean to rest at a place for up to 24 hours before his mark is made there. He can then remain at the place for another 24 hours, after which the first-stage of the Wasteland sets in. It will advance to the second-stage if he stays for a week, and so forth, as per the normal rules. This power effectively gives the Promethean a 24-hour grace period, rather than the normal hour. It's not much, but it means the world to many Prometheans who just want to rest for a day somewhere without worrying about tainting the place. After the 24 hours, though, the normal rules for Wastelands apply.

## Shape Disquiet (•••••)

Those who master the art of Disquietism have frightening power over the false souls of their brethren. With this Transmutation, a Promethean can temporarily alter the Azoth of another of the Created. For the duration of the effect, the targeted Promethean acquires a new Lineage. His disfigurements (but not Bestowment) change to those of the altered Lineage, and he triggers Disquiet and Torment according to that Lineage as well. Worse, he must immediately roll to resist Torment, and he suffers a penalty on the roll equal to the Azoth of the Promethean who forcibly changed his Lineage. The effects of this Transmutation usually last for one scene, but it can be extended to a full day with the expenditure of additional Pyros.

**Cost:** 2 Pyros (or 3 Pyros if the effect is to last for a full day)
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Composure + Occult vs. Composure + Azoth
**Action:** Contested
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's Inner Fire briefly rages out of control, and her player must immediately roll for her to resist Torment.

**Failure:** The attempt to activate the Transmutation fails.

**Success:** For the duration of a scene, the target assumes the drawbacks of a different Lineage, chosen by the user of this Transmutation. The Transmutation automatically fails if the Promethean attempts to "change" the target's Lineage to what it already was. Although new Lineages theoretically exist, only the five well-known Lineages have been studied sufficiently to reliably duplicate their respective drawbacks.

The target's player must immediately make a Torment roll at a dice penalty equal to the Azoth of the Promethean who inflicted the change. All Torment rolls made while under the effects of this Transmutation suffer a like penalty.

**Exceptional Success:** The effects are as per success, except that the effect automatically lasts for a full day. If the user spent three Pyros prior to the roll, the effect lasts for two days.

### Quell Disquiet (•••••)

The pinnacle of Disquietism is the ability to calm the unnatural storm within the Promethean and quell the Disquiet he causes in humans, animals or Nature. With this Transmutation, a Promethean can temporarily suppress the effects of her own Disquiet, allowing her to pass for a time as the mortal she wishes to be.

**Prerequisite:** Soothe Disquiet (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros or 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Socialize
**Action:** Reflexive
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's attempt to quell her Disquiet fails disastrously. Her Disquiet rages out of control, and her player must immediately roll for her to resist Torment.

**Failure:** The attempt fails.

**Success:** For the duration of the scene, the Promethean does not invoke any of the effects of Disquiet. She can cloak her Disquiet in the presence of only limited numbers of mortals, however, specifically a number equal to or less than her Presence or Manipulation (whichever is higher). If the Promethean spends two Pyros, she can double her effective Presence or Manipulation for the purpose of determining how many mortals she can interact with. If the Promethean ever encounters more people at one time than her maximum limit, the Transmutation ends instantly.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean's Presence or Manipulation is automatically doubled for purposes of determining how many mortals she can remain around. If the Promethean spent an additional Pyros, her Presence or Manipulation is tripled instead of doubled.

## Electrification

Lightning has long been seen by many cultures as a physical symbol of the might of the gods. For the Created, that power may take the form of wrathful electrical attacks or be used to reinvigorate damaged Promethean flesh. The path of the Furies in particular focuses upon the might of this Transmutation. Other Prometheans may take up its study, but the forces of Electrification come most easily to the Furies due to their practice of the Refinement of Tin. Unlike some Transmutations, these powers have largely come about during the modern age.

The Electrification Transmutation normally ignores armor when it requires the Promethean to touch an opponent. (See "Touching the Target," p. 119.) Only a form of armor that is especially resistant to conducting electricity would grant any sort of defense. Mundane insulating protections such as rubber or plastic can present a barrier, and some supernatural protections might apply.

### Feel the Spark (•)

Given electricity's usefulness to the Created, practitioners of the Refinement of Tin discovered this method of divining its presence. The Promethean attunes her own vital fluid to the flow of that which is found in the world around her.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Science
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean thinks she detects electricity where there is none.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails in her search.

**Success:** The Promethean detects the closest source of electricity strong enough to cause electrocution, provided one lies within 200 yards. The Created may sense the location of a wall socket hidden behind a couch or a circuit breaker box in the corner office.

Alternatively, the Promethean can scrutinize a specific object to see if it contains electricity. In this case, even the location of weak sources such as small batteries is detected.

Prometheans who practice the Electrification Transmutation are not revealed by this power unless they are currently using a power that creates an ongoing source of electricity.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean gains one bonus die to the use of any other Electrification Transmutation used on the identified sources during the same scene.

**Possible Modifiers:** Experience as an electrician (+1), completely insulated wiring (-1), distracted by combat (-1), use of Electrification by any Promethean during same scene (-1 per use)

### Jolt (•)

The Created are naturally attuned to the flows of electricity, so manipulations of it come easily to them. With this Transmutation, the Promethean can power an electrical device with his own energy.

**Cost:** None or 1 Pyros or 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

Activating this Transmutation requires the Promethean to touch the device, which is powered for the remainder of the scene. To maintain the flow of electricity, the Created must either continually touch the device or spend one Pyros to allow it to run on its own. A valid target for this Transmutation must run on electricity and must not require more electricity than could normally be drawn from a standard wall socket. Jolt only powers a device. It cannot be used to cause electrical damage, and efforts to do so cause the power to cease immediately.

Alternatively, the Promethean may touch a power transformer or generator and cause it to power whatever is connected to it, though this use always costs two Pyros. This application of the Transmutation cannot power more devices than are typically found in a residential block or urban supermarket, even if conducting lines connect them.

## Insulator (••)

As any good electrician knows, generating or directing electricity is not the only way to control it. With this Transmutation, the Promethean gains the ability to insulate a target from the effects of electricity.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina (unwilling targets subtract Resolve)

**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean may reflexively use this power after touching the target (see p. 119). An unwilling target may resist with his Resolve.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean accidentally blows a fuse or burns out the electronics of the piece of equipment he was trying to shield.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to protect the target.

**Success:** Each success grants the target one point of armor effective against all electrical attacks or damage, whether the target desires it or not. Variable effects that are not rolled are reduced in effectiveness by one point per success. Powers that normally operate without varying degrees of effectiveness, such as Jolt and Blackout, simply fail to affect the insulated target (though they are not otherwise inhibited). This protection lasts for the remainder of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The target gains five or more points of armor (one per success rolled) effective against electrical attacks and damage, as well as all the other benefits described for a success.

## Shock (••)

The Promethean can release a powerful electrical shock, electrocuting anybody or anything he is touching. Because this electricity is charged with Torment, it can even harm the Created.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina

**Action:** Reflexive



The Promethean must successfully touch the target (see p. 199) before reflexively activating the Transmutation. Most forms of armor do not protect against this touch attempt.

Using this power (or any power that lists Shock as a prerequisite) more times during a single scene than the character has dice in his Azoth + Stamina pool, and then using any of the Electrification powers that inflict direct damage again that scene causes Torment to build. (See "The Noble Resistance of Torment" on pp. 181-182.)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean accidentally grounds the Torment-tainted electrical charge into herself, suffering one point of bashing damage.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to produce a damaging charge.

**Success:** The Promethean inflicts one point of bashing damage per success via electrocution. Prometheans *cannot* absorb this kind of electricity to heal Health wounds, though the Vulcanus Transmutation Electroshock Recharge (see p. 155) can provide an instant defense.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean inflicts five or more points of bashing damage (one per success rolled) via electrocution.

## Arc (•••)

Improving her control over electricity, the Promethean becomes capable of emitting an electrical bolt to attack a target at a distance. Because this electricity is charged with Torment, it can harm the Created.

**Prerequisite:** Shock (••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean can now use his electrical shock at a range of 20 yards per Dexterity dot. Most forms of armor do not protect against this attack, and the victim may not apply his Defense against the ranged attack unless he is in close combat with the attacker.

Using this power (or any power that lists Shock as a prerequisite) more times during a single scene than the character has dice in his Azoth + Stamina pool, and then using any of the Electrification powers that inflict direct damage again that scene causes Torment to build. (See "The Noble Resistance of Torment" on pp. 181-182.)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean accidentally grounds the Torment-tainted electrical charge into herself, suffering one point of bashing damage.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to produce a damaging charge.

**Success:** The Promethean inflicts one point of bashing damage per success via electrocution. Prometheans *cannot* absorb this kind of electricity to heal Health wounds, though the Vulcanus Transmutation Electroshock Recharge (see p. 155) can provide an instant defense.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean inflicts five or more points of bashing damage (one per success rolled) via electrocution.

## Generator (•••)

Refining her control over the flow of electricity, the Promethean can power a device without even touching it. Projecting energy over a distance is more draining, however.

**Prerequisite:** Jolt (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros or 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

Except as noted herein, this Transmutation operates like the Jolt power. The Promethean may power a device within sight and not more than 200 yards range. Once activated, the Transmutation continues to power the device with electricity for the remainder of the scene. This Transmutation cannot be used to cause electrical damage, and efforts to do so cause the power to cease immediately.

Alternatively, the Promethean can instantly recharge a battery to its proper level, whether the battery is sized for a large truck or a clandestine wiretap bug. The battery expends its charge at its normal rate. Recharging a battery costs one Pyros.

## Blackout (••••)

Channeled indiscriminately, electricity can cause damage to devices that depend upon it. This Transmutation creates an electromagnetic pulse, causing all electrical devices within range to fry their circuits. Wise Prometheans who possess this power protect their vulnerable devices or don't rely upon such things in the first place.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

Blackout wrecks the sensitive circuits of all electrical devices in a one-yard radius. Double the radius for each Azoth dot beyond the first. (Two dots equals a two-yard radius, three dots equals a four-yard radius, and so on.) Some pieces of equipment are shielded against electromagnetic pulses and are immune to this Transmutation. The Insulator Transmutation (see p. 132) also may protect devices from Blackout.

## Regulator (••••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can control an electrical device at range, turning it on and off at will, and skillfully directing the flow of power within it. Although crafty Prometheans find innumerable uses for this Transmutation, Regulator cannot create electricity where it does not already exist.

**Prerequisite:** Generator (•••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None, though controlling the device's actions might require rolls




**Action:** Instant

The Promethean gains limited control over a device within sight and not more than 200 yards away. Once activated, the Transmutation allows the Promethean to manipulate the flow of electricity within the device for the remainder of the scene. Each attempt to make the device perform a specific feat requires the Promethean to spend an appropriate instant or extended action concentrating upon the desired effect. Turning a simple device on or off can be done automatically, but more complicated control requires relevant rolls (often Intelligence + Computer). Regulator might force a cell phone to dial a specific number, a car's turn signal to activate or a computer to start up its email application. If the device is in the hands of another user, that user may try to thwart the Promethean's control via a suitable contested action. This Transmutation cannot cause electrical damage, and efforts to make it do so cause the effect to cease immediately.

### Divine Lightning (•••••)

Achieving greater control over the destructive power of electricity, the Promethean with this Transmutation can command deadly bolts of lightning or stunning blasts of electricity. Because this electricity is charged with Torment, it can harm the Created.

**Prerequisite:** Arc (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina

**Action:** Reflexive (Shock) or instant (Arc)

This Transmutation acts as a more powerful form of the Shock or Arc Transmutations, at the Promethean's discretion. If the Created uses Arc to attack, each success inflicts one point of lethal damage and the range is extended to 20 yards per dot of Dexterity + Azoth.

Alternatively, the Promethean can create a Shock attack (causing bashing damage) that targets everyone in a one-yard radius from herself. Double the radius for each Azoth dot beyond the first. (Two dots equals a two-yard radius, three dots equals a four-yard radius, and so on.) Anyone who suffers damage equal to or greater than his Stamina from this attack is stunned, losing his next action.

The effects of this Transmutation also invoke the muscle contractions of extended electrocution. The player of any victim who suffers at least one point of damage from it must succeed at a reflexive Strength roll, lest the character be immobilized for one turn. Immobilized targets cannot apply Defense to attacks.

With either form of attack, the Promethean can spend an additional Pyros to upgrade the type of damage inflicted. An Arc attack can deliver aggravated damage at the cost of one additional Pyros (for two Pyros total). A Shock attack can inflict lethal damage at the cost of one additional Pyros or aggravated damage by spending two additional Pyros (for three Pyros total).

Using this power (or any power that lists Shock as a prerequisite) more times during a single scene than the character has dice in his Azoth + Stamina pool, and then using any of the Electrification powers that inflict direct damage again that scene causes Torment to build. (See "The Noble Resistance of Torment" on pp. 181-182.)

### Lightning Therapy (•••••)

With a touch, the Promethean can energize a fellow Promethean with a massive jolt of power. This Transmutation is difficult to master, because it requires the Promethean to discover how to create a pure "vital fluid" of electricity that is not charged with Torment.

**Cost:** 1+ Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

By touching a Promethean and activating this power, the Created can directly apply electrical power to heal the target. This Transmutation can only affect Prometheans. Lightning Therapy costs one point of Pyros for either each Health point of aggravated or lethal damage it heals or each two points of bashing damage it heals.

## Mesmerism

More subtle than Disquietism, Mesmerism also relies on the Created's ability to manipulate his own Disquieting aura to affect the minds of others. Indeed, some of the Transmutations associated with Mesmerism have effects similar to those used in Disquietism. As a whole, however, Mesmerism focuses more on shaping the minds of others in discreet ways rather than openly terrifying subjects into submission.

The path of the Mimics lends itself to the alterations these Transmutation effect. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Mesmerism come most easily to the Mimics, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Gold.

### Fixed Stare (•)

The Promethean must first make eye contact with his intended victim, then he can paralyze the target, sapping her will to act for as long as he maintains eye contact. The Transmutation can be maintained indefinitely, but the Created must continue to match his target's gaze, and he must likewise stay motionless. The effect ends instantly if the victim is attacked or harmed in any way. Otherwise, though, she will have no memory of what happened while she was mentally ensnared.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Resolve + Intimidation vs. Resolve + Azoth

**Action:** Contested

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The attempt to paralyze the target fails, and the target is immune to any further Mesmerism attempts by the Promethean for the next day.

**Failure:** The attempt to paralyze the target fails, but the Created can try again.

**Success:** The target remains motionless and utterly unaware of her surroundings as long as the Promethean himself stands still and maintains eye contact. Although the Promethean cannot move, he can still speak, so this Transmutation is often used to incapacitate targets before more invasive mind-altering effects are deployed. Once the effect ends for any reason, the target becomes aware of the Promethean, if she was not already. She will have no recollection of the time that has passed.

If the target is attacked from any quarter, or even threatened with what appears to be an imminent attack, this power ends immediately.

**Exceptional Success:** When the effect ends, the target is momentarily disoriented. If the Promethean leaves immediately, the target will forget that he was ever there unless her player gets more successes on a reflexive Wits + Composure roll than were rolled for the Promethean on the Transmutation's activation roll.

## Flight Instinct (•)

To the Promethean, the minds of animals are simple things, easily manipulated. The Promethean reaches out with his Disquieting aura toward the primitive hind brain that exists within all animal life and excites the beast's flight instinct. (Disquietism's Rabid Rage can be used to incite a fight instinct). An affected creature flees from a designated target. This Transmutation affects only animals, and it will not affect sentient beings who have taken the form of animals or animals that have been raised to the level of sentience. Unlike Rabid Rage, it can be used to force a vampire's ghoul animal or a mage's familiar to flee from its master, though doing so is difficult.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wits + Animal Ken vs. animal's Composure

**Action:** Contested

Flight Instinct can be used on anyone within the Promethean's line of sight. Regardless of the target chosen, it is the animal's Composure roll that is used to contest the power.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The animal instead gets aggressive toward the Promethean. It might attack him if provoked.

**Failure:** The attempt to influence the animal fails.

**Success:** The animal flees from a designated target, leaving the area. If prevented from fleeing, it attacks whoever prevents its escape, until it gains an opening through which it can escape. It stays away for the remainder of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The animal continues to avoid the object of its fear for a full 24 hours.

**Possible Modifiers:** Household pet (-1), household pet with strong bond to owner (-2), animal is supernaturally bonded to the target (-5), already agitated (+1), wild animal (+1), predatory animal (+2)

## Firebringer (••)

The Divine Fire was once a gift to mortals, even though its presence in Prometheans provokes fear and hatred. The Created with this Transmutation can evoke a sense of the original awe the original gift had in humans, giving himself an aura of respect.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Persuasion vs. Intelligence

**Action:** Instant

This power affects all humans within the Promethean's presence. Each can make a contested Intelligence roll to resist the power's effect.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The attempt to invoke the aura of respect fails, and the Promethean will not be able to attempt this Transmutation again for a full day.

**Failure:** The attempt to invoke the aura fails.

**Success:** The attempt succeeds. Those nearby mortals whose Intelligence roll successes do not equal or exceed the Promethean's successes, feel a sense of awe and respect for the Promethean, even if they don't like him or are affected by Disquiet. For the duration of the scene, the Promethean gains a +1 dice bonus per success on all Persuasion- or Socialize-based rolls and on all Social rolls calculated to take advantage of the character's awe. If the Promethean threatens the character or attempts to intimidate him, this power's effects immediately end — not just toward that character, but toward every affected character.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean gains a +5 or more dice bonus (+1 die per success rolled) to his Persuasion- and Socialize-based rolls.

## Suggestion (••)

The Promethean can attempt to influence the mind of a single target by whispering an instruction to him. The Transmutation requires the Promethean to whisper, which may make it difficult to use in crowded or loud situations. In fact, the user is at a -2 penalty to activate this Transmutation against another person except in two situations: when the victim is asleep and the Created can whisper the instruction in his ear, or when the victim has been incapacitated by the Fixed Stare Transmutation.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intelligence + Persuasion vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The target is immune to the user's Mesmerism attempts for one full day.

**Failure:** The attempt to influence the target fails.

**Success:** The Created can give an instruction that the target will be compelled to obey. The instruction can consist of up to one concise sentence per success, and the target forgets he heard the command. (He remembers his

encounter with the Promethean only if his player succeeds on a Resolve + Composure roll with a dice penalty equal to the Promethean's Azoth.)

Once the command is successfully given, the Promethean can then speak a code word to the target anytime within one day per dot of his Azoth that unlocks the command and causes the target to enact it. This code word can be issued via telephone or television, as long as the Promethean is the one to speak it. Alternatively, the target can be "programmed" to act when a specific situation arises, such as "when the Greek Ambassador enters the room" or simply "at nine o'clock." The Promethean cannot cause the target to attack others or to perform any inherently dangerous actions, but he can cause the target to do things that might cause others to attack him. (In such cases, the target responds as he normally would.)

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to permitting very complicated instructions, the suggestion is so potent that the target has no possibility of remembering that the Promethean gave it to him.

**Possible Modifiers:** Loud, crowded place (-1), target is awake and not subject to Fixed Stare (-2), Suggestion to be carried out within same scene (no modifier), Suggestion to be carried out within same day or later (-1; add cumulative -1 per additional day)

## Atavistic Instincts (•••)

Where Flight Instinct allows the Created to invoke a primitive fear response in animals, this Transmutation allows her to achieve the same effect within higher creatures such as humans and supernatural beings. She can cause a single sentient being to either flee another person (or the Created herself) with uncontrolled dread or attack someone with a savage fury.

**Prerequisite:** Flight Instinct (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wits + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The affected person immediately targets the Promethean herself and attacks her to the best of his ability.

**Failure:** The attempt to influence the target fails.

**Success:** Depending on the Promethean's choice when activating this power, the target either flees the area or attacks a victim of the Promethean's choice to the best of his ability for the remainder of the scene. Once the effect ends, the affected target will not realize that the Created was the reason for his actions unless his player gets more successes on a Wits + Composure roll than were rolled for the Promethean in activating this power.

If the target comes close to killing the victim of his fury (the victim has suffered more lethal wounds than her Size), the target's player can make a Morality roll for the character to resist fighting on. If this roll succeeds, the spell is broken and the target is under no compulsion to continue attacking.

**Exceptional Success:** If compelled to flee, the target continues to avoid the object of his fear for a full 24 hours. If compelled to fight, he does so in a rabid frenzy, fighting until he is dead or incapacitated. Regardless, the target has no possibility of realizing that the Created was the reason for his mad actions.

### Other Supernaturals

Supernatural beings can be affected by Atavistic Instincts almost as easily as mortals, but the effects are more pronounced for some due to the effects of the target's own supernatural nature. When Atavistic Instincts successfully provokes fear or anger in a vampire (that is, the Promethean's player rolls more successes to activate it than the vampire's player does on his Composure + Blood Potency roll to resist it), the vampire's player must also roll Resolve + Composure for his character to resist Rötschreck or frenzy as appropriate. (See **Vampire: The Requiem**, pp. 178–180.) Even if the frenzy roll succeeds, the vampire still either flees or attacks the designated victim as determined by the Promethean's successes. He neither suffers the effects nor gains any benefits of vampiric frenzy, though, and his emotional disturbance ends when he has either fled the scene or killed his designated victim. If the vampire's frenzy roll fails, however, the vampire suffers the full effects of either Rötschreck or frenzy in addition to the normal effects of this Transmutation. (He cannot roll Humanity to avoid trying to kill either.) Most importantly, in the case of frenzy, the vampire will likely lose the mental capacity to pick his designated victim out of a crowd and is more likely to attack anything that moves — possibly including the Promethean who used the Transmutation against him. The number of successes the vampire needs to resist frenzy is equal to the number rolled on the Transmutation's initial activation roll. If the player of the Created rolled an exceptional success, the vampire needs an additional number of successes equal to the Promethean's Azoth. Sometimes, you can succeed a little too well.

These same rules apply to werewolves subjected to this Transmutation, whose players must roll Resolve + Composure for their characters to avoid Death Rage (as outlined on pp. 173–175 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**). A werewolf forced to either flee or to attack whose Resolve + Composure roll to resist Death Rage fails enters her Gauru form for the duration of a scene. If she is compelled to attack, though, she may come out of Death Rage early once she has killed every living (or unliving) thing in her vicinity, possibly including the Promethean who affected her. Although an exceptional success rolled for the Created may cause the affected person to avoid the target for 24 full hours, the effects of a supernatural fear frenzy for either a vampire or a werewolf do not last more than a scene.





Worst of all, when one Promethean uses Atavistic Instincts against another, the victimized Promethean suffers greatly due to the violation. The player of a Promethean who falls under the swag of this Transmutation must make a Humanity roll at the conclusion of its effect as Torment builds.

## In Vino Veritas (•••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean reaches out with his own Azoth and provokes his intended target's sanguine humour. An affected target becomes slightly drunk for the duration of the effect and functions as if she's been dosed with a truth drug. The Promethean can then induce his target to divulge information, including her darkest secrets. Unfortunately, she doesn't just spill everything she knows. The Promethean must guide the revelations through questioning.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intelligence + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested and extended (one roll represents five minutes of questioning)

The Promethean gains a one-die bonus on the activation roll if he has previously captured the target's attention with the Fixed Stare Transmutation. Also, the suggestibility that results from this Transmutation aids in subsequent uses of the Suggestion Transmutation, conferring a two-die bonus on any attempt to use that Transmutation while the subject is under the effects of In Vino Veritas.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The intended target is immune to any of the Promethean's Mesmerism attempts for one full day.

**Failure:** The attempt to draw information from the target fails, but the Promethean can continue to try in the next turn.

**Success:** The target becomes somewhat light-headed and suggestible. The Promethean can ask one question per success scored, and the target must answer truthfully. As long as the Promethean is not interrupted and continues to get more successes than the target on each roll, the interrogation lasts as long as the Promethean wishes, up to a maximum number of rolls equal to his Manipulation + Intelligence + Subterfuge dice pool. At the conclusion of the interrogation, the target remains in a light stupor for several minutes before coming to her senses. She will not remember being questioned unless she gets more successes on a Wits + Composure roll than the Promethean has dots of Azoth.

**Exceptional Success:** The Created can ask as many questions as he wishes for the duration of the scene, with no further resistance from the target. At the end of the interrogation, the target will nod off to sleep. Upon awakening, she forgets all about the interrogation with no chance of remembering.

## Logos (••••)

The Divine Fire was said to have given language to humans. Prometheans who believe this myth say that this language was a universal tongue anyone could understand. As the Fire grew dim in humans, so did their capacity to speak this original tongue. Prometheans who learn this Transmutation, however, can once more hear the words of the universal language in whatever tongue humans speak, regardless of the actual language spoken. They can likewise speak such that any human can understand them, although the human will mistake the words for those of his own native language.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Socialize

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean cannot understand a word people say to him for the remainder of the scene, even if they're speaking his own language, unless he uses an instant action to concentrate on what they're saying, during which time he can do nothing else but move up to his Speed.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to tune into the universal language.

**Success:** For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean can understand any language spoken within earshot, provided he can clearly hear it. (Muffled voices or whispers don't count.) Additionally, when he talks, the speakers of a single one of the languages he heard can understand him, as if he were speaking that language. He can break the barrier for one additional language per success, choosing which languages are affected as he hears them, until he has declared his full allotment. For example, a Promethean who rolled two successes and who hears people speaking Cantonese, Japanese and Cambodian can choose two of these languages to emulate when he speaks to those who spoke them. Once the scene ends, he remembers nothing of the languages.

**Exceptional Success:** As with a success, except that the Promethean can now speak any language he hears, with no limit, for the duration of the scene.

## Waters of Lethe (••••)

The Promethean can directly manipulate the memories of the target, causing him to forget some person, place, thing or event of the Promethean's choice. The Promethean must first capture the target's attention with the Fixed Stare Transmutation. Then, she can describe what person, place, thing or event within the target's memories that she wishes to alter. Ideally, the Promethean can describe alternative events to take the place of the excised memories so as to smooth over any gaps in the target's recollection, but circumstances might not leave her with enough time for this. The more thorough the programming is, however, the more difficult it is for the target to recall what he has forgotten or for him to see through false recollections.



**Prerequisite:** Fixed Stare (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intelligence + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Azoth
**Action:** Contested and extended (1–5+ successes; one roll represents one turn of indoctrination)

The Storyteller sets the target number needed to erase or rewrite the target's memory. The more complex or intensely personal the memory is, the more successes become necessary to alter it. For example, making the target forget that he saw the Created standing on a street corner the day before might require only one success; making him forget an angry argument he had with the Promethean might need three successes. Making him forget that he caught the Promethean kissing his beloved daughter might need five or more successes.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The intended target is immune to any of the Promethean's Mesmerism attempts for one full day, and the Promethean loses all accumulated successes.

**Failure:** The attempt to alter the target's memories gains no successes toward the target number, but the Created can continue in the next turn.

**Success:** Once the player has gained the required number of successes, the target's memories will conform to his wishes. This effect erodes over time. Every time the target is forced to remember the events in question, his player can roll Wits + Composure and accumulate the results over time. When he collects half as many successes as the Promethean's player rolled on the Transmutation roll, he might begin dreaming about the forgotten subject. When he collects as many successes as the player rolled, he may remember the truth as well as the false memories but might not be convinced of which memory is real. When he gets five more successes than were rolled by the player, he will be certain of the true memory and also recall the circumstances under which his memories were altered.

**Exceptional Success:** For at least one week of game time, the target's player cannot roll Wits + Composure in order for him to break through the false memories. Even when the target breaks through the false memories, he will not remember that the Promethean was the one to change his memories.

## Imaginal Friend (•••••)

The Promethean can project a portion of his own consciousness into an object, investing it with temporary sentience. This sentience is not a separate personality but an aspect of the Promethean's own consciousness, much like a child's imaginary friend. It thinks and acts on its own and can even surprise its creator, but it is ultimately just a projection of his own consciousness. (He is not in telepathic contact with it, though.) The object can speak, even if it has no mouth, although players of mortals who hear it need to roll to resist Disquiet once the scene ends.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Manipulation
**Action:** Instant

The object to be invested with the new personality must be of a Size no larger than the Promethean's Azoth.

If the Promethean knows the Vulcanus Transmutation Animate Firetouched, he can combine it with this Transmutation, allowing the object to act on its own, independent of the Promethean's telekinetic control. He needs to spend only one Pyros for both effects.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Imaginal Friend is not a friend at all. Its Mental and Social Attributes and Skills match those of the Promethean, but it works to oppose him. It might insult enemies or foes, trying to get them to attack the Promethean.

**Failure:** The object is not invested with sentience.

**Success:** The object gains a personality of its own and has Mental and Social Attributes equal to one dot per success. In addition, it has a number of dots in Mental and Social Skills equal to the Promethean's Azoth plus the number of successes rolled. The Storyteller can choose how to distribute the dots, or he can allow the Promethean character's player to decide.

The Imaginal Friend can talk and see and hear in 360 degrees around itself, regardless of what sort of object houses its consciousness. Most Prometheans with this power create one to act as a companion to help stave off terrible loneliness. As pathetic as this might seem, other Prometheans rarely disparage the practice. Companionship isn't the only use for an Imaginal Friend, though. It can act as an excellent spy, watching and listening to all that takes place around it. People rarely suspect that a teddy bear or lamp has a mind of its own.

The Imaginal Friend lasts for one scene, though the Promethean can choose to spend one Pyros to make it last for 24 hours. (He can keep it alive indefinitely by continuing to spend one Pyros per day.) He cannot maintain more concurrent Imaginal Friends than he has dots of Azoth, however.

**Exceptional Success:** The Imaginal Friend lasts for 24 hours without the need for the Promethean to pay the extra Pyros cost that first day.

## Pygmalion's Caress (•••••)

Even as Pygmalion shaped the body of Galatea to his desires, so can the Promethean sculpts the mind of another to suit his fancy. With this Transmutation, the Created can cause a target to assume a false identity of the Promethean's own invention so that the target believes she is that person. The false identity erodes over time, and sudden encounters with the target's real life can break the spell.

**Prerequisite:** Waters of Lethe (••••)
**Cost:** 2 Pyros



**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Presence + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested and extended (1–10+ successes; one roll represents one turn of indoctrination)

The implanting of the new identity is an extended action during which the Promethean can take no other actions and must move no more than his Speed per turn, although he retains his Defense. Simply establishing a new persona with generically false memories but which is psychologically close to the target's original personality requires at least five successes. It requires one additional success per major life-shaping event altered, and four additional successes to change the person's Virtue or Vice.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The intended target is immune to any of the Promethean's Mesmerism attempts for one full day, and the Promethean loses all accumulated successes.

**Failure:** The attempt to alter the target's personality gains no successes toward the target number, but the Created can continue to try in the next turn.

**Success:** Once the player has gained the required number of successes, the target's personality conforms to the player's wishes. This effect erodes over time. Every time the target encounters events that might remind her of her true existence, her player can roll Wits + Composure and accumulate the results over time. At the Storyteller's discretion, events that powerfully remind her of her true life (such as a lover or relative who has been searching for her and has proof of her identity) might confer a bonus of up to +5 on the roll.

When the target accumulates half as many successes as the Promethean's player rolled on the Transmutation roll, she might begin dreaming about her former life, or elements of the false personality might drop away. The target might even believe herself to be going mad. When she accumulates as many successes as the player rolled, she effectively develops a split personality, with her true self and false persona warring for control. When she gets five more successes than the Promethean's player rolled, she will be certain of her true self and also recall the circumstances under which her personality and memories were altered.

**Exceptional Success:** For at least one week of game time, the target's player cannot roll Wits + Composure to break through the false personality. Even when the target breaks through the false memories, she will not remember that the Promethean was the one to brainwash her.

## Metamorphosis

Those Transmutations grouped under the heading of Metamorphosis tend to be frightening in their application and have disturbing effects on the Created who master them. (Less so than similar Pandoran effects, though.) It is difficult, after all, to maintain one's zeal to acquire human Mortality when one claims the ability to grow a third eye.

The path of the Pariahs best allows for the strange transformations of these Transmutations. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Metamorphosis come most easily to the Pariahs, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Copper.

### Mask of Medusa (•)

This Transmutation warps the Promethean's features into a horrific visage.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Intimidation

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly synchronize his body with her Azoth, causing it to surge painfully through her body and causing Torment to build.

**Failure:** The Created fails to alter her appearance.

**Success:** Each success grants the Promethean a one-die bonus on Intimidation rolls or any Social roll related to scaring, unnerving or grossing out someone. All other Social rolls, however, suffer a corresponding penalty. The effect lasts for one scene unless the Promethean chooses to end it with an instant action.

**Exceptional Success:** The power can last for up to 24 hours, though the Promethean can always choose to restore her features to normal with an instant action.

### Natural Weaponry (•)

Once he masters this Transmutation, the Promethean need never be without weapons. Spurred by the flow of Pyros, he can sprout claws or fangs in a moment.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

The character spends Pyros and grows claws on his hands or fangs in his mouth. These claws or fangs inflict lethal damage with a +1 dice modifier to the roll for the attack. The effects of this power lasts for one scene.

If he possesses an extra limb, due to a Transmutation such as Hundred Hands (a Pandoran power, see pp. 244-245), this Transmutation may be purchased separately for each extra limb. This Transmutation must be purchased once for each extra limb beyond those that come standard to the human form.

### Blessing of Tethys (••)

With this simple Transmutation, the Promethean gains the ability to breathe water instead of air. She does not develop gills as per the Pandoran Transmutation Sebek's Gift. Rather, she alters the lining of her lungs so that they are capable of processing oxygen alchemically from water as easily as they can from air. Unfortunately, while this Transmutation is in effect, the Promethean sacrifices the ability to breathe air and must spend additional Pyros in order to change her lungs back to normal.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros (plus 1 Pyros to change back)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

While the Transmutation is in effect, the Promethean can breathe only in water. She can breathe salt water as easily as fresh water, but in highly polluted waters, a Stamina roll might be required to avoid sickness.

The Transmutation lasts for as long as the Created desires it to, and it is not uncommon for Prometheans in pursuit of solitude to spend months or even years beneath the seas. Regardless of the desired duration, the Promethean must spend another Pyros point to transform her lungs back to the way they were. Any residual water or air left in the lungs is instantly assimilated during the transformation process, so there is no danger of the Created drowning while changing from one environment to the other. If the character is plucked from the sea and lacks the Pyros to undo the Transmutation, though, she might just suffocate like a fish out of water. Since the Created are not truly alive, they do not suffer any penalties from being deep underwater except at the most extreme of ocean depths, nor do they get the bends from ascending too quickly.

### Redundant Organ (••)

This Transmutation allows the Promethean to shapeshift a portion of his body to serve as either an organ (such as a heart, liver, kidney or spleen) or some other specialized body part (such as an eye, ear or tongue). The Transmutation shares many similarities with a similar Pandoran Transmutation called Hundred Hands, so Prometheans who do not practice the Refinement of Copper sometimes distrust those who exhibit this power. There are distinct differences between the two Transmutations, however. First, the Redundant Organ Transmutation allows only temporary creation (as opposed to the Pandoran's permanent creation of new limbs). Also, this Transmutation confers none of the ill effects associated with its Pandoran equivalent. Finally, the Transmutation is much less versatile than the Pandoran power, as each organ must be purchased as a separate Transmutation.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The specific advantages conferred by various organs are described with the Hundred Hands Pandoran Transmutation on pp. 244-245, except that this power does not permit the creation of actual limbs. The new organ lasts for one scene or until the Promethean wills it to merge back into his body as an instant action.

## Procrustean Shape (•••)

At this level of self-mastery, the Promethean can alter the size and proportion of various parts of her body. She can stretch her legs to lengthen her stride. She can fit her entire body through the smallest of openings. She can even render her entire body pliant and rubbery so as to shrug off deadly blows.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Medicine

**Action:** Instant

If she uses this Transmutation to alter her limbs, the Promethean can alter both matching limbs with one application of the Transmutation. The effects of Procrustean Shape last for an entire scene, during which time the Promethean can activate any of the specifically described effects.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly synchronize her body with her Azoth, causing it to surge painfully through her body and causing Torment to build.

**Failure:** The Created fails to alter her body.

**Success:** For the duration of the scene, the Created gains the power to alter the consistency of her body according to the descriptions outlined under Alterations (below). Although the power is versatile, the Created can use only one of the benefits conferred at one time per activation of this power. For example, if a Promethean has activated this Transmutation and is using the *Long Legs* alteration to improve his Speed, he cannot simultaneously use the *Rubbery Body* alteration to give himself armor unless he first restores his legs to their normal shape as an instant action.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean's malleability is even more prodigious. The specific benefits of an exceptional success are described under each listed alteration. Also, the Promethean can spread his successes among multiple alterations. Therefore, a Promethean with six successes on the activation roll could allocate three of those successes to *Long Legs*, one to *Long Arms* and two to *Rubbery Body*. During the duration of the Transmutation's effect, the Created can reallocate successes between alterations as a reflexive action. The Created gains the exceptional success benefit associated with each alteration only if he allocates at least five successes to that alteration, though.

**Alterations**

These alterations are the most common ones possible with this Transmutation. Other alterations that are in keeping with the general theme of this power may be available at Storyteller discretion (such as stretching one's ears to provide better hearing or modifying one's fingers to improve typing speed).

• *Long Arms:* The Promethean can stretch his arms to reach things that would otherwise be beyond his grasp. Both his arms lengthen by one foot per success. A Created with this alteration who engages in brawling combat gains a +1 Defense bonus, as his reach is much greater than that of his adversary. Alternatively, the Created can choose to lengthen only one of his arms so as to reach some object far beyond his normal grasp. In such a case, the affected arm lengthens by two feet per success, but the Created does not gain the Defense bonus in combat. In fact, he suffers a -1 penalty on any combat-related rolls while the alteration is in effect, due to the logistical problems of fighting with one arm much longer than the other. With an exceptional success, the Promethean's arms grow by two feet per success (or three feet per success if just one limb is lengthened).

• *Long Legs:* The Created causes her thighs and shins to lengthen by one foot per success, adding +1 per success to her species factor when determining her Speed. With an exceptional success, the Created can lengthen her legs by two feet per success, which alters her Speed bonus to +2 per success.

• *Malleable Skeleton:* The Created can temporarily soften his skeletal structure, allowing him to fit his entire body through any opening bigger than one foot in diameter. The Created could easily force his entire body through a narrow ventilation shaft, through which he could travel 10 feet per turn as an instant action, though losing his Defense. If this alteration is used in conjunction with *Long Arms* or *Long Legs*, the affected limbs are completely pliable, able to bend around corners or into impossible positions. With an exceptional success, the Created can fit his body through any opening bigger than three inches in diameter.

• *Rubbery Body:* The Created can alter the structural integrity of his entire body, effectively granting his whole form the consistency of thick rubber. This rubbery body can shrug off bashing damage with ease but is still vulnerable to cutting attacks and fire damage. The Created gains one point of armor per success, applicable against bashing damage only. With an exceptional success, the Created can convert lethal damage to bashing damage while this alteration is in effect.

### Metamorphosis and the Well-Dressed Promethean

Procrustean Shape, along with many other Metamorphosis Transmutations, can be hard on the Created's clothing, which seldom hold up to limbs that can stretch to many times their normal length. The problem of clothing is further exacerbated with higher-level Transmutations such as Shape of the Barghest or Guise of Proteus, both of which make significant changes to the Created's musculature and/or Size. If the Promethean knows the Vulcanus Firebrand Transmutation, he can choose to brand his clothing. Apparel branded in this way is considered a part of the Promethean's body for purposes of Metamorphosis Transmutations, and it can easily change with him. Any clothing to be affected must be relatively close fitting and must touch the Promethean's skin in order to gain this benefit. Therefore, the Created's pants,

underwear, shirt, gloves, hat and socks can be made to change with him. Shoes and overcoats generally do not do so unless the Created is not wearing socks or a shirt so that those items can touch his skin directly.

## Shape of the Barghest (•••)

By altering the length and shape of his limbs, his hands and feet, and his head, the Created can assume the form of a large, mastiff-like creature sometimes referred to as a barghest, after the legendary hellhounds of Yorkshire, England. He might be mistaken for a large hound in dark or dim light, but his unnatural shape is evident in clear light.

**Prerequisite:** Natural Weaponry (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean's legs bend and tighten into a shape similar to those of a large canine. His arms lengthen to match the stride of his legs, while his hands morph into savage paws with wicked claws. The Promethean's lower jaw distends into the shape of a rough canine snout with razor-sharp fangs, and his nose broadens to maximize his olfactory capabilities. The Created loses his opposable thumbs and cannot perform any physical action beyond the physical potential of a large dog. He does, however, retain both his normal intelligence and his capacity for human speech, although such speech is distorted and gravelly.

The Promethean loses his Defense during the turn of transformation. In barghest form, the Promethean gains +1 Strength, +3 Speed (due to a +2 increase to his species factor) and a +1 bonus on all perception rolls. If the Promethean knows any one-dot Sensorium Transmutations (such as Bloodhound's Nose), he can activate them for free while using this Transmutation. Finally, the barghest's claws and bite inflict +1 lethal damage.

If the Promethean knows the Mask Deception Transmutation, he can use it to make himself appear to be a real, natural hound. He does not need to make a separate activation roll for that power or spend the requisite Pyros as long as he brings his knowledge of that Transmutation to bear when he activates this one.

## Guise of Proteus (••••)

At this level of mastery, the Promethean can manipulate his shape to form a variety of solid, inanimate objects. With a thought, the character transmutes the entirety of his body into a viscous material contained only by his skin. From that point, he need only concentrate to stretch his skin into the appropriate shape and texture and then allow the viscous matter inside to solidify in the proper shape.

**Prerequisites:** Procrustean Shape (•••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Wits
**Action:** Extended (5–10 successes; one roll represents one turn of self-moliation)

Once the Created has spent Pyros to activate the Guise of Proteus, she can then mold her body into almost any shape. Her body takes on a grayish color, regardless of her natural skin tone, with a rubbery texture. If she knows the Color of Man Deception Transmutation, however, she can mimic specific colors and textures without requiring a roll to activate that power. As noted in the "Metamorphosis and the Well-Dressed Promethean" sidebar, the Created can transform her clothing with her if she has branded that clothing with the Firebrand Vulcanus Transmutation. Branded clothing will also assume a gray, rubbery appearance, but it can also be freely altered with Color of Man, just like the Promethean's own body.

The Created is limited to shapes with a Size equal to her normal Size plus or minus 2. Therefore, a Created of normal Size (Size 5) could compress her body down into an object of Size 3 or stretch it into an object of Size 7. She cannot change her mass, though. When she makes herself into an object smaller than her normal Size, that object is noticeably heavier than it should be due to her condensed weight. Changing herself into objects larger than her normal Size makes those objects lighter than normal. The Created cannot transform herself into anything with complex moving parts, such as a machine, but she could easily disguise herself as a chair or a potted plant.

Once she has taken a new form, the Created can maintain it for one scene without difficulty. She can continue to maintain it indefinitely at a cost of one additional Pyros per extra scene.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Any accumulated successes are lost.

**Failure:** The Created fails to get enough successes to assume her desired form but can continue to try again the next turn.

**Success:** The Created gets enough successes to assume the desired form. The form must be an inanimate one that fits within the Size parameters, but beyond that, it can be virtually anything the Created can imagine. In this form, she gains one point of armor and converts any lethal damage to bashing. Although she is mimicking an object, she is still a living creature, so she does not gain the Durability of the substance mimicked.

The target number is at least five successes, but this requirement can be increased based on certain factors:

| Successes | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | The object's Size differs from the Created's normal Size by one. |
| +2 | The object's Size differs from the Created's normal Size by two. |
| +2 | The object has a shape that requires some craftsmanship (such as a chair or an abstract statue). |
| +3 | The object has a shape that requires great crafts- |

| | |
|---|---|
| | manship (such as a desk with working drawers, a statute of a recognizable person or an ornate tapestry). |
| +3 to +5 | The object has an unusual texture or mix of textures (such as a chair with soft upholstery, a potted plant with realistic leaves, or a large set of silk curtains). |
| **Exceptional Success:** | The Created can further reduce or increase her Size by an additional point (to a minimum Size of 2 or a maximum of 8). Alternatively, she gains two armor points instead of one. |

## Homunculus (••••)

The Promethean can create a small version of herself to use as a spy or saboteur. Once summoned, the homunculus emerges from the Promethean's belly, tearing a small hole to crawl through which then heals instantly once the creature exits. Once the homunculus frees itself, it lies inert unless the Promethean activates it. The Promethean can project her consciousness into the homunculus as a reflexive action, but when she is not actively animating the creature, it lies inert and helpless.

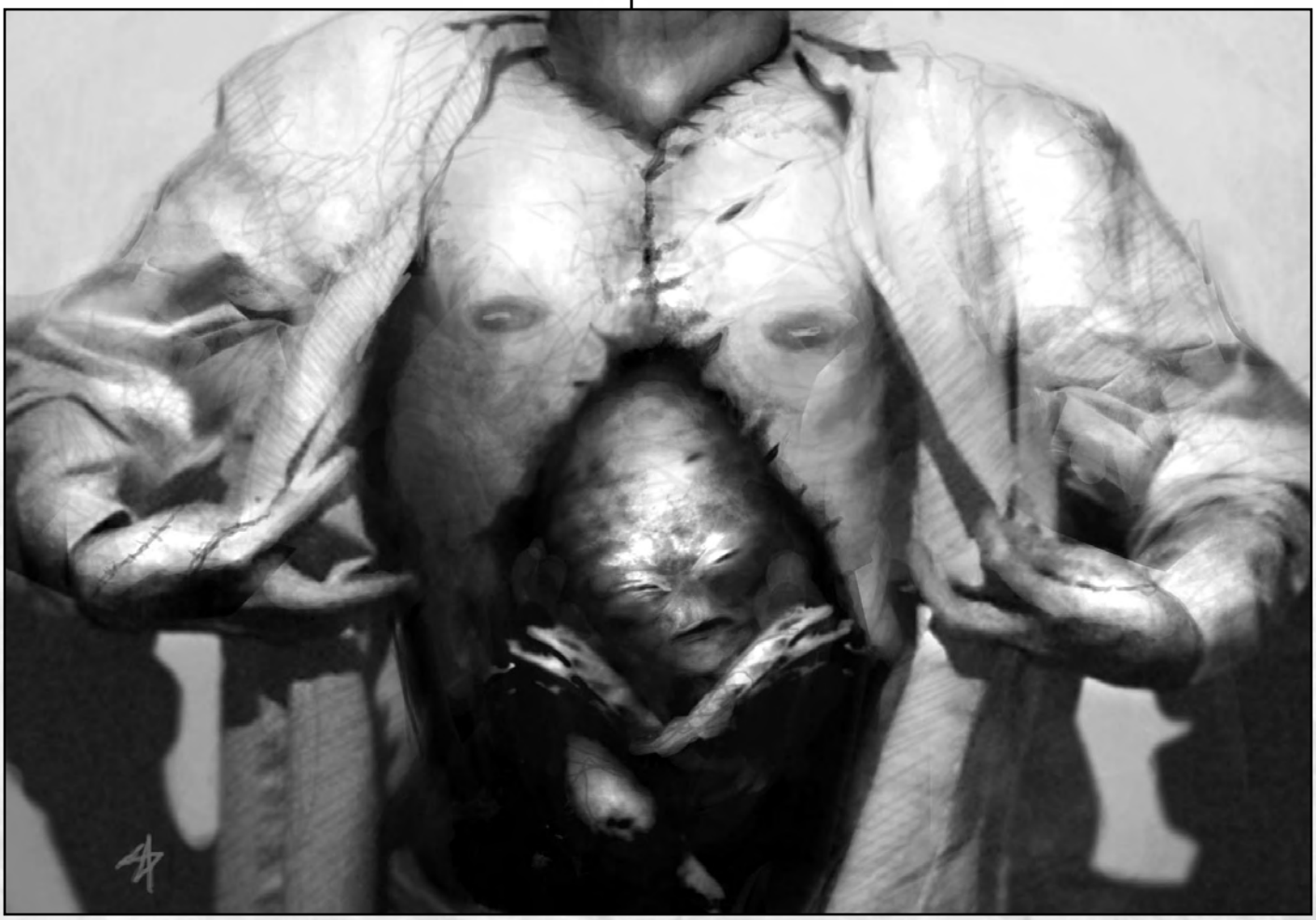
**Cost:** 1 Pyros, plus 1 Pyros per point of Size (maximum Size 2)

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Medicine (or Occult)

**Action:** Instant (plus one turn per point of Size)

If only one point of Pyros is spent, the resulting homunculus is only four inches tall and has Physical Attributes of one dot each. With two points of Pyros, the homunculus is Size 1, its Strength is 1 and its Dexterity and Stamina are equal to half the Promethean's (rounded up). With three points, the creature is Size 2, the maximum Size for a homunculus, and all of its Physical Attributes are equal to half its creator's (rounded up). While it is active, the homunculus has all of its creator's Mental and Social Attributes and all of his Skills, although the creature suffers significant penalties for many Skills due to its small Size. All of its advantages are calculated as per the normal rules.

While she is animating the homunculus, the Promethean can take no action with her own body, and she loses five dice on all rolls that involve awareness of her body's surroundings. Her consciousness automatically returns to her normal body if the normal body takes any damage or if the homunculus is destroyed. If the homunculus is destroyed, its creator automatically suffers a number of points of lethal damage



equal to the Size of the homunculus. (She takes no damage for the loss of a four-inch homunculus.) Alternatively, the creator can command the homunculus to return to her and remerge with her body. As a final option, the Created can will the homunculus to self-destruct, which inflicts bashing damage to the Promethean equal to the homunculus' Size +1, but prevents the more serious damage caused by its being slain by another. While the Promethean is using the homunculus's body, she can use any other Transmutations she knows at the normal Pyros cost.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly channel the alchemical processes within her body, sending her Pyros surging uncontrollably and throwing her vital humours out of balance. The Promethean's player must immediately roll for the character to resist Torment.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to create the homunculus.

**Success:** The Created fashions the homunculus, which climbs out of her belly and drops to the ground, remaining inert until she mentally possesses it. Although the creation of the homunculus is an instant action, it takes one turn to emerge per point of Size it possesses. A four-inch homunculus emerges on the same turn this power is activated. A Size 1 homunculus emerges at the end of the next turn, and a Size 2 homunculus emerges at the end of the third turn. The Promethean can do nothing during the time the homunculus is emerging.

The homunculus can endure for 24 hours unless it is destroyed prematurely. If that time limit runs out and the homunculus expires because it has not rejoined its creator, the creator suffers the same damage as if it had been destroyed.

**Exceptional Success:** The Pyros cost of fashioning the homunculus decreases by one.

### Chimera (•••••)

The Promethean is the perfect imposter, able to mimic any animal or creature, including its texture (fur, bone, etc.). In order to do so, however, he must touch the creature to be copied and activate this power. The chimera is a perfect copy of the form of the original specimen, but it has no trait increases or supernatural abilities associated with the specimen. Nor does it have any of that animal's memories or training. The Created always retains his own Mental Attributes while in the form of the Chimera.

**Prerequisite:** Procrustean Shape (•••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Stamina

**Action:** Extended (5+ successes; one roll represents one turn of shapeshifting)

Once the Created touches a specimen and uses this power to assume its shape, the shape will remain in his mental library for a number of weeks equal to his Azoth. If he spends one experience point during this time, he can make his memory of the shape permanent.

The Created can assume the form of creatures much larger or smaller than himself. If he assumes the form of a larger creature, he must spend additional Pyros at a rate of one point per extra point of Size the desired form has. If the desired form is smaller, the excess quantity of the Created's flesh sloughs off as he assumes the desired shape. In order to regain his former Size, the Created must return to the sloughed-off remains of his body and merge back into it. If those remains are somehow destroyed, the Promethean must devour enough food to enable him to change back — about 50 pounds per dot of Size to be recovered. Assuming the form of an animal with a very small Size is accordingly somewhat dangerous, as the smaller form loses a number of Health dots equal to the lost Size for the duration of the Transmutation. A Promethean can never assume the form of a creature below Size 1 or above Size 10.

The Created cannot assume the exact form of another person unless he also knows the Mask Deception Transmutation. If he does, he can copy a person perfectly by spending an additional Pyros point when the power is activated (and perhaps spending an experience point to add the person's form permanently to his mental library). A Promethean without Mask can simply assume the form of a generic person who resembles the target. That is, the adopted form might have the same race, gender and approximate build as the target, but the Promethean would not be able to fool anyone who knew the target.

A Promethean cannot use Chimera to assume the functional form of a vampire. He lacks the magical power to animate a corpse in that manner. This Transmutation can only allow him to appear as a corpse that resembles the vampire (perfectly so, if Mask is used). If the character uses this power to mimic a werewolf, Chimera permits the Created to assume the form the creature was in when the Promethean touched it, but the Created gains no lupine shapeshifting abilities.

While the Promethean is in the new form, all of the normal advantages and disadvantages of Promethean existence apply to that form. As noted, the Created never gains any additional supernatural powers associated with the creature he copies.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly channel her Azoth, sending her Pyros surging uncontrollably and throwing her vital humours out of balance. The Promethean's player must immediately roll for her to resist Torment. Also, she loses all accumulated successes.

**Failure:** The Created fails to assume the desired form but can continue to try again the next turn.

**Success:** The Promethean assumes the desired form.

The target number needed is five successes. Certain factors might raise this number. One success is added per additional scene in which the Promethean intends to maintain the shape. (He must decide this when activating the power.) One

success is added per difference in Size from the Promethean's natural Size and that of the shape to be attained.

**Exceptional Success:** The Created assumes the desired form, which remains in his library of forms for twice as long as normal without an expenditure of experience points.

### Unassailable Fortress (•••••)

The Created can harden his own natural form, strengthening his skin into a dense armor that can protect him from harm. Unlike Corporeum's Hard Body Transmutation, this power radically alters the Promethean's physical appearance. Most humans react negatively to the sight of his hardened skin.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's body is weighed down without other effect. He suffers a penalty of one die to all Dexterity-based rolls.

**Failure:** The Created fails to harden his structure.

**Success:** Each success on the roll gives the Promethean one point of armor in the form of a super-hard skin for the duration of a scene.

The Promethean hardens his skin for one scene. He gains one point of armor per success. (Unlike Corporeum's Hard Body Transmutation, the total armor points are not limited by the character's Stamina.)

**Exceptional Success:** The Created can maintain his armor for 24 hours, unless he takes an instant action to dissolve it.

## Sensorium

These eminently useful Transmutations give a character superhuman sensory powers. To better understand the world around her, a Promethean undergoing the Refinement of Copper seeks to improve her ability to perceive it. Whereas Metamorphosis focuses on changing oneself internally, these Transmutations reflect the Promethean mystic's evolution through outward observation. Some practitioners find it ironic that they must achieve inhuman insight before they can discover how to become human. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Sensorium come most easily to the Pariahs, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Copper.

### Bloodhound's Nose (•)

This Transmutation gifts the Promethean with the superior olfactory abilities of a canine when she wishes it. Created who hold to urban areas might not enjoy the pungent downside to such a fine sense of smell, but Pariahs commonly seek this power. In the wilderness, the ability to easily hunt down prey is exceeded in usefulness only by the potential to detect those who might wish to do one harm while they are still upwind.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Survival
**Action:** Instant

The Created becomes capable of feats normally beyond human possibility. Like a dog, he may track by sense of smell alone. Doing so uses Wits + Survival and an extended action, with each roll representing about 10 minutes of tracking. In rolls to determine reaction to surprise, the Created character gains two bonus dice unless the Storyteller deems that smell could not play a part for some reason (e.g. the Promethean is facing scentless antagonists or was recently dosed with pepper spray). This Transmutation also aids a character who's fighting blind by smell (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 166).

Once activated, requiring its own Wits + Survival roll, this power remains in effect for 24 hours unless the Promethean desires to end it early (which requires an instant action). Anyone who uses attacks such as tear gas or pepper spray against a Promethean using this Transmutation gains a two-die tool bonus. Dramatic failures on scent-oriented rolls may result in the Promethean following a false trail or alternatively suffering retching nausea.

Because taste and smell are so closely connected, a Promethean who possesses the Discriminating Tongue Transmutation gains one-die bonus to uses of this power.

### Discriminating Tongue (•)

With but a tiny taste, the Promethean can detect the presence of known substances or unrecognized dangerous ones. The Created are remarkably resistant to such trauma, of course, but the most dramatic benefit of this Transmutation is the ability to avoid ingesting poisons by sensing them at the last moment. Clever Prometheans can find many other uses for this Transmutation ranging from alchemical experimentation to forensic investigations or even stealing rivals' favorite recipes.

Discriminating Tongue requires the Promethean to taste the material he wishes to identify, so his tongue must actually touch the substance. Activation of the power is reflexive, but actually tasting a substance is generally an instant action.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Wits + Survival
**Action:** Reflexive

Because taste and smell are so closely connected, a Promethean who possesses the Bloodhound's Nose Transmutation gains one-die bonus to uses of this power.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean is confused by the enhanced tastes and misinterprets them, or the intense taste induces nausea and vomiting.

**Failure:** The attempt to identify the substance via taste fails.

**Success:** The Promethean identifies substances already known to her if they are present in the substance being tasted. Unknown substances are not identified, though their presence is revealed if they are dangerous to the character.

**Exceptional Success:** The character gains insight into the identity of one or more previously unknown ingredients.

**Possible Modifiers:** Multiple attempts (cumulative -1 per successive use in a single hour), content concealed with sugar or spices (-1), distinctive taste (+1)

## Sensitive Ears (•)

When this Transmutation is active, the Promethean improves her hearing to superhuman ranges. She can hear high or low frequencies, and her audible range is improved overall.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, though it might modify the circumstances of other dice rolls

**Action:** Instant

While this Transmutation is active, the Created can hear on frequencies beyond the human range. Dog whistles, sonar and sub-sonic vibrations are all clearly audible. With Storyteller approval, the Promethean can hear things she might not otherwise be able to detect at all, and this Transmutation adds two dice to any perception roll based on normal hearing. The use of this Transmutation does not guarantee that a hearing-based perception roll will succeed. It simply extends the possible times when such a roll might apply and grants a bonus to the roll. This Transmutation also aids a character who is fighting blind by listening (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 166).

Once activated, this Transmutation lasts until such time as the Promethean uses an instant action to intentionally turn it off. If she is subject to particularly loud or shrill sounds during that time, then her player must succeed at a Stamina roll (at a -1 to -5 penalty for extremely loud noises). If the roll fails, the character immediately loses her hearing for the remainder of the scene. If the Stamina roll results in a dramatic failure, the Promethean is struck deaf for at least 24 hours.

## Translator's Eye (•)

While it remains active, this Transmutation allows the Promethean to sense the meaning of any symbols he observes, though complex ideas and cultural concepts foreign to the reader are more difficult to decipher. A Promethean of any Lineage may alter his sight to discern this wisdom, but it comes most easily to those who specialize in the Refinements of the Eremites.

Due to Disquiet or personal preference, some Prometheans are unable or unwilling to safely converse with the inhabitants of regions through which they must pass. The search for meaning drives some alienated Prometheans to look for truth in the written word instead, yet the hunt can lead them to corners of the world where they cannot even speak the local tongue. Additionally, the practice of leaving pilgrim marks is not always united into a cohesive form.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics

**Action:** Extended (1–15 successes; one roll represents one turn of decipherment)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean misunderstands the meaning of the script, leading to potentially dangerous conclusions.

**Failure:** The attempt to discern the meaning of the symbols fails.

**Success:** For the rest of the scene, the Promethean can successfully read the meaning of a set of written symbols that he can clearly view, whether they are scratched into a wall or printed in a book. This understanding circumvents language barriers for the purposes of interpreting the message, but it does not grant any ability to understand the language itself. Additionally, the Transmutation does not allow the Promethean to read more quickly than normal.

As an extended action, this Transmutation requires a varying number of successes depending upon the complexity of the symbols being deciphered:

| | |
|---|---|
| Simple (a short phrase) | 1 |
| Involved (a paragraph) | 3 |
| Elaborate (page or so of material) | 6 |
| Daunting (scientific formula) | 9 |
| Intricate (encrypted code) | 15 |

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean gains an unusual insight into the meaning of the symbols he reads. The Storyteller may take this as an opportunity to introduce hints relevant to the message in the form of flashes of inspiration. Alternatively, she might even allow the player to use the event as an excuse to purchase the Language Merit (see **World of Darkness Rulebook** p. 109) suitable to the script.

**Possible Modifiers:** Message faded (-1 to -2), complicated concept (-1 to -3), hurried view (-1), culture barrier (-1 to -3), alphabetic script (-1), pictographs or ideograms (+1), possesses hints about meaning (+1 to +3)

## Aura Sight (••)

Once she achieves this Transmutation, the Promethean opens her senses to perceive the psychic auras that surround all sentient creatures. Numerous and often-shifting hues and patterns compose these auras, though the strongest emotions or signifiers predominate. Due to the nature of auras, this power can be used as a means of detecting other supernatural entities.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Composure + Empathy – subject's Composure

**Action:** Instant (Note that though this is an instant action, it takes more than just a glance to see the detail in an aura. The character must scrutinize her subject's aura for two full turns, though she gains only one roll to determine success.)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The character gains misleading and inaccurate information.

**Failure:** The character is unable to discern the aura's colors at all.

**Success:** The character perceives a number of colors in the subject's aura equal to the number of successes obtained on the roll. See the "Aura Signifiers" sidebar.

**Exceptional Success:** As per a normal success, but the player can tell the Storyteller what information is most important to his character, and it will be among the first colors sensed.

**Possible Modifiers:** Subject aware of being targeted by power (-1), distractions (-1 to -3), subject drugged (-1), familiar with subject (+1)

## Aura Signifiers

| Condition | Color |
|---|---|
| Afraid | Orange |
| Aggressive | Purple |
| Angry | Bright Red |
| Bitter | Brown |
| Calm | Light Blue |
| Compassionate | Pink |
| Conservative | Lavender |
| Depressed | Gray |
| Desirous/Lustful | Deep Red |
| Distrustful | Light Green |
| Envious | Dark Green |
| Excited | Violet |
| Generous | Rose |
| Happy | Vermilion |
| Hateful | Black |
| Idealistic | Yellow |
| Innocent | White |
| Lovestruck | Bright Blue |
| Obsessed | Bright Green |
| Sad | Silver |
| Spiritual | Gold |
| Suspicious | Dark Blue |
| Confused | Mottled, shifting colors |
| Daydreaming | Sharp, flickering colors |
| Supernaturally controlled | Weak, muted aura |
| Psychotic | Hypnotic, swirling colors |
| Vampire | Aura colors are pale |
| Shapeshifter | Intensely vibrant aura |
| Ghost | Splotchy, flickering aura |
| Magic User | Myriad sparkles in aura |
| Promethean/Pandoran | Fiery aura |

### Nightsight (••)

More attuned to the night than an owl, the Promethean with this Transmutation can see clearly even in complete darkness.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

When this Transmutation is activated, it lasts for the remainder of the current scene unless the Promethean spends an instant action turning it off. During that period of time, the Created can see clearly even in total darkness. While the power is active, however, his vision is colorless like he is watching the world as an old black-and-white movie. Exposure to any strong light source while using Nightsight requires the Promethean to succeed at a Stamina roll or suffer blindness for the remainder of the scene, imposing the rules for fighting blind (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 166).

### Ephemeral Gaze (•••)

Pushing her senses to mystic levels, the Created can see beyond mere material existence. This Sensorium Transmutation is similar to the Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment (see p. 116) but usually much safer. The power grants the Promethean the ability to perceive spiritual objects and creatures that are found in the physical world yet are intangible (also known as being in a state of Twilight). Ephemeral Gaze does not grant the ability to physically interact with ghostly entities nor allow such beings to attack the Promethean if they could not already accomplish such a feat.

**Prerequisite:** Aura Sight (••)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, although perception rolls might be required while using it

**Action:** Instant

Once activated, the effects of this Transmutation endure for the remainder of the scene. This power does not increase the range of the Promethean's vision or allow her to see through solid objects. She would be unable to see a ghost standing behind a solid wall or far in the distance, even if she might notice it at close quarters. Neither does the Transmutation guarantee notice. The Promethean's player would still be required to succeed at perception rolls for the character to discern ghostly beings who are attempting to hide.

### Firesight (•••)

Although its existence predates the modern age, scientifically minded Prometheans describe this Transmutation as simply allowing them to see in frequencies of light below those normally visible to the human eye. This depiction is not entirely accurate, but the Transmutation does seem to perform some detection of infrared radiation.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, though it might modify the circumstances of perception rolls

**Action:** Instant

Once it is activated, this Transmutation lasts for the duration of the scene (unless cancelled with an instant action) and overlays the Promethean's sight with a sort of "infrared vision." She may attempt miraculous sensory feats of perception such as spotting the rapidly cooling footsteps of a fleeing person or detecting the red glow of an attacker waiting just around a corner. The heat of a recently fired gun may be obvious, and the fact that a walking corpse is only room temperature might mark it as something out of the ordinary.

Unlike Nightsight, this Transmutation does not replace ordinary sight. She can see colors when there is light, and unexpected lights do not blind the Created any more than they might normally. In complete darkness, however, she can see only the red shapes of figures whose temperature differs from the black background. (Subjects such as unliving Pandorans or furniture likely remain invisible.) If the Promethean possesses both Firesight and Nightsight, she may activate them both simultaneously as an instant action and pay only one Pyros for the two combined. Should she choose this option, though, either Transmutation will automatically end if she cancels the other.

## Circle of Eyes (••••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can perceive 360 degrees around himself.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Azoth

**Action:** Instant

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created suffers from fractured vision, suffering a -2 penalty to all dice pools that rely on sight (including attacks) for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** The Transmutation has no effect.

**Success:** For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean's vision extends in every direction around him. As long as he can see at all, he can perceive in 360 degrees. It is almost impossible to surprise the Created by sneaking up on him, and he may use his Defense normally against attacks from the rear. Additionally, Circle of Eyes grants him +1 Defense while active.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean gains two bonus dice to all sight-based perception rolls for the duration of the scene.

## Rarefied Senses (••••)

The Promethean sharpens all of her senses such that little escapes her notice. By itself this Transmutation ensures that the Created is abnormally perceptive, yet it may also combine with many other Sensorium abilities to allow truly extraordinary feats of observation.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None, though it does modify Wits-based perception rolls

**Action:** Instant

When this power is active, all of the Promethean's perception rolls become rote actions (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 134–135). This means that whenever her player rolls a perception dice pool, she can re-roll any failed dice once (except during initial chance die rolls).

The Created may activate or deactivate this power at will, without a roll, but doing so requires an instant action. Keeping it active at all times is very useful but can occasionally prove dangerous. If the Promethean suffers a dramatic failure on any perception roll while this power is activated, she is disoriented and effectively unaware of her surroundings until the end of the following turn in addition to the penalties the original dramatic failure result apply.

## Clairvoyant Senses (•••••)

The Promethean's efforts to discover how the world connects allow her to use sympathetic bonds to extend her senses. If she possesses a piece of the target's substance, she can scry upon that target's location. The Created can employ all of her senses through this perceptual connection, allowing her to see, hear, smell and even feel the subject.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Investigation

**Action:** Instant

The Created must have a piece of the subject's physical substance, such as hair, nail clippings or blood from a creature; a leaf, flower or seed from a plant; or a sliver of material from an object.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean's efforts fail, yet the subject feels as though someone is observing him. If he later meets the Promethean, he might realize it was her if his player succeeds at a reflexive Wits + Composure roll. Alternatively, the Promethean's Pyros burns the material, rendering it useless as a future connection.

**Failure:** The Created does not manage to scry upon her target.

**Success:** For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean can sense her target (and only the target) with sight, hearing, smell and touch even if that target is thousands of miles away. She can watch and listen to the target, but the target remains unaware unless he has magical senses that might alert him. This Transmutation does not enable actual contact. The sensation of touch does not count as touching an opponent.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean's senses also apply to an area about five yards in all directions from the target.

**Possible Modifiers:** Previously spied upon target during last 24 hours (-1 per attempt), target of piece unknown "I wonder whose finger this is?" (-2), piece of target out of date (-1 to -3), target well known to Created (+1), can currently perceive target using normal senses (+2)

### Piercing Sight (•••••)

Like Firesight, this Transmutation allows the Promethean to supernaturally observe light other than that normally visible to the human eye. As a supernatural power, this is not an entirely scientific process, but one might best describe the Created as selectively using X-rays to see.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, though it might modify the circumstances of perception rolls

**Action:** Instant

For the duration of the scene, this Transmutation allows the Promethean to peer through material objects within 20 yards. Piercing Sight allows the Created to automatically and reflexively ignore concealment factors such as fog, mist or physical obstructions. This applies to concealment penalties to perception rolls as well.

If the Promethean take one instant action to scrutinize an object or person, and her player succeeds at a Wits + Composure roll, she may add two bonus dice to her next roll to attack that target. She has focused on the interior of her subject and targeted its weak points.

Additionally, with an instant action, the Created can peer through solid material, spotting a stolen artifact stuffed in a coat pocket or identifying a thug waiting behind the door. If the Promethean takes time to specifically look in a set location, the Storyteller may allow the attempt to automatically succeed or may require a perception roll depending upon the circumstances.

The base matter of lead interferes with this power. Objects with lead may provide concealment or completely block Piercing Sight.

## Vitality

Vitality Transmutations permit the Promethean to channel his Azoth through his body, toughening muscle and sinew to increase his physical capabilities. These physical augmentations can occur in a number of different ways but all generally affect the Promethean's Strength and/or Stamina Attributes in some manner. The mechanism for these augmentations lies within the Promethean's connection to and command over her own bodily humours. By shifting the Created's primary humour away from an even distribution throughout the body and concentrating it within the muscles, she can achieve a remarkable physical acumen.

Any application of Vitality triggers an obvious and visible response in the Promethean's body, above and beyond merely displaying her natural disfigurements. The precise nature of this physical response is determined by the Created's Lineage. Frankensteins channel yellow bile into their muscles, resulting in jaundiced skin that is hot to the touch and leaves an oily residue behind. The Tammuz channel black bile, which causes the skin to turn pale and become cold and clammy to the touch. A Tammuz employing a Vitality Transmutation is visible by his frosty breath regardless of ambient temperature. Osirans perspire profusely when using Vitality Transmutations and can quickly become drenched with sweat. The skin of a Galateid glows with a ruddy hue as blood engorges her muscles, occasionally passing through the skin as a light blood sweat. Finally, the mystical Ulgan secretes small quantities of ectoplasm through his skin, which leaves sticky handprints on whatever he touches.

The path of the Titans lends itself to the bodily alterations wrought by these Transmutations. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Vitality come most easily to the Titans, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Iron.

### Fist of Talos (•)

Freed from the concerns that a mortal would have for her living body, a Promethean with this Transmutation can channel the power of her primary humour into her arm or leg, making it into a blunt instrument particularly destructive against inanimate objects.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant, or reflexive if the Promethean sacrifices her Defense

On the turn following activation, the Promethean can strike a material object (not a living creature) and ignore one point of the object's Durability per dot of Stamina she has. If the Created fails to inflict any damage at all on the object she strikes, however, she herself suffers a number of dice of bashing damage equal to the Durability of the object she attacked.

Normally, the Promethean must spend one turn channeling Pyros before she can strike her target. She can choose instead to spend the Pyros and strike in the same turn, but doing so causes her to lose her Defense that turn.

### Might (• to •••••)

There are five Might Transmutations, ranging from one to five dots, and each must be learned in sequential order beginning with the one-dot version. With the one-dot version, the Promethean need only spend one Pyros to gain a +1 bonus to his Strength for the duration of the scene. Each additional level of the Might Transmutation adds another +1 bonus, up to a maximum bonus of +5 at the five-dot level. Regardless of how many levels of the Transmutation are taken or what bonus is gained, the Promethean needs to spend only a single Pyros to activate all of his Might Transmutations for the entire scene. Once active, additional Strength dots are considered normal Strength for purposes of Transmutations that multiply the Created's normal Attribute, such as Shoulders of Atlas or Titanic Vigor (pp. 150-153).

(**Note:** A Promethean who purchases an extra spleen with the Hundred Hands Pandoran Transmutation — see pp. 244-245 — cannot gain that power's +1 Strength benefit in conjunction with any Might bonuses. He gets one or the other, but not both at the same time.)



## Shoulders of Atlas (•)

The Created augments his musculature by channeling his Lineage's humour. For brief periods, he can lift prodigious weights.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant, or reflexive if the Promethean sacrifices her Defense

Beginning on the turn following activation, the Promethean's Strength is doubled for purposes of determining how much he can lift. Lifting attempts follow the normal rules outlined on p. 47 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook.** The increased Strength applies only to lifting attempts and lasts for only a maximum number of turns equal to the Promethean's Stamina. The Transmutation ends instantly if the Promethean puts down the object he has lifted or if he takes any action other than lifting the object or holding it aloft. The Promethean cannot throw any object so heavy that it requires this Transmutation to lift. For that, he needs the Titan's Throw Transmutation described on p. 151.

Normally, the Promethean must spend one turn channeling Pyros before he can use this power. He can instead choose to spend the Pyros and heft the object in the same turn by sacrificing his Defense.

## Battering Ram (••)

The legends of Frankenstein's monster convey vivid images of the great creature tearing through heavy doors as if they were flimsy cardboard. A Promethean with this Transmutation can inflict heavy damage on structures such as walls and doors by channeling Pyros through his entire body and flinging himself at the offending barrier.

**Prerequisite:** Fist of Talos (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

Mechanically, this Transmutation functions like Fist of Talos except that the Promethean's entire body is affected. With this version, however, the character can attack physical objects (including doors and walls) in the same turn he activates this Transmutation without any loss of Defense. See the rules for breaking down doors on p. 137 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The Promethean ignores one point of the door or barrier's Durability per dot of Stamina he has. If the Created fails to inflict any damage on the door, however, he himself suffers one point of bashing damage and his player must roll Dexterity + Athletics for him to avoid knockdown.

A Promethean with this power can also hold a door against intruders with far more effectiveness than normal. See the rules for holding back a door on p. 137 of the **World of**

**Darkness Rulebook**. By using this power, the Created can add one point to the Durability of the door per dot of his Stamina, for the purposes of keeping others from breaking the door down.

## Bludgeon (••)

When the lonely monsters found among the Prometheans are moved to defend or avenge themselves, the results can be terrifying. With this Transmutation, the Promethean unleashes her unholy might against a living target, pouring her vital humour into her limbs to pummel her enemies into submission.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

When making a Brawl or Weaponry attack against a living and/or moving target, the Promethean can spend one Pyros to stun the victim for a single attack. Unlike the normal rules for such attacks (p. 167, **World of Darkness Rulebook**), however, she does not need to exceed the target's Size to gain this benefit. If even a single point of damage is inflicted, the victim loses his next action. The Promethean loses her Defense in the turn in which she activates this Transmutation, and she cannot engage in an all-out attack in the same turn when she uses Bludgeon.

## Vault (••)

The hated and despised among the Created have many enemies, and it is not uncommon for one to find herself on the run, leaping from rooftop to rooftop in desperate flight from an angry mob. This Transmutation sends the power of the Promethean's vital humours coursing through her legs, improving both her speed and the distance of her running jumps.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean spends one Pyros, doubling her Strength for purposes of calculating her Speed. In addition, her running jump distance is now effectively tripled. (Convert feet to yards when figuring how far she jumps.) For example, she can normally cover a distance in feet equal to her Size of 5, plus four feet per success. If her player rolls two successes, the character jumps 13 feet. Using Vault, that distance becomes 13 *yards*, or 39 feet. This benefit applies only to running jumps. Hyperion's Flight can aid his standing leaps.

## Titan's Throw (•••)

As noted previously, a Promethean normally cannot effectively throw an object which she can only lift by virtue of the Shoulders of Atlas Transmutation. This Transmutation negates that limitation.

**Prerequisite:** Shoulders of Atlas (•)
**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

There is neither a Pyros cost nor a roll associated with Titan's Throw. Once this Transmutation is purchased, the Promethean simply gains the ability to hurl any object that has lifted using the Shoulders of Atlas Transmutation. Doing so uses the normal throwing rules outlined on pp. 67–68 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

## Thunderclap Blow (•••)

As the Created sends her vital humours surging through her mighty sinews, her muscles bulge and her tendons stretch until, in one mighty rush, she brings her hands together with a clap that echoes like thunder. The Promethean can clap her hands together with such force that it can shatter glass, deafen bystanders and even knock her enemies off their feet.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Strength
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created throws her vital humours out of balance. She suffers one point of bashing damage.

**Failure:** The Created fails to channel her humour properly and achieves no effect.

**Success:** By clapping her hands together, the Created sends out a shock wave with several effects. First, any glass within a number of yards equal to the roll's successes shatters from the force of the blow. Second, anyone present whose Stamina is less than the user's Azoth is deafened for the remainder of the scene. Finally, the player of any character within a number of yards equal to the Promethean's Azoth must also roll Dexterity + Athletics and get more successes than were rolled for the Promethean. If they don't, their characters are knocked down.

**Exceptional Success:** Anyone deafened remain so for a full day before their hearing returns.

## Hyperion's Flight (•••)

Where Vault augments the Promethean's Speed and running jumps, Hyperion's Flight improves his standing leaps to equally prodigious levels. The Promethean channels his humours through his legs. Flesh tightens into iron-strong knots as the Promethean crouches down and then leaps high into the air.

**Prerequisite:** Vault (••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

When the Transmutation is activated, the Promethean can *triple* his range for standing high jumps or standing broad jumps. Normally, the character can jump one foot vertically per success gained on a Strength + Athletics roll or two feet horizontally per success on a standing broad jump (as described on pp. 66-67 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Thus, with two successes, the Created could jump two feet

vertically or four feet from a standing broad jump. With Hyperion's Flight, the player converts feet to yards when figuring how high the Created can jump. In the previous example, the character could jump two *yards* (six feet) vertically or four yards (12 feet) horizontally. This Transmutation can be used only on standing jumps. If circumstances require the Promethean to make a running jump, he must use the Vault Transmutation, as the application of vital humours is distinctly different between the two actions.

## Rampage (•••)

With this Transmutation, the destructive power of the Promethean is like that of a raging giant. The Promethean can now unleash devastating attacks against physical objects and barriers, smashing through such impediments with ease.

**Prerequisite:** Battering Ram (••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

This Transmutation functions like Battering Ram and Fist of Talos but further augments the Promethean's destructive potential. By spending one Pyros, the Promethean can ignore a number of Durability points equal to her Stamina x 2 when attacking inanimate objects. Also, even if the Promethean fails to inflict any damage on the object or door, he will suffer neither knockdown nor any damage from the failed attempt.

## Striking the Gates of Tartarus (•••)

Like the Titans of old, the Promethean can strike against the Mother Earth that bore her. The Created must strike the ground, either with her hands or with a mighty stomp. As she does so, she channels her vital humours through the blow, causing the ground to shake from the fury of her attack. All those nearby risk being flung to the ground from the force of the earthquake.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly channel her humour, and the force of the blow damages her instead of her surroundings. The Created suffers one point of bashing damage.

**Failure:** The Created fails to activate the Transmutation.

**Success:** The Created strikes the ground with such force that it shakes violently. Players of every character within a number of yards equal to the Created's Azoth must immediately roll Dexterity + Athletics and get more successes than the Promethean's player rolled, lest their characters suffer knockdown.

Everyone who suffers knockdown will automatically also suffer one point of bashing damage. Everything within range of the Transmutation which has a Durability rating less than 2 suffers one point of Structure damage. Glass shatters, wooden doors splinter, and wall hangings crash to the floor.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success except that persons rolling to avoid knockdown suffer a -2 penalty on the roll, and items with a Durability rating below 3 suffer Structure damage.

## Defenestrating Blow (•••)

Not only does the Created possess titanic strength, he knows how to use it effectively against those who would challenge him. The Created can almost effortlessly knock his adversaries to the ground, if not through the nearest window.

**Prerequisite:** Might (••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

The Created spends one Pyros to reflexively activate this power in conjunction with a single blow. He must sacrifice his Defense in order to use the Defenestrating Blow, though. If the Promethean inflicts *any* damage to the target, the target's player must roll Dexterity + Athletics and get more successes than were rolled for the Promethean, lest the target be knocked down. If the target's roll is unsuccessful, she is flung backward or to the side (in a direction of the Created's choosing) one yard per point of damage. She lands flat on the ground, as per the knockdown effect (p. 168, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). If being flung through the air throws her against a wall, she suffers one point of bashing damage for every three yards she covered before impact. If she falls into an object, she knocks it over if her Size exceeds that of the object. If the object's Size exceeds her own, she takes damage as per being knocked into a wall.

If the target is knocked toward the edge of a cliff or a potentially fatal environment (into a furnace, for instance), her player can make a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll to grab the edge before going over or to fling herself aside at the last minute.

## Titanic Vigor (•••)

The phenomenal power of the Shoulders of Atlas Transmutation is only a prelude to the true majesty of Promethean strength. Like Atlas of Greek myth, a Promethean who masters this Transmutation can bear the weight of the world on his shoulders.

**Prerequisite:** Shoulders of Atlas (•)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

The Promethean spends one Pyros, allowing him to triple his Strength for purposes of determining how much he can lift (for a maximum number of turns equal to his Stamina). Unlike Shoulders of Atlas, the Promethean can freely channel Pyros to activate this Transmutation in the same turn he lifts his burden without sacrificing Defense.

Once the Transmutation is activated and the Promethean's Strength is increased, all lifting attempts follow the normal lifting rules outlined on p. 47 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The increased Strength applies only to lifting attempts. The Transmutation also ends instantly if the Promethean puts down the object he has lifted or takes any action other than lifting an object or holding it aloft. The Promethean cannot throw any object so heavy that it requires this Transmutation to lift. For that, he needs the Weapon of the Gods Transmutation.

## Cyclopean Rage (••••)

Cyclopean Rage improves on the Striking the Gates of Tartarus Transmutation, increasing its range and destructive power, although its Pyros cost is also higher.

**Prerequisite:** Striking the Gates of Tartarus (•••)
**Cost:** 2 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly channel her vital humour, and the force of the blow damages her instead of her surroundings. The Created suffers one point of bashing damage.

**Failure:** The Created fails to activate the Transmutation.

**Success:** The Created strikes the ground with such force that it shakes violently. The player of every character within a number of yards equal to (the user's Azoth x 20) must immediately roll Dexterity + Athletics and get more successes than the Promethean's player did to avoid knockdown. Everyone who suffers knockdown automatically suffers one point of bashing damage. In addition, the successes rolled on the activation are used as dice in a new roll, on which each success inflicts one additional point of bashing damage to the victim.

Everything within range of the Transmutation which has a Durability rating less than 3 suffers one point of Structure damage.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success except that players rolling to avoid knockdown suffer a -3 penalty on the roll, and items with a Durability rating below 4 suffer Structure damage.

## Stupefying Blow (••••)

The Created's puissance is now so great that she can render her enemies insensate with a well-struck blow against them.

**Prerequisites:** Defenestrating Blow (•••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

The Created spends one Pyros to reflexively activate this Transmutation in conjunction with a single blow. If a successful Brawl attack made by the Created inflicts *any* damage on the target, the target's player must roll Stamina + Athletics lest the character be knocked unconscious for one turn per point of damage suffered. Even the roll succeeds and the target remains conscious, he is stunned and loses his action for one turn.

## Pulverizing Blow (•••••)

The Created's hands carry death for all who oppose him.

**Prerequisites:** Might (•••), Stupefying Blow (••••)
**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

There is neither a Pyros cost nor a roll associated with this Transmutation, which confers a permanent benefit on the Created. Whenever the Created has activated a Might Transmutation and enters hand-to-hand combat against another, his blows are so powerful that they inflict lethal damage instead of bashing, if he so wishes.

## Weapon of the Gods (•••••)

As noted previously, a Promethean normally cannot effectively throw an object which she can only lift by virtue of the Titanic Vigor Transmutation. This Transmutation negates that limitation.

**Prerequisite:** Titanic Vigor (•••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

There is neither a Pyros cost nor a roll associated with Weapon of the Gods. Once this Transmutation is purchased, the Promethean simply gains the ability to hurl any object that she lifted with the Titanic Vigor Transmutation, using the normal throwing rules outlined on pp. 67–68 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

## The Wrath of the Hecatonchire (•••••)

The flame that burns within the Created is godly in origin — the Divine Fire made manifest. What few stop to realize is that some gods are angry gods, and the vengeance of an angry god is a terrifying thing. The Wrath of the Hecatonchire is the ultimate expression of the Refinement of Iron's destructive potential. A sufficiently powerful Promethean unleashing this Transmutation can conceivably destroy a village or a small town, and the shock waves of his power can be heard from miles away.

**Prerequisites:** Cyclopean Rage (••••), Might (•••)
**Cost:** 3 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics
**Action:** Instant
**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created fails to properly channel her vital humours, and the force of the blow damages her instead of her surroundings. The Created suffers one point of lethal damage.

**Failure:** The Created fails to activate the Transmutation.

**Success:** The Created strikes the ground with such force that it shakes violently, triggering an earthquake that can be felt for miles around. The player of any character near the epicenter within (the user's Azoth x 100) yards must immediately roll Dexterity + Athletics (at a -3 penalty) and get more successes than the Promethean's player did, lest their characters be knocked down. Every character who suffers knockdown automatically suffers one point of bashing damage plus one point per success rolled on the activation.

Also, everything within the immediate range of the Transmutation that has a Durability less than 4 suffers one point of Structure damage. *All* objects within (the user's Azoth x 10) yards take Structure damage equal to the successes rolled. This damage ignores the first three points of Durability an object has. Poorly made buildings might collapse, and the foundations of better-made homes will crack. In addition to the normal knockdown damage inflicted on nearby people, individuals might take additional damage if they are caught within collapsing structures or in front of exploding windows.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success except that players rolling to avoid knockdown suffer a -5 penalty on the roll, and items with a Durability below 5 suffer one point of Structure damage. At close range, damage ignores the first four points of Durability an object has.

## Vulcanus

The study of this Transmutation involves the search to understand the Inner Fire that burns within every Promethean. As such, the changes wrought by the advancements of the Created range from shaping natural fire to manipulating pure Pyros. The path of the Ophidians requires pushing one's body's alchemical capabilities to the limits, and experimentation with the Divine Fire is implicitly included. Other Prometheans may take up study of these Transmutations, but the changes wrought by Vulcanus come most easily to the Ophidians, due to their affinity for the Refinement of Quicksilver.

### Firebrand (•)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can mark a subject, physically burning symbols into it or mystically branding it. Scribing blackened or charred symbols with his finger, the Created can leave warning signs for those who follow. Alternatively, he can etch a fiery sign that is invisible to those who cannot see auras or Pyros. In any case, the Promethean must be able to touch his intended canvas. (See "Touching the Target," p. 119.)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, though the Created must successfully touch his target within one turn of activation.

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean can brand an object or creature by activating this Transmutation and touching it just long enough to scribe a quick symbol with his finger. If he chooses to create a physical sign, that sign is scorched onto the surface as if branded by a red-hot iron. The symbols scribed must be something he could write in a single turn. If the surface is not flammable, then it is stained with blackened soot instead. The brand does not burn deeply enough to cause any Health points of damage, though it is painful and will likely alarm creatures who are afraid of being burned. A physical brand fades away at a normal rate, via time and weather or human interference.

Alternatively, Firebrand may be used to mark the subject with a mystical brand that has special effects. The brand can be perceived only by the Promethean who inscribed it, by someone using the Sense Pyros (see p. 155) or Aura Sight (see pp. 146-147) Transmutations, or by similar beings with similar supernatural senses. Until the brand is removed (by the original brander or another Promethean using this power, or via similar supernatural means), the Promethean can easily target the branded creature or object with certain powers. He can animate it using Animate Firetouched (see p. 156) or locate it with the Sensorium Transmutation Clairvoyant Senses (p. 148). (The brand replaces the need for a physical link to the subject in the latter Transmutation.) The Created can always recognize his own brands, but another Promethean requires a successful Wits + Azoth roll to determine that a specific brand matches some other brand he has previously observed.

If the creator of the brand wishes to call others' attention to it, he can infuse it with a dim radiance, such that any Promethean who comes within 20 yards of it might sense its presence with a reflexive Wits + Composure roll. Many Ophidians do so to alert other Prometheans to the pilgrim marks they leave behind them in their travels.

### Sense Flux (•)

In their pursuit of the Divine Fire, Prometheans can become sensitive to all its forms. Those with this Transmutation can sense the presence of Flux and pinpoint the location of an active use of it. Searching for latent Flux requires intentional effort, while active uses of Flux in the area might alert the Created even if she is otherwise occupied. The maximum range of detection is 200 yards.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Wits

**Action:** Instant or reflexive

If the Created is actively seeking the presence of Flux sources (such as a Pandoran), she must take an instant action, and her player must make a successful roll. Alternatively, if someone within range of the Promethean activates a Transmutation or Pandoran power that uses Flux energy, the player may reflexively roll to sense this.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created gets an erroneous result, sensing Flux where there is none or pinpointing the Flux to the wrong location.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to determine whether Flux is present.

**Success:** If she is actively searching a specific object or creature, the Promethean senses the Flux (if any) within her chosen subject, and a Flux-based effect that is normally invisible to the mortal eye is visible to her sight. If she is just generally scanning the area, she detects the presence of the strongest source of Flux and its general direction. If active Flux use within range caused the roll, then she senses that Flux is being used and the general direction of the source.

**Exceptional Success:** The Created knows the exact location of the directional Flux she has detected, or if she had already scrutinized a specific subject, she also knows about the strongest other Flux source in range (provided there is one).

**Possible Modifiers:** Source is visible (+1), more than one source (-1 to -3), Pandoran is dormant (-3)

## Sense Pyros (•)

In their pursuit of the Divine Fire, Prometheans can become sensitive to all its forms. Those with this Transmutation can sense the presence of Pyros or Azoth and pinpoint the location of an active use of it. Searching for latent Pyros or Azoth requires intentional effort, while active uses in the area might alert the Created even if she is otherwise occupied. The maximum range of detection is 200 yards.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Azoth

**Action:** Instant or reflexive

If the Created is actively seeking the presence of Pyros or Azoth sources, then she must take an instant action and have her player make a successful roll. Alternatively, if someone activates a Bestowment, Transmutation or Pandoran power that uses Pyros energy or Azoth within range of the Promethean, the player may reflexively roll to have her sense this. Because this power senses Azoth, it may detect the activation of a Transmutation that uses Azoth as part of its dice roll, even if that power does not expend any points of Azoth or Pyros.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Created gets an erroneous result, sensing the Divine Fire where there is none or pinpointing to the wrong location.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to determine whether Pyros or Azoth is present.

**Success:** If she is actively searching a specific object or creature, the Promethean senses the Pyros (or Azoth) within her chosen subject, and a Pyros-based effect that is normally invisible to the mortal eye is visible to her sight. If she is just generally scanning the area, she detects the presence of the strongest source of Pyros or Azoth and its general direction. If active use within range caused the roll, she senses that it is being used and the general direction of the source.

**Exceptional Success:** The Created knows the exact location of the directional Divine Fire she has detected, or if she had already scrutinized a specific subject, she also knows about the strongest other source in range (provided there is one).

**Possible Modifiers:** Source is visible (+1), more than one source (-1 to -3)

## Electroshock Recharge (••)

Electricity is intimately tied to the Pyros that animates Prometheans. It is not the Pyros itself, but it *conducts* this force, much like water conducts electricity. Prometheans who possess this Transmutation may draw Pyros from electricity although they have no ability to manipulate electrical energy.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None (Azoth + Stamina for defensive use)

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean uses this power by exposing himself to mundane electrocution, but instead of healing Health wounds (see "Electroshock Therapy" on pp. 164-165) he can choose to gain Pyros instead: one per every two points of *bashing* damage absorbed.

This power can be used as a defensive instant action against an successful Electrification Transmutation attack. Roll Azoth + Stamina; one Health point of damage per success is absorbed and converted to a point of Pyros. Any excess damage is inflicted as Health wounds. Using a defensive instant action means that the Promethean loses his action for the turn. If he has already acted in the turn, he loses his action for the following turn. He can use this defensive action to react to an attack that occurs earlier than his position in the Initiative roster.

## Share Pyros (••)

This Transmutation grants the Promethean the ability to channel his Pyros into another Promethean, or even a Pandoran, with a touch.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per point granted

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean can replenish the Pyros points of another Promethean or a Pandoran using his own Pyros. He may transfer any number of points (up to his normal limit each turn, based on his Azoth), but the recipient cannot possess more points than her maximum Pyros capacity.

Branded throngs (see "Alchemical Pacts" on pp. 165-166) can exchange Pyros, but only one point per scene to each member. (That is, the Created could give one ally one Pyros and another ally one Pyros, but he can't give a single ally two Pyros.) If member one of the Branded throng has this power, he can act as a funnel, accepting other throng members' Pyros gifts and channeling them to other members in any combination. This power allows him to temporarily accept more Pyros points into his pool than he can normally hold (only if they come from a throng member), as long as

he shares those points within the next 10 turns. He cannot spend these excess points himself. If he doesn't share them, he loses them after 10 turns. Even this temporary sharable pool has limits, however (in case two players who each have this power want to use it to move massive amounts of Pyros): he can't hold an excess amount more than his Azoth.

### Animate Firetouched (•••)

As Pyros is the animating divine force, the Prometheans often experiment with it. This Transmutation allows the Created to invest a physical object with a bit of her Pyros, thereby granting it limited animation but no will of its own. As such there is no risk of the animated object running free as a Pandoran, although some Pandorans might seek to steal the item.

**Prerequisite:** Firebrand (•)

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None, though the animated object's actions might require rolls.

**Action:** Instant

The Promethean can animate an object she has mystically branded with the Firebrand Transmutation, telekinetically controlling its movements. To activate this power, the Promethean must touch the intended object (see "Touching the Target," p. 119), whose Size cannot exceed her Azoth. For each additional point of Pyros that the Promethean spends, she may increase the maximum affected Size by +5. Once animated, the Created may control the item's actions for the rest of the scene, as long as it is within sight and not more than 200 yards distant. The object acts on the Promethean's place on the Initiative roster, and causing the object to act costs the Created his own action for the turn. If he chooses not to have the object act for a turn, it remains still until he directs it again. The Storyteller should require appropriate rolls of the Promethean to use the object for various actions. To strike someone with the object, roll Strength + Weaponry. Firing an animated gun at someone requires Dexterity + Firearms. Fine manipulation (such as picking a lock with animated lock picks) uses Dexterity + Larceny. If the object is broken, the animation ends immediately.

### Fire Grasp (•••)

The Created do not fully understand the Divine Fire, but they can manipulate it nonetheless. In pursuit of the Refinement of Quicksilver, some Prometheans have discovered how to transform Pyros into mundane flames. For a brief time, the Pyros surges forth and surrounds the Created's hand with fire. This is a frightening power to those who do not understand it, and even its possessors occasionally come to bad ends if they are careless.



**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

When this Transmutation is activated, one of the Promethean's hands is surrounded by fire with the intensity of a torch. If he does not touch anything before then, the flames endure until the end of his next turn. Successfully touching a target (see p. 119) automatically inflicts two points of lethal damage (aggravated for Prometheans) as the fire leaves the hand of its creator. Flammable materials may be set alight, causing further damage at the Storyteller's discretion. While attached to his hand, the fire does not harm the Promethean. Flames that result from the attack can subsequently harm him, however, so the wise user will take care. Armor does not provide Defense against the roll to touch the opponent, but it may absorb some of the damage. (See "Fire" on p. 180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

## Crucible of the Will (••••)

Exploration of the mettle of humans suffering great hardships is of great interest to those Prometheans who seek Mortality. The steps of the Pilgrimage are often difficult, and those Created who study the Refinement of Quicksilver sometimes learn to transform the raw ore of the Divine Fire into a will of iron.

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

This Transmutation allows the Promethean to transform two points of her Pyros into a single Willpower point. Use of this power cannot grant her Willpower points in excess of her maximum capacity.

## Steal Pyros (••••)

With this Transmutation, the Promethean can take Pyros from another Promethean or a Pandoran. This theft of power requires the Created to touch the victim, but it is difficult to resist once the Divine Fire is set in motion.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Strength + Presence + Brawl vs. subject's Resolve + Azoth
**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

The Promethean must successfully touch the target (see p. 119) in order to reflexively activate this power. If she touches the target, her player spends a point of Pyros and rolls for the effect of the Transmutation. The target may reflexively contest the effect.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Promethean loses another point of Pyros, which is given to the intended victim instead.

**Failure:** The Promethean fails to steal any Pyros.

**Success:** The Promethean can transfer one point per success on the activation roll, up to a maximum per turn equal to his Azoth. This theft may continue from turn to turn as long as she continues to touch the victim, and as long as her successive activation rolls succeed, until she has transferred all of the stolen points. This power can be used successfully only once per scene against the same target.

**Exceptional Success:** The Promethean may use this power against the target again during the same scene.

## Drain Pyros (•••••)

This Transmutation functions as the Steal Pyros power but the Promethean can affect a target at a range.

**Prerequisite:** Steal Pyros (••••)
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Presence + Brawl vs. subject's Resolve + Azoth
**Action:** Contested

This Transmutation has a range of 20 yards and requires an instant action to activate. Because it operates at range, no roll is required to touch the target. Except as noted herein, the power otherwise acts exactly like the Steal Pyros Transmutation. The Promethean can keep using this power against the same target per turn until she fails an activation roll, after which she cannot use the power against the same target again that scene.

## Sublimate Phlogiston (•••••)

Students of the Refinement of Quicksilver say that the relation between fire and Pyros is more than figurative. The ability to transform one into the other is possibly the greatest achievement of the Vulcanus Transmutation.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** Azoth + Stamina
**Action:** Instant

The Promethean uses this power by exposing himself to fire and having his player roll Azoth + Stamina. For each success gained, one Health point of fire damage is negated and instead transformed into a point of Pyros. Any excess damage is inflicted as *aggravated* Health wounds.

This power can be used as a defensive instant action against a successful attack by an opponent using fire. Roll Azoth + Stamina; one Health point of fire damage per success is absorbed and converted to a point of Pyros. Any excess damage is inflicted as *aggravated* Health wounds. Using a defensive instant action means that the Promethean loses his action for the turn. If he has already acted, he loses his action for the following turn instead. He can use this defensive action to react to an attack that occurs earlier than his position in the Initiative roster.

Sublimate Phlogiston does not protect the Promethean from any Torment triggered by the fire.

# CHAPTER THREE
# THE PROMETHEAN CONDITION

The strange Dr. Brine. He reminds me of another doctor I once knew, whose name I will not write here.

"My creator theorized that constructing me, her first and only progeny, was a final task that would to bring her Saturnine Night to a close. I don't know if her supposition proved correct, for after tutoring me in the basic facts of my existence, she exited for parts unknown. She did bequeath me considerable wealth and resources. It's her insight that I'm most lacking.

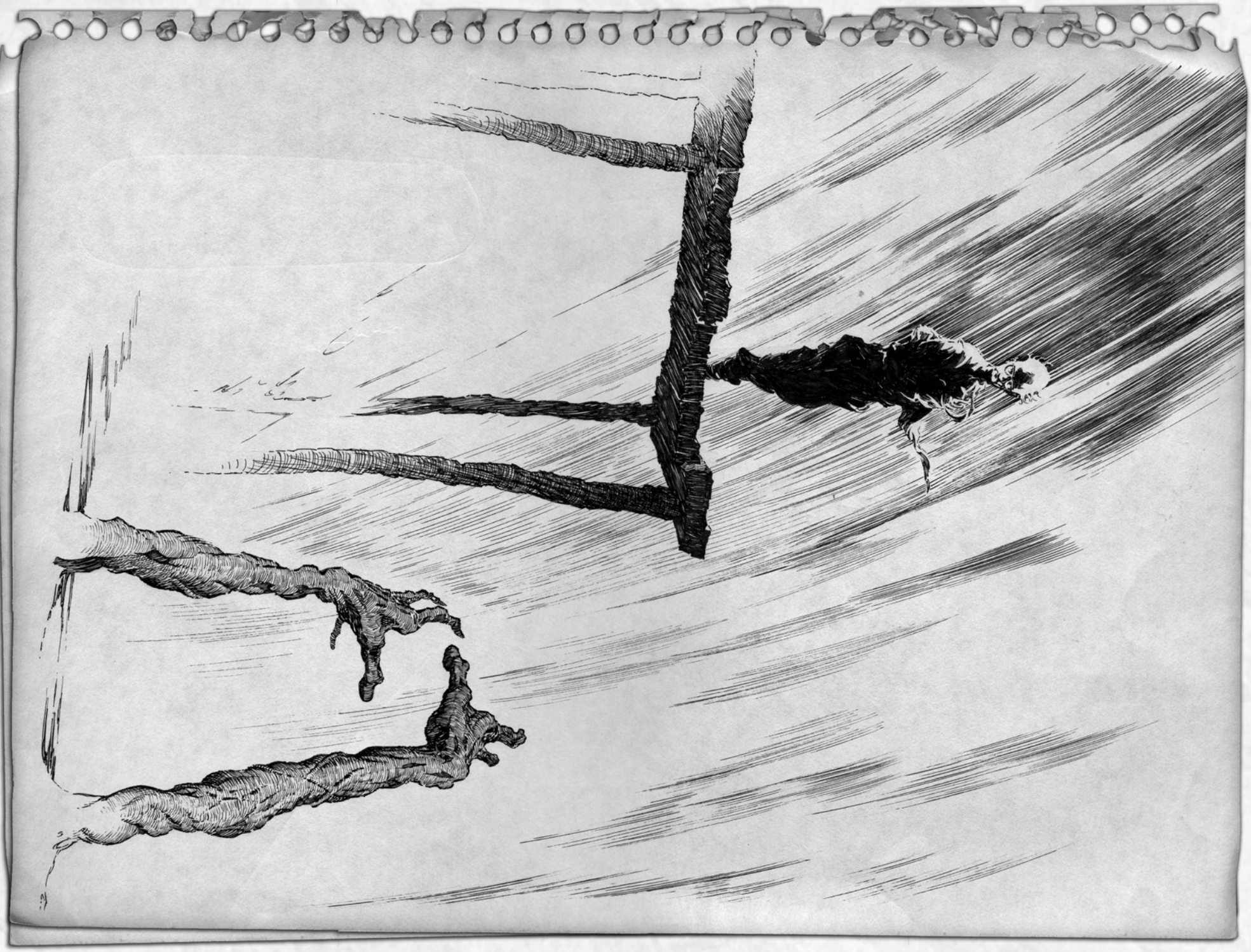
"The first time I performed a Transmutation, I felt disoriented and sick to my stomach. For that brief moment, I apprehended that everything, that anything, can change. Nothing is permanent. Not life. Not death. Not self. I think that this is why the mortals suffer Disquiet in our presence. The flame we carry is one of change and transformation, and an intuitively perceived threat to the illusion of stability that they hold so dear.

"Is it possible to enlighten them, then, and take away this fear of change? I made several halfhearted attempts, but it never worked. I could never overcome their fear.

"And then they killed me.

"When I came back, I knew I'd found the transformative experience I'd been seeking. Immersion in the great river that flows between the life and death gives one a new perspective. I became interested in mapping out the arteries of that black watercourse, that torrent of light, to make its navigation less traumatic. I've sent many an explorer to scout the way. They always return transformed somehow, reluctant to speak of what they saw. But I usually can glean some useful bit of data.

"I choose my scouts carefully and prepare them diligently. To date, none has gained sufficient insight from the experience to overcome the Disquiet and understand that I am not so different from them. But one day my map will be complete. And everything will change."





"Oh, mother, I have no heart, and I live outside the world and have no share or part in it; its joys and sorrows alike pass me by and are never mine;" and she started on her way.

"No heart!" the woman said sadly. "Ah, poor lassie! Then the world must indeed be a riddle of which you have forever missed the answer."

—Lucy Lane Clifford, "Outside the World"

Human beings have an innate understanding of each other that transcends any artificial notion of race, gender, nationality, culture or even family. The shared experiences of the human condition, the needs and emotions and underlying concepts of morality, link all humankind with undeniable bonds of familiarity. These bonds might not always be easy to articulate, but every human being can recognize them instinctively and equate them to his own experiences. Thus can even bitterest enemies find commonalities and achieve, if nothing else, respectful boundaries that allow them to coexist in this shared world.

Underpinning this unspoken understanding human beings have of one another is a subtler, stranger caring *for* one another that is unique in the World of Darkness. Perhaps it comes as a result of knowing that humanity is surrounded at all times by devious, intelligent predators with only the faintest mockeries of the virtues to which all humanity aspires. Perhaps humankind is instinctively aware of the insidious background pulse of the invisible world of bizarre and terrible spirits, which is separated from the flesh-and-blood world by a tenuous membrane too thin to see or feel. Such factors as these herd and corral human beings in cities, suburbs and towns with little but each other and sheer numbers to protect themselves from that which abides in the darkness.

To be human is to share in this understanding and this caring. When a woman is pregnant, it is the instinct of the group to congratulate the baby's father and dote on the expecting mother, in reverence for the act of creation in spite of the world's manifest dangers. When that baby is born, every person who looks on it — especially the mother, whom the child caused such terrible pain — is fascinated and charmed by its tiny, innocent helplessness. The intensity of this feeling fades as children grow from precocious explorers to despondent adolescents to scared and bitter adults, but it never goes away entirely. In many cases, it grows stronger again as the person's twilight years approach, because not only must his survivor wisdom be preserved, but he retreats into a new stage of innocent helplessness. Most human beings dread this inevitable, doomed stage of their lives, so the instinct grows within them as they approach it to do what they can to alleviate its symptoms in the elders they most respect or revere.

Of course, not every human being acts on this instinctive caring for and understanding of his fellow human beings. The World of Darkness would be an incalculably safer and more idyllic place to live if that fantasy were the reality. Most human beings are engrossed in their petty concerns, worried that everything they have worked for or been given will be taken from them somehow if they don't protect themselves. (It is arguable that this fear stems from the unspoken sense that humans are prey to unrecognizable horrors, but making such a case would be fruitless in a world largely ignorant of its own dangers.) As a result, human beings insulate themselves from one another behind walls both imaginary — national borders, state lines, city limits — and physical — behind fences, within their homes, and even in separate rooms. Nonetheless, humanity's instincts can override even this insular, self-absorbed fear, enabling human beings to work together, protect one another and treat each other the way they themselves wish to be treated. There are still plenty of examples of people who are cruel, hateful, heedless of humankind's greater good and unwilling to compromise their own boundless self-interest, but such people are usually labeled "inhumane." In time, regardless of how far their self-serving ambition might push them, they eventually find themselves shunned by the rest of human society, especially as their baffling, frustrating behaviors grow more extreme.

Yet, while this caring and understanding instinct is common across every stratum of human society, it does not extend *beyond* human society to the monstrous hidden societies of the World of Darkness. Regardless of their feelings and attitudes toward each other, human beings universally shun outsiders. And rightly so, as these outsiders are the selfsame predators that force human beings to form groups and rely on one another in the first place. In many cases, the most successful predators have learned to mimic humanity and blend in among it to an extent, but human beings are not completely fooled by even this tactic. In fact, the more closely a predatory outsider resembles humanity, the more uncanny its presence becomes in the eyes of its prey. Whether it resembles humanity only by design




— as in the case of werewolves — or it was once human but is so no longer — as in the case of vampires — the understanding, caring instinct that humanity shares no longer applies to it.

Unfortunately, such is the lot of the Promethean.

While not predators of humankind exactly, the Created are nonetheless outsiders. No matter how they reach out, they find themselves shunned and isolated from humanity — as a result of either showing human beings exactly what superhuman feats all Prometheans are capable of or revealing the grotesque disfigurements to which all Prometheans are subject. Few humans can truly understand the Promethean experience when they are confronted with it so directly, and all humans instinctively fear what they do not understand. This fear drives them to desperation, for which the only cure is the offending Promethean's destruction or banishment.

Some humans need not even see the inhumanity of the Promethean condition firsthand to feel this fear stealing over them. The longer a Promethean remains in or near a community, the more his mere presence unsettles that community and taints the very land around him. This phenomenon, referred to as Disquiet, has the potential to tear communities apart, but what it most often does is force the community to bond in pursuit of one shared goal — driving out the source of the Disquiet. Prometheans are well aware of this effect they have on people and on the land, and the tragic, inevitable result comes as no surprise to them. It pains these once-human creatures that they inflict such misery on humanity, especially since it always comes back to them with karmic malice, forcing them to remain on the move until (or unless) they finally manage to complete their Great Work of alchemical transformation. Before such a day can come, however, the Promethean must endure an existence of not only great power and potential, but of unending torment as well.

# Innate Supernatural Properties

To be a Promethean is to be a cursed outsider, set aside from the humanity of which one was once a part, often for no better reason than that an older monster craved companionship. Even for those who were created with the least ignoble of intentions, it is cold comfort to realize that one's own suffering was a cruel, calculating necessity of a more refined monster's journey to spiritual purity. And that's to say nothing of those rare Prometheans forged from the raw elements by a misguided human demiurge fascinated by the feverish delirium of the Divine Fire.

Yet for all the injustice heaped upon a pitiful being by the unwanted Promethean existence, such beings do enjoy tangible benefits (if "enjoy" is not too strong a word). A large part of what sets Prometheans apart from humankind is that Prometheans are simply better creatures than humans in many ways. They are stronger and tougher, and they are no longer subject to many physical frailties that every son and daughter of Adam must endure. They have even broken free of the shackles of death once, and in each of them rests the ability to do so again. Granted, most Prometheans know of no more noble or worthwhile goal than the attainment of Mortality. Nonetheless, the unique properties of their condition make them much better able to withstand the rigors of the pursuit of that goal than any human being would be.

Of course, attempting to point any such thing out to a Promethean would be sure proof against wisdom.

Every Pilgrimage is fraught with hardship, and devastating setbacks along the way are natural aspects of the Promethean condition. For all their seeming power, Prometheans are subject to certain physical limitations and frailties from which even pitiful, ignorant humanity is free. The Promethean psyche is also subject to certain flaws and weaknesses that never cease to work against them unless they are actively fighting to perfect their Great Work of transformation. Compounding that issue, Prometheans deeply disturb and unsettle humanity, which makes relying on human beings for companionship or help on the Pilgrimage out of the question. Finally, something within the Promethean body taints the land around it, making the landscape nearly uninhabitable. This taint spreads whenever the Promethean tries to settle down, and in a particularly bitter stroke of divine cruelty, it recedes once the Promethean moves on.

## The Benefits

### Physical Benefits

The purified Azoth hardens and fortifies the body of every Promethean, melting away the impurities of human frailty. This Fire also sustains the Created, and though it might dim and gutter from time to time, there is little in this world that can truly extinguish it. Yet it is only the energy of this undying flame that animates the dead flesh of a Promethean's body. As such, Prometheans aren't really "alive," the way human beings understand the term. The Azoth that animates them and keeps them going doesn't spark the same organic processes that human beings call life, nor is it subject to the same circadian rhythms that human bodies maintain.

#### Flesh and Blood

As Prometheans are not exactly alive, their flesh and vital fluids don't provide the same benefits to supernatural creatures that would normally partake of such things. For instance, the hot, viscous electrochemical "blood" that

permeates a Promethean's body and conducts the Pyros within him would not be as nourishing to a vampire as a living human's blood is. In order for a vampire to gain one Vitae by drinking from a Promethean, he would have to drink twice as much of this conductive fluid as he would blood — which does not taste especially good. Doing so causes as much damage to the Promethean as it would to a human from whom the vampire had drunk two Vitae. Fortunately, Prometheans are not subject to a vampire's Kiss, so they can more easily defend themselves from Kindred predation. Likewise, a hungry werewolf who consumes a Promethean's flesh in order to regain Essence must eat twice as much per point of Essence as he would have to eat from a normal human or wolf (that is, inflicting two points of damage per Essence).

Vampires and werewolves do not receive half-Vitae or half-Essence if their attempts at consumption yield them only one point of damage before the Promethean stops them. Any half-points left over are lost, although the Promethean still suffers the damage. Also, in addition to gaining Vitae or Essence by stealing a measure of the Promethean's life force, the vampire or werewolf who does so is immediately infected with Disquiet without the chance of a roll to resist. (For more on how Disquiet affects supernatural creatures, see "Other Victims of Disquiet" on p. 172.)

Prometheans enjoy all of the following physical benefits:

**Superlative Endurance**

Prometheans do not require as much sleep as humans, nor do they tire as humans understand the sensation. Lactic acids simply don't build up in their muscles as they exert themselves physically. As such, Prometheans can go for 48 hours before they must contend with possible fatigue penalties. If they are forced into sleep after staying awake for too long, they only sleep for four hours, plus one per six-hour period they spent awake in excess of 48 hours. (See the rules for "Fatigue," pp. 179–180 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Prometheans are just as subject to boredom, apathy or ennui as human beings are, though, so they don't necessarily spend 24 hours every day pushing ever onward. Yet when they focus their attention, they are capable of monumental endurance.

Related to this capacity is the Prometheans' prodigious physical durability. If a Promethean is attacked and damage is inflicted, the wounds in no way slow the Promethean down or hinder his activities. Similar to the three-dot version of the Iron Stamina Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 113), the Promethean ignores wound penalties, regardless of how much damage he has suffered. A Promethean, however, need not meet that Merit's Stamina or Resolve prerequisite, nor is he subject to that Merit's drawback since he has no need to sleep. The benefit is just part of being a Promethean. This is not to say, though, that Prometheans never feel pain. It might not slow them down, but they most certainly feel pain from their injuries. More often than not, it serves only to infuriate them.

In fact, no matter what damage is inflicted on Prometheans, they are nigh unstoppable. If they suffer more bashing wounds than they have Health dots, they need not have their players roll Stamina for the character to resist falling unconscious. Suffering subsequent bashing damage converts previous bashing wounds to lethal damage as normal, but the Promethean just keeps on fighting or fleeing or whatever he was doing. Even when lethal damage fills up a Promethean's Health boxes, he still does not fall. He just… keeps… going. Further lethal wounds in a Health track full of lethal damage convert previous lethal damage into aggravated damage, and only when the Promethean's Health boxes are completely full of aggravated damage is the Promethean finally dead. (Sort of… More on that in a moment.)

Even a Promethean, however, cannot casually shrug off large amounts of aggravated damage. As wounds mount and multiply, the sheer mass of a Promethean's muscle tissue is shorn off or burned away. The Divine Fire within compensates for this damage at first (hence the lack of wound penalties), but there is only so much even the Divine Fire can do when it has no matter to work with. As such, aggravated damage inflicts extreme and debilitating deterioration on a Promethean's body when that damage represents a buildup of lesser trauma. The result of such damage might only look gruesome at first, but eventually it physically destroys the Promethean's body. Typically, a Promethean can suffer a number of points of aggravated damage equal to his Stamina before he suffers the damage's most adverse effects. At that point, when he has only a number of Health boxes equal to his Size remaining, he loses limbs (or the use of them) and finally begins to wear down.

The average Promethean has a Size of 5, so the last five points of aggravated damage he can suffer before death represent this extreme deterioration. Each of the first four points of this damage is enough to destroy one limb (or enough of one limb to make the whole thing functionally useless), and the final point of damage is the one that destroys whatever's left over. The order of the loss of limbs should be appropriate to the specific circumstances, and even with called shots to the head or torso, the damage must fill all of the Promethean's Health boxes before the Promethean is dead. Should the character lose a foot or leg to such damage, he is considered to have the Flaw: Lame. Should he lose both legs, he is considered Crippled. If he loses one hand or arm, he gains the appropriate Flaw, and if he loses both arms, the problems of the One Arm Flaw are compounded considerably. (These Flaws are described on p. 219 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) If a character loses all of his limbs to extreme deterioration but retains his last lingering Health box, he remains conscious and aware but completely unable to move (and likely in excruciating pain). A Promethean's body heals wounds naturally at the same rate as humans do.

(**Note:** As a general rule, this extreme deterioration should come into play only when wounds in a Promethean's last five Health boxes are upgraded from lethal damage to ag-



gravated damage. While still deadly, aggravated damage that is inflicted directly should not cost the Promethean the use of his limbs unless the Storyteller sees a pertinent need for such extreme deterioration in order to tell a better story.)

Yet even death is not necessarily the end for a Promethean, as has been hinted at a couple of times now. The first time a Promethean dies as a result of having his Health boxes completely filled up with aggravated damage, his Azoth flares dramatically and reanimates him once again. This flare occurs at some point within 24 hours of the Promethean's death, usually as soon as the threat from whatever killed him has subsided. In bringing the Promethean back to life, the flare consumes every dot of the character's Azoth except one, meaning that only those Prometheans with two or more dots of Azoth can cheat death in this way. When a Promethean's Azoth brings him back to life, he is completely healed of all damage and he retains all of his traits, except Azoth, at their previous levels. (His missing or destroyed limbs do not magically reattach themselves, however.) The only catch is that a Promethean's Azoth can flare thus only once. Cheating death more often than that requires the Revivification Bestowment. (See pp. 116-117.)

**Superlative Constitution**

Just as the Divine Fire strengthens a Promethean's body, making it hardy and nearly indestructible, so too does it fuel the Promethean's body and purify it from within. As such, a Promethean need not worry about eating three square healthy meals every day, nor need he be especially choosy about what he consumes. Furthermore, since the Divine Fire uses up every bit of whatever substance the Promethean eats, the Promethean need eliminate no waste matter. He need only fuel the Fire with appropriate substances and make sure it gets plenty of oxygen to keep burning (meaning that, yes, Prometheans must be able to breathe, just as humans must).

As for what constitutes an appropriate substance to be consumed, however, a Promethean can pick just about any organic substance on Earth. When a Promethean is created, the character receives the benefits of the Iron Stomach Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 113) at no cost. He receives a +2 bonus to Survival rolls when he must forage in the wild, and he can eat pretty much anything he can fit in his mouth and chew up — from roots to bugs to moldy animal carcasses. The obvious proviso to this benefit is that the Promethean must eat *something* in order to keep the Divine Fire fueled. If the character goes for more days than he has dots of Stamina or Resolve (whichever is lower), he gets hungry and the Torment within him builds. (See the section on hunger under "The Suffocating Rise of Torment" on pp. 180-181 for more information.) The character does not suffer the effects of deprivation (per pp. 175–176

of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) until a number of days equal to Stamina + Resolve, though. Even then, his hunger does not make him any more susceptible to disease, as being malnourished normally would. A Promethean need eat only one "meal" a day to keep his Inner Fires fueled, but whatever he eats, he must fill his stomach. He doesn't technically need to drink water or other liquids to survive, but he suffers no ill effects for doing so.

The nauseous diet some Prometheans are forced to consume would be enough to do most humans in, but Prometheans are made of sterner stuff. They don't so much metabolize the disgusting things they eat as have the Divine Fire that drives them break those things down completely. As such, any toxins or deleterious substances are unlikely to affect them. All Prometheans have a free version of the two-dot Toxin Resistance Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook** p. 113), which functions largely the same way and has the same drawbacks. Where the Promethean constitution differs, though, is that a Promethean need not meet the Stamina prerequisite, and the dice bonus on the Stamina + Resolve roll to resist harmful substances is twice as big (i.e., it's +4).

Finally, no matter what a Promethean eats, no matter how long he goes without eating, and no matter how long he suffers exposure in the wild, he is unlikely to ever get sick. The Divine Fire supercharges Promethean immune systems, and foreign bodies find it very difficult to survive and cause harmful effects within. Just as with the Natural Immunity Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 113), the Promethean enjoys a dice bonus on Stamina rolls to resist infection, sickness and disease, but this bonus is a +4 modifier. The reanimated flesh of a Promethean can still get sick, but only the most serious diseases have any chance of taking root. Consequently, those most severe diseases are the only ones Prometheans are likely to be able to transmit to other beings.

Prometheans do not suffer the debilitating effects of aging. Their strength does not wither, their senses remain sharp, and their minds are unclouded by age. They do, however, perish after having lived a long life span, even if they have not yet attained Mortality by the time they reach this age. Most Prometheans believe that their standard span is an average of 100 years, after which their internal Fire goes out. This is not a set figure; some die earlier, some later. If they are lucky enough to attain Mortality before age takes them, they begin mortal life as if they were in their 20s. A long life awaits them thereafter, barring the sort of fatal happenstance that can take human life in the normal course of living.

Two things are known to counteract this ticking biological clock: undergoing resurrection or the Revivification Bestowment, and the practice of going to the wastes. In the case of the former two powers, the Promethean seems to add more years to his allotted time, although none can say with any measure of surety just how many. Most believe that a decade can be gained this way, sometimes longer. When a Promethean goes to the wastes, retreating from the world, his aging clock reverses as he loses Azoth dots. Some say that it is through this method that Victor Frankenstein's monster, the Progenitor of the Wretched Lineage, still lives. Others say that there is no aging clock for Progenitors, and that even Osiris himself might still live, should he have avoided Mortality for millennia.

## Supernatural Benefits

In addition to their physical benefits, Prometheans enjoy certain supernatural properties that reflect the way in which Promethean bodies conduct and interact with the Divine Fire.

**Electroshock Therapy**

Electricity is intimately tied to the Pyros that animates Prometheans. Electricity is not Pyros itself, but it *conducts* this force, just as Prometheans of the Frankenstein Lineage understand electricity to be representative of the classical element of fire. Electricity channels the Divine Fire, and Promethean flesh uses this Divine Fire to repair damage and animate inert flesh. Therefore, a Promethean who exposes himself to electricity heals damage he has suffered rather than suffering more damage. It takes one point of bashing "damage" from electricity to heal one point of bashing damage the Promethean has suffered. Two points of electrical bashing "damage" heal a single point of actual lethal damage, and three points of electrical bashing "damage" heal one point of actual aggravated damage. As usual, the least severe wounds heal first.

For example, say a Promethean with seven Health dots has been tortured and chased by an angry mob of citizens and police (all of whom are suffering from Disquiet) down into a nearly deserted subway station. He manages to escape the mob, but not before suffering a total of three points of aggravated damage, two points of lethal damage and a single point of bashing damage as a result of their mistreatment. When the coast is finally clear, he kneels by the third subway rail and grabs it with both hands. Per p. 178 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, such a source of electricity inflicts 10 points of bashing damage automatically per turn. In the first turn, the first point of electrical "damage" heals the Promethean's single bashing wound. The next four points of electrical "damage" heal the Promethean's two lethal wounds (for a cost of two points of electrical "damage" each). That leaves five points of electrical "damage," enough to heal one of his three points of aggravated damage. Healing one aggravated wound takes three points of electrical "damage," leaving two. In the next turn, the Promethean maintains contact with the third rail and sucks up another 10 points of electrical "damage." He has two points of aggravated damage left over, so six of those 10 points of electrical "damage" go toward healing them. That leaves four leftover points of electrical "damage."




When "damage" from electricity is left over in a turn (as happened in both turns in the preceding example), that energy discharges around the Promethean's body in livid, crackling arcs that make him look like a living Tesla coil. This energy can harm a non-Promethean being who happens to be touching the Promethean at that point, or it can heal a Promethean who happens to be touching him. (If more than one person is touching him, the excess electricity is divided evenly between them in each turn.)

When a Promethean touches a source of electricity, his muscles do not contract convulsively like a normal living being's muscles would do. As a result, his player need not make a reflexive Strength roll for the character to pull away. One downside to using electricity to heal oneself thus, however, is that doing so reveals the Promethean's disfigurements. His disfigurements become visible to any witness as soon as the first point of damage is healed, and they remain on display all throughout the Promethean's contact with the source of electricity. When the Promethean breaks contact with the source, his disfigurements remain visible for a number of turns equal to his Azoth.

### Electrical Damage

For convenience sake, the amount of "damage" various sources of electricity inflict is reprinted here from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

| Source | Damage |
|---|---|
| Minor; wall socket | 4 (B) |
| Major; protective fence | 6 (B) |
| Severe; junction box | 8 (B) |
| Fatal; main line feed/subway rail | 10 (B) |

A bolt of lightning inflicts the same amount of "damage" as a subway rail, but it lasts for only one turn.

**Transhuman Potential**

Every Promethean can stoke the intensity of his Azoth to boost an Attribute for one turn. To gain this boost, the Promethean's player reflexively spends one Pyros per +1 Attribute dot boost. *Any* Attribute can be boosted in a turn, within the bounds of reason. A Promethean can boost his Intelligence thus, for instance, but doing so won't put facts in his head that he's never learned. It would help him remember something or figure something out from the evidence at hand, though. The effects last for only one turn, but any Attributes can be boosted in any combination and even beyond trait maximums. The only limit is that a Promethean can spend only as many Pyros in one turn to achieve his transhuman potential as he has dots of Azoth.

**Alchemical Pacts**

Like a living, intelligent force, the Divine Fire in one Promethean calls out to those around it. Prometheans who are inclined to listen to this call can unite their disparate Azoths in mystical, alchemical pacts with one another. Doing so forms the Prometheans into a special throng, and each member is marked by a Pyros Brand. Through this Brand, and the pact it represents, Prometheans are able to channel Pyros between one another and to dispel some of the worst effects of Disquiet. It also helps them resist some of the psychological pressures and tribulations of the Promethean condition. What's more, when a Promethean is within 20 yards per dot of Azoth he possesses of a member of his throng, he can reflexively transmit one point of Pyros to that member, once per scene. A Promethean need not be within the range dictated by his own Azoth to receive transmitted Pyros, but the one doing the transmitting must be within a range dictated by her Azoth. When this transmission occurs, the Pyros Brand of the transmitter and receiver flares briefly with eldritch evanescence. (The Share Pyros Transmutation on pp. 155-156 allows for more advanced Pyros transmission.)

Also, when members of an alchemical pact are in the same vicinity, the Azothic radiance they emit is determined only by the highest Azoth rating of the present members of the Branded throng. (See the "Azothic Radiance" sidebar in Chapter Four, p. 222, for more information.)

Yet being part of a Branded throng can also exacerbate certain symptoms of the Promethean existence. The key factor is the Lineage of each Promethean in the throng. For instance, when a Promethean's lingering presence poisons the landscape and causes a Wasteland effect (see "The Wasteland" on pp. 174-179), being alchemically bonded to Prometheans of the same Lineage vastly extends the range over which the effect spreads in a given amount of time. Having members of the same Lineage in a throng also penalizes a Promethean's roll to resist Torment (as shown under "The Noble Resistance of Torment" on pp. 181-182). Making a pact with Prometheans of the same Lineage is not entirely harmful, however. Once per scene, when a Promethean uses one of his Transmutations (or his Bestowment), he enjoys a +1 bonus on the activation roll for each member of his throng whose Lineage is the same as his. The player chooses which single Transmutation or Bestowment roll in a scene receives this benefit.

Forming an alchemical pact with Prometheans of different Lineages (or more Prometheans with different Lineages than the same Lineage, at least) is generally safer. The roll for a Promethean to resist Torment enjoys bonuses based on the number of Prometheans in the throng with a different Lineage from the sufferer, for instance. When a Promethean's player rolls his Azoth in a contested roll against a victim's Resolve + Composure to determine whether Disquiet takes hold (see p. 169), the Azoth roll suffers a penalty equal to the number of Branded throng members of different Lineages from the Promethean's. (This penalty makes it easier for the victim in question to resist Disquiet.) Also, the amount of time

it takes for the aforementioned Wasteland effect to spread and fully take hold in an area increases by a factor related to the number of members of the throng whose Lineages are different from the Promethean's.

Of all these pact-based effects, only the willing transmission of Pyros is subject to the distance between members of a throng. The rest of the bonuses and penalties always apply to all members of the pact for as long as each member exists and remains a member of the throng, regardless of how far apart they are.

The process of forming the alchemical pact involves an extended action and the expenditure of Pyros. One Promethean from among the prospective members is considered the primary actor of the group task, as per the rules for teamwork on p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. His player makes a Presence + Occult roll each turn, collecting successes toward a target number equal to one success per member of the throng. A five-member throng requires five successes. The players of the fellow throng-members also make the same roll, but their successes add dice to the primary actor's dice pool. Once the target number has been achieved, each member to be admitted spends one Pyros.

Once the pact is complete, each member's Azoth flares and burns a symbol into his flesh. The primary actor chooses this symbol, although the rest of the throng presumably has consented to it. Most often, the symbol is a well-known pilgrim mark or alchemical sign that communicates something of the throng's intent. If no symbol is predetermined, the Divine Fire creates a random image on its own. It might not look like anything recognizable, but others will read some meaning into it, similar to how Rorschach tests reveal certain images to people.

When new members are inducted into an existing Branded throng, one current member must be the primary actor on a new series of rolls, with a target number equal to the current membership plus one per additional applicant. Each applicant must also participate in this new extended action, although only one member of the existing throng (the primary actor) need be involved. The new members gain the same Brand as the existing members.

An alchemical pact lasts for as long as a Promethean wishes to bear the Brand. If he chooses to disassociate with the pact's fellow members, he can do so by spending one Pyros as an instant action to erase his Brand. This instant action cannot be reversed, although he can accept a new Brand from the same throng should he ever wish to rejoin (and if they'll take him back). Once he has quit a pact, the character loses all the benefits and drawbacks of that pact.

A throng can choose to expel a member from the pact if all the other members agree. If the outcast refuses to willingly erase his Brand, all the other members can force it to dissolve by spending one Pyros each as an instant action.

## The Downside

As should be apparent, the Promethean existence is seldom fun, and it is never a game to the Promethean who's going through it. For all the power and potential the Azoth grants, it also inflicts some serious drawbacks to which only Prometheans are subject. The chief among these drawbacks is simple isolation and its concomitant loneliness. Although their flesh was once human, Prometheans all become feared, dangerous outsiders as soon as the Azoth gives them new life. This status inevitably forces them to the outskirts of human civilization, sometimes beyond, and inspires them better than anything else to strive toward their Great Work of transformation. The Promethean condition also confers a pair each of specific physical and psychological drawbacks that make existence and the pursuit of Mortality very difficult.

The physical drawbacks are the easiest to categorize and understand. First of all, fire is ruinous to a Promethean's flesh. Mundane fire supercharges the Divine Fire within a Promethean just as electricity does, but where electricity heals a Promethean, fire inflicts aggravated damage. Whether this extreme damage comes as a result of some not-yet-understood alchemical principle or is simply a divine punishment for the original sin of accepting the stolen Divine Fire from Prometheus in mythic times is unknown. It doesn't especially matter to a Promethean who's experiencing the phenomenon anyway.

A more unsettling physical drawback to being a Promethean is the inheritance of certain grotesque disfigurements. All Promethean bodies are the results of alchemical manipulations of dead flesh, and evidence of this fact can be grotesque and terrifying to behold. Frankenstein's monster, for instance, was literally stitched together from mismatched corpses, and the Prometheans of the monster's Lineage are all likewise constructed. Ulgan Prometheans must be torn apart and reassembled before the Azoth does its work, and the bodies of the Riven show signs of this mistreatment. (Each Lineage's specific disfigurements are discussed with its introductory write-up, beginning on p. 99.)

Normally, a Promethean's Azoth alters his flesh in such a way as to disguise these disfigurements. For all intents and purposes, the Promethean appears to be perfectly normal to casual inspection (or at least much more normal than he should look). When a Promethean channels his Pyros to perform superhuman feats, however — such as by spending it to achieve his transhuman potential, or when he activates a Transmutation — the alteration runs like melting candle wax, and the disturbing truth is momentarily revealed. This revelation is reflexive, even if the power in question is not, barely long enough to register in a witness's mind. The disfigurements are revealed as if by a flash of lightning, and when that flash is over, the Promethean looks entirely normal again. The only time these disfigurements remain revealed for any longer is when a Promethean dies, which can completely baffle a police investigator or a medical examiner, or when he uses exposure to electricity to repair his wounds. (In the latter case, the disfigurements remain




visible for the duration of the exposure after his first wound is healed, and then for a number of subsequent turns equal to his Azoth.)

Prometheans can see through the Azoth's illusion of life and identify a Promethean by his disfigurements, even when he isn't spending Pyros or performing a feat that would reveal them. They can also see his normal features as well, in a sort of double vision, so they know what mortals believe the Promethean looks like.

Even when a witness can't literally see a Promethean's disfigurements, however, the refined Azoth burning within the Promethean's dead flesh unsettles and disturbs the witness on a subconscious level. He might not be able to understand why the Promethean makes him feel this way, but the sensation doesn't go away quickly, and it's very difficult to withstand for long. This effect, which Prometheans call Disquiet, varies by the Lineage of the Promethean inflicting it, and when it becomes pronounced enough, it can spread through a community like an illness. (More information about Disquiet follows in the next section.) Making matters worse, this effect emanates from the Promethean into the very landscape around him. This effect is known as the Wasting of the Peaceful Refuge, or the Wasteland effect for short, and an examination of it begins on p. 174.

Finally, all of these downsides, combined with rampant mistreatment and sheer frustration with the unfairness of it all, take their toll on the Promethean psyche. The more beaten down and discouraged he gets when life doesn't go his way, the more distressed the Promethean becomes. Like mythical Prometheus himself suffering on the stone, the Created writhe in unending psychological anguish. They refer to this suffering as the Endless Torment of Prometheus — or the Promethean Torment, or just plain Torment. The driving heat of the Azoth inside a Promethean dims as his Torment builds, and letting that Torment overwhelm him forces him to fall back on the baser impulses of the humours of his personality. A more in-depth examination of the nature, causes and effects of Torment, as well as ways to resist it, begins on p. 179.

## Disquiet

Essentially, every Promethean was once human. It is a human body that died to provide the raw material from which the Promethean was created — sometimes more than one. It is the innate humanity of every inspired demiurge that channels the Divine Fire in the first place, imprinting a humanlike conception of the world on each Progenitor creation. Only the innate physical and alchemical properties of the human form can contain the transformative power of the Azoth. Only a human being's special electrochemical matrix can safely conduct Pyros, whence that Azoth is refined. Nonetheless, no creation that a demiurge or Progenitor has wrought is truly human. The Azoth is not a soul, and the Promethean consciousness is not a human life or outlook. It comes close, certainly close enough for a Promethean to be able to see the innate differences and recognize in himself the potential to overcome them, but never close enough. Despite any similarity or potential, the Promethean remains an outsider from humanity, and his mere presence inflicts a gnawing, incessant, inescapable unease on the human beings in the world around him.

Prometheans are well aware of this phenomenon, which human beings are rarely capable of recognizing or acknowledging, and they call it Disquiet. It keeps them forever separate from humanity, forcing them to work ever harder to achieve the final alchemical transformation from soulless monster to human being. It is the force that makes even the most ambitious, inspired or insane demiurge turn away from his creation in disgust. It can even grow powerful enough to affect the very flora and fauna of the area in which a Promethean might try to settle, forcing him to wander continuously without roots, lest he blight the very land around him. Disquiet is a malignant emanation from the very Azoth within, forever reminding the Promethean that he should not *be*, that he does not *belong*. It is a condition that will never cease until, or unless, the uncanny monster completes his Pilgrimage and becomes truly human at last.

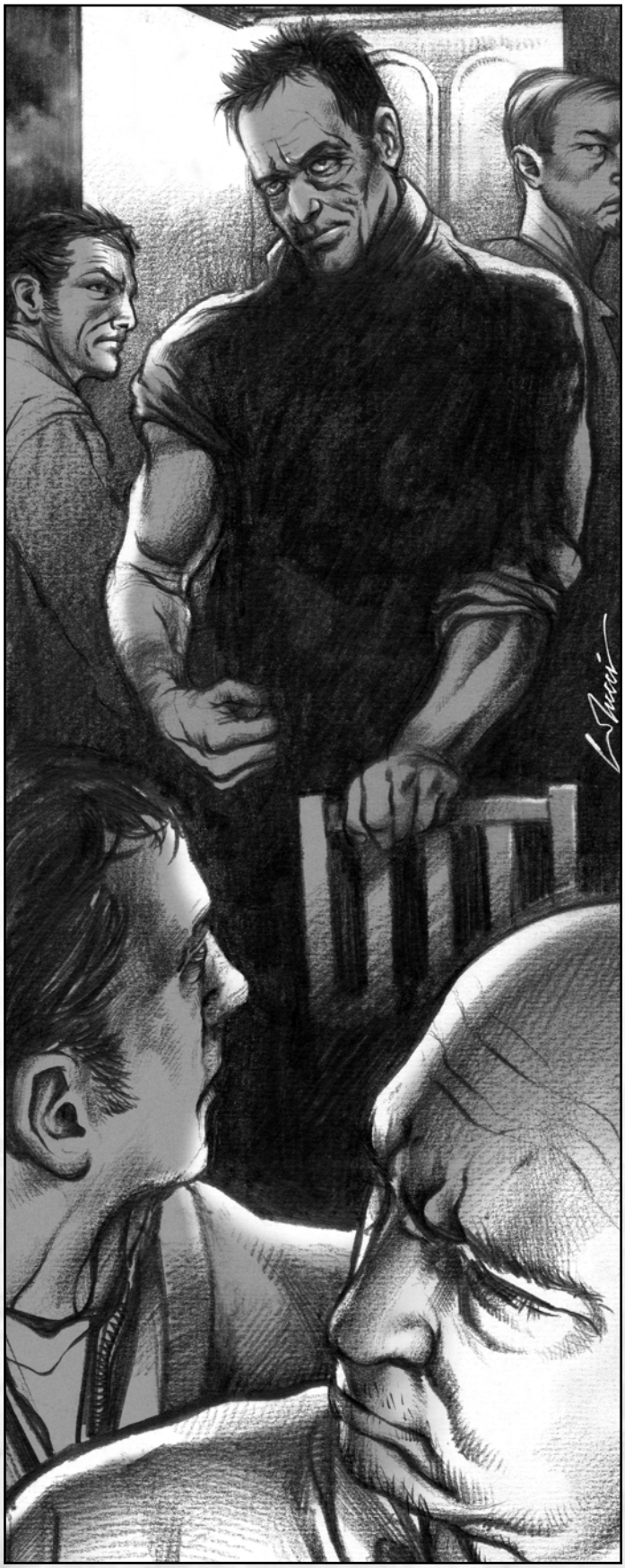
### The Effects of Disquiet

If Disquiet were a straightforward alchemical reaction, an expected byproduct of sparking the Azoth within a reconstructed corpse, some inspired demiurge or Progenitor would have found a way by now to account for it and eliminate the potential for it at the moment of Promethean creation. (Indeed, many Prometheans experiment with new methods of creating their own kind in hopes of discovering just such a thing.) Yet Disquiet is a slippery, mutable force, the effects of which are difficult to predict except in broad strokes. The manner in which a Promethean inflicts Disquiet is unique to his Lineage and humour and even to his personality. What's more, the way in which a human being reacts to the Disquiet he feels depends on his own personality, as well as on the pressures placed on him by his larger social group. Finally, while Disquiet primarily affects human beings, deriving as it does from a Promethean's innate separation from the human ideal, it also affects the very landscape in a manner based not only on the Promethean's Lineage but on the local environment. The only true cure for and proof against these effects is for the Promethean to keep his distance and never stay in the same place or around the same people long enough to overexpose them to the Disquiet he emanates.

Disquiet can seem deceptively weak at first, however. A strong-willed individual can build up an innate tolerance to its effects, becoming able to withstand the fear and revulsion that humankind naturally feels toward outsiders. Such individuals learn to recognize these emotions and choose to label those feelings as irrational (especially if they can't tell

what it is about the Promethean that makes them feel that way). In so doing, they try to rise above this base unease and treat the Promethean as they would any other human being. Unfortunately, such tolerance is only superficial, a means a person employs to make himself feel more enlightened or simply more humane. More often than not, a person *condescends* to treat fairly and civilly with a Promethean, which rarely escapes the notice of the Promethean subject to such treatment. True friendship between a human and a Promethean is not impossible under such circumstances, but the likelihood of such a thing is faint indeed unless both the Promethean and the human are truly exceptional beings who work very hard to maintain their fragile relationship. The slightest mistaken intention or simply thoughtless act can rekindle the lingering Disquiet and destroy what the Promethean has built. Therefore, most Prometheans who try to maintain close ties to select humans do so through regular correspondence and only rare, brief face-to-face interaction.

Where a Promethean's Disquiet is at its most harmful is when it affects groups of people simultaneously. As humans gather, they band together to find strength and safety in numbers, as well as unity of purpose in common cause. In so doing, they forge tight, intense bonds of community, against which outsiders stand in sharp contrast. Where an individual might be able to force himself to endure the presence of a Promethean, an individual who has a choice will almost always decide to abandon an outsider in favor of his own kind. Yet when humans gather thus, turning inward away from an outside threat, they rarely find simple confidence and solidarity in their community. Each person's individual dread multiplies incestuously, growing stronger on a diet of paranoid reinforcement. Everyone in the community sets aside his own interpersonal worries and disputes, and everyone focuses all their obsessive energy on protecting themselves from the outsider. Whether the Promethean actually means the community any harm or just wants to pursue his Pilgrimage in peace, the community seethes and whispers and schemes until it can suppress its Disquiet no longer. When that time comes, the community becomes a mob, hell-bent on driving the outsider, the Promethean, out into the cold, where it will never trouble them again.



## The Disquiet Vector

To a certain extent, the spread of Disquiet throughout a community mirrors the spread of a virulent, contagious disease. Whether he lives alone on the fringes of the outermost suburbs or tries to lose himself among the shambling, nameless masses of a city's heart, the Promethean will inevitably come into contact with members of the community. This contact exposes the individuals to the Disquiet the Promethean emanates, and they do their best to resist the Disquiet's effects. If the Promethean is lucky, the individuals will resist the effects long enough for him to finish his work and move




on. (If he is supremely lucky, the individuals might even become his friends.) If he is unlucky, his Disquiet infects the individuals, who then carry the infection back to their community and spread it, where it becomes an outbreak.

The type of Disquiet with which a Promethean infects the people around him is based on his inherent humour, which derives from his Lineage. A Promethean's humour also flavors the unique type of Torment he suffers, which either affects or is affected by the type of Disquiet he suffers. (Hypotheses vary as to whether Torment gives rise to Disquiet or vice versa, but every knowledgeable Promethean perceives an undeniable link between the two.) Yet, where a Promethean suffers Torment when he cannot achieve a goal to which he is driven by his humour, the Disquiet he radiates inflicts on human beings a condition that is generally adverse to his humour.

Suffering Disquiet from a Promethean's presence is not a guaranteed sure thing at first, but it is a strong likelihood in the long run. The basic system for determining Disquiet is that the first time in a scene when a human is exposed to a Promethean's presence for longer than just passing him on the street, never to see him again, the human's player rolls the character's Resolve + Composure. This roll is contested against a roll using the Promethean's Azoth as the dice pool. The results of this Resolve + Composure roll break down as follows:

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The victim is afflicted with Disquiet one stage more severe than he would normally be under the circumstances.

**Failure:** The victim gains no successes or fails to exceed the successes the Promethean rolled with his Azoth dice. He is afflicted with Disquiet at a stage appropriate to the circumstances.

**Success:** The victim's successes exceed those rolled by the Promethean's Azoth dice. He withstands the unsettling effects of Disquiet for the rest of the scene unless the Promethean takes active steps to try to cause Disquiet again in that scene (thus calling for another set of rolls).

**Exceptional Success:** The victim rolls five successes *and* exceeds the amount of successes rolled by the Promethean's Azoth dice. He withstands the Promethean's Disquiet for the rest of the day.

It is important to note that the Promethean's contesting Azoth roll has no effect other than to set a benchmark of success for the victim's Resolve + Composure roll. If the Promethean's roll fails but the victim's roll fails as well, the victim still suffers the Disquiet effect. Likewise, if the Promethean's Azoth roll scores an exceptional success but the victim's Resolve + Composure roll also scores an exceptional success and has more successes than the Promethean's roll, the victim is still fine for the rest of the day.

The victim's Resolve + Composure roll is subject to certain modifiers:

| Modifier | Condition |
|---|---|
| +1 | Character cannot see the Promethean (due to blindness, darkness, etc.) |
| -1 | Character witnesses Promethean using an obvious Bestowment or Transmutation, and/or he witnesses the Promethean's disfigurements. (Even if Disquiet is not triggered, this is still a terrifying sight.) |
| -1 | Character is currently infected with Disquiet |

These conditions affect the Azoth roll of the Promethean:

| Modifier | Condition |
|---|---|
| +1 | Promethean is currently suffering the ravages of Torment |
| -1 | Per Branded throng member of a different Lineage |

Once a roll results in a Disquiet infection, the human suffers an immediate Disquiet effect based on the Promethean's Lineage, and he suffers the first stage of the Disquiet's long-term effects. (More on the stages momentarily.) If he manages to avoid the source of the Disquiet for a number of weeks equal to the Promethean's Azoth, the Disquiet subsides and life returns to normal. If the human is exposed to the Disquiet source again during that time, though, and the player fails the associated contested roll, the Disquiet advances to the next stage. Should the character avoid the source of Disquiet after that for a number of weeks equal to the Promethean's Azoth, the Disquiet subsides to the previous level, and the countdown begins again.

**Stages of Disquiet**

The **first stage** of a Disquiet affliction is the *dream* stage, in which the individual's nameless fears and unease attempt to resolve themselves in his own subconscious. Such dreams are colored by the Promethean's humour, so a victim might dream of being amorously pursued by a Galateid or see himself being pushed into the immaterial realm of spirits by a sneering Ulgan. The victim might not always remember these dreams, but they don't allow for restful sleep. The victim suffers a -1 dice penalty to his tasks on any day following a night of such dreams (which is not cumulative).

The **second stage** of Disquiet's progress is that of *fantasy*, in which the unsettling dreams he's been having intrude on his waking moments. Any time the victim sees the Promethean or a situation inspired by or relating to the subject of the Promethean's humours arises, the victim might potentially slip into a distracting, uneasy fantasy. For example, if a Galateid Promethean causes Disquiet of this severity in a victim, the victim might slip away into a lurid sexual fantasy when his wife makes a playful innuendo over the phone. This fantasy plays out in the victim's mind in real time while he goes through the motions of his life with a dreamy look on his face (incurring a -2 penalty on all dice pools). When the fantasy ends, however, the victim is filled with such queasy shame for his own lascivious thoughts that he can't bring himself to act on what his wife is suggesting.

The **third stage** of Disquiet is known as the *impulse* stage, in which the victim finds it more difficult not to act on his Disquiet (or, conversely, to act in a way that defies his Disquiet). A victim under the influence of a Frankenstein Promethean's Disquiet no longer simply dreams or fantasizes about one-upping his rival, he acts on his petty jealousy. If he sees his Promethean tormentor, he might spontaneously go out of his way to trip him, spill coffee on him or ruin something the Promethean seems to hold dear. For a victim at this stage of Disquiet, doing something other than what the Disquiet in his mind urges him to do imposes a -2 penalty on any dice rolls related to that other action. This penalty remains in place until the victim indulges the tendency. Furthermore, if the impulse that compels him would lead to an immoral or illegal action and he wants to resist the urge, doing so calls for a Resolve + Composure roll at a -2 penalty. (A Willpower point can be spent on this roll.) If this roll succeeds, the impulse subsides, imposing no further penalties. If the roll fails, the character acts on the impulse without another thought. During the time when he is thus afflicted, the character also suffers a mild derangement appropriate to the type of Disquiet. A Wretched Disquiet might impose narcissism, while a Galateid's Disquiet might inflict an inferiority complex. An Ulgan's Disquiet could induce unthinking vocalization, while a Tammuz Disquiet would inspire a fixation and an Osiris Promethean might inflict irrationality. These derangements last for as long as the victim suffers the Disquiet at this level of severity.

The final and **fourth stage** of Disquiet is called the *driven* stage, wherein the victim is driven to act on his Disquiet. No longer able to set his mind at ease through dreams or fantasy or small gestures, the victim devotes his entire attention to some action that he thinks will alleviate his Disquiet (whether he realizes he's been afflicted or not). A scientist who has been thus afflicted with a Tammuz's Disquiet *must know* how the Promethean's body works and what keeps it from simply crumbling to dust. To achieve this, he will go to any length to capture the Tammuz and keep the Tammuz locked away for ongoing study — from threatening to expose the Tammuz's secret to murdering someone the Tammuz holds dear in order to "cut all ties with the outside world." Any action a victim so deeply affected by Disquiet takes that is not directly related to the subject of the victim's drive suffers a -3 penalty. He can't concentrate on anything other than the subject of his drive either, suffering the same penalty to any Resolve or Composure roll. The Disquiet also inflicts a severe version of the derangement that the impulse stage inflicted.

Making matters worse, Disquiet becomes communicable from person to person at this final stage, although this type of infection must be spread actively, as opposed to that spread passively by Prometheans. Spreading the Disquiet actively includes any attempt to sow animosity among his friends, family or neighbors against the Promethean to whose Disquiet he is reacting — from gossiping about him over the picket fence to lambasting the horrible Promethean during the announcements at church. The victim's appeal to his fellow man is handled in a contested roll just as any attempt at coercion would be. The victim's player makes a Wits-, Intelligence-, Presence- or Manipulation-based roll, and the person the victim is trying to coerce resists with a Resolve + Composure roll. If the victim wins, his audience suffers the first stage of Disquiet toward the Promethean for a number of nights equal to the Promethean's Azoth. The original victim cannot exacerbate a pre-existing condition of Disquiet, but if he infects enough heretofore unaffected people, he can whip them into a frenzy and lead them to where the Promethean is hiding. If he does so, exposure to the Promethean can change the temporary Disquiet into a full-blown Disquiet that takes the normal amount of time to subside.

Perhaps the worst aspect of the driven stage of Disquiet is that it does not degrade to a less severe stage if the Promethean avoids contact with the victim. The Disquiet persists, allowing the victim to affect everyone around him over several days until the entire community is infected. At this stage, the only cure for the driven victim's affliction is to destroy the Promethean. After that, the Disquiet diminishes by one stage in a number of *months* equal to the Promethean's Azoth (at which point the interval becomes one week per Azoth again).

## Types of Disquiet

People infected by the Disquiet that a Promethean of the Frankenstein Lineage gives off tend to find the Promethean frighteningly ugly the first time Disquiet touches them. This reaction might engender in them fear or pity, which makes them shallow and skittish around the Promethean. In time, they become even more petty, careless and small-minded. They leave their larger ambitions to lie fallow, seeking only the next temporary gain or the next chance to one-up an enemy, a rival or even a friend. They don't care who they hurt in pursuit of these petty goals, shattering friendships, families, alliances or even institutions for the next chance to stick it to someone they feel is standing in their way. And the "someone" in question, usually the Promethean radiating the Disquiet, need not necessarily be *actually* standing in the person's way. Communities infected by this type of Disquiet tend to break down into savage cliques at first, each seeking some ridiculous perceived advantage over the others. That advantage might involve gaining membership into a certain country club, signing up for a committee to plan a popular activity with the local PTSA or even buying the best lawn-care equipment on the market as part of a "Keep the Neighborhood Beautiful" campaign. Conflict between cliques evolves from friendly rivalry to passive-aggressive sniping to cruel exclusivity to feckless sabotage and finally to heated confrontation between community members. In-




evitably, "cooler heads" attempt to prevail either just before or just after actual violence breaks out, and these would-be leaders convince their neighbors that everyone has gotten carried away with their foolish behavior. The community is too strong to just let itself go to pieces over such trivial disagreements, they say, so surely someone must be working to destroy the community from without. The act of tracking down the agent provocateur inevitably works its way back up the chain of Disquiet infection, whipping the growing mob into a greater state of careless agitation. It eventually sets its sights on the Promethean and lays the entire blame for the disintegration of the community at his feet.

Those infected by a Galateid's Disquiet suffer in a different way. They immediately recognize the Galateid's great beauty and find it intimidating. The longer this feeling lasts, the more their courage and self-confidence withers inside them, leaving them feeling unworthy of affection or even attention. Their desires become shameful and dirty to them to such an extent that they cannot express or even articulate them. This shame makes them withdraw into themselves, which drives a wedge between themselves and their spouses, significant others or even close friends. Amorous advances and gestures of closeness come to feel alien to them, and they look on such behavior with suspicion and dread. A woman might start to consider herself underweight, especially compared to the voluptuous Muse who just arrived in town. She then starts wondering why her husband still pretends he wants to have sex with such a skinny bag of axe-handles as herself. This behavior convinces the husband that maybe the fact that he's out of shape or losing his hair disgusts his wife, so he withdraws his advances entirely (convincing his wife that she was right all along). As this Disquiet spreads, more people pen up their desires, making themselves miserable with shame and unrequited passion. Those who must succumb to the pressures inside them, getting their rocks off lest they drive themselves completely mad, do so in only the most base and degrading ways they can think of, convinced they deserve no better. And all the while, a subtle sense builds in the people's minds that this is all the Galateid's fault. If only the wicked siren had never come along, none of these shameful thoughts or behaviors would have been enflamed or brought into the open. The Promethean becomes a convenient scapegoat for the community's licentiousness, and it is deemed that what's best for the community is to have nothing further to do with her. No invitations arrive for society affairs, no one will open a door to the Promethean's charms, no shop owner will do business with the Promethean, and no one will so much as look the Promethean in the eyes. In the best cases, this sudden community-wide shunning drives a Galateid away in despair. In the worst, the community's most upright citizens either call the police to have the Galateid removed or take it upon themselves to see that the Promethean's perceived wickedness will corrupt the morals of the community no longer.

When a Promethean of the Osiris Lineage inflicts his Disquiet, chaos ensues. An afflicted individual loses his ability to think clearly and will almost certainly panic when he loses control of the Disquiet he feels. Whether he's afraid of the outsider, angry that such a one would dare masquerade as human, or blithely infatuated with the exotic stranger, no amount of calm, unemotional reasoning on the Promethean's part will change that fact. What's worse, the victim's total commitment to his emotional reaction can change for no reason at all, plunging him from fanatical lust for to blind hatred of the Promethean in the time it takes to draw a breath. The effect on a community is even worse, as first frustration grows with the sole afflicted party's unmanageability, then unreason spreads. Finally, some crisis inevitably breaks out in the community (likely caused by someone's drastic irrational behavior), and the community members polarize around a spectrum of emotional responses. These poles shift and merge in constant flux, dissolving whatever stability might once have existed. Sometimes this madness is such that it turns against the Promethean (who is likely to do his doomed best to restore order) and sustains itself long enough to drive him out. Most of the time, however, it is those who are least affected by the Disquiet who manage to track the source of the madness back to the Promethean and do what they can to get rid of him.

The Tammuz inflict a strange, deceptively insidious sort of Disquiet. The unease they spread makes people afraid and restless, but it does not drive them straightaway into a mob mentality. They don't necessarily seek to destroy or drive out what they don't understand. Instead, they seek to capture it, study it and control it. This effect starts off as a sensation not unlike curiosity, bordering on fixation. A private investigator searching for a missing person, for instance, tracks that person down, only to find that he has been killed and resurrected as a Tammuz. The investigator then stalks and spies on the Tammuz, learning everything he can about what the Promethean is capable of. When he has learned all he can, he tells the victim's family everything, which inspires the family to contact the Tammuz and try to bring him back home. His sudden reappearance and the strange things he can now do attracts the attention of the neighbors, however, who get the media involved. The media send reporters who hound the Tammuz day and night. Their prying catches the attention of local scientists and religious groups who want to either use the Tammuz to prove their respective pet theories or seal the Tammuz away somewhere so he can't inflict irreparable harm on the same. Demand builds on demand, with more and more people trying to control the Promethean, until he is either locked away somewhere under harsh fluorescent lights or forced to flee.

In the short term, the Riven Disquiet makes the Promethean seem progressively uncanny, as if he doesn't fully belong in this world. Perhaps more frightening, however, is that this Disquiet can have two separate, diametrically opposed long-term effects.

In an individual, it either opens his mind dangerously wide to the nightmarish possibilities that exist in the world of spirits (for which he blames the Promethean), or it closes his mind off from the basic instincts that make him human. A person whose mind has been opened too wide sees flicker-flashes of the world beyond the material and catches unasked for glimpses of whatever Twilight beings might be lurking nearby. Yet, while these visions constantly impinge on his awareness, the things he sees remain unaware of him. Even if he tries to ritually call out to them or propitiate them, they ignore him and go on about their business. Meanwhile, those who have had their minds closed too tightly, take on a perambulatory dissociation. They go through the motions of their normal routines, but the inherent meaning behind their actions evaporates. They get on the bus, they ride to the office, they sit down behind their desks, but they have no fundamental grasp of what they're doing there. They don't talk to anyone, they don't go out for lunch, they don't get up to use the restroom, and when they head downstairs and across the street to the bus stop, they don't look both ways before stepping into traffic. And in counterintuitive contrast to those whose minds are open too wide, these people are prime targets to be victimized by spirits in Twilight. Such spirits find them easier to ride and possess (as the victims suffer a -2 penalty on the standard Resolve + Composure roll to resist possession), and the most crafty and malignant of them eventually lead the charge to oust from the community the Ulgan Promethean who's emanating the Disquiet. That's provided that the frustrated open-minded ones have not done so already.

**Other Victims of Disquiet**

Disquiet affects not only mundane humanity but animals and supernatural creatures as well. Animals are simple beings, so the effects of Disquiet are much simpler on them than on humans. The Azoth burning in a Promethean's soul terrifies the beasts of the earth on an instinctive level, and they flee a Promethean's presence the first chance they get. No animal will outright attack a Promethean, though, unless that animal is cornered and unable to escape. A Promethean can still attempt to train an animal, as long as he can make sure that it can neither escape nor attack him. He does, however, find it much more difficult to train animals than a normal person would (requiring double the standard number of successes per trick or type of behavior).

The supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness are, like Prometheans, outsiders from humanity, but even they are subject to a Promethean's Disquiet. Mages, ghouls and Uratha who have not yet undergone the First Change all react to Disquiet as normal humans do, although inciting Disquiet in such victims carries inherent risks (not the least of which is potentially triggering a First Change). Vampires and experienced werewolves, however, are not affected the same way. Their players still make the same Resolve + Composure rolls under the same circumstances as a mortal would, but they don't experience the different varieties of Disquiet humans do based on the Promethean's humour, nor do they display the same symptoms with each progressive stage. For a werewolf, the only affect of Disquiet is that for each progressive stage by which the victim is afflicted, he suffers a cumulative -1 penalty on all (Resolve + Composure) rolls to resist Death Rage in circumstances that invoke that state of mind. Vampires suffer a similar effect, racking up cumulative -1 penalties on their Resolve + Composure rolls to resist frenzy. Regardless of what stage of Disquiet they have achieved, however, supernatural creatures cannot spread Disquiet to normal human beings.

Ghosts and spirits are not affected by Disquiet at all.

## Compounding Disquiet

The rules up to this point are primarily designed to determine the way in which a single Promethean's presence affects one individual witness and how that witness infects his community with his Disquiet. Such compounding factors as how a Promethean affects groups of people simultaneously and how a group of Prometheans affects either an individual or a group make matters different. Technically, you can use the individual-to-individual rules to reflect these relationships in a given game setting, down to a fine degree of minutia. Doing so, however, is comparable to solving simple Newtonian physics equations with complex quantum-level mathematics. It gets the job done, but it takes forever and wastes a lot of energy. Instead, the following rules should make it easier to regulate story situations in which various factors compound the effects of Disquiet.

When a Promethean encounters a number of people simultaneously — such as riding on a subway car or trying to banter with a potential informant over a crowded poker table — simply roll the highest Resolve + Composure total among the witnesses against the Promethean's Azoth roll. Should this roll succeed in the witness's favor, Disquiet doesn't necessarily spread at the moment. If the roll fails, however, all the assembled witnesses suffer from the first stage of Disquiet (or the second stage if the roll fails dramatically), just as if the Promethean had affected them individually. Their common bonds of humanity draw them subtly together, closing ranks against the outsider. The witness whose Resolve + Composure total was rolled against the Promethean's Azoth becomes a de facto leader and spokesperson for the group. Should circumstances grow particularly tense or heated — that is, should the Promethean press his luck — the group pulls in even tighter. It has the potential to devolve into an unruly mob at any moment, especially if the Promethean's actions inflict further Disquiet. If that happens, the de facto leader and spokesperson becomes the leader of a mob.

### Leader of the Mob

Disquiet that affects a group of people subsides at a slightly different rate for the leader of the mob than it does for the rest. (The leader, after all, is likely to be




the most prominent human character in the scene of conflict, whereas the rest of the mob will likely be faceless and indistinct.) The leader of the mob is affected normally, and his Disquiet subsides at the normal rate. The people who make up the rest of the group are likewise affected per the foregoing rules, but their Disquiet subsides much more quickly. Where it takes the leader of the mob the standard week per dot of Azoth the Promethean had for the Disquiet to downgrade by one stage, it takes the other members of the group only one night per dot of Azoth. If any individual from the mob is affected by Disquiet separately later, the Disquiet advances by one stage and each stage becomes serious enough to require the standard week-per-Azoth-dot cooling-down period.

When a group of Prometheans inflicts Disquiet, the Azoth of the group's most prominent member tends to overwhelm that of the others. The Promethean with the highest Azoth in a group, regardless of whether he's the group's leader or the one doing most of the talking, is the one who determines how Disquiet affects the witness. It's his Azoth that's rolled against the witness' Resolve + Composure. (If more than one Promethean in the group is tied for highest Azoth, use the one with the highest number of Pyros.) It's also his Lineage that determines how Disquiet affects the witness. The presence of the other Prometheans modifies his Azoth roll, however, making it harder for the witness to resist the Disquiet. For every additional Promethean present, add one die to the Promethean's contesting Azoth roll. Then, if the others who are present are members of a Branded throng with the Promethean in question, check their Lineages. For every present Branded throng member whose Lineage is different from the Promethean's, subtract one die from the Azoth roll. Branded throng members whose Lineage is the same as that of the Promethean in question and present Prometheans who are not part of a Branded throng with him have no further effect on the Promethean's Azoth roll aside from that levied by their very presence.

If this contested roll somehow succeeds in the witness's favor, the witness maintains his cool despite the nearly overwhelming presence of so many inhuman creations. If the roll fails, the witness is affected by Disquiet at its first stage (or second for a dramatic failure), and of a type determined by the Lineage of the Promethean whose Azoth was rolled. This feeling is directed largely against the singular Promethean, but for the rest of the scene, the others present are considered to be "with him" — even if they're not — and therefore deserving of being included in the emotional effect. Barring further exposure, the victim's feelings toward these other Prometheans fades away completely in a number of nights equal to the main Promethean's Azoth. His stage of Disquiet does not degrade against the primary Promethean, but the inclusion of the other Prometheans in the Disquiet effect disappears. The Promethean whose Azoth was rolled is the one who stands out in the victim's mind.

When a group of Prometheans encounters a group of witnesses simultaneously, these two previous sets of rules mesh. The highest Resolve + Composure total among the witnesses, belonging to the de facto leader, is rolled against the highest Azoth from among the Prometheans (modified appropriately). If the witnesses' side succeeds, everyone remains calm and events play out as normal. If the witnesses' side fails (or worse), all the Prometheans in the group become outsiders and subject to the will of the crowd, which is suffering from a mass Disquiet based on the Lineage of the Promethean whose Azoth was used.

Another factor that can compound Disquiet is when a Promethean interacts with a subject who's already suffering Disquiet, but on whom that preexisting condition was inflicted by a different Promethean. The first thing to understand is that every exposure to Disquiet that the witness doesn't successfully resist increases the severity of Disquiet a witness is currently suffering. If one Promethean infects a witness with the first stage of Disquiet and that Disquiet lingers, exposure to a second Promethean in a different scene increases that Disquiet from the dream stage to the fantasy stage. At that point, the witness perceives a connection between the two Prometheans (regardless of whether one actually exists) and applies his Disquiet to both. The type of Disquiet the witness feels is determined by the Lineage of the Promethean who either has the highest Azoth or has inflicted the most degrees of severity of Disquiet.

For instance, say exposure to a Promethean of Frankenstein's Lineage causes the witness to suffer the dream stage of a Wretched Disquiet. If that witness meets an Ulgan Promethean in a later scene and that meeting causes Disquiet, the witness's Disquiet advances to the fantasy stage and the witness convinces himself that the two Prometheans are "probably in it together" (whatever "it" might be in his uneasy imagination). If the Ulgan Promethean has a higher Azoth than the first Promethean did, the Disquiet becomes a Riven Disquiet but applies to both Prometheans (as if the witness had been exposed to both Prometheans simultaneously rather than separately). If the Ulgan Promethean had a lower Azoth, however, the Disquiet would still advance to the fantasy stage, but it would remain a Wretched Disquiet directed at both Prometheans. (The witness would simply believe that the second Promethean was working with the first, or that the second was just as bad as the first.) Now, assuming the latter is the case — that an Ulgan with a lesser Azoth had further compounded a witness's Wretched Disquiet — things change if the Ulgan inflicts a more severe Disquiet later. If the Ulgan causes the witness's fantasy stage of Disquiet to upgrade to the impulse stage, the witness' Disquiet becomes a Riven Disquiet, though it is still directed at both Prometheans who caused it. Even though the Ulgan still has a lower Azoth than the original Promethean, the Ulgan has now inflicted two degrees of severity of Disquiet, rather than the Frankenstein's lone degree.



## The Wasteland

As if it weren't bad enough that animals fear them, supernatural creatures are ever more likely to lose their minds around them, and human beings can't seem to keep themselves together after a few exposures to them, Prometheans must deal with yet another disastrous side effect of their condition. This effect — known as the Wasting of the Peaceful Refuge, or just the Wasteland effect — physically blights the landscape around the Promethean, spreading more damage the longer he stays. Even the oldest Promethean scholars and most studious demiurge researchers have no clear idea of why this effect occurs. Most of them lump the study and classification of it in with that of Disquiet because it seems to emanate or radiate from the Promethean into the landscape just as Disquiet does into the general populace. Yet unlike a contaminant or a pollutant, the effect does not spread toxins that the wind can blow around or the local fauna can eat and carry at random. Instead, the blighting effect seems to suck the very life out of the area, leaving it a wasted, sterile place. What makes most students of the phenomenon categorize it as a type or effect of Disquiet, though, is that when it grows strong enough, the blight inflicts Disquiet on humans and supernatural creatures as if the Promethean himself were inflicting it directly.

The first thing to understand about the Wasteland effect is how far and how quickly it spreads. When a Promethean arrives in a new, undisturbed area, the blaze of his Azoth mystically and invisibly scorches the land in the first place where he stops to rest for one full hour. This mystical mark applies to an area of about 20 yards in diameter. For the next 24 hours after this mystical mark is laid down, the mark remains where it is as long as the Promethean stays within a one-mile radius of the spot's exact center. Should the Promethean remain within that one-mile-radius area for a full 24 hours, the Wasteland effect takes hold in that area at its first stage. Should the Promethean remain within that area for one full week, the Wasteland effect increases in severity to its second stage and the radius of effect increases. This increase stretches the radius of the effect a number of miles equal to the character's Azoth, and the Wasteland effect takes hold at its first stage in this new territory.

Thereafter, the Wasteland effect changes on a month-by-month basis. At least one affected region always intensifies to the next stage over the course of the month, and the effect might also spread in that same period of time. If the character is not a careless wanderer, he can remain within his original one-mile boundary for a while and not inflict too much damage on the surrounding landscape. For every month that the Promethean spends within the extended area of his Wasteland (equal in radius to one mile plus a number of miles equal to his Azoth), the severity of the Wasteland in the original one-mile-radius area increases by one stage. The stage-one Wasteland area outside that original area does *not* increase




in severity, though, unless the Promethean spent 24 or more consecutive hours in that extended area. If the Promethean *does* spend 24 or more hours in this surrounding area at any point during the month, though, the original area increases from stage two to stage three and the new area increases from stage one to stage two. The radius of the effect then increases again by a number of miles equal to the character's Azoth. The Promethean may now move freely within the original area and the area immediately surrounding it without spreading the blight any farther. The Wasteland effect intensifies once more over the next month (bringing the stage-three area up to stage four and increasing the stage-two area up to stage three), but it does not grow as long as the Promethean remains within his new boundary. Should he move beyond it and stay in the surrounding stage-one area for 24 or more consecutive hours, the effect intensifies by one stage in each interior area and increases the radius of effect by another number of miles equal to the character's Azoth.

Remaining a hermit can keep a Wasteland contained for only so long, however. When a region of a growing Wasteland reaches its fifth stage of severity, it can't actually get any worse. Instead, when its month at stage five ends and it would conceivably intensify to stage six, that region instead increases the intensity of the Wasteland effect in the immediately surrounding region and increases the radius of the over all effect (just as if the Promethean had stayed for 24 or more hours in the stage-one perimeter). If the Promethean happened to spend 24 or more hours in the stage-one perimeter anyway, the stage-five region only increases the intensity of the region surrounding it once. It does not expand the radius of the Wasteland anymore than the Promethean's wanderings already did.

## The Logistics of Wasteland Spread

The Wasteland a Promethean spreads doesn't actually move in large leaps and bounds as the preceding text might imply. The spread of a Wasteland is actually a gradual process, creeping outward inch by painful inch the longer the Promethean remains in one general area. The intensification from stage to stage is likewise gradual and almost impossible to recognize if you're experiencing it as it happens and not paying attention. (Sort of like the gradual spread of Wal-Marts and the sneaky rise of gas prices.) The rate and breadth of Wasteland expansion given by these rules is just an approximation to make downtime bookkeeping easier.

The only way to remove the Wasteland effect is for the Promethean's Azoth to be removed from the entire affected area (from the stage-one perimeter all the way to the original center) for one month per dot of Azoth per region of effect and incremental increase. That is, if a Promethean with an Azoth of 3 lays the mystical mark on an area and remains there for 24 hours, he affects an area up to one mile in radius. If he leaves this one-mile-radius area before the month is up and stays gone for three months (one month per dot of Azoth), the area will no longer be a Wasteland of any kind. If he returns before the three months pass, however, the area remains a stage-one Wasteland and the one-month countdown begins again. In order to stop the countdown in this fashion, a Promethean must spend at least 24 hours outside the expanded border of the Wasteland effect he created. Doing so lays down another mystical mark in that spot, however, and starts the Wasteland effect anew from that new center. Should a Promethean's new Wasteland effect overlap a previous region's effect that he himself caused, increases in the stage of the new Wasteland region increase the old region's Wasteland stage as well.

Aside from curing a Wasteland effect, the only way to mitigate the spread of the blight is to either remain confined to a small geographic area or form an alchemical pact with a throng of other Prometheans who are not of the same Lineage. Being part of a throng has no effect on the spread of the Wasteland in the first 24-hour period or the one-week period that follows that. Thereafter, however, being part of a Branded throng adds to the time it takes for the Wasteland effect to spread. The amount of time it adds is equal to an additional number of months per throng member who is not of the same Lineage as the one whose Wasteland effect is being considered. That is, the normal expansion of a Wasteland progresses one month at a time after that first day and subsequent week of seeding the Wasteland. If a Promethean is part of a Branded throng in which one member is not of his same Lineage, the first period of expansion takes two months instead. If the Promethean's Branded throng includes three others who are not of his Lineage, the expansion period is four months.

Yet, while differing Lineages within a Branded throng slow the spread of the Wasteland effect, matching Lineages simultaneously extend the range over which the effect spreads. When calculating the distance over which the effect spreads in one period of time, multiply the character in question's Azoth by the number of Prometheans in his Branded throng who share his same Lineage. Then add that number (in miles) onto the number of miles the Wasteland effect would normally spread in the same amount of time if the character were not part of the throng.

As for the various stages of severity of a Wasteland's condition, they are largely dependent on the type of Wasteland effect being generated (more on that in a moment). Stage one and stage five, however, are the same regardless of the type of Wasteland. A stage-one Wasteland actually demonstrates no detectable effects. In fact, this classification has arisen as a placeholder to help Promethean scholars of the phenomenon account for the potential spread of a Wasteland. Furthermore, the inherent

symptoms caused by the various types of Wasteland at stage five grow no more severe than they were at stage four, but it is at this point that the very area itself begins to exude Disquiet just as exposure to the Promethean does. This Disquiet affects humans and supernatural creatures just like an afflicted human at the driven stage of Disquiet does, but the roll to resist the effect occurs only once a month. If the potential victim resists the Disquiet when he enters the Wasteland for the first time, he is free to roam about it at will (without fear of its Disquiet overwhelming him) for another month before another roll is required. He is still subject to a resistance roll if he encounters any of the other standard conditions, though. Unfortunately, once a victim has been affected by the Disquiet a stage-five Wasteland exudes, his player cannot roll to resist the increases in severity that come with remaining in the area month after month. Other conditions still elicit a resistance roll, but the pervasive gloom and unease of a stage-five Wasteland slowly, inevitably wears down the victim's resistance. The only cure for Disquiet brought on thus is to either leave the area and stay away for a number of years equal to the Promethean's Azoth, or to destroy or drive off the Promethean so that the Wasteland returns slowly to normal.

The second important thing to understand about the Wasteland effect is that it is not a single, generalized sort of phenomenon that every Promethean inflicts the same way. In fact, each Lineage of Promethean blights the land in a slightly different way, based on the classical element associated with it. As the Wasteland effect spreads around a Promethean, the parts of the environment that fall into the appropriate elemental category have the life and solidity leached from them — an effect that intensifies as the Wasteland grows in severity. Some Lineages inflict similar Wasteland effects in common, so sometimes getting a handle on what exactly the source of the problem is can be tricky. Doing so with an Intelligence + Science or Investigation roll yields only dry, plausible answers that don't always fit the apparent facts at hand, though it could lead an investigator toward the source of the Wasteland. Following such mundane investigations up with an Intelligence + Occult roll, however, (provided the character has some Promethean-specific information on which to base such a roll) can help a character better identify the blighted area as a Wasteland and even shed some light on what sort of Promethean might be causing it.

When Prometheans of different Lineages settle in the same area and their Wasteland effects spread out and overlap, the two effects do not interact with each other in any way. They simply affect the same overlapping area in their different ways as if the other effect were not taking place. If Prometheans of the same Lineage settle such that their Wastelands overlap, only the most advanced Wasteland effect affects people. The overlap does not increase the effective stage of the less severely affected area in terms of how far the Promethean can safely wander or how quickly the effect spreads. It does, however, make the entirety of *both* overlapping sections act as if they were affected to the same degree (no matter how much actual land the sections share in common). Such is the case regardless of whether the Prometheans whose Wastelands overlap are part of the same throng. Being part of a throng affects only how far and how quickly the Wasteland effect spreads, not how severe the effects are.

**Wretched Wastelands**

The element of Frankenstein Prometheans is fire, usually expressed through electricity, and it is this vital force that the Wretched blight when they linger. Where once such Wastelands were not immediately inimical to people or their way of life, the danger these places pose to humanity's many modern conveniences make them especially problematic.

**Stage Two** — The skies are always dark with rumbling clouds, and static electricity hangs in the air unable to discharge properly. Supposedly sound wiring and circuitry shorts out more often than it should, though the damage is reparable.

**Stage Three** — Lightning tears the sky, occasionally striking objects on the ground and causing significant harm or damage. Blackouts are regular if infrequent occurrences, and portable electronic devices from cell phones to digital watches to mp3 players can no longer be relied upon to work properly.

**Stage Four** — Lightning storms rage constantly in the region, threatening lives and property, and widespread blackouts are common occurrences. When portable electronic devices fail to work, they cannot be repaired or even properly diagnosed. The region might even be subject to an unexplained electromagnetic pulse.

**Muse Wastelands**

The element of the Galateid Prometheans is air, which represents not only the Divine Breath that gives life, but the Word of Truth that defines forms, shapes and names. When a Muse's presence blights the air of a Wasteland, not only is the substance we breathe damaged, but familiar forms and shapes are warped into unrecognizable caricatures.

**Stage Two** — The wind seems to blow only fitfully, like the gasps of an old man, and a vague, unidentifiable scent lingers in the air. Landmarks seem forbidding and just slightly out of place unless the witness concentrates on them.

**Stage Three** — The wind rarely blows at all now, and sound travels poorly in the air. A faint smell of embalming preservatives wafts through the air on the infrequent winds, and once-familiar images and faces no longer look the way they should at first glance (even faces in the mirror).

**Stage Four** — The wind ceases utterly to blow, which grinds windmills to a halt, becalms sailing vessels on the water and even creates pockets of bizarrely low air pressure at altitude. People lose their way on streets they've known all their lives, and the shapes of solid objects seem to warp and deform before witnesses' eyes.

**Nepri Wastelands**

The Prometheans of Osiris' line are associated with the element of water, and all life on Earth depends on water in some way.




Since ancient times, the Wastelands created by Prometheans of this Lineage have been the most feared and dangerous, driving otherwise rational people to desperate extremes.

**Stage Two** — All water in the region takes on a flat, metallic taste, worse than anything that ever came out of a tap. The same goes for any rain that falls, though rainfall becomes somewhat infrequent. Water that actually comes out of a tap leaves an odd, oily residue on the skin, though this residue has no smell and causes no ill effects.

**Stage Three** — Rainfall becomes scarce, and what little rain does come down leaves the same aforementioned oily residue on the skin. It also emanates a bitter, nauseous tang. Containers of standing water, from aquariums to drinking glasses to puddles to swimming pools, all turn cloudy much faster than they should, despite any chemicals or filtration systems normally designed to combat such a thing.

**Stage Four** — Rainfall ceases entirely in the area, and the… *liquid* that comes out of the tap has the consistency of baby oil (and is equally palatable). Standing water clouds and turns stagnant in a matter of hours, and even naturally running water in rivers, streams or springs is sluggish and oxygen-poor, choking the fish below the surface and forcing them elsewhere.

**Golem Wastelands**

The element of the Tammuz is earth, which represents not only physical material but the substance from which humanity itself is made. When a Tammuz Promethean creates a Wasteland, this material and substance becomes infirm and breaks down.

**Stage Two** — Surfaces of buildings, streets and the very ground take on a weathered and aged look, whether they're bleached by the sun or covered with a fine layer of dust. Human bodies also take on an unhealthy pallor, and people seem less energetic.

**Stage Three** — Stone structures constantly yield up fine grit as if they're disintegrating in miniscule layers. Small sinkholes open in the ground, and the topsoil dries out, yielding up few of the precious nutrients the plants living in it need. People seem somewhat dried out and undernourished as well, and they find it takes longer to recover from injuries.

**Stage Four** — Mines run dry or collapse as if from exhaustion. Enormous sinkholes gape in the earth like greedy mouths sucking up delectable treats. Topsoil becomes completely inert, and seemingly imperishable stone structures begin to crack or even crumble to the touch.

**Riven Wastelands**

The Ulgan Prometheans belong to the element of spirit, and they stand at the threshold between the physical and ephemeral world. When they stay too long in one place, the distinction between those worlds blurs, causing a host of bizarre troubles that are inexplicable to all but the Ulgan.

**Stage Two** — Twilight spirits stir unceasingly. Voices whisper out of nowhere, taunting and teasing rattled listeners in languages they cannot understand.

**Stage Three** — Jagged rents appear and disappear in the air, visible to physical witnesses but too fast for them to understand what they're seeing. Spirits whisper ever more loudly to their chosen subjects, urging them to commit strange acts either for the spirits' inscrutable benefits or against the aims of the Promethean.

**Stage Four** — Holes tear themselves in the wall between the spirit realm and the material world and sometimes stay open long enough for *things* to emerge. Such things ride or possess mortals with uncommon facility (as the victims suffer a -1 penalty on the standard Resolve + Composure roll to resist possession). People even disappear as these holes yawn wide, blundering directly into the spirit realm before they realize what's happened to them (and usually just before they hear the sickening sound of the barrier sealing behind them).

## An Example of Wasteland Spread

As a demonstration, assume that a Promethean with an Azoth of 2 comes into an undisturbed wooded area on the outskirts of a major city's suburbs. He's on the run from humans in his last city of residence whose Disquiet drove him away, and he has no Branded throng members to whom he can turn for support. His first day in this new area, he finds a large abandoned cabin that takes up an area conveniently 20 yards in diameter. He spends an hour exploring this place to make sure that no one is likely to return soon and that the place is well and goodly abandoned. This hour spent within this 20-yard-diameter area mystically marks the area, and that mark remains in place for as long as the Promethean remains within a one-mile radius for the next 24 hours. Deciding the place is safe, the Promethean does just that, lying low and reflecting on the poor turn his existence took in the last city. When that 24 hours is up, the Promethean's Wasteland effect spreads out to the perimeter of his one-mile-radius area at stage one — effectively the placeholder stage.

Unwilling to venture out and risk contact with other people, the Promethean stays holed up in his abandoned cabin all week after that, rarely venturing outside. He goes out of doors only to forage for edible organic material, and since such matter is in abundance, he never goes farther than one mile from his house. In so doing, he locks in the burgeoning Wasteland effect around him. The area within his one-mile-radius upgrades to a stage-two Wasteland, and the radius of the effect extends another two miles (equal to his Azoth). The entire radius of his Wasteland effect is now three miles, with the one-mile-radius area in the center being a stage-two Wasteland and the surrounding area outside that being only stage one.

For the next month, the Promethean remains pretty much a homebody. He explores the area around his found cabin a little bit, but he still doesn't venture beyond the original one-mile-radius. He discovers a box of old paperback books

in the cabin's attic and spends most of his time reading them. When that month is over, the overall size of the Wasteland has not increased, but the one-mile-radius area in the center has gotten somewhat worse. It upgrades from stage two to stage three. The stage-one area surrounding the stage-three area remains the same because the Promethean hasn't ventured past the original one-mile-radius area into the placeholder stage-one Wasteland yet.

In the next month, however, the Promethean suffers a turn of bad luck. He runs out of books to read, and he doesn't like many of them enough to read again. Instead, he decides to go exploring, and he ventures some two and a half miles from home, well into the stage-one placeholder area. He's done this before, but never quite so far and this time he gets lost. Rather than heading straight back toward his cabin when he gets bored, he accidentally heads out on a course perpendicular to where he should be headed, and it takes him a long time to realize his mistake. By the time he finally gets back to familiar territory, he has spent a full 24-hour period in the stage-one placeholder territory surrounding his stage-three, one-mile-radius area Wasteland around his cabin. This folly extends the area of the Wasteland's coverage. At the end of the month, his one-mile-radius area upgrades in severity from stage three to stage four. The area surrounding that for the next two miles in radius upgrades from a stage-one placeholder area to a stage-two Wasteland. The radius from the center then extends another two miles (equal to his Azoth), forming a stage-one placeholder area around the outside. The total radius of the Promethean's Wasteland now extends for five miles.

In the next month, the Promethean realizes that the one-mile-radius area around his cabin has become a dreary and desolate place in which he can barely stand to stay. He decides to spend more time out in the stage-two Wasteland, where he can safely roam at his leisure now that the range of his Wasteland has been expanded. He explores and forages and makes several attempts to build shelter out in this expanded area, never venturing out into the stage-one placeholder territory beyond. That area is dangerously close to the suburbs of the next nearest city, and he isn't ready to deal with people just yet. Instead, he remains within three miles of his cabin for the entire month so that the Wasteland effect doesn't spread. His presence does cause the interior areas of the Wasteland to intensify, however, upgrading the central one-mile-radius area from stage four to stage five and upgrading the area immediately surrounding that for the next two miles of radius from a stage two to stage three. The remaining two-mile-wide band that surrounds the perimeter of this stage-three area remains at stage one.

At this point, the stage-five center of this Wasteland cannot get any worse, it can only accelerate the wasting of the area immediately surrounding it. Therefore, even though the Promethean remains within his three-mile boundary for another month, something terrible happens to the two-mile-wide band surrounding the one-mile-radius center. Not only does the Wasteland effect in that area increase from stage three to stage four in that area because a month has passed, but it then increases from stage four to stage five because the stage-five area in the central area has accelerated its wasting. By this point, the Wasteland's overall scope is still only five miles in radius, but the three-mile-radius area in the center is completely a stage-five Wasteland. The next month is not going to be pleasant.

At the end of the next month, the Promethean realizes what devastation he has wrought on the area surrounding his cabin, and he decides he doesn't want to spread the effect any further. He is under the mistaken impression, though, that as long as he doesn't wander at all, the effect won't spread. He stays within one mile of his cabin for almost the whole month, venturing farther than a mile only once or twice, and never for more than an hour. Yet at the end of the month, the stage-five Wasteland effect upgrades the adjacent affected area by one stage. The stage-five area in the one-mile-radius center has no effect on the area immediately surrounding it, since that surrounding area is already a stage-five Wasteland. The stage-one placeholder area surrounding that, though, is automatically upgraded from stage one to stage two, even though the Promethean didn't wander out into that area at all. This upgrade in the stage-one area also causes the overall radius of the effect to increase by another two miles (equal to the Promethean's Azoth).

So now, at the end of four months, the Promethean's overall Wasteland effect covers an area with a radius of seven miles. For reference, a Wasteland of this size would cover a total area of some 150-plus miles. To put that in perspective, such a region would almost entirely cover the land encircled by Interstate 285 in Atlanta, Georgia. It's for this reason that most Prometheans don't tend to settle for very long in any given area, especially around population centers. And those who perversely do try to do so don't tend to last very long. As the Wasteland effect spreads and intensifies, it spreads Disquiet with it, which inevitably traces back to the Promethean who caused it.

### A Little Help from His Friends

This quick example focuses on a Promethean who's not part of a Branded throng. Let's assume, briefly, that he was part of such a throng, though, and show how that association would affect the spread of this Wasteland. First, let's assume that the Promethean has two people in his throng who share his Lineage. The number of people who share his Lineage multiplies the amount by which the radius grows. That is, you multiply the number of Prometheans of the same Lineage as the one in question by a number equal to the Promethean in question's Azoth. You then add this number to the Promethean's Azoth when determining how far the Wasteland effect's radius spreads when it spreads. This effect doesn't kick in until the Promethean has been in his Wasteland for one week and one day.

Therefore, in the first month, when the Promethean was a homebody, his Wasteland remains in place just as written. In the second month, however, when he gets lost and spends 24 hours out in the placeholder, stage-one territory, the land around him really suffers for his being part of a Branded throng. At the end of that month, when the central area upgrades from stage three to stage two and the next area out increases from stage one to stage two, the radius of the Wasteland increases dramatically. Rather than increasing by two miles — equal to his Azoth — it increases by six miles — equal to his Azoth plus that number multiplied by the number of Prometheans in his Branded throng who share his Lineage (or 2 + [2 x 2]). The total radius of his Wasteland is now nine miles, rather than the five it would have been normally.

Granted, that doesn't literally ruin that extra outside area immediately, but it lays down the potential for vast ruin. If no other factors change, though, the end of the fourth month described previously will see a vast and spreading Wasteland much worse than the Promethean could have spread on his own. At the end of the fourth month, the interior three-mile-radius area of this same Promethean's Wasteland will have advanced to stage five, and the extended six-mile-wide band around the outside of it will be forcibly exacerbated by the adjoining interior stage-five Wasteland to a stage-two Wasteland. This contamination of the placeholder region will then extend the radius of the Wasteland effect *another* six miles out, thanks to the other two members of the Promethean's Branded throng sharing his Lineage. The resulting Wasteland then has a radius of 15 miles, which covers a more than 700-mile area.

It's for this reason that Prometheans who form Branded throngs with members who share their Lineage rarely remain in any given area for very long or choose more than two such similar members.



## Torment

The Divine Fire was never supposed to be a gift granted to humanity. Perhaps human beings would be able to look upon its light or feel a faint caress of its warmth from afar, but never was it to be humankind's to control. In human legend, Prometheus defied this mandate and delivered the Divine Fire from the heavens into the ignorant hands of man. In the legends of the Created, divinely inspired demiurges (perhaps descended from those first people enlightened by Prometheus himself) hoarded the embers of this Divine Fire and fanned them back into a blaze in the furnace hearts of their abominable creations. Just as the original Pyros enlightened and elevated humankind, so too did it grant awareness and intelligence to once-dead flesh.

Yet it is the nature of fire to burn and grow and consume, and such is the manifest power of the Divine Fire. Uncontrolled, it roars and rages, and finally consumes itself when it has nothing left to burn. Such is the experience of the Pandorans, whose bodies fill up with the raw essence of

the Divine Fire and have no way to slow or stem its spread. When it is refined and purified by a Promethean's guiding intelligence into Azoth, however, the Divine Fire can sustain itself better and for longer. Even still, it is no less a fire. It must be controlled, lest it rage and roar and consume everything a Promethean has worked for and holds dear.

The body and mind of a Promethean are ideal vessels to nurture and control the Azoth and the Pyros whence it derives. Like the ceramic surfaces of a kiln or the iron belly of a forge, that which makes up the Promethean traps and intensifies the flame's heat so that what's being forged inside, the soul, is as strong and free of impurities as possible. But as with any oven or kiln or forge, the containment is not perfect. A measure of the intense heat of the Divine Fire — sometimes a great deal indeed — always manages to escape, and this heat continuously burns the Promethean from within. The harder the Promethean works to re-forge and purify the base matter that will one day be his soul, the more intensely the Azoth within him burns, and the more the heat it gives off torments him.

Some Prometheans equate this torment with the torture Prometheus himself suffered when Zeus discovered his theft of the Divine Fire. In the legend, Zeus had Prometheus bound to a stone, where an eagle (or a vulture, or harpies, or the very mortals he'd sought to enlighten…) tore out his liver and devoured it. Alas, the organ grew back each day, and so Prometheus' torment continued until Hercules set him free some time later. Prometheans recognize within themselves this ongoing torment and even ascribe to themselves a similar nobility of purpose. Only, where Prometheus used his stolen Divine Fire to aid and enlighten humanity, Prometheans use their ill-gotten Azoth to improve their own lot and uplift their own souls. Sadly, no mythical hero has come forward to unbind them and release them from their torment.

Neither is this torment purely metaphysical. Prometheans might not *literally* radiate heat, but their condition does lend itself to a certain suffering nonetheless. No Promethean can escape it, and all Prometheans recognize it, which has led various Promethean and demiurge scholars to apply to this aspect of existence the poetic appellation "the Endless Torment of Prometheus." (Most Prometheans simply call it the Promethean Torment or just Torment for short, depending on how tolerant they are of poetic excess.) This Torment is primarily a psychological affliction that all Prometheans must endure, but it expresses itself through certain psychosomatic symptoms, and it can lead the Promethean to indulge in dangerous, immoral or otherwise unacceptable behaviors.

At its most basic, Torment is the transformative drive of the Azoth viewed as through a glass darkly. A Promethean's Pilgrimage is inspired by a yearning to be something more than just an animated creation — to be a human being with a human soul. Torment, however, is a bitter rejection of what it means to be a Promethean. It is a roiling, nauseous disgust with the soot and slag and ash left over in the furnace where the Azoth burns. It lurks ever beneath the surface of a Promethean's thoughts, poisoning his humours and infecting him with the belief that he's wasting his time, that he's unworthy of ever being better than the crude monster he was created to be. When the Promethean's will flags or his efforts fail, the Fire within him escapes and distracts him from his Pilgrimage. When that happens, the Torment builds, blinding the Promethean with thoughts of how much easier it is to remain a monster than it is to work toward Mortality.

## The Suffocating Rise of Torment

Many Prometheans, especially young ones or ones suffering their first stinging setback on their Pilgrimages, cry out that their entire existence torments them. True Promethean Torment, however, results from only certain types of stimuli. Just having a bad day isn't necessarily enough to derail a quest for ultimate transformation. Such inconveniences as mislaying your keys, stepping in a concealed patch of dog mess and having a city bus splash dirty water on you barely register against the background of the normal Promethean experience. In fact, putting such annoyances in perspective at the point just before they become overwhelming is one of the few things that can still make a Promethean laugh, however bitterly. Other tribulations are not so easy to ignore, though, and they threaten the progress of even the most stalwart and noble of Promethean pilgrims. They cause Torment to build, which forces the Promethean's player to roll to resist being overwhelmed by it. (More on doing so in "The Noble Resistance of Torment.") Such tribulations include the following:

**Disquiet**

Prometheans understand all too well what harm their presence inflicts on the land and the beings who live in it. The fact that they are largely powerless to stop the Disquiet they spread pains them and shakes their faith in their ability to transcend their condition. It certainly doesn't help that Disquiet inevitably drives humans to act out against each other and against the Promethean who caused it. When that happens — be it in the form of a sadistic, torch-wielding mob or a haughty, passive-aggressive prayer vigil staged on the Promethean's property — the Torment builds. More specifically, the Torment builds when a human at the impulse or driven stage of a Disquiet affliction acts against the Promethean or his interests.

Simply standing in a Promethean's way doesn't cause the Torment to build, though, as competition and rivalry are normal part of human nature. Only when Disquiet drives humans to stand against Prometheans (or destroy them) does true Torment become an issue. Such is the Promethean disposition, however, that it too easily assumes the worst in humankind. When a Promethean realizes a human is trying to deal him a setback of some sort and he doesn't already know whether the human is suffering Disquiet, the Promethean's player may (though he is not forced to) roll Wits + Empathy to try to read the human's state of mind. If he fails, the Promethean assumes the human is suffering Disquiet, and




the Torment builds accordingly. If the roll succeeds, the Promethean can tell whether the human is suffering Disquiet, and the Torment builds only if the answer is affirmative. If the answer is negative, the human is just a jerk.

**Defeat**

There is one person in every Promethean's existence whose competition and rivalry *always* causes Torment to build — the Promethean's creator. It is a cruel necessity of every Promethean's Pilgrimage that they create one of their own before they can truly become human. Being cursed thus is never worthwhile in the new Promethean's eyes, though, so each new Promethean harbors bitter resentment for the one who did this to them. That resentment isn't enough on its own to cause Torment, but should that creator in any way keep the Promethean from achieving the aims of his Great Work, the Torment builds. It doesn't matter if the creator is another Promethean or a human demiurge (even one who has somehow miraculously resisted Disquiet).

**Fire**

As has been stated before, fire inflicts aggravated damage on Prometheans. A worse dimension of this weakness is that when fire is used against a Promethean as a weapon, that sadistic intent causes Torment to build. Simply being trapped by an out-of-control blaze, while harrowing and potentially calamitous, does not cause Torment, but having a mob wave torches in one's face or set fire to one's refuge certainly does. A Promethean can safely approach an urban campfire burning in a trashcan or even have a human light her cigarette for her, but something as simple as a person holding a flickering lighter in front of an aerosol can in a threatening manner causes Torment to build.

**Pain**

Beyond threatening intent, fire can still cause Torment to build just by virtue of the damage it inflicts. The first time a Promethean suffers aggravated damage from fire in a scene, Torment builds. In fact, Torment builds the first time in a scene when the Promethean suffers aggravated damage of *any* kind. Converting lethal damage to aggravated damage as a result of compounded injuries doesn't build Torment, though. Only direct aggravated damage does so, and only the first time it is successfully inflicted in a scene.

**Failure**

A Promethean's Pilgrimage plays out as a series of quests or challenges, each of which stokes the Azoth within him and burns away more of the impurities from the base matter he hopes to transform into a human soul. Each success takes him farther along his Pilgrimage and renews his faith in himself. Failure, however, destroys his confidence and causes Torment to build. It doesn't matter whether the Promethean fell short because of some failing within himself or because some enemy or rival sabotaged his efforts. It doesn't even matter whether the saboteur did so maliciously, carelessly or inadvertently. If a Promethean fails in a Mortality milestone for any reason, his Torment builds. More on these milestones can be found beginning on p. 190.

**Hunger**

Even the refined, purifying blaze of the Azoth must have fuel, and so the Promethean must keep himself fed. When he does not do so, the Azoth dims and gutters, and the Torment builds in its place. Of course, a Promethean can eat just about any organic substance, but the more palatable of such substances can become scarce in the heart of a Wasteland seeded by a Promethean's lingering presence. Should a Promethean go without food for a greater number of days than either his Stamina or his Resolve, whichever is lower, he hungers and his Torment builds. He doesn't necessarily suffer the effects of deprivation from lack of food (per the rules on pp. 175–176 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) until a number of days equal to his Stamina + Resolve have passed. The Torment does build anew against his resistance each subsequent day after the hunger first strikes, though.

**Torment**

Much like Disquiet is among humans, Torment can be contagious among Prometheans. When a Promethean is part of an alchemical pact with others of his kind, seeing a member of his throng succumb to Torment causes the Torment within him to build as well. He must bear witness to this tragic surrender in person in order to be likewise affected, but only the actual moment (i.e., the turn) in which the Promethean is overwhelmed causes a witness's own Torment to build.

## The Noble Resistance of Torment

The struggle against the continuous buildup of Torment is an immutable fact of the Promethean condition. From the moment the Divine Fire is kindled within to the moment the Promethean is finally destroyed or transformed, the Torment is always there, nagging him incessantly and distracting him from the pursuit of his Great Work. The only thing a Promethean can do in the face of this ongoing pressure is resist with all his might. To do so, the Promethean's player makes a reflexive roll of the character's Humanity. In this case, that trait represents the ideal toward which the Promethean ever strives, and the farther along he progresses toward attaining that ideal, the easier it is to overcome the inertia that would have him remain a monster.

A reflexive Humanity roll to resist the Promethean Torment is called for when any of the conditions in the preceding section that are said to "cause Torment to build" occurs. If multiple conditions occur (or are ongoing) in the same turn, the Promethean's player rolls to resist each condition separately. If the Promethean who's resisting Torment is part of a Branded throng with other Prometheans, each Humanity roll is subject to bonuses and/or penalties based on the Lineages of the pact's other members. For every member of the throng whose Lineage is the *same* as the Promethean's, *subtract* one die from the roll. For every member of the throng whose Lineage is *different* from the Promethean's, *add* one

die to the roll. Bonus dice can increase the pool above the Promethean's Humanity for the purposes of resisting Torment. Penalties can reduce the pool only as low as 0, thus calling for a chance die. (More information on alchemical pacts can be found on pp. 165-166.)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The character not only succumbs to the ravages of Torment but also loses a Willpower point and gains a mild derangement.

**Failure:** The character immediately succumbs to the ravages of Torment.

**Success:** The character resists the suffocating rise of Torment arising from the particular stimulus in question until the next such roll is called for. Failing a Mortality milestone, being thwarted by one's creator, being stymied by someone suffering Disquiet, suffering an aggravated wound and witnessing a throng member succumbing to Torment all call for only one roll. Being hungry calls for one roll per day until the condition abates. Being attacked by someone who's reacting to Disquiet or being threatened by someone wielding fire calls for one roll per turn until the threat is over or the Promethean escapes.

**Exceptional Success:** The character not only resists being overwhelmed by Torment but also regains a lost or spent point of Willpower.

## The Ravages of Torment

When Torment overwhelms a Promethean, the Divine Fire inside him dims and he ceases to strive toward Mortality. In metaphysical terms, an oily, black smoke plumes from the inner furnace of his guttering Azoth, polluting his humours and suffocating that which strives to be human. In other words, he becomes selfish and lazy, able to take only what actions are called for under the circumstances by the dictates of his humours. As a result, the ravages of Torment vary by Lineage. (More on that in a moment.) The actions of a Promethean suffering Torment are normally opposed to and antagonistic toward the drives that the Promethean's Disquiet inflicts on the people around him, which only serves to complicate matters.

Making matters worse, the Fire inside a Tormented Promethean does not burn at its full strength. Therefore, any effect the Promethean performs that requires an expenditure of Pyros increases the associated cost by one Pyros. Finally, once the initial period of Torment passes, the Promethean remains morose and withdrawn for an additional number of hours equal to his Azoth. In this time, he curses and berates his creator, his enemies and the very world entire for driving him to such dire lengths of despair. He even heaps bitter scorn on himself for not being human enough to resist his monstrous impulses. During this time of despondent recrimination, the Promethean is unable to regain any spent or lost Willpower points, nor may he spend any Willpower points he has to increase any dice pools, as his drive to excel has been undermined.

As for the initial period of Torment itself, the way a Promethean behaves depends on not only the circumstances but on his Lineage's predominant humour and disfigurements.

**Wretched Torment**

Prometheans of Frankenstein's Lineage turn from being relentless and ambitious to stubborn and vengeful, especially when they have been thwarted. When Torment overwhelms them, they seek immediate (often petty) vengeance against one person for one slight, be it real or imagined. The Promethean does nothing during this period of Torment but attempt to gain this vengeance, and the Torment lasts either until he gets his revenge or for a number of hours equal to his Azoth (whichever comes first). Whether he seeks brutal, bloody vengeance or engineers a more subtle, sinister comeuppance depends on the Promethean's personality. The patchwork nature of a Promethean's body also affects him under Torment as his mismatched limbs refuse to harmonize properly (imposing a -1 penalty on all Dexterity rolls). His memory of this initial period might become patchy as well, offering him only glimpses of what vengeance he set in motion for his enemies, or his mind might remain wholly his own yet impotent as his treacherous body acts on his humours' basest impulses.

**Muse Torment**

When Galateids suffer extreme Torment, their courage and amorousness is poisoned into foolhardiness and unhealthy fixation. One might stalk the object of her affection, break into his house to climb into bed with him in the middle of the night, or drag his wife out of bed kicking and screaming to make the terrified fool choose between them. And since Muses understand that their unearthly beauty unsettles humans who witness their disfigurements, some of them even go so far as to lacerate their flesh or tear out their hair under Torment. Finally, the Divine Breath within them turns putrid in their nostrils, imposing a -1 distraction penalty to any Wits roll. The initial period of a Muse's Torment lasts either until the subject of her sick fascination is resolved or for a number of hours equal to her Azoth (whichever comes first).

**Nepri Torment**

When an Osiris Promethean is overwhelmed by Torment, his phlegmatic calm becomes cold detachment, and his intellect wears thin. He fails any Empathy roll automatically, which tends to make him thoughtlessly cruel. During this period, he fixates on solving some intellectual problem that bedevils him — such as getting the too-scrupulous police commissioner who keeps standing in his way out of his hair without just murdering him. This fixation lasts until the Nepri achieves the most ruthless and efficient solution, or for a number of hours equal to his Azoth (whichever comes first).

The missing part of the Promethean's body also throbs with intense phantom pains that make it difficult to focus his higher thoughts on any problem not related to the intellectual puzzle he's trying to solve. This distraction imposes a -1 penalty on any Intelligence roll not related to solving the problem on which




he's fixated, though it doesn't affect his situational awareness. The phantom pains linger on after the initial period of Torment, but the penalty does not linger with them.

**Golem Torment**

When Torment overwhelms the Tammuz, their melancholic irritability explodes in a frenzy of destructive violence that makes them nearly unstoppable. They are deaf to appeals to their pity or mercy, and they lose the ability to speak altogether. Even their inarticulate cries of rage are choked off as bitter clay wells up inside their mouths like thick, mucous saliva. This rage does not last for the entire initial period of the Tammuz's Torment, however, except in the weakest specimens. The frenetic outburst lasts for only one minute per point of Azoth. At the end of that time, the Tammuz becomes listless and lethargic for a number of hours equal to his Azoth. In that listless state, the Tammuz suffers a -2 penalty to his Resolve for purposes of resisting coercion (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 47).

**Riven Torment**

When an Ulgan Promethean succumbs to Torment, his instinctive intuition is perverted into a mockery of itself. The Ulgan acts on the incomprehensible behaviors of the spirits with which he interacts, rather than relying on higher thought. He attempts to gather or be near an object, place or person that has a particular significance to a type of spirit with which he has had recent or frequent dealings. The Storyteller determines what sort of spirit the Promethean's behavior reflects, and he determines what sort of significance the item, place or person in question must have. For instance, if the Storyteller decides that an Ulgan's behavior should mimic those of a spirit of hate, the Ulgan will have to find some object that has been used in an especially hateful manner, such as the gasoline can a notorious racist has used to torch an all-black church. Or, the Ulgan can try to get his hands on an item that has been the subject of much hatred (such as the cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban that's on display at a local museum), or confront a person who has consistently fomented hatred, such as a member of the KKK. Regardless of the type of spirit or the representative thing in question, the Ulgan must devote his entire attention to the search. His Torment ends either when he has acquired what he wants, or in a number of hours equal to his Azoth. During that time, the accepted norms of human behavior are strange to him, imposing a -1 penalty on any Manipulation roll his player might try to make for him.

## Derangements

The Promethean mind is like an alchemical substance. It can withstand only so many reactions or transformations before it begins to degrade in the course of its function. Prometheans might succumb to madness when they can no longer cope with the rigors of self-awareness or the consequences of certain actions. A Promethean might attempt to steel himself against eroding self-control through a series of mental veils or other defense mechanisms that insulate him from the pain of the world. In severe cases, the Promethean mind practically shatters, losing understanding of reality and the ability to nurture Azoth.

The Created are quite prone to derangements, suffering from them more often than mortals do in the World of Darkness. This should come as no surprise, of course. Their very genesis is one of artifice and fabrication, and their understandings of themselves can be exceedingly delicate. Some Created prefer to think of themselves as human — either hopefully or in states of denial — but they go into such a supposition with an imperfect understanding of what that means. As time passes, Prometheans experience highs and lows, but they lack the resiliency of the human mind to withstand tragedy and bathos. The people they think they love abandon or fear them, they guarantee their own loneliness through Disquiet, their own attempts at creation degenerate before them. Prometheans can also suffer other, specific terrors. These include the dark consequences of Flux or gross misunderstanding of Refinement philosophies. Perhaps most tragic of all, the Pilgrimage can claim its own price, as a Promethean moves ever further from the mortal ideal without realizing that he's strayed from the path. As Prometheans embroil themselves in the quest for the New Dawn, they must risk more and more in the name of trust. The world around the Prometheans is the most reliable barometer. Denied any sort of genuine emotional investment in other people, Prometheans withdraw into their own distorted perceptions.

## Gaining Derangements

Created characters can acquire derangements through several methods. Some are all but inherent to the Pilgrimage, or are indeed a part of it. Others are automatic results of certain courses of action. These conditions can tie closely to a Promethean suffering Torment (see p. 182), or they might simply come as a result of their own aberrant experience.

• **Failures and Dramatic Failures:** If the player fails a Humanity roll after failing a Degeneration roll, the Storyteller chooses a derangement that has some connection to the situation that led to the failed roll.

*Example: A Promethean who failed her Degeneration roll also fails her Humanity roll after striking a man in frustration. The Storyteller decides that depression is a good choice for a new derangement (see p. 96 of the* **World of Darkness Rulebook***), reflecting the character's disappointment in herself at being unable to handle the situation properly. Mechanically, the character loses a point of Willpower and cannot spend Willpower in scenes in which her player fails a Resolve + Composure roll when she is unable to achieve a goal. In terms of the character's behavior, she second-guesses herself, not wanting to lose her temper again as new tasks and situations test her mettle. She worries about minor details, like how others will perceive her and how she'll ever manage to accomplish everything before her. She frets about her ability to complete the Pilgrimage and wonders if she's made all the proper choices thus far.*

Additionally, a character might gain a derangement when her player rolls a dramatic failure on an attempt to resist certain debilitating Pandoran powers, or on certain rolls to invoke supernatural mental influence or other extreme stress.

• **Extreme Pain, Frustration or Horror:** Fearsome, surprising or ghastly events can shake a character's reason. Examples include killing innocents in a rage, a long period of torture at the hands of a vicious creator or seeing the fruits of one's efforts suddenly collapse in failure. Under such circumstances, the Storyteller may ask the player to roll the character's Resolve + Composure (at whatever penalty seems appropriate) to avoid a derangement. Derangements of this kind are usually temporary, lasting for the duration of the scene, but especially stressful events might make a derangement permanent.

• **Going to the Wastes:** Created who spend long periods of time away from personal interactions lose touch with the social aspects of themselves. Sometimes the Promethean can integrate himself (somewhat) back into the social environment of a locale. Other times, he can't. Truly expansive periods spent in the wastes are not common among players' characters in most chronicles, but the Storyteller can use this to explain a maddened or atavistic lone Promethean the throng might come across.

• **Genuinely Inconsolable Situations:** Some Prometheans labor ceaselessly and brutally under cruel creators. Others find themselves suddenly bereft of relationships they misinterpreted as equitable or loving. Such circumstances can create a shock so sudden to the Created that she rationalizes it or justifies it in the form of a defense-mechanism derangement.

## Roleplaying Derangements

Derangements present a great challenge to players. Derangements shouldn't be played for laughs. Although their outcomes might occasionally prove amusing, derangements themselves represent mental sickness, insanity or a simple inability to react to circumstances in a civilized way.

For characters so profoundly affected by their actions or events they've witnessed, derangements are a coping mechanism for pain. The problem, though, is that the mechanism is imperfect and artificial, like the Created themselves. As derangements, these defenses can cause as much suffering as whatever engendered them in the first place. In the most extreme of cases, Prometheans can become so desperately unhappy that they want to end their madness but don't know how.

The actions of a deranged character can seem utterly alien to other people, but they make sense to the afflicted character. Outsiders simply can't understand the motivations for the deranged individual's behavior. When a character's derangement comes to the fore, the player should be able to explain the character's rationale for doing what she's doing. A character afraid of water might cease her hygiene, for example, or a character with an unhealthy fixation on money might literally loot corpses or rifle the pockets of sleeping derelicts. Wacky, zany explanations won't pass muster. ("I smack the Tammuz flagellant with a fish!" isn't what derangements aim to represent.)

## Curing Derangements

Recovering from a derangement is challenging for the Created. Their minds' processes aren't like those of humans, so they defy conventional psychology. What's more, the effects of behavior-modifying drugs are unreliable for them. While drugs sometimes work in the short term, metabolism and the quirks of a Promethean's artificially functional brains make such prospects fail more often than not. The chemical defects that cause some mental illnesses in mortals don't seem to occur in Prometheans, though. It's cold comfort, but at least a Promethean knows that any mental instability occurring in his mind is a product of his own behavior or perceptions.

In matters of derangement and degeneration, the Created are much like mortals. A derangement is considered overcome once the character regains the level of Humanity at which the derangement first manifested. More information on this process appears on pp. 92–93 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. If the derangement was gained through means other than Humanity degeneration, such as the result of a dramatic failure when resisting a Pandoran's Flux powers, the Storyteller sets the conditions for its cure. The character might need to somehow come to terms with the root problem, either through an intentional action (he stood up to an enemy of which he suffered an irrational fear), emotional catharsis (he realizes that his envy comes from love), or an intellectual epiphany (his compulsion is an attempt to avoid thinking about his creator).

## Sample Promethean-Specific Derangements

While the minds of the Created are artificial, they're no less fecund than mortal minds. As such, they can play host to a wide variety of aberrations, some of which are unique to their manufactured states.

More information on derangements, as well as the mild and severe distinctions, can be found on pp. 96–100 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

**Rote-Action Repetition (mild):** A character suffering from this derangement attempts to replace her conscious thought with preprogrammed impulses. This derangement is especially common in Prometheans who were created with menial tasks or subservience in mind. In effect, the character "turns off" higher thought and regresses into an automatic state of task completion. A character under the influence of rote-action repetition might cease to pay attention to a discussion and instead count grains of salt or cubes of sugar. He might stack boxes and ignore someone trying to threaten him. He might sweep an immaculate foyer instead of dealing with the raging fire behind him, or he might simply perform mental arithmetic instead of facing the sorcerer menacing his throng.

Effect: If a stressful situation arises, the player rolls Resolve + Composure. If the roll is successful, the player may act as normal for the duration of the scene. If the roll fails, the character

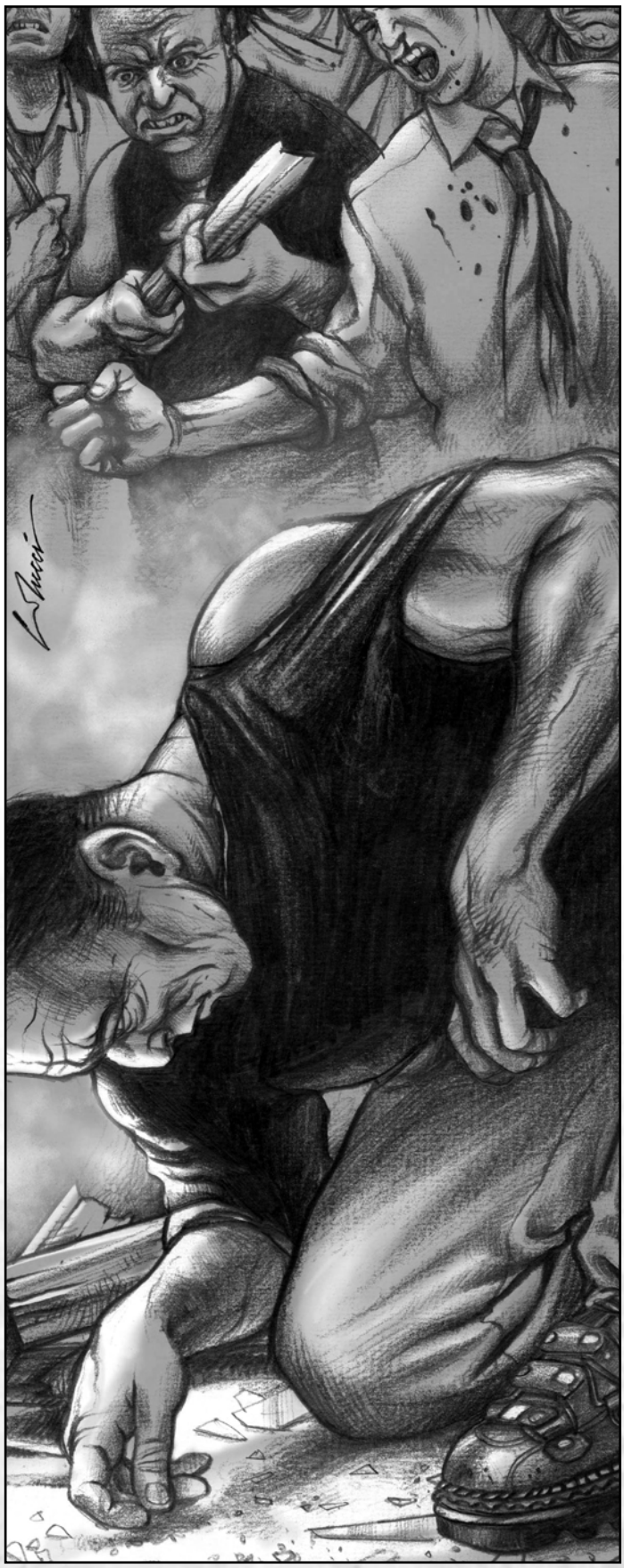
absorbs herself in some meaningless, trivial task (preferably one related to her personality) instead of facing the issue. Such characters suffer a –2 penalty to all dice pools while the stressful situation persists, with the exception of dice pools related to their rote-action repetition. This penalty reflects the distraction the character feels while she'd rather be cataloguing the books on the shelves rather than negotiating with the hostile vampire in the library. This derangement is similar to obsessive compulsion (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 98) but is not as severe or debilitating. It's intended as more of a minor autonomic quirk than a full-blown obsession.

**Glossolalia (mild):** A Promethean who suffers episodes of glossolalia occasionally has periods of time in which he becomes unable to communicate in his own language. In place of his native language, he might speak a foreign language he doesn't normally know, or he might actually speak some mystic tongue that has no origin in the known world. Some afflicted Created speak the long-dead languages of their Lineage's Progenitors or demiurges. Others speak languages that one of their corpse-bodies might have known in life. Still other speak "the tongue of the angels" or "with the words of Mercury itself." Regardless of what language the character suddenly speaks, no one around her is able to understand it. This itself can be a cause of frustration for the Promethean, and may well cause a conflict with other derangements.

Effect: The effect is straightforward in that no one who has any verbal conversation with the character undergoing a spell of glossolalia can understand him. While people familiar with the language in question might be able to recognize it, they won't be able to comprehend anything the character says. Whenever a character with the glossolalia derangement spends a Willpower point, that character's player should roll Wits + Composure. If the roll succeeds, the derangement remains inert. If the roll fails, the character speaks in an alien tongue for the duration of the scene. The player and Storyteller should mutually decide if the character speaks the same language every time. The Storyteller should also determine whether any "otherworldly" tongues the character blurts out are simply gibberish or are actual languages of alien or mystic origin.

**Synesthesia (mild):** Sometimes, Promethean minds interpret sensory input incorrectly or they have difficulty translating input into the proper context. In some cases, the results of this sense-mixing are synesthesia, the ability to "taste" colors, "hear" tactile sensations or "see" smells. While this condition can make for some interesting poetical expression, it can also make understanding between two individuals difficult.

Effect: When the afflicted Promethean experiences an overwhelming amount of sensory or emotional input — anything from looking into a light while using Nightsight (p. 147) to suffering pain in combat to discussing a personal experience that necessitated a Humanity roll — the player should roll Wits + Composure. If the roll succeeds, no additional complications occur. If the roll fails, the Promethean's mind either misunderstands or miscommunicates the envi-



ronment, thus giving the Promethean erratic, conflicting and incorrect sensory information. For the remainder of the scene, the Promethean suffers a –2 penalty to all Presence and Manipulation dice pools, as she's unable to effectively relate her experiences to those around her.

**Submission (severe; extreme; follows Inferiority Complex or Rote-Action Repetition):** When this derangement afflicts a character, that character needs a purpose and she needs someone else to define that purpose for her. She is incapable of making her own decisions. She might even ignore stimuli if a dominant personality doesn't define how she should react to them.

This is a truly debilitating derangement, as it can cause tormented Prometheans to attack friends, abandon allies, betray comrades and give enemies exactly what they want.

Effect: In any stressful situation, the player rolls Wits + Composure for the character. If the roll succeeds, the character retains free will. If the roll fails, the character has no will of her own. In this latter circumstance, the character will follow orders issued by the person with the highest Presence who issues her a direct command. The character cannot spend Willpower on any of these assigned tasks, and she cannot choose to shirk them unless she succeeds on a Wits + Resolve roll at a –2 penalty. Characters who are issued orders will not kill themselves, but they will hurt themselves if commanded to do so, though they will not inflict enough damage on themselves that would cause the player to mark off the last two boxes on the character's Health track. Further, a character ordered to hurt herself in a combat situation wouldn't do so, as she'd have no real trust that the individual telling her to harm herself wouldn't just finish the job thereafter. A spell of submission lasts for a number of turns equal to the highest-Presence character's total presence + Willpower. If no one steps up to issue commands to the character, or the character cannot hear the command being issued, she slumps into a useless heap until she makes a Wits + Composure roll at a –2 penalty.

# The Generative Act: Creating Prometheans (or Pandorans)

There comes a stage in every Promethean's Pilgrimage that most of them dread — the moment when they must bequeath their curse to another, instilling Divine Fire into a dead corpse and bringing it to life as a new Promethean. Most hate the idea that they must create another monster like themselves so that they might possibly attain Mortality. Few refuse to undertake this stage, though, for it *must* be done if the New Dawn is to come.

Others fear the task for another reason. If they get it wrong, if they have not sufficiently purified themselves, it won't be a Promethean they create, but a Pandoran. Or worse, many Pandorans at once.

Not all Prometheans dread this step in their ongoing alchemical lives. Some relish it. Some actually want to create others of their own kind, either as companions to assuage their loneliness, as devoted children to do their bidding, or as a means of populating the world with a new master race. There are even Created, such as the Centimani, who want their generative operation to go awry, so that they can plague the world with more Pandorans.

The act of creating a Promethean is called *mulitiplicatio*, or "multiplication," a necessary stage before the creator can complete his final stage of *projectio*, or Mortality. If the creation results in the generation of Pandorans, however, it is called Epimetheus' Folly.

A would-be creator must enact the following steps:

## Step One: Acquire the Corpus

The creator must first obtain a dead body. His Lineage determines the necessary state of the body, as listed in the Lineage descriptions beginning on p. 99. Frankensteins, and optionally Galateids, are cobbled together from more than one body (and only beautiful bodies for Galateids), while Osirans, Tammuz and Ulgan need only one body. In all cases, the body or bodies must be dismembered and re-formed. This is the alchemical stage referred to as *digestio*.

The creator's Azoth determines how long the body can have been dead: 24 hours per dot. If he attempts to animate a corpse (or a collection of parts from different corpses) that has been dead for longer, he suffers a –1 dice penalty for each week of decomposition. If the body has been kept on ice, the penalty is –1 per every one month.

## Step Two: Impart the Humour

During the preparation of the corpse, the creator imparts a portion of his Lineage's key humour into it. A Frankenstein produces yellow bile from the liver, a Galateid produces blood from her spleen, an Ulgan produces ectoplasm from his pineal gland, and so on. The creator either spits the substance up from deep within his organ via his gullet or cuts himself to bleed it out or extract it with his fingers in a gooey lump. He mixes this substance into the corpse as he joins the limbs. If the corpse was already prepared by someone else, or was perhaps the victim of dismemberment and was stitched together by a mortal undertaker, the creator can spit his humour into the throat of the corpse.

He must spend one Pyros as he imparts the humour, investing it with his Azothic radiance, a necessary preparation for the fourth stage, when the humours receive the Azoth itself.

## Step Three: Exposure to the Elements

Each Lineage has its own key element. It is vital to the creation of the new Promethean. The Lineage descriptions,

beginning on p. 99, detail the elements needed for each and the manner in which they are used.

## Step Four: *Distillatio*

The creator now sacrifices a dot of his own Azoth to spark to life the implanted humour. The Pyros he invested into it readied it to receive the Azoth. This is the moment of generation, when Azoth animates the humours, spreading them throughout the corpse, which twitches and convulses as its organs come to life.

Each Lineage has a different means of imparting the Azoth. The Osirans, for instance, receive it in conjunction with crushed roses that are then devoured by the corpse, which begins to chew and swallow as the Azoth animates it.

Some call this step the "Promethean Gift," as the creator hands the Divine Fire to the being of clay, causing a new Adam or Eve to rise from the dust.

## Step Five: Judgment

The player now rolls the creator's Humanity, modified by the conditions that follow the roll results.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The creator fails to make a Promethean. The corpse tears itself apart and its limbs warp, shift and merge into one or more Pandorans. Either one Pandoran is produced per dot of the creator's Azoth or a single *Sublimatus*, a sentient Pandoran, is quickened from the corpse.

**Failure:** The creator fails to make a Promethean. The corpse tears itself apart and its limbs warp, shift and merge into one or more Pandorans. The creator's player now rolls his Azoth with no modifiers and compares the following results:

*Failure:* A single Pandoran is created. It goes into a feeding frenzy, but if it fails to gain at least one Pyros point within the scene, it dies instead of going dormant.

*Success:* One Pandoran is created per success. Each enters a feeding frenzy, and follows the normal rules for Pandoran Dormancy if they don't acquire Pyros after the scene ends. See "Dormancy" on p. 222 for details.

*Exceptional Success:* Either five or more Pandorans are created (one per success), or a single *Sublimatus*, a sentient Pandoran, is quickened from the corpse.

**Success:** A new Promethean is created.

**Exceptional Success:** A new Promethean is created, and it comes to full awareness and capability within the scene. It still lacks any firm sense of identity, but it has little trouble speaking and commanding its body.

**Conditions**

Some of the conditions that can modify the Humanity roll are as follows. The Storyteller should feel free to create modifiers of his own.

| Modifier | Condition |
|---|---|
| –1 | This is the second time the generative act has been performed by the creator. (Increase this modifier by one for each successive act.) He can erase this cumulative penalty by going to the wastes and lowering his Azoth by at least one dot. |
| –1 | The generative act is done out of spite, revenge or selfishness, rather than necessity. |
| –1 | The generative act is performed under threat or against the Promethean's will (coercion). |
| –1 | The creator practices Centimani, the Refinement of Flux. |
| –1 | The generative act is performed within the boundaries of a fifth-stage Wasteland. |
| –2 | The creator has suffered the ravages of Torment within the last month. |
| –2 | A mortal suffering from Disquiet caused by the creator is present at any point during the fourth or fifth steps. |
| –2 | The corpse belongs to one of the Redeemed, a former Promethean who had attained Mortality. |
| +1 | Per point of Vitriol the creator spends to aid the generative act. |
| +1 to +3 | The creator has studied the actual notes of a mortal demiurge. The only notes that might possibly be available in modern times, however, are those belonging to Victor Frankenstein. Their discovery would be priceless to any Promethean or occultist. Still, the Storyteller could introduce into his chronicle an Egyptian artifact that contained the secret wisdom of Isis, a Babylonian stele recording the dark magics of Ishtar, a tract on "sculpting" by Pygmalion, and even an oral Siberian folktale embedded with the secrets of Tengri. |

### Promethean Parenting

Once a creator has made a Promethean, he must decide what, if any, are his responsibilities to the new creature. Many creators flee from their creations in shame or horror at the enormity of what they've done, although some do so out of a twisted sense that the new Promethean must learn things the hard way, lest he always cling to others for assistance. A creator might have a clear sign (from dreams or a visitation by a *qashmal*) that he must leave his new creation, or else trouble will ensue for both of them.

Some creators stay with their progeny, helping them through the confusion and agony of their first days and nights. In a rare few cases, creator and created stay together for many years until their respective Pilgrimages draw them apart. Most of the time, however, the progeny grows to resent his maker, blaming him for all the Disquiet, Torments and disfigurements he experiences. Although few take the dramatic step of trying to kill their creator in revenge, some might feel driven to do so by their Pilgrimage. Betraying the parent might be the one remaining task they must complete to win their quest.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# STORYTELLING AND ANTAGONISTS

The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter. I enjoyed asking her to relate her story. She was quite frank:

"My father made me because he was right lonely and wanted someone to love. There were no normal folk who would love him, so he decided he'd create one of his own kin. We lived happily for years in our little cabin by a dead creek. He used to tell me stories of how he lived in the Old West and built a gallows with his own hands and hung horse thieves for the frontier folk.

"Then, one day, a lady from town tricked Daddy, and people from town came and burned him and burned our cabin down. They packed me off to a home for orphans and waifs. I didn't much like it there. The other girls made a game of tying me down and beating me. The headmistress said she'd keep me there always, just to have the pleasure of thrashing the devil out of me.

"I thought to take a knife from the kitchen and use it on some of the girls in their sleep. But instead I picked two or three of the girls and made them love me. That made the other girls hate them, so they had no choice but to compete for my favor. I turned more girls into my friends and set different groups of them against each other, and I declare the whole place turned into a lovely stew-pot of discord. The headmistress I drove mad and used for a plaything.

"Soon I grew bored. So when a rich and handsome man came looking for a daughter, I made him choose me. And we were happy. He gave me all the finest of things, and had me tutored and well educated. But then I found out he didn't love me, not really."

Mayllan



Both the man of science and the man of art live always at the edge of mystery, surrounded by it. Both, as a measure of their creation, have always had to do with the harmonization of what is new with what is familiar, with the balance between novelty and synthesis, with the struggle to make partial order in total chaos.... This cannot be an easy life.

—J. Robert Oppenheimer, quoted in Robert Jungk, *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*, trans. by James Cleugh

The Philosopher's Stone is the core component of alchemy, the *materia prima* by which lead transmutes to gold or by which the mystic elixir that allows mortals to cheat death comes into being. It is the key to the Great Work of alchemy. Metaphorically, the Philosopher's Stone is the Holy Grail, forever sought yet frustratingly elusive.

For Prometheans, the Philosopher's Stone is both grail and goal, metaphorical concept and literal trophy. It is the center of their quest and the ultimate attainment of Mortality — the transmutation from soulless creation into genuine human being. A Promethean doesn't just become a normal, fragile, ignorant mortal. The transmutation of the Azoth into a soul creates a "purified" human, similar to what many Prometheans believe humans to have been like before the Fall and exile from Eden or to how they are destined to evolve.

**Promethean** chronicles tell the tale of the grail quest, the search for the Philosopher's Stone — the Pilgrimage at the end of which lies that vaunted state. It's an advanced concept for a Storytelling game, most of which don't have clearly defined conclusions or even "winners" of the story. That's expressly what **Promethean** sets out to do, however. From the visionary genesis wrought by the demiurge, through the terrifying acknowledgement of the self, to the ultimate emergence from the grotesque as represented by the transition from creation to man — this is the path Promethean nature leads the Created to follow. Whether or not they choose to heed this call is up to them.

## Summa Perfectionis: The Pilgrimage

Let's be frank. A **Promethean** Storyteller has his own Great Work ahead of him when he plans to run a chronicle. Because the end goal for each character in the chronicle can actually be achieved, the Storyteller has much more planning to do than he would for any of the other games that use the Storytelling System. The Storyteller needs to plan not only the overall course of the chronicle as normal, but also as many individualized character progressions as he has players.

This task is not insurmountable, however. The objective of this part of the Storytelling chapter is to lay plain how to do just that.

Most important among the character's concerns is the Pilgrimage, the journey from manufactured entity to realized individual. This is the crux of the Promethean condition. It is the ultimate potential of Elpis and the apex of the Azoth's heat.

Indeed, the process is tied very closely to the mechanical functions of Azoth, though simply increasing Azoth on its own isn't enough. Each Promethean undergoes the Pilgrimage on her own terms, and the milestones that mark that journey are hers and hers alone.

### What is a Milestone?

A milestone is a character objective. In some ways, it is its own discrete quest, part of the larger search for Mortality. (See "Attaining the *Lapis Philosophorum*: Mortality" on p. 194.) Milestones have several characteristics.

#### The Storyteller creates all of the milestones for all of the characters.

This is part of the Storyteller's significant amount of bookkeeping, but it's a central part of managing the chronicle. Much as the Storyteller defines the theme and mood of the chronicle, she also defines the milestones each character must pass to reach the ultimate goal.

Storytellers must be careful with this. The fact that she creates the character's milestones *does not mean* that she gets to define a player's character, nor does it mean that she determines the order in which the character achieves those milestones. The Storyteller must understand intimately what the player wants to experience with her character and then construct milestones that reinforce that vision, not the other way around.

For example, let's say Bill is planning a chronicle. In this chronicle, Conrad wants to portray an Ulgan who is initially enamored of the Refinement of Copper but ultimately chooses to take a different path than this first Refinement. In Conrad's mind, he sees the character seizing upon an idea that very closely cleaves to his Ulgan Lineage, but through discovery of who his character is, changes over to another philosophy in pursuit of the New Dawn, even though he doesn't know what that other Refinement will be yet. Conrad obviously likes the idea of a character in transition (as opposed to one who decides immediately that he'll follow the first One True Way that catches his eye and see it through to the end). Conrad also likes the spiritual nature of the Ulgan. Such being the case, Bill should plan Conrad's character's milestones around these principles. Perhaps one of Conrad's milestones will be "Find the Refinement that best suits you." Another might be "Achieve a peaceful resolution with a spirit." These ideas suit Conrad's inclinations with his character choices. If Bill chose to make one of the character's milestones "Rigorously adhere to the Cuprum Refinement and become a paragon of self-refinement" or "Conquer the local gangland culture," Bill would be undermining both his own chronicle and Conrad's enjoyment of his character.

In creating milestones, the Storyteller orchestrates the events of the chronicle to a certain degree. This must be handled deftly. If a character's milestones are a foregone conclusion, players might complain about not being able to impact the story or grow their character at their own pace. Completely unstructured milestones can make a chronicle feel thrown together without any real sense of purpose or thematic continuity.

Storytellers should not show the list of milestones to the players beforehand. Achieving milestones is very much a metaphor for the mysteries of life. Characters gain experience by learning things about themselves, not by following a roadmap to enlightenment. The Storyteller should tell the player that he has satisfied one of his character's milestones once he achieves it (and grant him his just rewards).

## Milestones are rated by the amount of Vitriol awarded for their completion.

Achieving milestones yields Vitriol for the Promethean. Vitriol is a sort of supplemental experience that can be used exclusively for purchasing traits that belong solely to Prometheans — Azoth, Bestowments, Transmutations or Humanity. A milestone shouldn't result in an automatic increase of Azoth or Humanity in any but the most extreme circumstances; this Vitriol award represents progress toward such increases. In other words, completing a milestone doesn't result in an instant epiphany upon completion, but it does result in a slow advancement of the Promethean's sense of understanding. For more details on Vitriol, see pp. 198-199.

Learning to assign point values to milestones is a key part of the Storyteller's responsibility. An eight-point milestone, for example, might seem like a lot, but because the Storyteller creates milestones, he has a great deal of input as to how they come into play.

Milestones, obviously, are tremendously personal, which is why the Storyteller creates them separately for each character. If the character learns that the Promethean who created her is dead, she might receive only one or two points of Vitriol, but it might open up new vistas of potential for her, as she comes to understand that she won't be beholden to her creator's whims and judgments. For still another character, learning that his creator is dead might be a seven-point milestone. This character's concepts and goals tie more into expectation, duty and the eternal question of the meaning of life than the former character's do. Therefore, learning more about his origin confers a greater reward.

The suggested amount of Vitriol earned from a milestone varies by how important the milestone is to the character. For example, it might be the Storyteller's intention to tie an eight-point reward to a foundational thematic idea for a character, allowing her to grow significantly from Azoth 1 to Azoth 2 with the completion of a single milestone. (Azoth costs 8 x the new level in experience points to achieve, so going from 1 to 2 would require 16 experience points, half of which were gained as Vitriol in the hypothetical eight-point milestone.) Comparatively, a milestone of lesser point value obviously has less mechanical impact on the character, but it might have a far greater effect on her sense of self.

The following table offers some suggestions for Vitriol rewards. The examples are broad and not tied to any specific character concept, but they give some sense of scale in understanding the mysteries of the Promethean condition.

| Vitriol Awarded | Milestone Importance | Example |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | Minor | Finding the graves of the people who were stitched together to create the Promethean. |
| 4-8 | Major | Saving another Promethean from self-destruction and learning about oneself in the process. |
| 9+ | Superlative | Helping another Promethean achieve Rebirth. |

See pp. 198-199 for more on Vitriol and its rewards.

Additionally, characters gain no benefit for repeating milestones.

## Milestones must be concise and achievable.

This might seem like common sense, but it deserves to be mentioned.

The milestone itself should be a single idea or sentence. If the milestone requires a paragraph to define, it's too specific

or convoluted. While the *significance* of a milestone is probably worth many more words to the player and character, the milestone itself is a simple statement of objective. Storytellers should not attempt to define the circumstances or specifics of milestones. Doing so robs the player of her free will, as she can succeed at the game only by adhering to the veritable script the Storyteller creates (and keeps hidden from her).

Likewise, milestones must be achievable. If the characters can't satisfy their milestones because the Storyteller made them too specific or too difficult, the whole purpose of the game becomes moot. Milestones are not treats to be handed out by a domineering Storyteller for good player behavior. They're the crux of a Promethean's being and the literal objectives the characters must accomplish in order to win the game.

### Soul Alchemy

Do Prometheans know about these systems? Can they tell which actions will "stoke the fires" and advance the alchemical process of their purification? That's an answer for each Storyteller in each individual chronicle.

Certainly, Prometheans won't use the word "milestone." It's mechanical shorthand describing a game system that's invisible (or at least metaphysical) with regard to the characters in the game proper. Just like no character would suffer a gunshot wound to the face and scream, "Argh! I just suffered six points of damage!" neither will a character mention satisfying milestones.

On the other hand, some quantifiable degree of the Promethean's Pilgrimage might be detectable by Promethean scholars. Some waypoints along the Pilgrimage may be divined by intuition — the Pyros knows! — while most are hidden completely, defined by the existential force that measures such quantities, as represented by the Storyteller.

Similarly, characters will probably speak of Azoth and Vitriol, but not in the context of points or values. A character is much more likely to say, "His Azoth burns strongly," than, "He has an Azoth of 7."

## Planning For and Working with Milestones

How many milestones should constitute a Pilgrimage? What criteria should the Storyteller keep in mind when creating milestones? What happens if a character misses a milestone? With **Promethean**'s unique Storytelling format, these and more questions might arise as the Storyteller plans and presents the chronicle.

### Making Milestones

Milestones are the points along the Pilgrimage that exist as markers on the journey toward self-actualization. The function of milestones is to portray the human condition as something truly fragile and yet poignant, something worthy of attaining. It's not an academic sort of learning curve, since Prometheans already think and feel like humans. Nor is it a completely withdrawn achievement of linear duties; Prometheans aren't androids or computers. Milestones represent the Created's progressive self-realization that they do think and feel like humans. That's what's important.

That doesn't impart any moral or ethical direction to milestones, however. Humanity is an entirely separate measurement than Azoth. A Promethean could become exceptionally vicious along the Pilgrimage, by which he demonstrates the ephemeral nature of human life. He might take a shine to larceny, building his own real life from the stolen scraps of others' success. These are just as valid Pilgrimages, with just as succinct milestones, as a character who cultivates the concept of love or sacrifices himself for some greater good along the Pilgrimage.

Indeed, a savvy Storyteller will make a character's milestones a mixture of positive and negative experiences, all of which combine to make a fully realized Promethean, versed in the ambiguities of the world and accepting of both good and evil, opportunity and crisis. It's naïve (but not impossible) to have a character's experiences be solely positive. Such a saint probably isn't cut out to handle the vagaries of the World of Darkness. The converse is also true — a Promethean so ruthlessly irredeemable will probably meet her end at the hands of some concerned third party who has had enough of her depredations and wants to improve his own small corner of the world. Ultimately, polarities of "good" and "evil" don't work in the World of Darkness. A person is judged by the actions he takes, and those actions are what make him a real person, not arbitrary attributions of good or evil.

What follows are a few principles that make for good criteria from which to create milestones for characters. This list is by no means exhaustive — these are just a few concepts to get you started. You'll certainly have more ideas once your chronicle begins to take shape and your players design characters to participate in the drama.

- **Emotional discovery:** The Promethean feels what it's like to love another being, to get genuinely angry at one (not Torment driven, but through natural psychology), to mourn the loss of a friend, etc.
- **Intellectual discovery:** The Promethean understands something about human psychology, such as philosophy, religion, politics, taxes, etc.
- **Situational discovery:** The Promethean experiences the proverbial mile in another man's shoes. He learns what it's like to have to work hard to feed others, to slave away at a job for survival (or dignity), to make the sort of compromises a leader must, to abandon others for selfish reasons, etc.

• **Murder:** The Promethean truly understands death by causing it, either intentionally or accidentally (as with the little girl in *Frankenstein*). This doesn't count if the person can resurrect himself; it's only useful if the victim can't come back (making him into a Promethean isn't really bringing a dead mortal back).

• **Heroism or Villainy:** The Promethean sacrifices something important to save others. Or, he refuses to do so when the time is right, and so comes to an understanding of what happens when heroes don't arise.

• **Genesis:** The act of creating another Promethean. Unless the Storyteller has something equally as central and compelling for a given character, this should be a milestone in all Pilgrimages. There's no better way to understand the process and everything behind it than by doing it oneself. For some Prometheans, a successive milestone might be to mentor their creation — or destroy it! — while others might be able to get away with abandoning it (which might itself even be a milestone for some characters).

• **Refinements:** One of the greatest contributors to the Pilgrimage (and one that can lay a lot of groundwork for the Storyteller when she's planning milestones) is the conscious choice of philosophy and outlook the characters make. This can take many forms. It can be as simple as using a Refinement's affinity Transmutations to make a lasting or significant change to a character. It can be as abstract as choosing a course of action based on the archetypal ideologies of the Refinement. A character following the Aurum Refinement might have "Live in a bustling condominium community instead of with members of your throng" as a milestone. An Ophidian character might have to inflict massive pain on a mortal to observe the difference between a human's suffering and the illusion of suffering fostered by the Azoth of a Promethean in pain. Indeed, dealing with Refinements or the transition between Refinements can make up as many as half of a Promethean's milestones. This isn't to say that every choice made in relation to or informed by a character's Refinement is a milestone. Likewise, simply using a character's affinity Transmutations isn't a guarantee of completing a milestone. The key is to make the Refinement and its Transmutations important but not the objective themselves. Transmutations and Refinements are only the means to the end, and their influence on the character is significant. Milestones should reflect this importance.

## How Many?

Deciding upon the number of milestones each character has to accomplish is a question related to the scope of the chronicle. The best way to plan a chronicle's size is to come up with a number of sessions or months that you'd like to lead it as Storyteller, then reduce that by 20 percent.

Sad but true, it's a reality that lives come before games, and you're probably going to be hard pressed to have everyone who wants to play the game actually sitting around the table every session. That's not a denigration of your skills or your troupe, it's just a fact. The unique structure **Promethean** presents makes games that drop off more damaging than other World of Darkness games. In other games, if the story doesn't keep going, well, it just stops, like a television series canceled before its final episode. **Promethean**, however, invests both its stories and its players so significantly in its characters that it's best to bite the bullet and tell the shorter story than it is to leave four or more characters hanging and unresolved.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. Literary tradition is based on the economy of words. Final drafts of literary manuscripts are optimally 10 to 20 percent shorter than their first drafts. The excess has been cut away, and a little more emphasis has been placed on the story events that are key. You're doing the same thing here: planning and writing based on optimum effect.

With that said, what number of milestones per character makes for a good chronicle? A chronicle of average length has one or two milestones per Azoth level the character will achieve. That is, a character's progress up the ladder of Azoth often depends on how much Vitriol he earns from his milestones. It also depends on how judiciously he spends it on Azoth. A character who earns vast amounts of Vitriol but who chooses to spend it on Transmutations isn't going to increase his Azoth as quickly as someone who devotes more mystical experience to fanning that Inner Fire. That makes sense. It's going to take that character who's effectively dallying with his Created state longer to come to his epiphany of self-realization. A chronicle of this scope takes between six to eight months of playing every other week to come to its resolution.

A short chronicle, one of only three to four months of every-other-week sessions, will probably consist of five to eight milestones per character. This also assumes that, to reach the conclusion, the Storyteller is going to award a bit more Vitriol and experience than normal. This is the concession he makes to the shorter schedule. Things happen a little more quickly and abstractly, or are representative of larger trends in the characters' lives. A chronicle like this either paints events in broad strokes or acknowledges its own smaller scale by reducing the grand sense of the stakes. Metaphorically, if the "normal" chronicle is *Frankenstein*, the short chronicle is the movie based on that book's events.

A long chronicle spends a lot of time developing each character and investigating the weight of her actions. Milestones here could be tied to a certain number of events per Azoth level. More likely, the Storyteller will simply have a large number in mind, developing about a third of them up front. The rest of the milestones — as many as 20 or 25 more — will come into being as the chronicle progresses and the characters become more fully conceptualized. If *Frankenstein* was a three-novel trilogy of 800 pages per volume, that's what we'd be talking about here. A word of warning: This

is opus-grade stuff. Story events will cause intense sessions of character introspection. Plot arcs will be vast and convoluted. It's not for the casual player, but the committed troupe that wants this degree of emotional involvement and game commitment. Remember what we said about planned length. Most people don't play chronicles of this length, and that's okay. But if you have those grand ambitions, by all means, take the reins and make it happen.

Remember that characters can't make their rolls for Rebirth until the Storyteller has determined that they've finished their Pilgrimage. While the Storyteller is certainly within his rights to allow a character a pre-emptive attempt (by negating whatever incomplete milestones may remain), cutting them severely short does a disservice to both the chronicle and the characters. A long chronicle stopped short gives the impression that characters don't yet truly know enough about themselves to merit Rebirth. A short chronicle stretched beyond its planned duration will almost certainly leave the players feeling as if they're just treading water or grinding forward to a predetermined conclusion. Therefore, it's important to cleave as closely to originally planned milestones as possible.

## Missed Milestones

Sometimes a character never quite makes it to achieving a milestone the Storyteller has concocted for him. Sometimes a character not only misses a milestone, but she actually takes the opposite tack, granting mercy where the Storyteller expected her to kill or going on a rampage when the Storyteller anticipated an act of soothsaying. Flexibility is required here.

In the latter case, if the character simply botched a milestone, the Storyteller has a decision to make. If the character made a king-hell mess of things, well, that's a shame. The road to Hell is paved with good intentions, after all. If, in the Storyteller's opinion, *the character learned something anyway*, he may choose to award her a diminished Vitriol award. If the character did indeed take some lesson away from the otherwise bungled milestone, the Storyteller may grant half of the planned Vitriol award.

Storytellers need to be open-minded and careful about these situations, and they should listen to player input. By their nature, milestones remain secret until accomplished. As such, it's the height of unfairness to hold a character's actions against her for holding her to an agreement she never made without allowing her to look at the event in retrospect. The Storyteller might have had an improper vision for what the character's true intent was. Frankly, he might be railroading the story for his own outcome rather than the players' simultaneous enjoyment. He might have outdated milestone information, or he might have confused one character's milestone with another's. Storytellers, listen to your players. You shouldn't allow players to weasel their way into satisfying milestones they've genuinely failed, but you should do them the courtesy of hearing them out if they have a legitimate counterpoint.

If the character has never had the opportunity to satisfy the milestone, the Storyteller should go back to her notebooks and rework the milestone. Forcing a milestone into place can feel artificial or jar the flow of the story. As such, it's better to make a few adjustments behind the Storyteller's screen and keep the story moving forward. No one will ever know, since all of the milestone building happens invisibly to the players anyway.

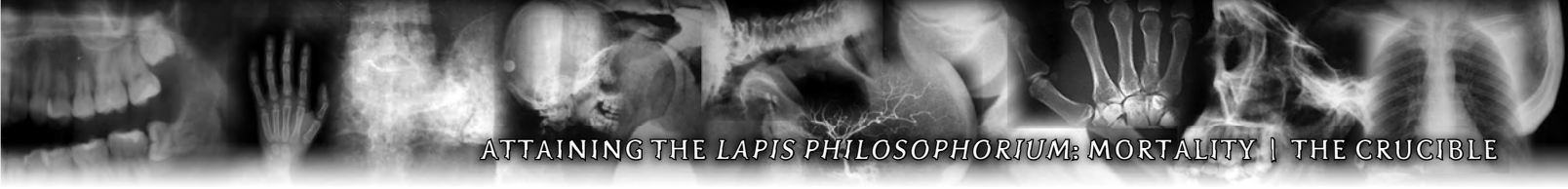
On those occasions when a character has blown a milestone entirely, well, that's too bad. That may seem harsh, especially in light of the fact that players don't see their milestones and their characters must pass all of them to attempt Rebirth, but that goes only so far. If a character truly makes a mess of himself, acting out of sorts, deliberately foiling himself, or as a result of the player being contrary to the character, the milestone is lost, never to be attained. No one ever said every Promethean was going to finish his Pilgrimage or that it would be a fait accompli. Storytellers must be *extremely* careful in making this judgment call, however. By sheer dint of being players' characters, these Prometheans have something important fated for them. You're not telling the tale of half-a-dozen "extras" on the set of *Frankenstein*, you're focused on the core characters themselves. In fact, *no single milestone failure should prevent a character from completing the Pilgrimage*. Everybody makes mistakes, and that whole precarious journey is what **Promethean** seeks to represent. If it becomes a pattern of behavior for the character, though, it may simply be that the artificial life of the Created is too much for him. As long as this continued failure doesn't indicate that the *player* himself is a problem, there's a lot of pathos and empathy to be gained as a result of such "doomed" characters. He might be an anti-hero, damned to inevitable failure himself, but able to facilitate another character's Pilgrimage and ultimate Rebirth.

Realize also that characters who attempt Rebirth and fail have to complete a further number of milestones equal to 10 minus the character's Humanity at the time the attempt was made. See pp. 195-197 for more on this.

# Attaining the *Lapis Philosophorum*: Mortality

The following section describes the system by which Prometheans become mortal. The specifics of each stage of the process are in the hands of the Storyteller, based on the goals of his chronicle, but this system serves as a foundation for game fairness. It prevents players from feeling that their characters' progressions are entirely up to Storyteller whim. Additionally, it gives new Storytellers a better handle on what to do.

This section addresses the *framework* of the Mortality system, but the *content* of the characters' Pilgrimage still lies in the hands of the Storyteller.




## The Crucible

Every Promethean seeks to become mortal or human, at least on some level. This distinction separates them from the deeply flawed Pandorans and from lesser, unaware but still intelligent constructs. Prometheans themselves call this journey the Pilgrimage, each small step on the path of which is sometimes described as "stoking the Azoth." In terms of player participation, this might be representative of a mythological hero's journey, or of the literary principle that character plus conflict equals conclusion. However the players and Storyteller individually choose to view it, it is the Prometheans' raison d'être. It's the reason your troupe gathers to play the game.

Speaking in the context of game systems, gaining Mortality can be viewed as a flowchart or as a level or plot progression. Each completed milestone or quest unlocks new potential that is latent or dormant in the Created. To the Prometheans, this is their reason for describing the process as stoking the Azoth. Each step forward on the Pilgrimage releases the Divine Fire's transformative powers. Most importantly, *each milestone of the Pilgrimage is determined by the Storyteller*.

Making progress on the Pilgrimage awards a special type of experience points, known as Vitriol, but these experience points must be spent only on traits that belong solely to Prometheans — namely Azoth, Bestowments, Humanity or Transmutations. If the player does not spend them on his character within a week (in game time), these Vitriol points are susceptible to theft by Pandorans. Pandoran thieves can then spend these stolen points upon themselves. (See pp. 222-224.) Worse, another Promethean can steal this unrealized potential with an invasive ritual. (See "Lacunae," pp. 199-200.)

The desired result is the Promethean's realization, his transition from a construct into a living, thinking, feeling being. Once the character completes the Storyteller's predetermined amount of quests, he can attempt to become mortal upon completion of a unique task or specific rite. If successful, he becomes mortal. (He's "won" the game!) If he fails, he must complete more acts of atonement, penance or enlightenment or raise his Azoth before he can try again.

## Systems

The actual system for achieving the transmutation from Promethean to mortal is simple. Upon completing his Pilgrimage (as determined by the Storyteller), the player rolls his Humanity as a dice pool. A few modifiers affect this dice pool, as well. If the player achieves one or more successes, the Promethean undergoes the ultimate chrysalis, beginning the final transformation into a human being. *This is a simple roll, and only success or failure matters.* Dramatic failures or exceptional successes do not apply to the roll to attempt Rebirth. (They do, however, apply to the Azoth roll to comprehend Promethean memory after a successful Rebirth. See pp. 196-197 for more information on this.)

It might seem strange that this massive thematic event seemingly rests upon the outcome of a single dice roll, but that's not actually the case. Before the player can even roll the dice, the Promethean will have made enormous strides in her Pilgrimage. She will have achieved numerous milestones that reveal who she is and where her moral compass points. Rolling the dice in fact comes after the character's story climax. It is the denouement that effects the conclusion of that character's story arc. If the character can't fulfill her Pilgrimage, she'll never actually make it to the point at which her player would make the Humanity roll. Not just any Promethean can decide, "Hey, I want to be human *now*." The dice are the final portal, but the character must first find the road and follow its length to have any hope of facing that last door at all.

The roll does have its own importance, however, which is why the system employs it instead of allowing the completion of the Pilgrimage to signify the transformation. The dice represent the fickleness of Fate, the whims of whatever metaphysical energies aligned to allow the demiurge to create a Progenitor focusing on the character herself. They symbolize the purity of the soul's alchemical Fire at that moment and the stability of the Created's Humanity at that moment, as well as a dash of universal rightness — or perversity.

**Suggested Modifiers**

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | The character has an understanding of why her creator created her |
| +1 | The character is part of a Branded throng |
| +1 | The character has an Azoth of 5–7 |
| +2 | The character has an Azoth of 8+ |
| +2 | The character has at least one mortal relative or some other current tie to the world of living humans |
| –1 | The character has gone to the wastes in the past year (not cumulative with the greater penalty for going to the wastes) |
| –1 | For each mild derangement the character suffers at the time of the roll, cumulative |
| –2 | The character has gone to the wastes in the past month (not cumulative with the lesser penalty for going to the wastes) |
| –2 | For each severe derangement the character suffers at the time of the roll, cumulative |
| –2 | The character has at least one relative, friend or close acquaintance who is supernaturally aware or active (a werewolf or "true" psychic, for example), not including other Prometheans |
| –3 | The character has entered a state of Flux or Torment in the past month (see p. 77 for information on Flux and p. 182 for information on Torment) |
| –5 | The character has performed any lacunae in the past year (see pp. 199-200) |

Note that these are only suggested modifiers. Storytellers with players whose Prometheans are on the cusp of the transition from Created to human may apply situational modifiers of their own, reflecting the character's diligence or perceived sincerity in the Pilgrimage. This shouldn't be a fait accompli, though. The character should have a chance to succeed upon completion of the Pilgrimage, even if the journey wasn't a perfect one. In fact, it's inarguable that a "perfect" Pilgrimage exists, as Prometheans certainly have the ability to learn from their mistakes.

The player may not use Willpower to add dice to this roll.

## Failure

If the roll for the Rebirth fails, the Promethean climbs to the metaphorical mountaintop, suspiring its rarefied air and then… nothing. No burst of insight. No metaphysical enlightenment. No spiritual or supernatural rebirth. Some Prometheans describe the Pyros as burning coldly, like a black sun, for a short time after a failed reach for Rebirth.

Failure is its own punishment in this attempt at transcendence. In terms of systems, if the player fails the roll, the character must first smother the Inner Fire and then stoke it again to its previous strength or higher before making the attempt again. In mechanical terms, the character must drop her Azoth by one or more (see "Going to the Wastes" on pp. 207-208) and then raise it again by one or more. Additionally, the character must complete a number of further Pilgrimage milestones equal to 10 minus the character's Humanity rating at the time of the attempt. Storytellers, you would do well to have a few extra milestones prepared or at least germinating, in case a character fails to achieve Rebirth.

## Success

Once a Promethean becomes mortal, he is, for all intents and purposes, human. He achieves the golden hour of the Aurora, the arrival of the rising dawn, alchemically speaking. Prometheans call these blessed few the Redeemed. This achievement doesn't grant any superhuman or transcendental powers; these characters are mortal and have no inherent special benefits. A Promethean becoming human is a natural conclusion to the story, the ultimate objective of the Created.

Upon attaining the mortal condition, the character's Humanity trait changes to Morality (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 91), as his attempts at following a human moral code have come true. He retains all his traits except Azoth, Pyros, Transmutations and any other supernatural properties. *Exception:* Those traits that are rated higher than the normal human maximum of five dots remain, though the player cannot spend experience points to increase them further.

### Athanors — Preparations for Mortality

Some Prometheans choose to develop a special form of Azoth called an Athanor, a furnace within their bodies in which they can seal Vitriol and "cook" it so that it produces special qualities and abilities. An Athanor imbues the Promethean's essence so indelibly that he retains its qualities into mortal life.

For more on Athanors, see pp. 260-265.

The player makes one final Azoth roll using the Promethean's Azoth score from just before he became human. This roll determines how much he remembers of his Promethean life. He might forget it completely, misremember it or remember everything.

**Suggested Modifiers**

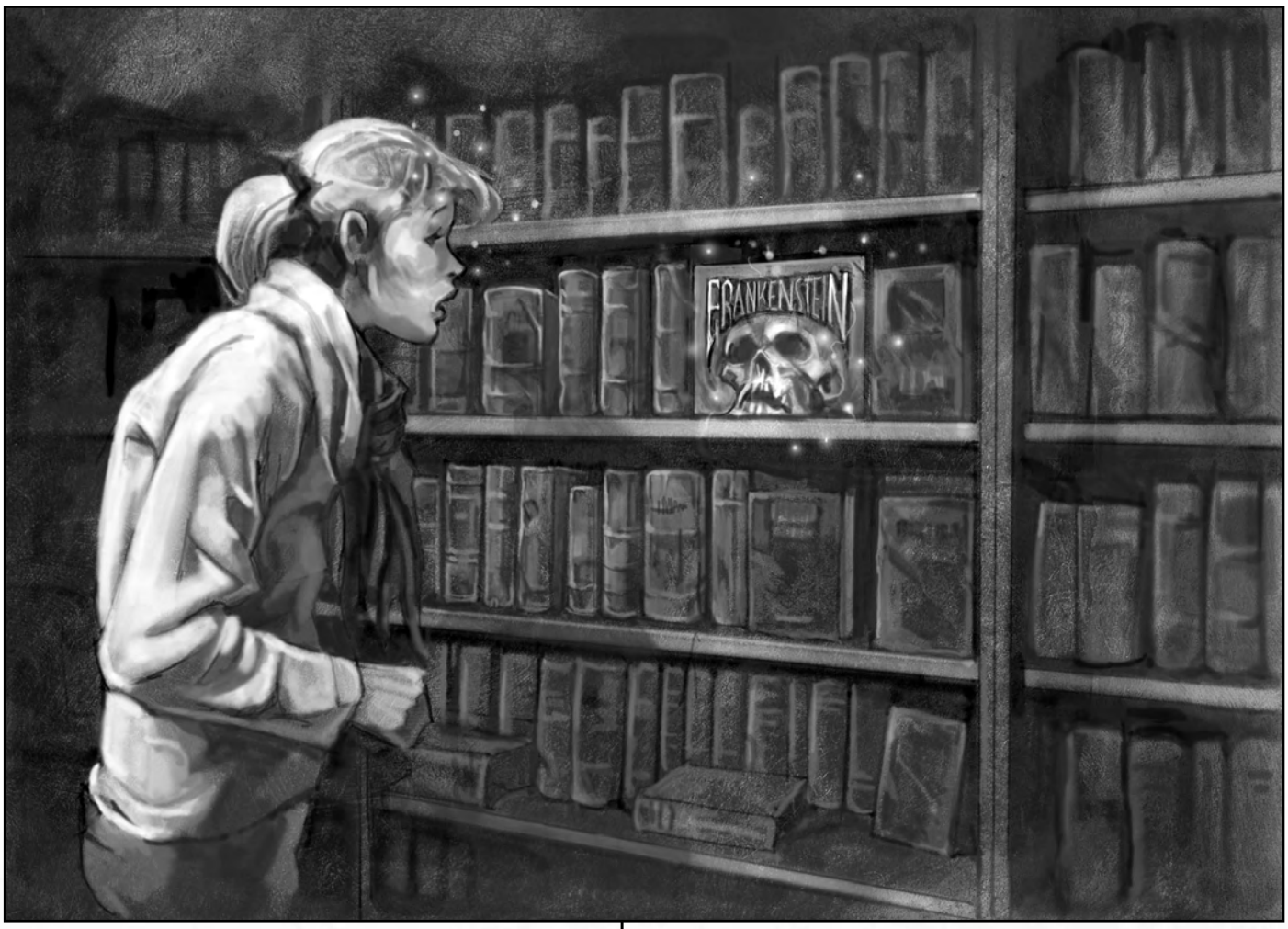
| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| –5 | The character has performed any lacunae in the past year |
| –3 | The character has had contact with supernatural creatures other than Prometheans in the past month |
| –3 | The character has gone to the wastes in the past month |
| –3 | The character has used a Transmutation or other supernatural power in the past month |
| –2 | The character has entered a state of Flux or Torment in the past month |
| –1 | The character has had contact with supernatural creatures other than Prometheans in the past year |
| –1 | The character has gone to the wastes in the past year |
| +1 | The character has indulged a Virtue and/or a Vice in the past week (non-cumulative) |

**Roll Results**

The player may not use Willpower to add dice to this roll.

**Dramatic Failure:** The character remembers nothing of his life as a Promethean, which leaves giant gaps in his memory and understanding of himself; or his memories overlap, distort and jumble, leaving his mind fractured and potentially psychotic. The Storyteller should assign an appropriate derangement to the character with this result. If the character has no derangements or only severe derangements at the time of the roll, the new derangement should be mild. If the character already has a mild derangement, the imperfect transition aggravates that condition, making it severe.

**Failure:** The character's Promethean life largely eludes him, making for frustrating lapses in memory and awkward social moments. ("What do you mean, you don't remember your parents' names?") This has no succinct mechanical effect on the character, but the Storyteller should interpret how it affects the erstwhile Promethean and his new life where appropriate. One month following this result, the player should




make this roll again, subtracting one from the dice pool, to see what state the new human is moving toward. The dice pool penalties on these subsequent rolls are cumulative. For example, if a player is on his third roll to see how much of her Promethean life his character remembers, he will subtract three dice from the character's final Azoth pool.

**Success:** The character remembers everything of his Promethean life and emerges from the chrysalis a well-adjusted individual… or at least as much so as his Morality née Humanity and derangements will allow. This result does not conjure happy memories of childhood or parentage or anything like that, however, and the wise Promethean would do well to be wary of questions that probe too deeply or keys to his past that might scare or agitate "normal" people he comes in contact with. Note that if the player succeeds on the roll to retain memory, he doesn't have to roll again the following month.

**Exceptional Success:** The character retains all memories of his experiences as a Promethean as well as *just a touch* of supernatural awareness. In addition to the effects of a standard success, these characters are unaffected by Promethean Disquiet (see pp. 167-173) and werewolf-caused Lunacy (**Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. pp175–178), and are considered to be Sleepwalkers when witnessing Awakened magic (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 334). Note again that if the player achieves an exceptional success on the roll to retain memory, he doesn't have to roll again the following month.

## Aftermath

When a Promethean achieves the Rebirth, that doesn't necessarily mean he's out of the chronicle. A player might wish to have his newly human character continue his relationship with his old throng, or the character might still have unfinished business among the shadows of the World of Darkness.

As a mortal, the character still nurtures some spark of the Pyros within him. Such a character can Awaken or be Embraced, though. If this is the case, that spark of Pyros is extinguished by the Embrace, or transformed by the Awakening. Vampires and mages who come to be in this way are normal for that type of creature. They gain no benefit from having once been Prometheans. Storytellers, as a word of warning, consider carefully whether you wish to allow something like this in your chronicle. The whole dramatic thrust of a Promethean character is his quest for Mortality.

Making him a vampire or mage after the fact "because that would be cool" can undermine the character's dramatic value if it's not handled with suitable regard.

If a character who has achieved the New Dawn is killed, he dies. The spark of Pyros within him slowly burns out like a fading cinder. If another Promethean fans that spark, however, it awakens, and the "mortal" arises as a Promethean again. The Created fanning that spark goes through the normal process of creating a Promethean. If he errs, he could even turn the dead mortal into a Pandoran. The reanimated Promethean might very well hate whoever did this to him again, preferring whatever reward he believes awaited his human soul. (If the dying character was Embraced or Awakened, however, he does indeed meet Final Death.)

## Vitriol

Promethean characters earn experience points for their activities and misadventures like other characters in the World of Darkness do, with one notable exception. Their quests and travails attune them to their Inner Fire and larger purpose, hopefully engendering a greater understanding of the individual Promethean's concept of self. When Prometheans unearth the secrets of their quest toward self-realization, identity and human empathy they can gain a special type of experience called Vitriol.

Alchemically, vitriol is a Philosopher's Stone, a medium in which to react substances. For Prometheans, Vitriol is critical to the transformation of the Aurora, or soul. In fact, many Prometheans blur the line between the Aurora as the soul and a concept of the Aurora as the "rising dawn," or the process of alchemical Rebirth as a mortal. It is a riddle, suggesting that the Created must understand what a soul is before they may claim one for themselves.

Like all denizens of the World of Darkness, Promethean characters gain normal experience points as described on pp. 216–217 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. These experience points don't reflect learning details or clues or making personal connections over the course of actual game play. Rather, experience points represent self-improvement, devotion to a field of study, practice at talents or tasks, and the cultivation of personal assets. Players spend experience points for their characters to improve existing traits or to learn new ones.

Over the course of a **Promethean** chronicle, though, the Storyteller should award characters one or more Vitriol points at the end of a chapter or story in which that character made progress in his Pilgrimage. These experience points work just like regular experience points, except that they may be used only to improve or acquire traits that are the sole purview of Promethean characters: Azoth, Bestowments, Humanity and Transmutations.

## Awarding Vitriol

Any number of circumstances can be cause for awarding Vitriol over the course of a Promethean's life.

- Whenever a character achieves one of the objectives the Storyteller has outlined for her, she receives Vitriol in addition to whatever standard experience point award she and the other characters receive for that gaming session. The amount of Vitriol she receives varies by the importance or sequence of the milestone. See p. 191 for more information on the variable value of milestones.
- Whenever a character learns some fundamental principle of how the Created interact with the world, a Vitriol award might be forthcoming. This sort of award depends on both the depth of the character's prelude and the relative amount of time the character has spent as an active Promethean. Some experiences might yield significant Vitriol for a neophyte Promethean but grant a more experienced character less Vitriol based on the assumption that the experienced character already had a working knowledge of the Promethean state. For example, a character who learned the hard way that fire is especially detrimental to the Created would earn a greater Vitriol award than a character who had already spent a few years on his Pilgrimage (if this latter character received any Vitriol award at all). Another example might be when the character first faces Disquiet or first learns the caprices of Flux.
- If a character helps a fellow member of her Branded throng realize one of his milestones, her support is worth a point of Vitriol. If the character was instrumental to the fellow's epiphany — he couldn't have achieved the milestone without her — this reward should be two or more Vitriol. An example of this might be helping to save a drowning child caught in a raging river, if her fellow Promethean's milestone involves an experience of sacrifice and compassion.
- If the character learns something about her creator's motivations for bringing her to life, this revelation is worth one to three Vitriol, based on its importance to the character's own Pilgrimage. If the creator simply wanted someone with whom to share the lonely misery of the night, that might be worth one Vitriol. If the Promethean's own Pilgrimage involves a sense of community and the importance of other people to her sense of self, learning that her creator wanted a companion might be worth two or three Vitriol.
- A character might gain one Vitriol point when he encounters some unknown supernatural phenomenon and puzzles out its mystery or participates in such an investigation. Examples include tracing an epidemic of Pandoran activity to a neophyte Promethean who has just become aware of her nature, or the formation of a throng and the unguided understanding of how it affects Disquiet and Torment. Some other examples might include the realization that other supernatural archetypes prowl the night, or that a local coven of sorcerers is more than what it seems. Such encounters must be new and different each time. The character would not gain Vitriol each time he came across the mages, for example.
- A character might gain one Vitriol point whenever he comes to an understanding about the supernatural. Examples include learning about the existence and nature of ghosts, that




werewolves don't communicate their "lycanthropy" through a bite, that vampires don't care about running water or being invited into one's home, or that mages practice a very specific and regimented form of magic. This sort of "discovery award" is usually given only once per type of understanding. Once the character realizes that werewolves don't bite each other to propagate their species, he can effectively rule out other myths, such as only being able to change form at the full moon, too. It's possible, though, to gain Vitriol points when the Promethean later realizes that some legends are actually true, such as the werewolves' susceptibility to silver. Also, learning things about how werewolf society functions might be a revealing enough experience to yield Vitriol (especially if the nature of that society has something to do with the chronicle's theme or the Storyteller's plot notes).

• A character gains one Vitriol point whenever he unravels a supernatural quandary (presumably after shedding some light on it, as above). An example of this might be solving what local police are terming a rash of "mutilation murders," when in truth, it is a Promethean harvesting organs to create another Promethean.

• A character might gain a Vitriol point by facilitating the resolution of some sort of supernatural crisis, such as putting a restless ghost at peace, destroying a cursed artifact or thwarting a rampaging mystical beast. If the Promethean played a pivotal role in addressing the issue, he might gain two points.

• A character should gain a Vitriol bonus when his Virtue or Vice interacts with the completion of a milestone. This isn't to say every time a Virtue or Vice comes up in the story that the character earns extra Vitriol. Virtues and Vices have their own inherent benefits in the form of Willpower. When either Virtue or Vice comes into play as the character achieves a milestone, that milestone obviously has significant resonance with the character's personality, thus indicating that the character probably takes the experience to heart or learns a little extra from it. For more on milestones, see pp. 190-194.

Remember that Vitriol is awarded *in addition* to any normal experience points given for a chapter or story. Storytellers should not withhold Vitriol or normal experience because he thinks one will mitigate the other. Vitriol is that extra bit of condition-specific insight characters earn for investigating the mysteries of Created life. Since one can use it only to raise Azoth or Humanity or to purchase new Bestowments or Transmutations, Vitriol shouldn't unbalance the story, even a story that introduces other supernatural World of Darkness characters who don't earn such benefits. As characters built for a sole purpose and seeking another singular purpose, Prometheans benefit from the thematic focus that Vitriol provides.

Players, on the other hand, should never expect that their characters are owed Vitriol. It's the Storyteller's choice to award it, and he should have a generous hand with it. Vitriol is a tool for encouraging players to thoroughly examine their characters and participate in the passion play of the story. It represents bursts of personal insight, dawning moments of horror or actualization about what it means to be a monster or artificial. Vitriol is a reward for those moments when a soulless automaton would feel the emotion that signifies her transition from alchemical artifact to genuine person. It also represents a Promethean's drive to fulfill his purpose and the satisfaction he enjoys from seeking it out. Storytellers, don't hoard Vitriol, but don't give it out too freely, either. Vitriol must be earned, refined, as it were, from experience like an elixir from its component ingredients.

## Lacunae

For Pandorans and certain unscrupulous Prometheans, Vitriol is a substance not only to be earned, but to be plundered. Vitriol that a Promethean does not use immediately (that is, unspent Vitriol points on the character sheet that have been there for longer than a week of game time) becomes a prize. It's there for the taking, if only one is so bold. Reaping Vitriol from a Promethean in this way is known as performing a lacuna, in that it literally creates gaps in the ravished Promethean's well of experience.

Vitriol stolen in this fashion is viscous and acidic, a caustic plasm pulled from the unwilling body of one of the Created. The substance stolen from a Promethean in this manner can be used to fuel Pandoran powers or to bolster other Prometheans' abilities. Pandorans may spend Vitriol earned in this way on the same things they could spend it on as if it were their own earned Vitriol. Alternatively, they can use it as a substitute for Pyros, point for point, though these "Vitriolic Pyros" points aren't limited by how many they can normally spend per turn. The Pandoran can spend them all in a blazing torrent, if he wishes. (For more on how Pandorans can use Vitriol, see pp. 198-199.)

The Promethean stealing the Vitriol need not use it immediately, nor must he devote it to the same things the victim had planned to spend it on. Of course, a Promethean who steals Vitriol and doesn't use it within a week may be subject to another's lacuna himself.

Even attempting to perform lacunae is a grievous sin among Prometheans. It is a crime of violence and power assertion, leaving little question that the victim has indeed been violated. Whether or not the attempt is successful, performing a lacuna confers an *automatic* loss of a Humanity point on the reaper. Note that Pandorans don't have a Humanity or Morality trait, so they can perform lacunae without any moral repercussion. That's part of what they're designed to do as antagonists.

To perform a lacuna, a Pandoran tears flesh from the Promethean and devours it. Details on that horrific process are provided on pp. 199-200. For a Promethean, the process is somewhat more complex and time-consuming. The Promethean perpetrator needs to be able touch the Promethean victim. The victim must be physically unable to resist, whether he's bound, restrained by the reaper's allies, unconscious, asleep or what have you. The reaper's player rolls Strength + Occult, literally coaxing the fluid from the victim, contested by the victim's Stamina + Resolve. This



act takes 10 minutes to perform. It's effectively an extended action, but one's that's resolved by the single roll's results.

Lacunae are emphatically *not* the tools or resources of a well-adjusted Promethean. Stealing Vitriol from another Promethean expressly inhibits his ability to complete his own Pilgrimage. While no single act should cause a Promethean to be deemed ineligible for Rebirth, lacunae cut it very close. Two acts of lacuna should raise an eyebrow and might indeed preclude a Promethean from attaining the Great Work unless the circumstances are dire or exceedingly appropriate to the character's Pilgrimage. Performing three or more lacunae indicates that the Promethean almost certainly isn't cut out for life as a human. He's reached a predatory or selfish state that surpasses even the most grotesque or maladjusted case of compassionate human nature.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The victim achieves five or more successes more than the reaper. (**Note:** *This condition is an exception to the normal rules for a contested action.*) Not only does the attempt to perform a lacuna fail, the admixture of mystic substances causes an alchemical backlash in the reaper. For the remainder of the scene, he suffers a -2 penalty to all dice pools as his humours are in a state of grievous imbalance.

**Failure:** The victim achieves more successes than the reaper. The reaper fails to extract any Vitriol from the victim.

**Success:** The reaper steals a number of Vitriol from the victim equal to the number of successes on the roll. The following turn, the reaper may try to perform the lacuna again (with no additional Humanity roll) by making the contested roll again, as normal. The reaper may not take Vitriol beyond the unspent points the victim has.

**Exceptional Success:** As per success. The extra successes are their own reward.

**Suggested Modifiers**

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | The reaper and victim are of the same Lineage (granting the reaper additional knowledge of how to draw forth the substance). |
| +1 | Per point of Azoth the reaper has more than the victim |
| –1 | Per point of Azoth the victim has more than the reaper |

# Mysterium Conjunctionis: Storytelling

Now that the basics of the milestones and the result of the Pilgrimage — namely, Rebirth — have been discussed, the "alchemical operations" of running the game itself need to be addressed.

## Conflict

With all the focus on the Created's great journeys and their trials and tribulations, it's easy to forget what, exactly, the conflict is that they'll face along the way. The four basic types of literary conflict apply, with unique considerations made for the **Promethean** setting. These conflicts are good for building both challenging milestones and story progressions.

### Promethean Versus Himself

This is the classic internal struggle, as represented by some inner turmoil. Torment is a good example of this kind of conflict, and experiencing Torment certainly makes for a good milestone. A character's Vice provides an immediately tangible source of this sort of conflict, as the character knows indulging the Vice will cause trouble, but it certainly yields rewards. In a less mechanical sense, a Promethean might have to make a moral or personal choice that carries its own consequences. Does the character pursue love, or does he choose to spare his paramour the inevitable incompatibility and negative feelings that would come as a result of dating an inhuman creature? Does the character pursue physical comfort, or does she instead seek philosophical enlightenment that would lead to suffering in the wake of becoming human? Derangements and several Flaws (see pp. 217–219 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) embody this sort of conflict, as well. Any time when the character must make a choice for himself can potentially be a conflict of this type, as the character has to balance repercussion and responsibility, even if the choice leads to some other type of conflict.

### Promethean Versusan Antagonist

This is the most common form of conflict in many Storytelling games and the easiest to facilitate. The potential antagonists for a Promethean are legion, and choosing which among them to bring to bear is one of the most fulfilling duties of the Storyteller. Rampaging Pandorans, incomprehensible *qashmallim*, canny Centimani, rival throngs, bloodthirsty vampires, deranged mages, savage werewolves, and even the torch-wielding mob can all test a Promethean's mettle. Care must be taken in using outside antagonists, however. If every session amounts to little more than an external challenge or "boss fight" at the end of the session, players might lose interest since such challenges don't readily explore the inner struggles or contribute to the Pilgrimages of their Created characters. Ideally, antagonists serve to punctuate other questions or goals the characters' throng has — defeat the rival Promethean and free the hostage as an act of compassion, or evade the marauding *qashmallim* to protect one's own Inner Fire, for example. Don't simply line up the monsters of the week just to have the characters knock them down.

### Promethean Versus Society

This is an excellent source of conflict for Prometheans, and one that need not be concluded in a single session. As rare and artificial creations, Prometheans inherently feel as if they are outside of certain social constructs. They might not have had sufficient upbringing to function uninhibited among other people, or the difference between their Created natures and the human condition of others around them might become acutely painful. Society can also include constructs of Promethean society, such as when a character has a dispute with other members of his Refinement or he finds himself working at cross-purposes with a makeshift throng. A powerful mentor and his cronies might represent a clash with greater social forces than the individual. Perhaps most damning of all can be the clash between a Promethean's own wants and desires and the complex mores of the human world surrounding him.

This is a difficult type of conflict to challenge and resolve cleanly. Rarely does it result in a single decisive victory. More often, at least in terms of the Created, it results in a sort of understanding. While a character might be in the right when compared with a social group of "heretic" Created, he's not going to face down the entirety of the human world or even a single family, subculture or government agency so simply.

### Promethean Versus Nature

This is another advanced type of conflict, and one that's often difficult to resolve meaningfully in a Storytelling game. Still, when employed effectively, this type of conflict is a memorable one, as most traditional methods of conflict resolution don't apply. You can't negotiate with a raging fire, and you can't beat a thunderstorm into submission. Exactly how a Promethean chooses to face a natural threat tells a lot about the character. Does he rage back into the howling gale? Does he seek cover or even succor in another's company? Does he use his own supernatural powers to subvert Nature itself to his will? Does he harness it, like electricity, to sustain or even improve himself?

Natural forces can expand in this definition to include supernatural or paranormal forces as well. Spirits, in particular, are often extensions of the natural world, and those with distinctly alien or naturalistic desires are proverbial forces of Nature.

Conflicts of this type work especially well for Prometheans who have chosen to go to the wastes. They have little other conflict while making hermits of themselves, and that's the point, but that doesn't mean they have to be effectively written off.

## Story Synthesis

So, knowing how conflicts relate to the Created, what sorts of stories can be told around them? A few examples follow. Remember that these are discrete story ideas. An enterprising Storyteller would weave many stories together to form a chronicle with a greater theme and purpose, as opposed to just revisiting one type of story over and over.

**The High Price of Success:** The characters learn of an alchemical compound or mystical artifact that can help Prometheans attain Rebirth. Antagonist and environmental conflicts ensue as they hunt it down. In the aftermath the real struggle begins, though, as they fight among their social order and themselves to determine who gets to use the one-shot item and why that Promethean deserves it over all the rest.

**The Alchemist's Pawns:** Characters are dominated by an alchemist who uses his elixirs or talismans to force them into servitude. The characters resolve the actions their master forces them to commit with their own senses of free will, and they eventually bring their manipulative — but generous — master to his knees.

**Young Turks:** The characters overthrow the "old guard" — be it their creators, mentors, social superiors or what have you. Plenty of antagonist conflict and social conflict in overthrowing those old guards combines with internal conflicts over why, exactly, the old ways need to be cast down.

**We Reign As We Endure:** The characters are part of a group going to the wastes, facing environmental challenges as well as the depredations of Vitriol-hungry Pandorans who have discovered the hermits' enclave.

**Ghetto Saints:** The characters are, strangely, looked up to as local heroes who keep the wrong element out of the neighborhood. Of course, they might be criminals themselves. This offers a good source of social conflict with legitimate authorities, gangland beatings and the classic criminal-with-a-heart-of-gold personal moral quandaries.

**The Search for Identity:** The characters begin the chronicle in an abandoned laboratory as complete blank slates, with no recent memory and no relationships. Who are these other weird people in the laboratory, what have they all been collected to do, who brought them here, and *why, damn it, why?*

***Arbeit Macht Frei*:** The characters were created as servitors or laborers for some mysterious purpose. The hitch is that they became self-aware somehow, and want more from this artificial "life" than their preprogrammed activities al-






low. Antagonist and internal conflicts arise as they try to escape and are opposed by their former fellows. But are they fighting soulless constructs or real people who just don't yet know they're real?

**Fanning the Flames:** Characters find a shortcut to stoking their Azoth, but it comes with the dangerous side effect of fueling Torment, as well. No doubt characters will face some antagonist conflicts, and then face internal conflicts as they determine whether the benefit is worth the drawbacks — which possibly causes social conflicts among them as well. They might even ultimately decide to go to the wastes, where environmental challenges face them that they must overcome without use of their supernatural edges, lest they render the whole exile moot.

**We're Not Alone:** Characters discover a thriving society of other supernaturals, whether mages, werewolves, vampires, ghosts or something less archetypal. How do the characters face this challenge — with diplomacy, force or stealth? The conflicts that arise derive from the characters' choice on how to interact, whether antagonistically, cooperatively, socially or by staying out of sight.

**She Belongs To Me:** The characters come into contact with a real, living person who represents something different to each of them. One member of the throng falls in love with her, the other sees a valuable tool, and yet a third realizes that someone else wants her and that he can bargain her for favor or gain. As personal relationships form with the woman and fray among the throng, what steps do the Prometheans take to ensure access to the woman, and to what depraved depths will their nascent jealousies take them?

## Multiple Characters' Pilgrimages

It might seem like an insurmountable chore to keep track of multiple different characters' Pilgrimages over the course of a **Promethean** chronicle. While it's not easy by any means, certain steps you can take as Storyteller can facilitate some of your adjudicative bookkeeping. You'll also want to use these and other techniques for making the chronicle and its varied Pilgrimages a unified whole. Whether the characters succeed or fail in their Great Work is up to them, but only the Storyteller can mix the elements in their proper ratios to create a compelling story.

### Keep Troupes and Throngs Small

Plainly put, fewer people in the game means fewer people you're going to have to keep track of. This is more than a pragmatic answer, however. **Promethean** is an intimate Storytelling experience, with a few central characters' introspective paths toward self-realization being the ultimate goal. The Created themselves are rare. Reinforcing both of these ideas with a small, devoted troupe allows you to maintain your thematic focus as well as balancing the amount of time each character has in the spotlight. It's easier to keep three people going in the same direction than it is for five, for example. Those nigh-apocryphal tales of Storytellers being able to handle eight players' characters and still make sure everyone was receiving adequate attention and implementation of their characters' goals are out of place in **Promethean**, almost by nature. While it's possible that there's an eight-member throng out there, rampaging through the streets of some poor city, that's the exception rather than the rule, in matters of both theme and story.

Think of a **Promethean** chronicle as an exclusive dinner party. You'll have the best results with a few players with whom you can enjoy a narrow but deep vein of Storytelling.

### Strike Common Chords

Nothing unites disparate individuals like a common enemy. Of course, not every common tie between the characters needs to be an enemy, though that's a good place to start. One character's creator might be the same Promethean who destroyed another's creator. A police ally might have arrested a character once, but be the crime-scene contact who provides another character her inside information. A throng that makes its lair in the basement of a tenement might all have different emotional attachments to the immigrant widow who lives on the ground floor. A Created mentor might share a Lineage with one character and a Refinement with another.

From this basic establishment of commonality, it's just a short trip to build milestones with these common characters playing central parts in them. As long as *everyone* isn't *always* linked to *every* event that occurs in the story, it won't feel forced.

Even if the milestones are seemingly opposed — one character needs to cause a death while the other needs to protect someone who doesn't know he's being protected — that inherent conflict is going to all but assure that at least one of the characters completes the milestone. As mentioned before, if the character who "fails" to achieve the milestone still learns from it, it's still worth a few points of Vitriol and can arguably count as a "satisfied" milestone anyway.

### Suggest (But Don't Require) Teamwork

A Storyteller who designs milestones so that they're achievable solely by solitary contemplation is shooting herself in the foot. Characters in the World of Darkness are more often driven by proactive desires rather than by reactive stimuli. Unlike most of the other World of Darkness games, **Promethean** characters have at least one universal and unifying goal: the journey toward Rebirth. Almost anything that hints at the possibility of enlightenment or understanding on the part of one character is going to draw others who might hope to learn vicariously from observing or taking part.

Outside that, a milestone that implies another's aid is a simple matter of story plotting. An attempt to defeat a

powerful rival, for example, benefits from the strength in numbers that a throng represents. Protecting a location can involve a few characters standing guard at that location while others patrol the area around it. Searching for a lost artifact or hidden tome always seems to require an extra set of hands — and that artifact or tome might need to be translated or destroyed, or whatever complementary or contested goals involve it.

Indeed, by explicitly involving only two or three characters, the others will almost certainly take part willingly themselves, thus making your job easier. **Promethean** isn't a game in which some high-ranking figure orders characters around on missions and they oblige because that's what nominal heroes do. Rather, it's a game about personal motives and relationships, and all but the densest Created realizes that one hand washes the other. Aiding another character in her goals is a great way to earn that character's help (and trust, for better or worse…) in one's own agenda.

## Alchemical and Mystical Design

Alchemy doesn't just happen. Substances don't just transmute from one to another. Various substances must be combined, and outside forces or energies must be applied to them for transformation to occur at all.

You can take this metaphor into the realm of Storytelling, as well. In such a metaphor, the characters themselves serve as the reagents or forces. By couching plot details in terms of alchemical or mystical formulae, that setting material becomes a very real contributor to the plot design. What happens when two "ingredients" (characters) are exposed to the "flame" of conflict? What happens when a whole vessel of some arcane "solution" is suddenly cut off from its supply of electricity?

Such analogies work well when commented upon by outside observers (either before or after their events occur), or as clues leading to the next task to be resolved or challenge to be faced. If such metaphors are mixed into prophecies or requests — such as, "the balance of choleric, sanguine, and melancholic humours must be achieved" for a task that would require the efforts of Frankenstein, Galateid and Tammuz throng members — you'll not only help yourself build story elements, you'll also aid players with their investment in the setting.

## An Example of Milestone Planning

Let's go back to the example of Bill's game and Conrad's character from earlier in the chapter, and look at an example of how a Storyteller might plan a **Promethean** chronicle and incorporate a character's milestones into the process. This won't be a complete listing of all the milestones for every character in the chronicle, but it'll be a sampling of the milestones for one.

### Part One: Back Story and Chronicle Planning

For reasons of space, we won't go into the specifics of standard chronicle preparation here. Instead, we'll just place this at the top of the list, in sequence, and cover a few of the relevant details to come out of this step.

At this stage, Bill decides on the theme for his chronicle, which he decides to call "The Sins of the Fathers." Bill's theme is one of responsibility and expectations inherited by newly created Prometheans. He intends the relationships between the characters to take a central role in the chronicle, but he wants to include a good bit of alchemical mysticism and inexplicable, World-of-Darkness-style strangeness, too.

Bill comes up with a general story arc he'd like to see the chronicle take. He wants to have all of the players handle their characters' preludes before the game actually begins. He plans to have the inaugural session begin as the players' Prometheans have their first tentative meeting with one another, heeding the strange call of Azoth to Azoth in an abandoned dockside warehouse. Bill wants to provide the characters with a Promethean mentor-figure who helps show them the slings and arrows of life as one of the Created, but he ultimately wants this mentor to betray them. Bill scribbles down a few notes for possible story ideas down the road — the mentor unfairly blaming the characters for spawning Pandorans, the mentor being one of the characters' creators, a mortal alchemist making monstrous constructs, ghosts of previous Prometheans — and then puts the brainstorming on hold.

Bill also generates a few of the personalities he plans to include, such as the mentor, antagonists, allies, innocent bystanders and the like. Bill doesn't bother assigning traits to these characters yet, as he doesn't know what his players' characters look like or how he'll need to challenge them. Putting numbers to all the personalities can come later.

### Part Two: Character Ideas

With a few notes of his own already committed to paper, Bill tells his players a bit about the back story and themes in hopes of soliciting their character ideas. Conrad, as we mentioned in a previous example, is interested in an Ulgan who wants to explore the mysteries of the Refinement of Copper. Conrad knows (but the character doesn't) that he ultimately wants to move from the Pariahs' path, though he doesn't yet know what that'll be. Conrad sees his character as spiritual and open-minded, with a spark of optimism that the World of Darkness hasn't yet extinguished. He's a character on a journey, both personally and in terms of the Pilgrimage.

Bill takes Conrad's handful of concepts and sees where they overlap with his own chronicle ideas in preparation for building the character's milestones from them. He figures that he'll need about half a dozen milestones defined for the chronicle's launch, and three or four more in sketch form, at least. Bill plans to have 15 or so for each character by the end of the chronicle (one or two per Azoth rating), but

he can worry about the later ones or the ones that define themselves in the chronicle further on down the road.

For Conrad's Ulgan character, Bill initially finalizes the following milestones.

**Learn about other Promethean points of view (Vitriol 3)**

Since Conrad sees his character as one in a state of transition, Bill uses this milestone to show Conrad's character that there's more Promethean philosophy out there than he's necessarily familiar with. Bill sees this milestone being satisfied in the first session, when Conrad's character meets the other Prometheans and is exposed to their ideas (as opposed to those with which his creator indoctrinated him). It's worth only three Vitriol because it's the first step on a longer journey.

**Manifest autonomy from the creator (Vitriol 7)**

As an outgrowth of learning about other Promethean points of view, Bill slates "leaving the nest" as one of Conrad's character's milestones. In Bill's mind, this represents the transitional nature of Conrad's character. Once freed from the impositions of the "parent," what will he do? It also reinforces Bill's chronicle theme in that it allows Bill to visit some character conflict on Conrad's Ulgan in the form of expectations others might have for him despite his desires to make his own way in the world. It's planned as an early milestone because Bill wants it to happen soon and to provide a launching point for Conrad's character and his throng to explore free will. It's a seven-Vitriol milestone because it's the turning point from an "adolescent" character to one who's responsible for his own fate.

**Engage in a non-violent encounter with a spirit (Vitriol 3)**

This is a comparatively minor milestone, but it will set the tone for many of Conrad's character's spiritual interactions in the future. Bill places the milestone early in the Pilgrimage to signify that it's not something Conrad's going to encounter right out of the gate, but it should happen relatively quickly after he comes to understand the basics of the Promethean condition. Bill specifies "non-violent" because it seems to be in keeping with Conrad's character concept. Another, more aggressive character might well have a combative encounter with a spirit be one of his milestones.

## Part Three: Adding Milestones in Mid-Chronicle

By this point, Bill and his players have undergone several sessions of the chronicle. Conrad's character specifically knows a little more about himself, but he hasn't quite found his perfect course for the Pilgrimage. Bill likes that uncertainty, as it reinforces the mood of the World of Darkness. He also sees it supporting his theme of the "Sins of the Fathers," as Conrad is still unaware as to how much his character's creator's actions saddle him with responsibilities and preconceptions.

Over the course of the next few stories, Conrad's character will face the following milestones, as planned by Bill after three or four prior sessions.

**Find the Refinement that most appeals to the character (Vitriol 9)**

Bill has this slated for a mid-chronicle milestone, but since he keeps the milestones hidden, he makes a mental note to himself that he could slide this to either earlier (if Conrad's character finds his calling with prodigal alacrity) or later (if Conrad's character finds his preferred Refinement after much introspective consideration). It's worth nine Vitriol because it's central to Conrad's character development. It's something Conrad had in mind as a major character decision back when he first created the character.

**Defend fellow throng members in a Pandoran raid (Vitriol 5)**

This is an example of a plot-driven milestone. With much of Conrad's character's emphasis being on the self, and many of those decisions being made in the early stages of his Promethean life (or yet to come), Conrad's character now shares the spotlight with the other characters. Indeed, this is more of a "support milestone" for Conrad's character, intended to let him participate in the rest of the troupe's activities and demonstrate what he's learned from them, how he feels about them, and his position in the throng. Bill knows he wants to have a Pandoran raid on the throng's lair, so he ties this event into Conrad's milestones. It's a five-Vitriol milestone because it involves dealing with both the supernatural (from which Conrad's Ulgan can gain spiritual knowledge) and a degree of Promethean power mastery (the characters will have to turn their expertise against the Pandorans, which Bill's hoping will showcase some of their Lineage and Refinement abilities). It also requires Conrad's character to have enough knowledge of himself and his relationships with other Prometheans to matter. If those relationships didn't exist, Conrad's character probably wouldn't bother defending the other members of the throng, and might hide or run away to protect himself.

This is also a milestone for which Bill sees some flexibility in interpretation. If Conrad's character does run, does he fail? In Bill's estimation, the character should stay and fight, but if the Ulgan learns something in the process of fleeing, he may earn a Vitriol reward anyway. Exactly what Conrad's character might learn from fleeing, Bill doesn't know, but he's open to possibilities that the actual event spawns.

## Step Four: Climactic and Denouement Milestones

At this stage, Bill's chronicle has been well under way in weekly sessions for just over three months. The characters, especially Conrad's, have made many choices that have defined their characters more clearly. Bill views this as a challenge to meet, as Conrad's initial character concept of being in a state of personal change is going to require more attention to illustrate.

**Validate the character's choice of Refinements (Vitriol 2)**

For this milestone, some aspect of Conrad's choice of

Refinements must yield an optimal result. This can be anything from triumphing over a Pariah to using a critical skill earned since the change to the character's new Refinement. Bill deliberately leaves the milestone open-ended so that Conrad's character can convince himself that he's made proper choices. It's a late-stage milestone because it builds on an important decision made earlier in the Pilgrimage, and it's worth only two Vitriol because it's a complement to an existing choice. It demonstrates the validity of choices made previously in the Pilgrimage, but it doesn't break any new ground.

**Create a Promethean (Vitriol 8)**

This is a big one because it strikes the keynotes of both Bill's chronicle and Conrad's character. With Conrad's character-in-transformation concept, the creation of a new Promethean represents the penultimate change: the passing on of the Azoth from one individual to another. It also resonates with the chronicle's entire theme in that Conrad's character then becomes the "father" who imparts the weight of his own "sins" to his progeny. In Bill's mind, this is an episode akin to a "dark night of the soul" before allowing Conrad's character to attempt Rebirth. He wants Conrad to see the creation of a new Promethean as a failure of the self, but a mistake from which he learns about his own frailties, the revelation of which paves the way for the Rebirth attempt.

## Tracking the Pilgrimage

Storytellers face a new and significant challenge when managing **Promethean** chronicles that they haven't had to consider in other World of Darkness games. Because the Pilgrimage plays such a central role in **Promethean**, the Storyteller needs to constantly remain aware of each individual character's progress and the status of his milestones. What follows are a few techniques by which Storytellers can help keep track of these concerns.

### Character Sheet Updates

This is the simplest and most common method of keeping track of the character's journey. Simply turn over the character sheet and write a quick synopsis of events in the blank space there. Alternatively, an expanded character sheet will provide explicit space for this, but you'll probably run out of that quickly and need to supplement the space with loose-leaf paper or a separate character notebook.

### Corkboard and Thumbtacks

This is one of the simplest methods of keeping tabs on character progress, and most other methods are variations on this concept. It's truly as simple as it sounds. Take a corkboard and tack a row or column of note cards to the board for each character. On each of these note cards, write a character's individual milestone. Turn the note cards over






so that their contents remain hidden until the character completes that milestone. This method provides a tangible and commonly accessible system by which both players and Storytellers can keep up to date on the progress of a character's metaphysical journey.

Storytellers can also add personal touches to this method, and its versatility is unmatched. For example:

**Use a unique font for each character.** If the Storyteller prints out the milestones from a computer or typewriter, he can assign an individual font to each character, thereby lending a sense of individuality to each Pilgrimage track. A strong, stolid character might be represented with a bold-faced, chunky font, while a striking Galateid might be represented with a more fluid or cursive font. It's a small thing, sure, but it goes a long way toward helping players identify with their characters' actions. It also keeps the characters visually distinct on the board.

**Have the player turn over his character's milestone cards.** When a character completes an action stipulated by one of his milestones, allow the player to turn the card over on the board. Again, this is a comparatively minor thing, but it has significant value in the player's memory. The player will have only a few cards to turn over, so each one will carry with it a sense of achievement.

**Have the player write down his character's milestone and pin it to the board.** When the character completes an action that satisfies one of his milestones, have that character's player write down a brief synopsis of the situation and allow him to pin it up on the board. This is analogous to building a "highlight reel" of the character's actions and edifies the event in the player's memory. It also creates an environment of constructive competition among the other players and their characters. Nobody wants to be the guy who falls behind the others on their journey of self-actualization.

## Bluebooking

This time-honored tradition of keeping a character journal takes its name from the college-exam books devoted to this new purpose. Those who prefer to use a more technological approach may choose a 'blog format as an alternative.

Bluebooking as a method of tracking one's Pilgrimage lacks the immediate visual reference that the corkboard-and-thumbtacks method provides, but it offers much greater opportunity for character conceptualization and meaningful communication of a character's self-discovery. With the bluebooking method, the player keeps what amounts to a character's diary, a primary source that records the character's inner dialogue and her impressions of what life puts before her. Note cards pinned to a corkboard are Cliff's Notes in comparison to the analogous novel that bluebooking creates.

That's the sticking point for this method, though. True, it creates intensely detailed and realized characters. On the other hand, not every player wants to keep a painstakingly realized journal, and not every Storyteller wants to commit himself to poring over dozens of pages of introspection. Bluebooking is an advanced technique, and not one to be undertaken lightly. Storytellers who choose the bluebooking method have a lot of work before them. They not only have to create the story and run the game, they have to read and interpret these character journals for those bursts of insight that signify that a character has achieved a milestone.

When one of these epiphanies occurs, the Storyteller should mark the key phrase or passage with a highlighter. (He'll also mark it off on the master list he's secretly keeping for each character. Bluebooking is unabashedly more work for the Storyteller, not a shortcut on defining the characters' journey toward mortal apotheosis.)

The benefits of bluebooking make their extra effort worthwhile. They generate the introspection, rationalization and understanding that Prometheans themselves undergo during the course of the chronicle. They point out what players think is especially cool during the course of a story, which gives Storytellers direction for future stories. They offer story hooks that players might want to investigate in upcoming stories (and any time a Storyteller can get his players to do some of his work for him, he's achieved a small victory of his own). They foreshadow and posit conjecture and hypothesize details that even the most devious Storyteller might not have been able to forecast. More than anything else, though, bluebooking makes characters real and complex. With a Storytelling game as advanced and ambitious as **Promethean**, this realization of character is often its own reward.

## Going to the Wastes

A time may come in a Promethean's artificial life when the weight of what he is and what he's doing becomes too much to bear. His fellow Created, once drawn to him by sympathetic Azoth, instead repulse him. His Pilgrimage becomes an ordeal, his every action an agony. In these dire emotional times, a Promethean might literally choose to get away from it all, fleeing into the expanses of unpopulated nature or harsh regions where no sane individual would follow him.

In times of Promethean legend, Dr. Frankenstein's monster fled to the Arctic, the shamans of the Ulgan legacy withdrew into the trackless Siberian steppes, Osirans hid in sandy oases or Coptic hermitages, the Tammuz took refuge in uncharted forests or beneath vast libraries, and even the vainest of Galateids has fled from the doting attentions of her thralls to reflect inwardly.

Why do Prometheans do this? The urge is as old as the Created themselves, and as varied as the individuals. The prevailing emotional impetus, however, is that the constant effort of maintaining a false life is just too much. It takes much fuel to burn the Azoth so brightly, and the constant tasks of understanding and revelation to which the Prometheans set themselves sometimes exact more toll that the

Created can stand to pay. Additionally, Prometheans must lower their Azoth prior to raising it again before attempting Rebirth after a previous, failed attempt. See p. 196 for more information on failed attempts at Rebirth.

The method differs by Promethean as well. Some hibernate. Some shut down certain bodily systems. Others stand, immobile, in forest glades or on blasted plains, effectively becoming features of the landscape themselves. Still others remain active in their isolated environments, simply eschewing interpersonal contact.

When a Promethean goes to the wastes, she flees her home environment and takes up a temporary residence somewhere far from intruding individuals and vicious Pandorans. By opting out of game play for a while, a Promethean suppresses her Azoth. The amount by which the Azoth abates depends by the amount of time spent away from social contact. The first month spent in the wastes reduces Azoth by one. Thereafter, each dot after the first takes twice as long to fade away as the one before it. That is, one month of dwelling in the wastes reduces a Promethean's Azoth by one. Two additional months (three months total) take away a second Azoth dot. Four additional months (seven months total) take away a third Azoth dot. Eight additional months (15 months total) take away a fourth Azoth dot. The progression continues in that fashion. Besides lowering actual Azoth, this process purifies the Promethean's Azothic radiance, making it more acceptable to others (see "Drawbacks of Azoth," p. 92).

Additionally, going to the wastes provides some degree of fortitude against the ashen troubles of Torment. For each increment of time spent in the wastes, the Promethean gains a bonus die to resist Torment. This bonus lasts until the character next increases her Azoth. At that point, the Inner Fire burns so hotly again that the effect of going to the wastes is overcome.

A Promethean must spend one full year in civilization, or the time he spent actually in the wastes (whichever is greater) before again going to the wastes. That is, a character cannot go to the wastes for a month, come back for a day, and then go to the wastes for another month to reduce her Azoth by two. She must either spend three months in the wastes to reduce her Azoth by two or spend a month in the wastes, return to civilization for a year (without raising her Azoth), then return to the wastes for another month to reduce her Azoth by two.

Further, a character must literally smother the Inner Fire during this time. That means the character may not use any Transmutations during the time spent in the wastes. The only exception to this is for practitioners of the Refinement of Copper. Pariahs may use their Transmutations while in the wastes, but if they do so, the only benefit they accrue is the bonus dice to be used to prevent Torment. Even Pariahs lose the Azoth-lowering effect if they indulge their Transmutations while going to the wastes.

The smothered Azoth doesn't just disappear, however. It escapes into the world, and can be harvested by Pandorans or fuel Firestorms (see pp. 253-254). This is one of the perils of going to the wastes, and packs of rapacious Pandorans might lurk in the vicinity of a hibernating Promethean or even form localized cults devoted to harvesting the Transformative Fire.

# Advanced Concepts

Some ideas fall outside the standard format of information presented here. Nonetheless, they're important to telling a good story.

## Working with Theme

When you take the role of Storyteller in a **Promethean** chronicle, you'll be working with several high-concept ideas and refereeing techniques. To that end, it's important to remember one core idea: *The theme exists to serve the story, not vice versa.*

When you're planning your chronicle or running a single story episode, keep that in mind. The story comes first. It's there on the cover of this book — this is a Storytelling game, not a theme-delivery game.

We're not saying to abandon theme. Far from it, as we've stated openly that the theme serves the story. The difference, however, is in how you communicate the theme. A chronicle in which theme supersedes the story is more of a sermon, and the actions of the players' characters become secondary to the point the Storyteller is trying to make. That's not enjoyable for players. Players come to the table to play the game and affect the environment, not be moved about the stage at the whim of a director, speaking only the lines they're allowed to speak.

When planning a chronicle, you'll be responsible for a lot of work and bookkeeping, so be prepared for one bit more. Go ahead and plan your chronicle with key plot points, antagonists, allies, locations, et cetera. When you have the basic ideas written down, look over it all. From this, you'll be able to discern your theme. Thereafter, go back and tinker with the details so that they reinforce your theme or at least make it recognizable or accessible.

This might seem counterintuitive, especially if you approach **Promethean** with a "game as art" mentality. Consider, though, that a theme can't exist without a story. A theme is just a one-line précis of the story's greater meaning. Without a story to support it, it's just a statement. This isn't to say your theme can't be complex or introspective. This isn't to say theme takes a back seat. Rather, it's intended to allow the theme to emerge as a lesson or experience over the course of the story, as opposed to being the club with which the Storyteller cudgels his players every time they gather around the table. Remember that Storytelling games exist primarily for entertainment. If that entertainment comes at the price of nigh-scripted adherence to a heavy-handed

Storyteller's one-sided morality play, the players' interest will wane from the beginning.

As you create your chronicle, your theme emerges organically. This is a positive thing. It means that the message you want to impart is an integral part of the kind of story you want to tell. Don't worry if your theme doesn't seem important, dense or intellectual enough to sustain a chronicle. Those are arbitrary value judgments that don't have anything to do with the kind of story you want to tell. If you want an action-packed story full of combat and chase sequences, but you feel compelled to saddle it with a heavy theme involving redemption and free will in order to satisfy an inner critic, your chronicle will suffer for it. Your plot points will feel forced and your players will become confused, not knowing whether they're supposed to look inward for their motivations or jump across the rooftops in pursuit of a marauding Pandoran. A simple theme is fine. "The thrill of the hunt" is as valid a theme as "Human nature is destructive by design and inevitably results in sorrow and regret unless the individual makes a conscious choice to the contrary." A theme doesn't even have to be a conclusive statement. "Why do bad things happen to fundamentally good people?" is a reasonable theme. Hell, if you just want to play for kicks, "Explosions are awesome" is as functional a theme as anything else.

The upshot here is not to let yourself be burdened by theme. As we mentioned before, **Promethean** is a tough game to run. Don't place arbitrary obstacles in your own path as you attend to your Storytelling duties. Tell the story you want to tell and let its meaning arise from that. If you're not running a story anyone wants to participate in, no one will hang around long enough to see your painstakingly crafted theme anyway.

### Be Flexible

In terms of both milestone planning and character achievement, allow yourself to remain open to interpretation. If you need to go back to the drawing board and redefine or rework a few of the characters' milestones, that's fine. In fact, you will almost certainly have to do this, as characters will take on lives of their own and characteristics you hadn't anticipated during your planning.

What's more, a character might have a genuine moment of clarity or understanding that satisfies a milestone in a way you hadn't considered. This is okay, too. It's your job to plan and present the chronicle, but you don't have to be prescient to do it. If one of the characters' milestones is "fall in love," and that character becomes the protector of a homeless child, that may well satisfy the milestone. If the Promethean loves the child, that satisfies the condition of love, even if it's not romantic love. The character has experienced love (and will no doubt experience its liabilities soon, if she hasn't already) despite not having "fallen in love" in the way the Storyteller originally anticipated.

### Shift on the Fly

In tandem with being flexible, being able to adapt quickly when circumstances demand it is critical. You're going to make mistakes — you're going to overlook some critical, fundamental detail of a character's personality and he's going to have a shining moment in which he has a defining experience… that you didn't write down and formally codify as a milestone.

The answer to the quandary is to acknowledge your oversight and reward the player at the end of the session as you would normally. Take an extra 20 minutes or an extra day, if you wish, to think about the spontaneous milestone's value and grant a fair reward, but do acknowledge the character's growth and the significance of the character's action on the Pilgrimage.

Don't be too lenient, though. The intent here is to leave room for your own error or for a brilliant idea that you couldn't possibly have anticipated. This isn't license for headstrong players to plead a case for every action their characters undertake to yield a Vitriol reward.

### Incorporate Player Feedback

The relationship between players and Storytellers isn't adversarial. They're there to help you tell the story. In fact, they can be an even greater benefit than the roles they play.

Character progression doesn't have to be the purview of the Storyteller and one player's character only. If, after you conclude a session, one of the players remarks to another, "Hey remember when you did that one thing? That was really cool," that player's helping you with your planning. If someone else thinks a certain portion of the session was especially noteworthy, you can incorporate that into your ongoing revision of story events and even milestones. If Joseph shares a comment regarding something that happened to Conrad's character in the game Bill's Storytelling, that's a fresh perspective that might spawn a new plot point or milestone for Conrad's character, even though Bill didn't come up with it himself. And if Joseph unwittingly ends up with an extra experience point or Vitriol point for his contribution, more's the better.

## Mortals

Disquiet is a constant problem for Prometheans, keeping them from forming lasting bonds with mortals. The more mortals there are, the worse the problem gets. They can rarely be near more than a handful of humans for long without eventually invoking anger, fear or raw hatred. The image of peasants with torches and pitchforks might be outdated, but it's not far from the truth of what Disquiet can cause.

And yet, Prometheans yearn to be near humans, to move among them, to spend time in idle talk or at a sports bar screaming about the latest plays, to laugh and cry with them

at the cinema, and to simply *be* with them. Mortals are everything a Promethean wants to be, in all their flawed, petty, ignorant perfection.

But we don't always get what we wish for, and Prometheans even less so. No Blue Fairy is going to wave a wand and make them human. Only years of toil, pain and endless rejection with the vague hope of Mortality at the end of the road can do that.

Humans can serve as allies, acquaintances and antagonists on the Pilgrimage. As long as the Created are careful not to get too close for too long, and to accept the Disquiet-based condescension, anger and sneers of those humans they deal with, they can maintain shaky relationships over time. Some have too much pride too put up with it for long, and others' hair-trigger humours will allow them to be pushed only so far before they snap and start giving back what they get.

Still, the world is populated with humans, with more being born every day. A Promethean has to eventually deal with them, even if all he wants to do is spend his life hibernating in the wastes. For the most part, his dealings will be brief and on the outskirts — a quick encounter on the subway, a short exchange in the convenience store, a five-minute call-in to a talk radio show. Sometimes, they might be longer and closer — a night job as a security guard or janitor, a private investigator who mainly communicates via phone and fax, a weekend physical education instructor (nobody likes them anyway). Any closer, and the Promethean almost surely courts disaster.

There are certain types of humans, though, who might have cause to come more deeply into the Promethean's life, or he into theirs.

## The Criminal Element

Mobsters, pimps, drug smugglers and even dirty cops — all these types tend to routinely move among the dregs of society and are used to the worst sorts of behavior and danger. A little bit of Disquiet might seem normal to them. The presence of a Promethean might not trigger the same sort of alarm that it does in more rarefied company. It still brings trouble, eventually directed at the cause, but a Promethean might be able to cleverly redirect it against underworld rivals for a time, if he plays his cards right and makes the right connections.

A Promethean might find employ as a hit man or drug mule, jobs that send him out in the field and away from constant proximity to his bosses. Those they meet in the field might not like them, but their bosses might see only their accomplishments and not care about how popular they are. This might lead to a fast track into their confidence, with corresponding perks and responsibilities. Although the Promethean probably has to commit some heinous crimes to keep in these people's good graces, he might find the degeneration of his Humanity worth it, as long as he finds favor in some mortals' eyes — even the scum of the earth.

## Those Who Know Too Much

Some mortals uncover secrets or see too much. If they put two and two together, they might realize that Prometheans exist, or at least understand that they are special beings without necessarily understanding everything about them.

Of course, some mortals who know seek to use their knowledge for personal benefit. They exploit the Prometheans, holding over them the risk of revealing their secret to others. The more people who know, the more dangerous it will be for Prometheans who want to move unnoticed among society — and God forbid any government should find out. They'd probably start a whole new covert program to capture and study them. Who's to say they haven't done this already?

Storytellers can devise all manner of individuals, groups and institutions whose main purpose is the study and control of Prometheans (and/or Pandorans). They might be careful occultists, collecting notes and lore from centuries of hidden study by others, or fanatic cultists who believe that the Created somehow signify a coming change (for good or ill). Some might seek to exploit the Azoth, perhaps believing it holds the key to immortality or unlimited strength, or a means to create a legion of loyal soldiers (see "Clones").

None of these would-be masters is immune to Disquiet, though. Mortals cannot help how they respond to the miasmic aura of Prometheans, unless they've achieved a supernatural state that sets them off from their fellow man. (Such is the case with mages; see "Other Supernatural Creatures," pp. 254-257.) Even if their goal is to help Prometheans, they cannot help but come to despise them.

## The Redeemed

Some very rare mortals were once Prometheans. Their degree of memory about their former "lives" varies, but they can either help or hinder other Prometheans, depending on their feelings about them.

Those who are well inclined might set up safe houses in places where Promethean Disquiet won't harm communities or the land, or at least won't harm them too badly. Knowing the loneliness of the Pilgrimage, they might try to facilitate the meeting of Prometheans with fellow Prometheans, and the formation of throngs. Some might train older Prometheans in the use of Internet cafes, so that they can maintain email contact with distant acquaintances or even mortals. It is rumored that one of the Redeemed created a publishing house to release the works of Prometheans to the public, but stories vary about its name or the titles it is said to have released.

Those Redeemed who hated their Promethean lives might do everything in their power to avoid Prometheans, or even enact some sort of twisted vengeance upon them. With their intimate knowledge of the ways of the Created, they could become deadly enemies, knowing just when and where to deploy allies (or even anonymous 911 calls) to best interfere with the Created on their Pilgrimages.




Most Prometheans know to keep their distance from the Redeemed, some out of a holy respect for what they have achieved, others from fear of what they might know. Not all heed this wisdom, though. Some try to reveal themselves to the Redeemed to see what sort of reaction they'll get or to grill them for the secrets of attaining Mortality. Other Prometheans might try to stop them, but some might egg them on, watching the fireworks from afar.

## Clones

Notwithstanding the efforts of UFO cults or charlatans angling for Nobel Prizes, science has not yet found a way to clone human beings. The embryos don't take. Something's missing, and conventional science is thus far at a loss to make the leap. Moral considerations come into play as well. The cloning of a human embryo is more than the creation of a simple conglomeration of cells. It means the creation of something that has the potential for human life. Can an artificial being copied from another have a soul?

Conventional science hasn't advanced enough to make a human yet, but conventional science is not the only form of science out there.

For example: At some point in the last century, one scientist discovered that Mary Shelley's novel had a grain of truth to it. He then somehow managed to capture an unfortunate Promethean and dissect her. The scientist discovered the existence of the Azoth. Through agonizing trial and error, the scientist extracted it and used it to grow and enliven an artificial man. The clone man emerged from the nutrient vat fully grown and mindless after only a few days. The captured Promethean was the source for the birth of a new kind of creature. She didn't see it, though, as she'd been rendered down to liquid nutrient long before the experiment had been completed.

Over the years, a few others have discovered a means of creating clones. Although the clones might be grown in different ways, and have different characteristics, they all need to be created with stolen Azoth. The process of stealing always depletes the Azoth of the Promethean from whom it's taken — sometimes destroying it permanently.

The basic building blocks of life are the same for clones as they are for real people. Every clone is grown from a sample of human DNA taken from a living human, a corpse or a human embryo. The clone grows to be an exact duplicate of the donor, albeit as he would be aged between twenty and twenty-five, without any physical blemishes. Depending on the precise method of growth, the clone might not have a navel, and most probably don't have fingerprints, either. The stolen Azoth speeds the growth and birth of the creatures, bringing them to adulthood in the space of days. They don't last long. Although the stolen Azoth animates them, they have none of their own and no way to sustain it. Few last more than a few years. The stolen Azoth keeps them alive for a while, but it has few other effects. Very rarely, a clone might know a single Transmutation. The Azoth in the clone certainly isn't enough to awaken a Pandoran.

Such clones might be grown in vats or glass tubes full of soupy nutrients. They might be grown from the inside out over hollow-boned artificial skeletons of carbon fiber or plastic.

The method of their growth can reflect on them physically. Some clones might have oddly-colored skin. (Perhaps it's unnaturally pale or has a strangely metallic sheen to it. Perhaps it's a flat gray.) Some clones are devoid of hair. Others look completely normal, but require special nutrients to survive — pills, perhaps, or a particular energy drink, or a specially formulated and noisome nourishment gel.

The creators of some clones might supplement their clones with DNA from animals like mice, cats, dogs, chimps or perhaps from cockroaches and other vermin. This, too, might have an impact on the physical nature of the clone, perhaps granting them superhuman strength or stamina, or an enhanced sense of sight or smell, or an unerring sense of direction.

Whether or not their bodies reflect it, clones are not complete beings. They don't have souls. They don't have human emotions. Their minds are blank slates on which their creators can imprint anything they want. How this is done depends on the purpose of the clones and the resources of their creator. One might create the clones' memories and personalities, such as they are, with high-speed subliminal programming, delivered via a VR-style headset, while the clone is still in the tank. Another might surgically alter his clones' brains, implanting devices to control and stimulate some functions of the brain while suppressing others. Another might simply resort to high-speed brainwashing techniques, inflicting a kind of Orwellian boot camp on the clones until they're quite ready to die for their function.

Clones are quite limited in what they can do, sticking closely to their function. A soldier or bodyguard behaves like a soldier and is unable to do much else. Information-gatherers follow their quarries silently and transmit their findings back to their home base. Menials and lab assistants stick to a few set tasks and do them well. Clones bred for high intelligence can manipulate and assimilate data at great speed but probably have no idea what to do with it in any practical setting. Clones created as crash test dummies, laboratory guinea pigs, repositories of spare parts or sex dolls exist only for their set functions, and they stick to it. They have no independent will.

Anyone who has the resources to create a batch of clones is likely to be highly dangerous. They need Azoth to create more, and they've already proven that they have the resources to get it. Although it's just about conceivable that a lone scientist might have the resources to freeze and extract DNA and build clone vats without anyone asking questions, it's more likely that large organizations are involved. A government faction might be working to create

super-soldiers. A pharmaceuticals company, suffering in the wake of regulations on animal testing, wants to find other means of testing its drugs. A millionaire CEO with a rare blood type and the need of a transplant might need a clone to supply spare parts. A shadowy conglomerate supplies made-to-order sex dolls to the rich, with literally millions of dollars at stake.

Whoever these organizations are, they are likely to be very secretive. A clone agent, despite his limitations, asks no questions and will not betray his superiors. Prometheans could come into contact with clone agents entirely by accident, or the clones could be out looking for Prometheans in order to supply the means for their creators to make more. Although they're unnatural and they bear the mark of stolen Azoth, clones are never really the enemy. They're sometimes agents, sometimes victims, but whatever they are made for, someone else is always pulling the strings.

## Clone Traits

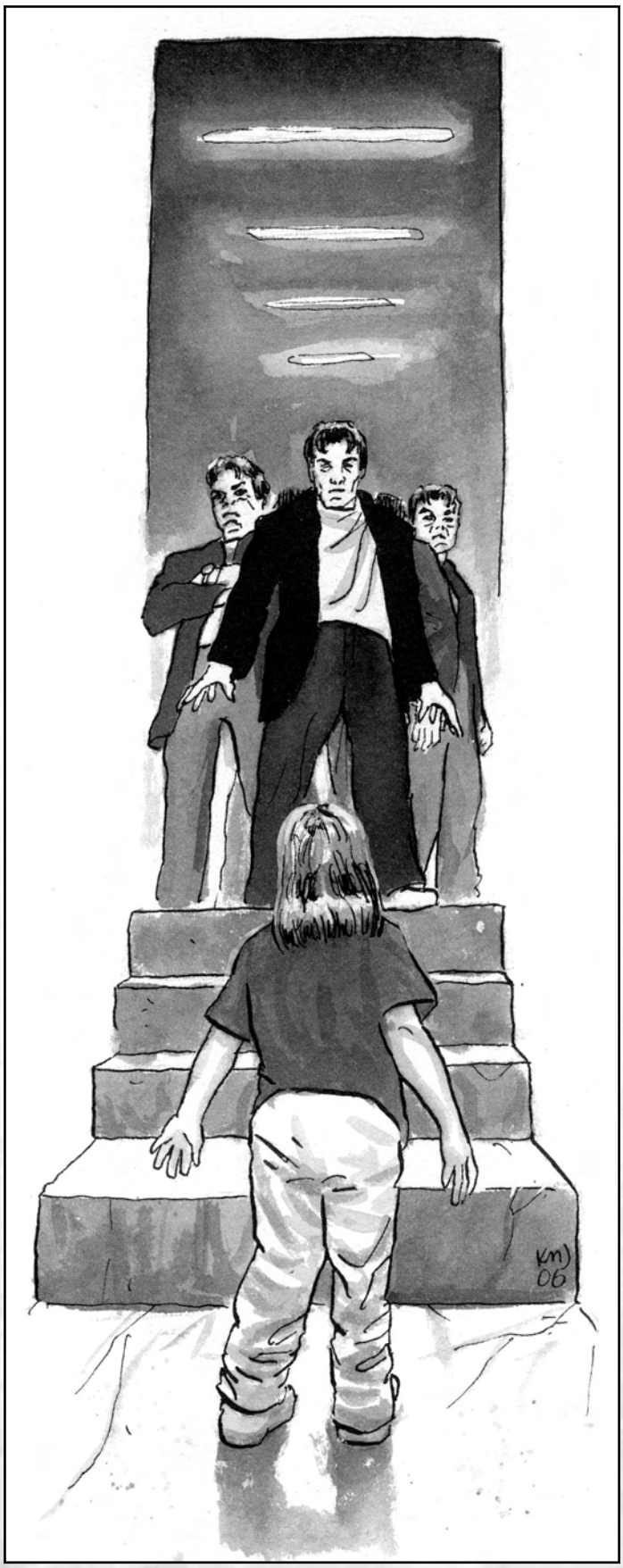
The amount of Azoth it takes to make a batch of clones varies from method to method. One scientist might find that an amount of stolen Azoth creates the potential for a number of clones equal to its square. (Thus the body of a Promethean with Azoth 1 has the potential for one clone, with Azoth 3, has the potential for nine clones.) He might just as easily find, however, that his method requires more Azoth to create one clone, or that a single dot of Azoth could create a dozen or more. It's up to the Storyteller. The process always steals at least one dot of Azoth from its Promethean victim.

Although they're created with Azoth like Pandorans, clones do not go dormant when no Prometheans are nearby. They are always active. Some don't sleep at all, in fact.

Clones usually have two dots in all their Attributes. Specialized clones might have more dots in one Attribute category, or even a superhuman score in one Attribute. A clone bred for the assimilation of data might have higher Mental Attributes, with a particularly high score in Intelligence. A clone bred to infiltrate society and kidnap people for his master's nefarious purposes is likely to have high Social Attributes. A clone soldier can have high Physical Attributes.

Clones don't suffer from wound penalties. Although they feel pain, they don't process it or react to it in the same way that humans do. They don't pass out when all their Health boxes are filled with bashing damage, although they do begin dying when all their boxes are filled with lethal marks.

Since they have no real human emotions, clones don't have Morality, although they do have Virtues and Vices. Fortitude is the most common Virtue for clones, reflecting a single-minded, obsessive need to follow orders and fulfil their function. Clones' Vices define them in a far more extreme way than they do humans or Prometheans. A clone's player must roll Resolve + Composure to avoid following






the dictates of his Vice. A soldier clone, for example, might be prone to frenzied rages (his Vice being Wrath). Another might be unable to act on initiative without direct orders (Sloth). Clones don't regain Willpower from their Virtues or Vices. How they regain Willpower depends on what they are. Some might regain it after a good night's sleep, others from taking their scheduled nourishment, and others still from returning to base and undergoing a new round of programming.

Some clones might know a single Transmutation, rated at one or two dots. A clone can only be imbued with a Transmutation that was known to the Promethean from whom the Azoth was stolen.

## Retrievers

**Quote:** *Come with us. Now.*

**Background:** The designer of these clones has already used a Promethean in her experiments, rendering the creature down to a chemical soup. She extracted refined Azoth — although she refers to it by another name — from the still-screaming liquid remains and used it to grow this baker's dozen of artificial men and women.

She was unable to duplicate the process. Every other attempt at cloning has produced nothing more than dead flesh. Reasoning that the being she destroyed was not unique, she has sent her wholly faithful creations out into the world to find another source of Azoth.

Perhaps she has another reason to find herself a new Promethean. She could be dying and trying to create herself a new body. Maybe stolen Azoth is her only hope. Or perhaps she fancies herself a demiurge and seeks to improve on her flawed creations by creating a new Promethean Lineage. Whatever her reasons, she has commanded her clone retainers to enter society, find a being that contains the same energy that created them and to bring it back to her, alive.

Having been ordered, they obey. There is nothing else in their lives.

**Description:** They work in groups of three or four. They're utterly unprepossessing. Their faces are forgettable, their voices unremarkable. They're of average height, with average figures. The men all look exactly the same, with average brown hair and average brown eyes. The women, likewise. They wear average clothes.

**Storytelling Hints:** Once given an order by their mistress, none of the clones will ever bend. Their conditioning is too complete, her control too rigid. Having said that, they're not mindless. They use their perfectly average intelligence to find ways to bring back the goods. They act in concert with each other. They talk with each other, but they never resort to small talk. Everything they say and do is single-mindedly directed toward their mission, even if it means their destruction. Although they are not affected by Disquiet, they can instinctively detect the presence of Pyros (and hence, Azoth) nearby.

Unfortunately for these particular clones, they have a great deal of trouble finding motivation to act outside their orders, even when it comes to preserving themselves or protecting each other. They have no authentic emotional responses, no instinct for self-preservation, and no affection for their companions.

One of the clones in each team has a headset, through which she can receive orders from her creator. If she loses this, she will be unable to take orders and unable to relay them to her teammates. Although she is smart enough to think of plans by herself, the clones find it very difficult to act on their own initiative, quite possibly standing back and allowing their comrades (and themselves) to be destroyed.

**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7
**Social Attributes**: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2
**Mental Skills**: Computer 1, Investigation 2
**Physical Skills**: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1
**Social Skills**: Intimidation 1
**Merits**: Strong Back
**Willpower**: 4
**Virtue**: Fortitude
**Vice**: Sloth
**Initiative**: 5
**Defense**: 2
**Speed**: 11
**Health**: 12
**Transmutations**: Sense Pyros (·)
Weapons/Attacks:

| Type | Damage | Range | Clip | Dice Pool |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Light Revolver | 2 | 20/40/80 | 6 | 7 |

# Centimani
## Refinement of Flux

### Freaks

*He stood, staring out the dusty, cracked window of the old warehouse, his hand resting idly on the head of a freakish, scorpion-tailed monster that knelt obediently at his side. His gaze followed the tall, graceful form outside. How lissome she was. How perfect.*

*He smiled, then, for it had been many years since he might have been called perfect. But this, his home, was like him. Once used as a newspaper press, then a cannery, then a factory bakery. Each purpose had left its mark, from the old containers along the ceiling that once held gallons of ink to the light coating of flour and dust that seemed to cover everything.*

*His body had seen many uses over the years as well. Flux had served him well, and his body bore the signs of its changes: wicked tusks, jutting outward menacingly; long, curving spines of bone at wrist, elbow and shoulder; the double-beat sound in his chest of twin hearts. His body, like his home, bore the signs of its purposes fulfilled, changed and transformed over the years to suit his needs.*

*The things in the shadows behind him crept nearer, distorted, strange mockeries of the human form. A low susurrus of hunger came from them. They wanted to press closer to see the visitor, but they did not dare come too near him without his permission.*

*"You can smell her," he said, smiling. "A gift has come to us, as I once came to you, before you caught me and fought me and ate of me, before I knew how we were one. I know you are hungry still."*

*He turned, and looked into the assemblage of monsters, who trembled at the knowledge of her presence. He could feel their hunger, pressing against his control over them, pushing outward, wanting.*

*"Come," he said, and like the breaking of a wave, his Pandorans were in motion. "Let us go to her."*

Those Prometheans driven to understand Flux are degraded creatures — or at least, that is what Prometheans tell one another, when their paths cross. To seek to understand Flux, the power of division and chaos, which stands at the opposite pole from the unifying principle of Azoth, is a gateway to madness, surely. If Mortality can be achieved by striving toward and understanding the Azoth, how can the quest to comprehend the Flux end in anything but the creation of a true monster?

### Overview

Those who seek to understand Flux are creatures of incredible passion. That passion may be an all-consuming loneliness, driving them to seek communion with the very horrors that would tear them apart to feed on the Azoth within them. It may be a grief born of one failure after another to understand the nuances of humanity. After being faced, time and again, with the proof of one's monstrosity, it takes a very strong soul to not embrace that monstrosity. Others, perhaps the true philosophers of the Promethean sort, say that to understand the light, one must delve into the darkness, seeking to understand Azoth by discovering the nuances of Flux.

Regardless of why they practice it, those who walk the path of the Centimani, the Hundred-Handed, consider themselves heirs to the legacy of the ancient monsters of old. Inhuman and monstrously strong, they delve into the horrors they are capable of with a thirst that sickens those who value the precepts of human morality.

The Centimani are justifiably named Freaks, for their appearances frequently are thoroughly inhuman and strange. Possessed of extra limbs, strange features and other warped physiological abnormalities, a Promethean Centimanus might easily be mistaken for a Pandoran, but for the spark of intelligence and deliberation in his eyes. Indeed, some Prometheans consider the Centimani to be worse than the Pandorans. After all, the Mockeries cannot help being the monstrosities they are. The Centimani seek immersion in Flux.

But they are freaks in more than body. Many Centimani end up so degraded in morality and sanity that they embrace strange habits. Like serial killers who are driven to keep mementos of their crimes, Centimani who are deprived of the sanity of the human experience try to find order in the life of a monster. They might construct strange totems to warn others that they are trespassing into their territory. They may seek out and steal certain household items from the homes around them, or kill all the black dogs they encounter.

Some of the strangest horrors in history may have been Centimani. Prometheans still tell the tale of the many-

handed Hag of Bangalore, a terrible flesh-eating Centimanus in India destroyed by British soldiers in the early days of Great Britain's colonization of India.

It is not uncommon to find urban legends among Prometheans that claim this or that legendary monster was actually one of the Centimani, but there is rarely any actual truth to these tales. In fact, the reverse is more often true. It is far more common for one of the Centimani to fashion themselves after a terrible monster of legend, or a demon of mythology, than it is for a Centimanus to inspire such myths.



## Practitioners

Though they aspire to the heights of Mortality, Prometheans too often stand revealed as monsters. Such a legacy can wear on the good will and faith of the unfortunate Prometheans. Is it any wonder, then, that they often seek escape from the world, undertaking the retreat or hermitage of other Refinements? But sometimes they find themselves at the center of tragedies that are simply too much to bear. Some simply become fed up, filled with rage at a world that cannot allow them to exist, becoming the monsters natural creatures take them for.

Where other Refinements are all part of a Promethean's Pilgrimage, Centimani is different. In effect, the Promethean turns away from the Pilgrimage and abandons the search for humanity. When he embraces Flux, the Promethean has admitted that he is, in fact, a monster and there is naught to be done for it. Some make this decision out of abject sorrow. For most, however, embracing the ways of the Centimani is marked with tremendous rage at a fate undeserved. Nonetheless, almost all Centimani acknowledge that their choice to abandon the Pilgrimage came also with a tremendous sense of freedom.

Occasionally, Prometheans seek out the secrets of the Centimani without abandoning their Pilgrimage. These seekers acknowledge that this is a temporary side-path, but one that will grant them greater insight into the human condition. Such wise ones teach that embracing the monstrousness within isn't a denial of humanity, but rather a sharpening of it. There are many strange creatures in the world, but only humans truly have the potential to be monsters.

Of the five Lineages, Frankensteins and Osirans readily adopt this Refinement in their despair. For the Wretched, their inability to live peacefully among men sometimes means embracing their truly monstrous nature. Likewise, the Riven sometimes find they have more in common with the strange demons and weird spirits of the unseen world than they do with mortals, so they seek to become more like those creatures. They abandon the Pilgrimage toward humanity in favor of what they perceive as the Pilgrimage to something else.

The Lineage least likely to seek out the study of Flux is that of the Muse, and with good reason: There is very little that is numinous or beautiful about the Centimani. Some Galateids, however, sickened with humanity's fragility and hate, embrace this legacy in seething rage, finding a new definition for the word "beauty" within themselves. Such Muses are usually referred to as "Gorgons" by other Galateids, and they often feature in tales of destroyed beauty that warn against meddling in such a wicked discipline. Likewise, the Tammuz, who tend to despise slavery, find the control that these arts usually give them over Pandorans anathema.

## Philosophy

The life of a monster is lonely. This is the first lesson Prometheans learn, and it is upon this lesson that the philosophy of the Centimani is built. Humanity scorns that which is powerful, that which is hideous, that which is not like itself. The Centimani understand that Prometheans stand between the worlds of humanity and the monstrous. Most Prometheans attempt to turn their backs on their nature as monsters, seeking instead to find Mortality, but the Centimani embrace the half of their legacy that is denied by their brethren.

In short, the Centimani desire nothing more than to be monsters.

To this end, they shun humanity and immerse themselves in the trappings of monsters, taking up dwelling in ruins and places far out of reach. Some Centimani even take up company with other monsters, seeking out vampires, werewolves and especially Pandorans, as a means of alleviating solitude and sharpening their wits and predatory urges. Of course, not all of the other creatures of the World of Darkness are interested in such company. Generally, only those vampires and werewolves who are particularly debased and inhuman themselves are likely to find any benefit from these associations, making for a true company of monsters, indeed.

### Centimani Morality

The sad truth of the monstrous Centimani is that, regardless of their protestations to the contrary, they are still possessed of a semblance of humanity. Yet, it has been such a source of pain and suffering for them that they wish nothing more than to deny it. As such, though the Centimani would paint themselves as philosopher-monsters, most of them are simply souls that have been hurt too many times and are trying to flee the source of that hurt.

In this regard, they are similar to many men and women in history who regarded themselves as grand monsters, when in reality, they were simply wounded people seeking to deny what they saw as a weakness within themselves. If one is a monster, without human emotion or care, then one can never truly experience loneliness or the pangs of rejection again, they reason.

Of course, these monsters have tremendous powers and strength with which to lash out at the world that has hurt them, and as they willingly give in to those tendencies, they are likely to degrade Humanity and gain the derangements that will turn them into true monsters.

## You are not human.

The first step toward undergoing any change is acknowledgement of one's current state. The Centimanus accepts, finally, that he is not human. Rare is the Promethean who can admit this to himself. "Not *yet* human" or "not *fully* human" seem to be favorite terms for the unfortunates who cling to other Refinements. The Centimani, however, cast aside that association utterly, sometimes going to tremendous lengths to rid themselves of what they view as their one true weakness. Connections to their humanity can only weaken their resolve like cracks in a dam.

Those Centimani who study Flux as part of their Pilgrimage teach that before a Promethean is capable of becoming fully human, he must release any illusions that he is already partially human. If the psyche believes that it is already human, it will resist efforts to become human.

## Serve yourself.

Monsters are not benevolent. They need not be actively malicious, but a monster must serve itself. Monsters best understand arrangements that benefit themselves, and Prometheans who know of the Centimani usually understand this. When one is not able to see the obvious benefit to a Centimanus' actions, he must search for the hidden ones, for the Freaks do nothing that is not of benefit to themselves.

Those Centimani who yet cling to the Pilgrimage teach that this is important. All living beings are inherently selfish, and only by acknowledging and accepting that one's own needs are just as important as the needs of others can a human being truly find compassion.

## In division, wholeness.

In their search for the ever-elusive true unity of Azoth, too many Prometheans have forgotten the power of divisiveness. The first step of most alchemical processes is breaking something down into its base components, separating the gross from the sublime. Purity, whether of purpose or nature, comes only after the extraneous, cumbersome parts that do not support that thing, have been gotten rid of. The Centimani who delve into inhuman behavior and habits understand that as they break away the limitations and assumptions of humanity, they are made more monstrous.

Centimani who continue their Pilgrimages are very cautious with this concept. Unlike most other Centimani, they do not take it as carte blanche to indulge in debasement. They do not believe that one's humanity and sanity should be broken down, but one's misconceptions about one's true nature.

## Practices and Operations

Living the life of a Centimanus can be equal parts exhilaration and horror, equal parts liberation and loneliness. Centimani are usually given to tremendous amounts of self-reflection, struggling to understand their dissatisfactions and fears. There are times when the changes to their

forms create such a sense of disassociation that they must struggle to maintain their sense of self.

To this end, many Centimani are constantly on the prowl for distraction, keeping themselves too occupied with projects and diversions to truly allow themselves to fear the direction in which they are traveling. Freaks who deny themselves meditation to understand the kind of monsters they are becoming, however, find all too often that they have become more monstrous than they ever intended. When that happens, they flee the Refinement of Flux toward other, more reassuring Refinements.

## Transform the Self

This is the first and foremost directive of the Centimani. In the victory of the Promethean's will over the static imprisonment of his body's shape, he finds liberation of spirit. To the Centimani, one is not one's physical form. The body is but a tool, like any other, to be changed as the needs of expressing inner truth demands.

Both philosophies of Centimani strive to transform the body. The monsters seek to be more monstrous, embracing their ideals in body, while those who remain on the Pilgrimage seek to divorce themselves from the idea of the body as self.

## The Lair

The Centimani tradition of maintaining specialized lairs is actually tied in very closely to the preceding practice. The home is simply seen as an extension of the body — physicality that serves to reflect and abet the inner self of the Promethean. As such, many Centimani seek out a lair and begin to change it to meet their needs.

The lair of a Centimanus is equal parts sanctum sanctorum, war headquarters, kennels and deathtrap. Centimani spend hours transforming their homes into places where their needs are met — including their need for security. Rare is the Centimani lair that is not equipped with a variety of traps or alarm systems. Those Centimani who collect Pandorans also make sure to include facilities for these beasts.

## Pandoran Study

In many ways, Pandorans are living embodiments of the Flux within the Divine Fire. As such, they are perfect specimens for understanding the strange ways in which Flux might make itself manifest on the flesh of a Promethean. Pandorans do not give thought or philosophy to the Transmutations that mar their forms — these are instinct and need. Centimani find the purity of Pandoran interaction with Flux admirable and enviable. Too often, the Freaks find themselves battling with their so-called higher natures against the changes in their flesh.

Monstrous Centimani use the Pandorans as a master of hounds uses his charges — to flush out his prey. He also cares for them, for they are not simply servants but the very blueprints for his own explorations of the malleability of his flesh.

## Transmutations

Pandoran (Centimani may learn Pandoran Transmutations without the usual negative side-effects.)

## Skills

Centimani are often called upon to engage in raw physical effort to survive, especially if they interact with Pandorans on a regular basis. As such, a variety of Physical Skills, such as Athletics and Brawl, come in handy, as does Intimidation. Centimani are also called upon to understand the strange Flux, however, meaning that many of them seek out knowledge of Medicine and Occult as well.

## Stereotypes

**Aurum:** Of all the changes that your will might make manifest in your flesh, you choose a simpering mockery of what is weakest in us? Contemptuous.

**Cuprum:** How tenuous is your peace. Ignored as a monster if you are still enough. Perhaps I might aid you in being stilled forevermore.

**Ferrum:** Your understanding and mine are close. Now, if only you might free yourself of squeamishness, you might find liberation in soul as well as body.

**Mercurius:** Burn brightly, burn fiercely. How long until you burn out?

**Stannum:** So close, little one. You are so close. Once you realize that your nature is not a wrong done to you, but a terrible gift... oh, the secrets I shall show you.

# Prometheans

Those with whom a Promethean is most likely to interact over time are other Prometheans. Only they are immune to his Disquiet and understand his Torment. They can better withstand his rages or stand beside him against enemies with the same fortitude and stubborn refusal to simply die when shot or stabbed multiple times. A Promethean's best allies are other Prometheans. They are also his worst enemies.

Sometimes, when it comes to gaining Mortality, there can be only one. Competition for precious Mortality evolution can cause some Prometheans to fight one another, if they think that its gains are in short supply or only winnable by the first one on the scene. While Promethean scholars might advise that there is no evidence for such scarce Mortality "resources," this doesn't always stop the Created from irrationally believing the myth, especially when they have so much emotional investment in the prize. While cooperation on each others' Pilgrimages is the norm among throng members, competition is common with other throngs or strong individuals.

Some Prometheans don't want to be mortal. These Refusers think their wretched existence is better than that of weak flesh. They might try to prevent others from attaining the curse of Mortality, not only to "save" them from such a fate, but to maintain their belief that it isn't really possible. If they can stop others from getting it, they can convince themselves that it's not worth getting. Refusers might even go so far as to hunt down the Redeemed and kill them. Worse, they might try to bring them back into the fold of Promethean existence, though this is just as likely to create Pandorans as Prometheans.

Certain Prometheans prey upon others for their Vitriol, stealing their hard-won gains on the Pilgrimage to use in their own petty pursuit of power. These "soul thieves," as they are sometimes called, are perhaps hated most of all, even more than Centimani (although most of them are Centimani). Prometheans might even forego eliminating Pandorans if it would interfere with their attempt to kill a soul thief (and kill him again should he arise once more).

## The Nuclear Promethean

*I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." I suppose we all thought that one way or another.*

—Robert Oppenheimer

Here's a story: Among the scientists who worked at Los Alamos between 1942 and 1945, there was a scientist who went quietly mad when he saw what the bombs did. He wanted to find some way of proving to himself that there was some worth in what he'd been part of. He wanted to see creation rather than destruction. He stole a corpse — a man who'd died of cancer — and drove the body out to the middle of a test field. He wrapped the body in strips of lead, and placed it on the site, within a few miles of the next test explosion, strapped to a slab of concrete.

When the test was over, he put on a radiation suit and drove out to the test field again. He found the concrete slab broken in two and the strips of lead scattered across a large area of ground. The body was gone. He never saw it again.

Or there's this story: The scientist was German. He had been at Peenemunde with Von Braun and Dornberger. The Americans had got him and taken him out to Bikini Atoll. This man was a mystic. Like some of the others from Peenemunde, he'd bought into the esoterica of Nazism. He was as well versed in Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus as he was in the work of Einstein and Heisenberg, less a follower of Frankenstein than one who found Frankenstein's method on his own. He fused the two fields of science, working on his masterwork behind the Americans' backs. He still believed. He still wanted to create the Übermensch, and radiation was the key to mankind's evolution. He stole the body of a man who had died in a criticality accident while working at his facility. He used a sample of the irradiated earth as his philosopher's stone and a lump of uranium as his alkahest. Like the scientist in the other story, using a bomb test to create his energy, the German tried to bring life to his creation. Unlike the other, he stayed by its side when the bomb went off. They found the charred body of the alchemist, a shattered alembic and some fragments of lead a few days later, but they found nothing else.

The third version of the story — the one most of the Prometheans who talk about such things believe — happened in the USSR, during the Cold War. A Soviet scientist had somehow acquired Victor Frankenstein's own notes. The Soviets had found them in an archive when they had "liberated" Eastern Europe. He researched further; ethnographic reports on Siberian shamans hinted at the existence of the Ulgan. He even saw one. Only the scientist recognized their significance. He believed in Frankenstein's work and attempted to duplicate it. He worked on the nuclear program, and used his connections to retrieve the corpses of men who had died in one of the KGB's "nuclear gulags," the penal uranium mines that provided the raw material for the Soviets to split the atom. In this version, the scientist assembled the limbs, just like Frankenstein had, and placed the body at ground zero of a nuclear test site. The blast didn't incinerate the body. Just like the other blasts, it invested the body with Pyros and gave it life.

This scientist kept his monster, for a time, but soon succumbed to Disquiet and attempted to destroy it. It escaped into the Urals. The demiurge was dead of cancer within a year, but he had created a new Promethean Lineage, the first since Victor Frankenstein's mistake over two centuries ago, using radiation as its governing element.

Rumors like this have been circulating for decades. Never

mind that in at least one of them no one could possibly know what the scientist was doing — the stories persist. The Promethean Lineages share rumors, friend-of-a-friend tales about what the stories mean. Some Prometheans have already decided: There's a new Lineage. Everything they know is conjecture. It's based on hearsay, information filtered through a kind of broken-telephone game of exaggeration and misunderstanding.

Few claim to have met a Nuclear Promethean. No one is really sure if there's more than one of them. Some tell the stories, only to be told that what they witnessed was just a Pandoran or a Promethean practicing Centimani and possessing an Azoth of awesome power.

The stories persist. Some describe Transmutations with which other Prometheans are unfamiliar. One Osiran saw a mysterious Promethean spontaneously create melanomas on the skin of an unfortunate mortal. Another version of the story has it that the Promethean made a man cough up blood and die, as if he'd just received a lethal and catastrophic exposure to radioactive material. A Galateid told a story of a Promethean creating a light so bright that it burned away the eyes of a group of mortals and stripped away most of their skin. Yet another account has him remaking still-living people into sick, tortured slaves, their brains overgrown with tumors that follow the Promethean's bidding.

Some say that when the Nuclear Promethean's disfigurements show, he has no skin. Or maybe what skin he has is red and sloughing off from eternal sunburn. Some say that he breathes radioactive fire. One account tells of bleeding eyeballs; another tells of bleeding pores, the whole surface of the body so slick with hemorrhaged blood that it could be used to contaminate objects and spread radiation sickness like a plague. Other tales tell of him leaving behind irradiated clumps of skin. Descriptions of huge tumors abound, enormous lesions and growths that spread, turning into fleshy armor or, sometimes, extra limbs, which sometimes grow faces and limbs of their own before detaching and walking away.

The Disquiet he creates is apparently tainted with radioactivity. Things die when any Promethean stays in one place too long, but if that Promethean is radioactive, his radiation begins to leak out into the world. A mortal staying in one's presence for too long is in real danger of getting cancer. The land becomes irradiated, blasted like the area around Chernobyl. The very air surrounding him develops a half-life.

The Pyros keeping this creature going is very strong. The more alchemically minded among the practitioners of Mercurius suggest that *if* such a creature existed, its radioactive element would cause the creature to be truly immortal, at



least until he gained Mortality. But then, there's a question whether he can gain Mortality at all. The same Ophidians suggest that a Pyros tainted with radiation would taint the body, meaning that becoming mortal might be a death sentence, since the body would still be radioactive and would die of radiation poisoning.

The flip side of a nuclear Pyros, they reason, is the effect that Torment must have on the Nuclear Promethean. What humour governs an atomic Azoth? Rumors persist that the creature's humour is cancer, the constant division and mutation of cells. What, then, would Torment do? What would an Atomic Promethean become when the humour controls him?

One story tells of how a Tammuz once witnessed a Promethean he didn't know being attacked by a gang of men. He moved to help the stranger, recognizing her for what she was, but stood back as she became enraged. Her body began to warp, as blood and lesions erupted from her flesh. Her blood began to boil — literally. As the rage took her over and turned her into a storm of destruction, that boiling blood spat and gusted around her. The men saw this and ran in horror. The unknown Promethean escaped. She left behind her devastation. The patch of grass she was standing on died off. It never grew back.

What would a Nuclear Promethean want? What would drive a creature like this? Most Prometheans know they should not be, and they keep that knowledge with them until they finally gain Mortality. The Fire burns within them too brightly for them to be at rest. What must it be like when that blaze is tainted with the power of the atom? What kind of agony would a creature like this go through, every day of his life? Perhaps the pain drives them mad. Perhaps they do terrible things because they're mad. Certainly, every story talks about them screaming, all the time, itching endless sores, picking at scabs, grinding their teeth as if to alleviate the pain. They're never still in the stories. Even at rest, they twitch and writhe, as if they're trying to escape their own skin. Finding humanity might be a goal. No one has any clue as to whether the Nuclear Promethean has found a way to end his Pilgrimage and gain Mortality yet. Even if he cannot, that doesn't mean he isn't still trying. No one's going to look for him just to tell him that his quest is hopeless.

Maybe there are other things it wants.

If the indications are true, the Atomic Promethean — or Prometheans — is in pain. It needs to get out. But what if, instead of finding his way to become human, he would rather end his agony in another way? Suicide? Perhaps that would work, but it just as easily might be hopeless for a creature like this. Maybe, instead, he wants to make the world like he is, radioactive and sterile, deliberately spreading his sickness everywhere he goes. Or maybe he just wants to find a way to harness the atom and destroy everything, to end the world at a stroke in a blast of energy that would reduce the planet to a glowing husk.

Most of the stories concerning the Atomic Promethean and the creatures that might be his progeny seem to be located near places where the atom has been a powerful force for change. He's been seen in the Ukraine, within the perimeter of the Chernobyl disaster. One British Promethean claims to have seen an Atomic Promethean in Cumbria, near Sellafield. A third story has him in New Mexico. A fourth tells of him being seen in Nagasaki. Each account disagrees on the specifics of what he looked like, what he could do, and in one case whether it was a *he* at all, which lends a tarnished kind of weight to the assumption that the first Atomic Promethean has founded a Lineage. All, however, agree that the strange Promethean was looking for something. What was he — or she — hoping to find? A way out of the Promethean condition through the contemplation of nuclear destruction? A way to harness the pain caused by these places for his own purposes?

Has he found the will to practice a Refinement? There's no sign that he practices any of the conventional Refinements. Certainly, no Promethean has admitted to teaching him. Maybe he practices Centimani. It's a logical conclusion, bolstered by stories of him being accompanied by walking, talking cancers.

And if that isn't the doing of one of the Freaks, then what else could it be? Has he — and the Lineage that he may or may not have created — discovered Refinements that the older Lineages don't know about? If a creature like this had created a Refinement of Uranium, what would it mean?

In the end, none of this is certain. Not all Prometheans have even heard of the Nuclear Promethean. None of those who have know his name. None of them know all these stories. Few know more than a couple. The things they've guessed about his motives remain guesses, nothing more.

More importantly, it is clear to none of them exactly where the Promethean stands when it comes to the Pilgrimage. Is the Nuclear Promethean's Lineage doomed to debase itself among the Centimani, or is he the harbinger of something worse still?

If there are more of them, can they be reasoned with? Is it possible to get close enough to treat them as companions or allies, or are they terrible enemies?

Do they even exist at all?

## Pandorans

The Broken. The Curses. The Mockeries.

These are several of the names for the Pandorans, the scattered sparks of the Divine Fire made corrupt, housed in sundered flesh. Pandorans are utterly infused with Flux, a power of division and separation, which stands in opposition to Azoth, a power of unity or coagulation in the language of alchemists. In comparison to the sundered and nearly mindless Pandorans, even the tormented half-life of Prometheans seems a blessing.

Pandorans are birthed from failed attempts at creating a new Promethean. The Azoth must be pure in the new

body in order to infuse it with the alchemical mockery of true life that is the Promethean existence. But sometimes, the passage of Azoth from creator to created is tainted, and Flux poisons the Divine Fire.

When this happens, the prepared corpse thrashes around and emits a horrible, otherworldly shriek. The corpse tears itself apart, and as pieces of the body hit the ground, some of them warp and twist, growing vestigial limbs. Oft-times, these pieces will snatch up other body pieces, pulling them into itself at this genesis moment, and then scurry off, to complete their transformations into whole Pandorans.

Pandorans can even form more of themselves. In some instances, when a Pandoran is killed with most of its power unexpended, that power animates the remnants of the corpse, forming a wholly new Pandoran (or more, if the Pandoran's death involved it being cut into multiple pieces). Other times, a Pandoran exposed to intense Azoth might cause a Flux backlash that rips it apart, forming two or more wholly new Pandorans.

However they come to be, these creatures flee to a safe place and their flesh hardens to a consistency like that of marble. They seem not even to be animate creatures, and indeed, they are not. After a few weeks in this stony chrysalis, a fully formed Pandoran emerges. (This state of suspended animation is similar to Dormancy, explored on p. 223.)

Pandorans are driven by a terrible hunger. Creatures of Flux, they are driven to consume all the sources of Azoth they can find. Within Pandorans, Flux manifests strangely, for it seemingly cannot exist without Azoth to balance it. Therefore, when Pandorans are outside of the aura of Azothic radiance that all Prometheans emit, the power of Flux within them takes hold and drives them first mad with hunger, then forcing them into Dormancy should that hunger fail to find another source of Azoth.

When Pandorans do find a source of Azoth, they are wicked and brutal hunters. When they first awaken from Dormancy, most Pandorans are driven by an animalistic hunger-rage that drives them to find the nearest source of Azoth and consume it. These feeding frenzies are often fatal to those Prometheans who are the prey.

Once they've been conscious for a while, however, Pandorans exhibit a sort of low cunning. They seem to intrinsically understand that the presence of a living Promethean is vital to their continued consciousness. Such Pandorans are more likely to capture a Promethean, occasionally consuming it in small pieces in order to make the source of Azoth last as long as possible.

## Pandoran Traits

Pandorans have the following Traits:

- **Attributes:** Determined by Rank (see below).
- **Skills:** Determined by Rank (see below).
- **Merits:** Pandorans do not generally develop Merits. The *Sublimati*, a breed of intelligent Pandorans (see p. 227), however, can and do learn them.
- **Willpower:** Resolve + Composure.
- **Morality:** Pandorans are not human and are not given to such concepts. They are unabashedly monstrous, and do not possess a Morality or Humanity trait.
- **Virtue and Vice:** All Pandorans possess a Vice, which reflects their base urges and desires. They do not possess Virtues, however.
- **Initiative:** Dexterity + Composure.
- **Defense:** Lowest of Dexterity and Wits. Animalistic Pandorans that do not possess Manipulation or Intelligence traits instead use the highest of Dexterity and Wits, as animals.
- **Size:** 4. Pandorans are slightly smaller than human beings and Prometheans (though some may be smaller or larger through the purchase of certain Pandoran Transmutations).
- **Speed:** Strength + Dexterity + 6 (the species factor for the quick Pandorans).
- **Health:** Stamina + Size.

## Promethean-like Traits

Additionally, Pandorans share the following traits with Prometheans:

- **Pyros Pool:** Pandorans do have a pool of Pyros, based on their Rank (see below). Pandorans use one point of Pyros per day to sustain their animated existences, and they recover Pyros only by consuming Promethean flesh (see "Hunger").
- **Transmutations:** Pandorans have a certain number of Transmutations, based on their Rank (see below).
- **Superlative Endurance:** Pandorans possess the strong resistances to pain and fatigue that Prometheans do. They do not, however, have the ability to resurrect themselves from death, as this is a function of Azoth.
- **Pandoran Constitution:** Pandorans do not need to eat. They do so only when consuming the flesh of Prometheans as a means of ingesting their Azoth. Additionally, Pandorans are immune to poison and disease.
- **Electroshock Therapy:** Like Prometheans, Pandorans are healed by the touch of electricity.
- **Transhuman Potential:** Like Prometheans, Pandorans may expend their Pyros to increase their Attributes, but they are limited to their Physical Attributes in such a case.

Pandorans *do not* have the following Promethean-like traits or capabilities:

- **Alchemical Pacts:** Pandorans may not enter into alchemical pacts. This ability to form a gestalt unity is a trait of Azoth. Pandorans are too infused with the divisiveness of Flux to replicate the feat.
- **Azoth:** Pandorans do not have an Azoth trait.
- **Disquiet:** Pandorans do cause a form of Disquiet, but its manifestation is distinctly different from that of Prometheans. Reactions of Disquiet in humans inflict Dormancy on Pandorans (see below). Pandoran Disquiet does not create Wastelands.
- **Torment:** Pandorans do not suffer from Torment.

## Rank

Pandorans are ranked one through five, based on how long the Pandoran has been in existence. Rank determines how powerful the Pandoran is. It is rare to encounter Pandorans of higher than Rank 3.

| Transmutations | Rank | Age | Int. & Phys. Att. Max | Manip. Max | Max Pyros |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 months | 5 | 0 | 10/1 | 4 |
| 2 | 1 year | 6 | 1 | 12/2 | 8 |
| 3 | 5 years | 7 | 1 | 14/3 | 12 |
| 4 | 20 years | 10 | 2 | 17/4 | 20 |
| 5 | 100+ years | 15 | 2 | 20/5 | 30 |

- **Age**: This gives the general age of a Pandoran of this rank. The shift between ranks happens slowly, somewhere between the year marks of one rank and the one that follows it. Note that only time spent out of Dormancy counts.
- **Attributes**: Pandorans begin with an automatic dot in all Physical Attributes, and one dot in all Mental and Social Attributes except Intelligence and Manipulation, which have zero dots each. Pandorans gain the ability to speak when they have at least one dot in both Intelligence and Manipulation. Until a Pandoran has a single dot in both Intelligence and Manipulation, it remains an animalistic and bestial creature, running purely on instinct. Pandorans may not purchase Social Skills, except for Animal Ken and Intimidation, until they have at least one dot each in Intelligence and Manipulation. They may not purchase Mental Skills until they have at least one dot in Intelligence.
- **Intelligence & Manipulation Maximum**: This is the maximum number of dots a Pandoran can have in its Intelligence and Manipulation Attributes.
- **Maximum Pyros**: This gives the maximum normal Pyros pool a Pandoran may possess. A Pandoran may spend up to its Rank in Pyros per turn.
- **Transmutations**: This indicates the number of dots in Pandoran Transmutations the Pandoran typically possesses.

## Dormancy

When denied the radiance of Azoth, Pandorans fall into a hibernation. Not only do they not function in this form, but they don't even seem to be alive. The flesh of the Pandoran hardens, ossified by Flux without any Azoth to counter it, becoming as hard as marble. Pandorans in this form do not register as being alive to any senses, magical or otherwise. This isn't some form of deception, either — they are definitively inanimate things, rather than creatures. Thus, it is not normally possible for magic or any other kind of power to detect them for what they are.

Generally speaking, Pandorans assume shapes reminiscent of statuary while in Dormancy. Though some simply petrify as they are, leaving behind statues that resemble the original Pandoran in every way, many Pandorans actually take on shapes other than their own in Dormancy. Often, the choice of form is a factor of the environment. A Pandoran that enters Dormancy in an art gallery or museum might appear to be a work of art, while those that enter Dormancy atop an old gargoyle-encrusted edifice might simply appear to be yet another masonry monster, albeit one that has fallen from its base somehow. There are even tales of Pandorans in theme parks assuming the likeness of cute cartoon characters or of broken merry-go-round creatures, complete with saddles.

Occasionally, Pandorans assume the shape of other things entirely. This sort of protective camouflage occurs in certain situations appropriate to the Mockery of the Pandoran. Therefore, a Sebek that returns to Dormancy in the water may become a chunk of stone or wood that sinks to the bottom of the lake, while one of the Silent might appear to be a mannequin. See the Mockeries (starting on p. 227) for more information on this phenomenon.

A dormant Pandoran is treated as an object. Its Durability is equal to its Stamina, and its Structure is equal to its Health. Once it awakens, any Structure damage it suffered while dormant remains as lethal Health wounds, though they heal at the normal rate. Once it awakens, the Pandoran no longer has a Durability score.

When the Pandoran in Dormancy is exposed to Azoth once more, it awakens hungry from its hibernation. All it requires is one full minute of exposure to the Azoth to awaken Pandorans, who shake off the effects of Dormancy in a single turn, rapidly shattering their outer, stony layers and emerging in a mad hunger frenzy. At this point, the Pandoran has no points in its Pyros pool and must gain sustenance in that scene, lest it return to Dormancy.

Pandorans enter Dormancy when they are exposed to the Disquiet they evoke in humans (see "Disquiet," below), or when their Pyros pool drops to 0 and remains there for one day or more.

### Azothic Radiance

The aura of Azothic radiance possessed by Promethean is similar to their auras of Disquiet. The greater the Promethean's Azoth is, the larger an area of radiance he generates.

| Azoth | Area |
|---|---|
| 1 | Same building |
| 2 | City block |
| 3 | Several city blocks |
| 4 | City neighborhood |
| 5 | City directional location (southeast, etc.) or borough |
| 6 | Half of city (northern, southern, etc.) |
| 7+ | Entire city |



The Azothic radiance of multiple Prometheans in contact with one another overlaps and increases in intensity. When Prometheans come into contact with one another, their Azothic radiance merges and mingles, increasing in combined strength.

Essentially, when two or more Prometheans are in the same building or similar vicinity, they generate an Azothic radiance as though they possessed an Azoth rating equal to the highest Azoth of the group, plus one per additional Promethean.

The only exception to this rule is when Prometheans combine their essences into an alchemical pact. Then, as a group they generate an Azothic radiance equal only to the highest Azoth rating of the group, as their Azoth is focused and turned inward in support of the throng.

## Disquiet

Pandorans cause Disquiet in mortals, but the results of this sense of discomfort and denial are dramatically different with them. When a Promethean or Pandoran causes Disquiet, it fuels the latent Flux within. In Prometheans, who have their own Azothic resources to battle the upwelling of Flux, this effect manifests as Torment. Pandorans possess no such defense, however, and Disquiet can suddenly strengthen the Flux to such a degree that the Pandoran is thrown into Dormancy.

When a mortal who is untouched by the supernatural (that is, one who is not a Sleepwalker, ghoul, werewolf kin or other similar creature) witnesses or encounters a Pandoran directly, Disquiet swells. The Storyteller immediately rolls the Pandoran's Resolve + Composure, minus one die per additional person present (-1 for two witnesses, -2 for three, etc.). Failure at this roll means the Pandoran immediately enters Dormancy, in the span of a single turn. Success at this roll indicates the Pandoran may act normally. On successive turns, the Pandoran's player rolls again, receiving a -1 penalty per successive roll made to resist Dormancy for that scene. Once the Pandoran fails this roll, Dormancy sets in.

For most normal humans, this strange encounter is rationalized away with short-term memory loss or confusion. Rather than believe that they just witnessed a monster turn into a statue before their very eyes, most people assume that they glanced up as the light was playing on it just right, making it look as though it moved. Only when they looked again did they see the truth of it.

Should the Pandoran be within line of sight of a Promethean, however, it is greatly resistant to the Dormancy-inducing effects of the Disquiet it creates. While it's within sight of a Promethean, a Pandoran gains a bonus to its Resolve + Composure roll to remain out of Dormancy equal to the Promethean's Azoth (or the highest Azoth present, in the case of multiple Prometheans). Additionally, once he succeeds in such a roll, the Pandoran's player does not need to make the roll again for the remainder of the scene, even if the Promethean leaves line of sight. Prometheans who flee into areas populated by mortals are not guaranteed safety from Pandoran attack, but Pandorans are cautious nonetheless.

As a result, Prometheans are often safest from Pandorans in the company of mortals. Their proximity to mortals brings its own Disquiet, however, leading to terrible situations. If a human is already suffering from Promethean-caused Disquiet, witnessing a Pandoran automatically advances that Disquiet by one stage, though the victim still attributes the mounting unease to the Promethean.

## Hunting

Pandorans all have an innate ability to automatically sense the close presence of Pyros, their necessary food source, although they can't necessarily pinpoint its exact source unless they are quite near it. They can also track down a source of Pyros, following the trail of a creature who possesses or has used Pyros — such as a Promethean.

Tracking is an extended action requiring Wits + Survival. The Storyteller sets the target number based on the length of the trail. The longer the trail is, the more successes are necessary to follow it to its source. Successes might range from 10 – 20 or more. Each roll represents 10 minutes of tracking.

While tracking, a Pandoran can move at only half its Speed. Moving at a more desperate clip increases the margin of error: Moving at three-quarter Speed imposes a -2 penalty, while moving at full Speed imposes a -4 penalty.

In time, the trail becomes fainter. The tracker suffers a -1 penalty for every eight hours that elapses once the quarry passes. This modifier assumes ordinary weather conditions. Rain or snow can erase a trail much more quickly, and thunderstorms can eradicate it entirely. The number of Pyros sources in a group being followed also influences rolls. The tracker gains a +1 bonus for each source after the first. If he's tracking three sources, rolls made for the tracker enjoy a +2 bonus.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic failure:** The Pandoran picks up another trail, mistaking it for that of the quarry. This is a false trail, however, that leads nowhere.

**Failure:** In an extended effort, no successes are gathered at the current stage of the trail. The Pandoran must find and correctly identify a fresher section of trail before trying again, represented by successes accumulated in subsequent rolls.

**Success:** In an extended effort, the tracker gains some ground and accurately traces the trail farther (successes are accumulated).

**Exceptional Success:** Considerable successes are gathered for the tracker.

**Possible Modifiers:** Access to item the quarry used (+1), quarry is bleeding (+1), quarry's Azothic radiance awakened the Pandoran from Dormancy (+2), quarry has dampened his Azothic radiance (-3; see p. 92).

## Hunger

The single, defining trait of all Pandorans is their terrible, insatiable hunger. They are driven like hungry hounds to hunt down Prometheans and consume their flesh for the rich infusion of Azoth it provides. Even their forms of combat are driven by the need to feed. Pandorans often grapple their foes, seeking to immobilize them in order to eat of their flesh.

Note that the Pyros gained in this fashion does not subtract from the Promethean's available Pyros pool. This energy comes instead from the rapid ingestion of Azoth-infused flesh and blood — inflicting Health wounds. As a result, a few Centimani keep their Pandoran packs sated and happy by allowing them to consume some of the Centimani's own flesh occasionally, repairing the damage through the use of Transmutations or electricity. Pandorans cannot consume the flesh of other Pandorans to gain Pyros in this fashion, save when they enter a Flux Hunger (see below).

- **Biting:** Generally speaking, Pandorans use their teeth to inflict damage. Unless the Pandoran has fangs as a result of a Transformation, it uses the normal human biting rules (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 157). Every two points of bashing damage it inflicts with such attacks gives it one point of Pyros. Alternatively, Pandorans that do have the means of inflicting lethal damage with their teeth simply take large chunks out of their foes. In such a case, each point of lethal damage thus inflicted grants the Pandoran one Pyros.
- **Claws:** Pandorans that fight with claws do so by gouging out fistfuls of Promethean flesh and consuming it as they fight. This method is less than reliable for feeding, however. Pandorans gain one Pyros per two points of lethal damage inflicted with claws. If the Pandoran focuses on feeding itself as efficiently as possible, it may gain one Pyros per lethal health point inflicted, but it is denied its Defense for that turn.
- **Vitriol:** Within Prometheans is the substance of the Great Work. Prometheans refine their essence into a substance known as Vitriol. In game terms, points of Vitriol are gained as a special form of experience points (see "Vitriol," pp. 198-199). These points are not simply game system devices the way experience points are, though. They represent an actual substance within the body of the Promethean.

The inner organs of Prometheans contain this substance, and Pandorans hunger for it. Instead of gaining Pyros for consuming Health points, Pandorans may instead snatch up Vitriol-rich inner organs and consume them.

A Pandoran must sense the presence of Vitriol within its target before it may attempt to harvest the substance. Trying to do so is an instant action. The Pandoran's player rolls Wits + Composure. Success on this roll indicates the Pandoran gains a sense for how much Vitriol is within the Promethean.

Once the Pandoran has sensed the Vitriol, it can call out to the dynamic substance, ripping open the Promethean and "luring" the substance to the wound, allowing the Pandoran to feast on it. The Pandoran must spend a point of Pyros to engage the Vitriol thusly, and it then makes an attack roll. If this roll results in at least one aggravated wound, the Pandoran may consume one point of Vitriol per point of damage inflicted (even if not all of the damage is aggravated), to a maximum of the Promethean's current Vitriol tally.

Within a minute of consuming its last point of Vitriol, the Pandoran may spend a point of Pyros to activate the internal alchemical process. The Pandoran's body immediately uses the alchemical substance of change to warp and transform its body. Sometimes, however, the Vitriol begins a process that can't be completed on the amount of Vitriol consumed alone. In these instances, the Pandoran's body draws on its own natural resources, breaking down part of its metabolism to provide what is chemically necessary to complete the transformation.

In game terms, when a Pandoran consumes Vitriol, the Storyteller spends those points on behalf of the Pandoran exactly as though they were points of experience, purchasing new Pandoran Transmutations. The amount of Vitriol gained isn't always enough to quite purchase a new Transmutation, though. In such cases, the Pandoran gains the new Transmutation (or upgrades an old one), pays all the Vitriol it contains and then takes one point of lethal damage per additional experience point cost to pay for the remaining unpaid-for experience points to actually purchase the Transmutation.

**Example:** *A Pandoran manages to consume seven points of Vitriol after surprising and slaughtering two Prometheans. The Storyteller then spends those points within a minute of its consumption of the last point of Vitriol. He spends five Vitriol to upgrade the Pandoran's Bizarre Weaponry claws from the two-dot version to the three-dot version. This leaves him with two Vitriol.*

*He decides that the creature suddenly develops a chitinous armor as well, gaining one dot in the Armor Transmutation. This requires five experience points, but the Pandoran only possesses two Vitriol. Thus, it spends those and then takes three points of lethal damage, as the Vitriol begins the process of transformation within it, but is expended before it finishes, forcing the Pandoran's body to scour away part of its integrity in order to complete the process.*

*This entire process costs the Pandoran a point of Pyros, as well.*

## Division

Occasionally, Pandorans that are exposed to too much Azoth will actually birth more Pandorans, their bodies tearing them into two or more pieces, and each of those pieces developing into a new Pandoran.

Anytime a Pandoran is in a field of Azothic radiance from an Azoth that is more than double the Pandoran's Rank, and it has a full Pyros pool, roll one die per point of Azoth above the doubled Rank. For example, the player of a Rank 2 Pandoran exposed to the Azothic radiance of a character with Azoth 6 would roll two dice (doubling its Rank equals four, which is then subtracted from six).

The Pandoran then splits into a number of new Pandorans equal to the successes rolled. If the roll scores zero or one success, the Pandoran does not split. This roll is made only once per scene, though if the level of Azoth in the area increases during that scene, the Pandoran's player must roll again.

When the Pandoran splits, it becomes a number of Pandorans equal to the successes rolled, each of a Rank 1. The original Pandoran is not reduced in capacity in any way, though it does take one lethal-damage wound per Pandoran created.

Newly spawned Pandorans have a single Transmutation and an empty Pyros pool (unless their progenitor is intelligent and chose to invest them with some of its Pyros as they were created). As a result, newly spawned Pandorans begin their existences in a feeding frenzy. Once they have managed to consume some Pyros, they usually scurry away to complete their development, generating the remainder of their Transmutations over the course of the next hour or so.

## *Praecipitati*

It is the nature of Flux to drive creatures toward madness, division and non-life. It is the nature of the Azoth to drive creatures toward integration, unity and vibrant humanity. These are two opposed expressions of the Divine Fire. Occasionally, when a Pandoran is well fed, the influx of Azoth is sufficient to drive out the influence of Flux in it.

If a Pandoran ends each day with its full Pyros, and it does so for an entire week, it has a chance of merging with other Pandorans, as the Azothic tendency toward integration drives the strange Flux-born physiology of the Pandoran berserk. These Pandorans seem to go nuts, suddenly leaping in among and attacking their fellows. As they touch another Pandoran, they absorb its essence and flesh into themselves, creating strange, horrific amalgamations.

When a Pandoran meets the conditions for entering this cannibalistic frenzy, its player rolls Composure. Failure on this roll indicates the creature enters one of these cannibalistic feeding frenzies, referred to as Flux Hunger by Prometheans who know of it. This roll must be made once for every day that the Pandoran meets these conditions. Generally speaking, this only happens when the Pandoran has access to an imprisoned Promethean or other reliable source of Pyros.

Some claim that certain Centimani keep their Pandorans well fed in hopes of inducing a Flux Hunger.

At this time, creatures called the *Praecipitati* are born. *Praecipitati* are Pandorans that have absorbed others, becoming stronger and more powerful. They also become larger as they literally absorb other Pandorans around them. Their normal hunger for Azoth is increased greatly, so much so that they rampage among even their fellows. In this form, Pandorans have the ability to feed on the Pyros in other Pandorans, though they still favor Prometheans as their prey.

When such a creature consumes half the Pyros of another Pandoran, that Pandoran is automatically merged with the composite entity. This process cannot be resisted by the Pandoran, and Prometheans are not subject to it. Only other Pandorans may be so absorbed.

## Amalgam Traits

When a Pandoran merges with others of its kind, it becomes the base upon which the *Praecipitatus* is built. The composite creature possesses all of the Transmutations of the creatures that are part of the amalgam. Their Physical Attributes and Skills are the highest of those possessed by the Pandorans in the amalgamation.

The creature also increases in Size, gaining +1 Size per two Pandorans absorbed. The composite creature's Pyros pool is equal to the sum of all the Pyros pools of the conjoined creatures.

Additionally, *Praecipitati* manifest one of three strange Bestowment-like abilities. Precisely what causes these powers to manifest is unknown, but each *Praecipitatus* has one of these manifestations, referred to by Centimani scholars by the names of one of the hundred-handed children of the Titans known from Greek lore. Each of these Bestowments is associated with one of the Power Attributes (Intelligence, Strength, Presence). A *Praecipitatus* develops the Bestowment associated with whichever of its Power Attributes is greatest. Those with great Strength take the Briareus Bestowment. Those with great Presence take the Cottus Bestowment. Those with great Intelligence take the Gyges Bestowment. If a *Praecipitatus*' Strength and another Power Attribute are equal and higher than the third, it gains the Bestowment of the equal Power Attribute that is not Strength. If its Presence and Intelligence are equal and higher than Strength, it develops the Gyges Bestowment. If all three Power Attributes wind up equal, roll a die. On a 1, 2 or 3, the Praecipitatus takes the Briareus Bestowment. On a 4, 5 or 6, it takes the Cottus Bestowment. On a 7, 8 or 9, it takes the Gyges Bestowment. On a 10, roll again.

• **Briareus:** Called "the Vigorous," Briareus *Praecipitati* are terribly strong creatures, gaining an additional +1 Strength per two additional Pandorans that make up the amalgam creature. This boost can take Strength above the normal Physical Attribute limits of such creatures, without limit. This is the Bestowment of *Praecipitati* with great Strength.

• **Cottus:** Called "the Furious," Cottus *Praecipitati* actually infect the world around them with an emotional spoor that causes madness in those that experience it. Animals react with tremendous fear and rage, attacking obstacles in their frenzy to get away. Sentient creatures must have Resolve + Composure rolled for them as an extended action each turn. The target number for this roll is the Rank of the key Pandoran in the amalgam, +1 per additional Pandoran in the amalgam. Until this roll is successful, the one affected manifests a severe derangement. This effect does not affect supernatural creatures, though it does affect those mortals touched by supernaturals (such as ghouls and Sleepwalkers). This is the Bestowment of *Praecipitati* with great Presence.

• **Gyges:** Called "the Great-Limbed," Gyges *Praecipitati* are incredibly physically hale. *Praecipitati* with this manifestation regenerate one bashing point of damage per turn, or one lethal damage per two turns. This is the Bestowment of *Praecipitati* with great Intelligence, who are the living embodiment of the "mind over matter" principle.

## Weaknesses

*Praecipitati* exist for only one scene, at most. Generally speaking, they are short-lived monstrosities that rage through the place where they were birthed and perhaps part of adjoining areas, until they fall back apart, the battle between Flux and Azoth within them abating. Unless something happens to end the situation earlier, any *Praecipitatus* falls apart at the end of the scene in which it was born.

Pandoran Disquiet can cause this to happen much more rapidly. When a normal mortal sees one of the *Praecipitati*, the Disquiet he experiences causes the Flux to reassert itself, and the creature breaks down into its composite Pandoran forms. At that point, normal Pandoran Disquiet applies, working to force the Pandorans into Dormancy. Most Pandorans usually attempt to flee the area before that can set in.

Nonetheless, those mortals who experience the sight of one of the *Praecipitati* know that they have experienced something that caused them tremendous fear, but they generally assume it was a hallucination or drug trip of some kind. Some mortals flat out fall unconscious, awakening with no (or only partial) memory of the sighting.

When the creature finally breaks up, the Pandorans return to their original states. Points remaining in the amalgam creature's Pyros pool are divided up evenly among the creatures when the *Praecipitatus* breaks apart again, and any damage taken by the creature is apportioned first to the lowest Rank Pandorans in the amalgam. Generally speaking, a *Praecipitatus* that has seen violence will result in a dead Pandoran or two. If a *Praecipitatus* is killed through violence, it breaks apart and the damage it has taken is suffered by the lowest Rank Pandorans that made up its being. In the case of equal Ranks, partial damage is rounded up to its nearest whole point of damage.

## Sublimati

Sometimes, a Pandoran is born with full sentience and terrible cunning. Unlike its animalistic kin, this type of Pandoran can concoct elaborate plots and schemes to acquire Azoth from its prey. These creatures, called the *Sublimati*, or the Refined, are very different from their Pandoran brethren.

*Sublimati* are highly intelligent and fully sentient, capable of raising their Intelligence and Manipulation Attributes to human levels (five dots). Most Pandorans never rise above a low cunning, and even those that do usually remain quite stupid. In contrast, *Sublimati* gain a reasoning ability uninhibited by human morality or ethics. They are quite clever, fond of convoluted, layered plans and observing their foes to determine what their weaknesses are. *Sublimati* can also learn Merits, and sometimes even Promethean Transmutations. In all other ways, however, they are like other Pandorans, including the need to feed.

They can be created in a number of ways:

• **Post-Amalgam:** Occasionally, when a *Praecipitatus* breaks apart, the process awakens a cruel sentience in the key Pandoran. At the moment of the amalgam creature's dissolution, it snatches up some of the vital being of its fellows and adds it to its own.

When a *Praecipitatus* breaks apart, the player of the key Pandoran may make a Stamina + Composure roll. If that roll gains a number of successes equal to (6 – the Pandoran's Rank), the Pandoran becomes a *Sublimatus*. This Pandoran gains a number of dots equal to its Rank to divide among its Mental and Social Attributes, and its limits on Mental and Social Attributes and Skills are immediately removed. This Pandoran also gains a number of dots worth of Transmutations equal to its Willpower.

• **Vitriol:** A Pandoran that has devoured Promethean Vitriol can to evolve into a *Sublimatus* by spending that Vitriol on Intelligence or Manipulation dots. First, its player makes a Resolve + Composure roll. Success means the Pandoran can proceed with the evolution, while failure means it remains in its lower state *and* loses the Vitriol points. A single Intelligence or Manipulation dot purchased in this manner is all that is required to vault the Pandoran to *Sublimatus* status.

• **Promethean Birth:** If a Promethean who creates a Pandoran has any unspent Vitriol points, the new Pandoran can try to steal those points and spend them on Intelligence or Manipulation dots, thus becoming a *Sublimatus* from birth. If its Resolve + Composure roll succeeds, it takes the points. If it fails, it does not gain the points (the Promethean retains them) but becomes a normal Pandoran (if the term "normal" can ever be applied to Pandorans).

## The Mockeries

Five are the noble Lineages of the Prometheans. But it is from accidents and terrible fates of each of these Lineages that are born the Pandorans. The powerful humours that drive the Lineages are not absent in the Pandorans, though they are subtler, overwhelmed as they are by the incessant shriek of Flux in the mind of a Pandoran.

Likewise, there are five breeds of Pandorans, each born from the sundering of one of the Lineages. Prometheans refer to these false Lineages as the Mockeries, but the rare few of the *Sublimati* who have spoken on the subject indicate that they are, in fact, the mirror-images of the Lineages. If the Lineages are the humours and elements expressed through Azoth, the Mockeries are the humours and elements expressed through Flux.

### Ishtari (Tammuz Mockery)

The great goddess Ishtar set demons on her husband, Tammuz, and led to his demise. Those wretched Pandorans spawned from the interference of Flux in the creation process of the Tammuz are named for her. And, like Ishtar herself, the Ishtari have nothing but rage and death for Tammuz and their Promethean brethren.

As Ishtar made a descent into hell, the Ishtari feel a tremendous affinity with the deep places of the earth. They haunt cavern complexes, subway tunnels, tombs and ancient ruins, dwelling among the tall, silent, stone walls, hungering.

The Ishtari prefer to trap Prometheans rather than destroy them outright. Of all the Pandorans, they are the ones most likely to imprison their prey and consume them slowly over time. Pitfalls, falling-block traps or simply trapping their foes beneath falling rock or collapsing walls are all favorites of the Ishtari. They favor anything that leaves their prey unable to escape and affords plenty of time to savor both the fear and the flesh of their foes.

Ishtari feed on their captives slowly. Death comes only after a long and lingering time of captivity, and the Ishtari are known for being willing to do things to help ensure the continued survival of their captives, including bringing them food and access to electricity to allow them to heal. Ishtari seem to instinctively know that death causes a cessation of the Azothic radiance from a Promethean, and they do what they can to extend it. They also seem as driven to imprison Prometheans as Tammuz are driven to never be enslaved.

**Dormant Form:** Dormant Ishtari seem to be pieces of masonry, random boulders or other stone or earth features. They are rarely noticed, for they often blend into their surroundings, seeming to be simply part of the landscape.

**Bestowment:** Ishtari possess the Pandoran Transmutation Inertia as a Bestowment. They are notorious for their ability to ground out the workings of the Azoth, forcing their prey to use their own strength and wits to survive.

***Sublimati:*** Ishtari *Sublimati* are strange, distant, cold creatures. Their intellect is cruel and dedicated to their goals with unflinching resolve. Ishtari *Sublimati* are rarely content with enslaving other Pandorans. They relish the keeping of Promethean captives, particularly those of the Tammuz Lineage, who hate slavery most of all.

**Weakness:** It takes greater Azothic radiance to rouse the Ishtari from Dormancy. Consider the level of Azothic radiance to be one point lower for the purpose of determining whether or not Ishtari awaken. Additionally, they require two turns to fully emerge from Dormancy, rather than the normal one turn.

## The Lady of Chains

**Quote:** *Beautiful. I find your penchant for philosophy and self-reflection beautifully narcissistic, and your idealization of humanity — the equivalent of a man wishing he were but a bug — confused, backward and laughable. Tell me more.*

**Background:** The Lady of Chains has appeared in many parts of the world, and many Prometheans have fallen into her clutches. It is said that she first appeared in Russia in the late 1800s, the result of a Tammuz Promethean's failed attempt at creating a mate. These same rumors indicate that she was the key of a *Praecipitatus* sometime in the 1920s, emerging from that amalgamation on a fateful Michaelmas Eve with the stunning realization of her own limited nature and a burning desire to expand upon it.

The first genuinely recorded account of her appearance was during World War II, when she followed German soldiers back from the desolation of the Russian war front. According to an Ulgan she kept imprisoned for seven months, she explored the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, seeking to understand the desire to imprison in humans. According to this same source, she came to realize that imprisonment happens for one reason: the desire to sequester, the desire to divide one portion of the populace from the rest. She is said to have found enlightenment to an aspect of Flux in this realization.

The next sighting of the Lady of Chains was in the Middle East in the 1950s, where she was said to have been seeking knowledge of the ancient legends of Ishtar and Tammuz. She disappeared then for another 25 years, re-emerging to the attention of Prometheans in the early 1980s in Europe. She'd gathered a bevy of Pandoran servants to herself, as well as a pair of young Prometheans, who both sought wisdom pertaining to the Centimani Refinement.

By the time her plans were laid bare, the Lady of Chains had managed to capture more than half a dozen Prometheans, locking them away in the catacombs that she claimed as her lair, building a virtual army of Pandorans. It was only because her attempts to capture a Galatea in the south of France brought her to the attention of mages there that she was stopped. Most of her servants were slain by a host of warrior-magi who didn't precisely know what she was up to, but chose to strike anyway, deciding that whatever her goals, if they necessitated the build-up of an army of monsters, it couldn't be good.

The Lady of Chains is a philosopher with a sadist's base urges. She enjoys the torment that those who are denied their freedom go through, and she believes that observing these torments allows her to better understand Flux. She has undertaken a variety of projects over the years, from attempts to deliberately create new Pandorans to cultivating young Prometheans as an occasional supply of Vitriol, and all of them have been directed toward this goal.



When the Lady of Chains enters an area, she invariably arrives with an entourage. This assemblage consists of at least one imprisoned Promethean, an assistant who's either a *Sublimatus* Pandoran or — better yet — a Promethean studying Centimani, and a small group of three or four potent Pandorans. The rest of her servitor Pandorans arrive slowly, shipped across great distances in Dormancy. The Lady of Chains has a network of employees, agents and others in her employ, none of whom need to see her directly to work for her. She does, however, possess a Transmutation she developed that allows her to resist going dormant in the sight of mortals. Over the years, she has even developed a cult following of odd conspiracy theorists and quack occultists.

**Description:** The Lady of Chains' appearance is malleable. She often appears to her guests as a creature of supernatural beauty, but her features are too fine, and she could never be mistaken for a human in person. In her natural form, she is a tall and horrible hag, standing well over seven feet tall. Her back is crooked, and her sides bulge obscenely, as though her torso were overstuffed with innards. She is snaggle-toothed and wickedly clawed, and more than once she has remembered legends from Russia of hag-goddesses and smiled.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Lady of Chains is a sublime creature and she knows it. She toys with the idea of being evil, not for evil's sake, but because so many of the traits she whole-heartedly embraces have been dubbed "evil." So, she accepts the language and secretly revels in the fear such acceptance causes others. Her timetable is vast, and her plans are grand, and she knows that in this world, she is royalty in the line of monsters. She embraces it.

**Mockery**: Ishtari (*Sublimatus*)
**Rank**: 4
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5
**Social Attributes**: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4
**Mental Skills**: Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Science 2
**Physical Skills**: Athletics 4, Brawl (Claws, Fangs) 5, Stealth 4, Survival (Taiga) 3, Weaponry 3
**Social Skills**: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Smooth Talker) 5
**Merits**: Allies (Banking/Finance) 2, Allies (Underworld) 4, Allies (Cult) 3, Ambidextrous 3, Contacts (Cult, Underworld) 2, Direction Sense 1, Eidetic Memory 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Languages (Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Russian), Resources 5
**Willpower**: 8
**Vice**: Lust
**Initiative**: 7
**Defense**: 3
**Speed**: 14
**Size**: 6
**Health**: 11
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••; Fangs ••; Breath Weapon, •••••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Great Stature (••), Unwholesome Visitations (••), Armor (•••), Detach Limb (•••), Hundred Hands [Extra Liver] (•••), Malleate (••••)
*Special* — Insomnia (•••••): By spending one Pyros and one Willpower, the Lady of Chains can automatically resist going dormant when sighted by mortals. She does, however, cause any existing Disquiet to advance by a stage. This power lasts for one scene, after which she is forced into a deep sleeplike state for four hours (one hour per Rank), and can awaken for short periods (even if she is attacked) only by spending one Willpower.
**Bestowment**: Inertia (••••)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 17/4
**Weapons/Attacks**:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 1(L) | – | 12 | – |
| Breath Weapon | (L) | 25 yds | 7 | Ignores Defense |
| Claws | 1(L) | – | 12 | – |

**Armor**: 3

## Renders (Ulgan Mockery)

Though the Ulgan were once rent apart by demons and put back together by shamans, Render Pandorans are driven by a singular understanding: that the primal destiny of these and other Prometheans is not to be whole. The demons, the gods and the spirits intended that the sundered bodies of would-be mystics be torn apart. Although the Renders haven't the understanding to truly express this idea, it drives them. That which was put together unnaturally must be rent asunder once more.

Renders seek to rip apart those Prometheans they consider prey. They are driven by the urge to use their wicked, tearing talons and not stop, until all that remains are wet chunks of once-dead meat, sodden in the alchemical muck that serves Prometheans as blood.

Renders are quick, moving smoothly and with unwholesome speed. Their motions seem somehow wrong to the eye, as though they have joints in places they shouldn't, or perhaps their limbs don't quite move as expected. Renders are deeply unsettling, prone to invoking Disquiet quite rapidly. They have a distinctly otherworldly air. Most who see them are likely to think they are aliens or demons. The idea that Renders might be something from this world almost never occurs to those unfortunates who catch a glimpse of them.

Those captured by Render Pandorans are likely to be kept in excruciating pain. A Render is likely to simply remove parts of the body that might lead to trouble, such as arms and legs, and then consume the Promethean at its leisure, always leaving rent, torn flesh in the aftermath of its feasting.

Renders look like demons or other strange, otherworldly horrors. All of them sport a set of wicked talons, and their eyes are strangely misty, as though filmed over in cataracts. They are thin and rangy, and it is unnerving to watch them move.

**Dormant Form:** When in Dormancy, Renders appear as natural features of the surrounding area, especially large plant-life. One might appear to be a tree or fallen log in a forested area, or it might blend into the muck of a swampy terrain. Some might even climb into trees and seem to be part of the foliage and branches above.

**Bestowment:** Renders possess the Pandoran Transmutations Scurry (••) and Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••) as Bestowments.

***Sublimati:*** Render *Sublimati* are paranoid creatures. They know that an immaterial state of being exists, and they often catch glimpses of it. Unfortunately, this also means that Render *Sublimati* usually mistake simple shifts in temperature, movement out of the corner of their eyes and unexplained noises as something in this "Twilight" state. They often surround themselves with charms and wardings, hoping to scare away any spirits. They are terribly cruel and callous creatures, finding joy only in the wet rip of rent flesh… which they don't always restrict to Prometheans.

**Weakness:** Unlike Ulgan Prometheans, Renders are not aware of Twilight, save on the most instinctual level. Beings

in Twilight are distinctly aware of Renders, however. Renders lose two dice on all resistance rolls to avoid being possessed by spirits and ghosts, and spirits can automatically sense this about Renders, using them for their own ends.

## The Clemens Street Horror

**Quote:** *(a strange, quiet giggle)*

**Background:** Few people who live in the suburbs know the histories of their dwelling places. As urban areas expand dramatically, land originally used for other purposes is put to new uses, and the families that move into these areas don't always know what those other purposes were. But it's only in the movies that newly developed land was once some sort of tribal burial ground or spot where people were executed. No, these days the secrets the land holds are more boring. Usually.

The neighborhood around the brand-new Clemens Street subdivision, for instance, used to be a landfill. Eventually, as the city spread, developers purchased the old dump and filled it in, piling tons of soil atop hundreds of tons of garbage. In a matter of a few years, a subdivision made up of cookie-cutter houses and trendy streetlights sprouted up. It was a lovely little gated community where children could play ball in the street, and a friendly security guard, paid by the local homeowners association, drove around.



But the things that are buried do not always stay buried. One night, when a Promethean sought to hide in an unfinished house, something unwholesome bubbled up from the layers of soil below.

Its origins are unknown, but the Clemens Street Horror was hauled away in its Dormancy form in the aftermath of its birth. It entered its hibernating state and was dragged away by garbage collectors, and it would have remained buried there had not an unlucky Osiran Promethean sought out a hiding place from werewolves in the suburbs.

That Osiran's Azothic radiance awakened the Pandoran, which transformed itself into a bloody sludge and seeped upward. The Osiran did not see it coming, and it struck while he was resting. Their battle nearly leveled the building, which the developers declared was on unsteady ground and simply left the partially collapsed building there, walled away from the rest of the subdivision when the gates went up around it.

Now, just outside the suburban neighborhood sits a house, half-swallowed by the earth, overgrown with vines and other local foliage. The creature has unearthed at least one other Pandoran, and they keep the Osiran on the verge of life, bringing it food scavenged from garbage cans. They consume it slowly, and the Clemens Street Horror ventures out at night, seeking to understand the beings that surround it.

The neighborhood has taken a turn for the worse. The Osiran's Disquiet spreads, and family members who loved one another dearly when they moved there can now only barely keep up appearances of being a normal family, while they are torn apart by irrational jealousy, rage and bitterness.

The children know. There is something out there, and it likes to watch people. Sometimes, you can hear its giggling drifting on the wind just outside your bedroom window. Sometimes, the children are sure it's been in the house. No one talks about it, but all of the kids know what the strange reddish smears are on windowsills and under doors. That means *it* was there last night.

**Description:** The Clemens Street Horror is approximately the size of a child. Its back is horribly hunched, and it is covered in a weird thickened hide that is the sickly white of extensive scarring, and tough in the fashion that cartilage keloid is. Its coloring makes it fairly easy to see at night, and more than one person has wondered what the sudden flash of a strange, white form was. Its legs are actually entirely without digits and very pliable, acting as tentacles, and its tiny, stubby hands are tipped with wicked, curving talons. Most of the time, however, it remains in the blood-ooze form that its Sanguine Victory Transmutation permits it to assume.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Clemens Street Horror seeps slowly around the neighborhood, indulging its curiosity and growing understanding. Occasionally, it consumes small dogs and cats that it encounters — not for any actual sustenance they provide, but because its nature is to consume, and the act of eating is pleasurable to it. Little brings it quite the joy that strangling something with its tentacles and ripping away

chunks of the victim's flesh with its claws to consume does. Of course, because of the effects of its ability to turn into blood, it finds strange joy in many things, such as frightening children, leaving the mangled corpses of pets to find next to the morning paper or other such pranks.

**Mockery**: Render
**Rank**: 2
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 0, Wits 1, Resolve 1
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
**Social Attributes**: Presence 1, Manipulation 0, Composure 2
**Physical Skills**: Athletics (Running) 1, Brawl (Tentacles) 4, Stealth (Stalking) 1, Survival 2
**Willpower**: 3
**Vice**: Gluttony
**Initiative**: 6
**Defense**: 4
**Speed**: 15
**Size**: 4
**Health**: 8
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Armor (·), Tentacles (··), Sanguine Victory (·····)
**Bestowment**: Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ··), Scurry (··)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 12/2
**Weapons/Attacks**:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | (B) | – | 9 | – |
| Claws | 1(L) | – | 10 | – |
| Tentacle | 1(B) | – | 11 | – |

**Armor**: 1

## Sebek (Osiris Mockery)

When Isis searched the length and breadth of the Nile for the pieces of her brother-husband Osiris, that she might make him whole again, only one piece remained undiscovered, for it had been consumed by the crocodiles of that river. The lack of this single piece kept Isis from being able to completely bring her beloved back to full life, leaving her with but one option: to craft of his body a Promethean.

Pandorans spawned from Osiran mishaps are referred to as Sebek, named for the crocodile god of ancient Egypt. Hungry and wicked, the Sebek Pandorans are quite savage in their pursuit. The Sebek are as brutal and forthright as the Osirans are subtle. Driven by their hunger, they desire the burn of Azoth-imbued flesh in their bellies, and there is very little they will permit to stop them from getting it.

The Sebek prefer to inhabit watery environs and will use them in many of the same ways that crocodiles do: as a means of hiding the entries to their lairs, as a place to hide and wait in ambush and as a medium in which to drown their prey. Sewers, riverways, canal systems, drainage outlets, swamps — these are all dangerous places for Prometheans, for they may harbor the ravenous Sebek.

Sebek rarely capture Prometheans. Most of the creatures are far too brutal and hungry to leave a foe alive. Those that manage to restrain themselves (and potentially their brethren) do not fashion exquisite tortures like many of their brethren do. They simply leave their prey bound as thoroughly as possible, and avail themselves of a wicked bite of their prisoner whenever they desire.

The Sebek appear quite well suited to watery environments. Their eyes possess nictitating membranes, clear eyelids that allow them to protect their eyes from filthy, stinging water yet still see perfectly underwater. Sebek fingers and toes are often webbed, and they are long, sinuous creatures. Many of them develop Transmutations that include thick tails, heavier armor and the power to control animals.

**Dormant Form:** When Sebek are forced into Dormancy, they assume forms that are reminiscent of nothing so much as various flotsam and river-bottom debris. Logs, huge muddy chunks of stone and similar debris are common. Even when they assume Dormancy away from water, Sebek appear to be greatly waterlogged, clearly recently dredged up from a swamp or lake somewhere.

**Bestowment:** All Sebek possess the Armor (•), Fangs (••) and Sebek's Gift (•) Pandoran Transmutations.

***Sublimati:*** Sebek *Sublimati* are creatures possessed of a low cunning, and affinity with the waterways. They usually construct impressive lairs accessible only by water, and they almost always surround themselves with a variety of traps and other constructions that make the most out of their ability to breathe and move about in water easily. Sebek *Sublimati* rarely achieve the heights of intelligence that other *Sublimati* do. Rather, their base cunning and hungry instincts take on a decisively more focused edge.

**Weakness:** Sebek Pandorans are ungainly when out of the water, suffering a -1 dice pool penalty on all Dexterity-based rolls. Additionally, only a successful Resolve + Composure roll allows them to overcome their great hunger for Azoth-infused flesh (including to follow orders to not eat a Promethean).

## The Great Albino Alligator

**Quote:** *(A sudden splash of water, drowned out by a gut-wrenching roar)*

**Background:** Everyone knows that there are alligators in the sewers of New York City. And hey, maybe there are. But when Prometheans gather to Ramble, one of the tales they tell is of the Great Albino Alligator beneath New York. Yet this is no alligator, they caution one another. It is a deathly pale Pandoran that only seems to look like one.

No one really knows where this monstrosity came from. The Osirans say that in the early days of New Amsterdam, a particularly rich man came to the city from Europe, bringing with him his collection of strange statuary. Obsessed with Egypt and the legends of the Nile, this collector brought with him an odd lizard-thing that men in Cairo claimed



was the remnants of the great crocodile god's cult that once existed along the Nile.

The Osirans claim to know this because they also claim that it was one of their number who awakened the thing from Dormancy. Apparently, a young Nepri broke into the man's house to steal an amulet said to be linked with his Pilgrimage in some way, and was surprised to discover one of the statues shattering its stony covering and attacking him ravenously with a massive, wicked maw.

That Nepri disappeared after he related this tale to another Promethean, and a wet mess was found in the basements where he'd been hiding. Since those days, Prometheans warn one another to avoid the sewers of New York. For though they seem to be the perfect place to hide and spare those around them from Disquiet, in truth, there are monsters far worse than a Promethean in those dank tunnels.

**Description:** The body of the Great Albino Alligator is vaguely humanoid, with wickedly clawed limbs and a great, thick tail. Its head is elongated like that of an alligator or crocodile, and its huge maw is filled with teeth. This horror is naked, though it is covered with a thick, scaly hide the color of sewer water. The shadows deepen around this thing, and its coming is often heralded by a swarm of sewer rats (and actual sewer alligators, if the Storyteller decides that such an urban legend is true in his World of Darkness).

**Storytelling Hints:** The Great Albino Alligator hungers. Its existence is a nearly eternal sleep, punctuated by occasional bouts of terrible hunger and a hunt, at the end of which it drags it prey back to the depths of its lair in the lowest part of the sewers and gnaws on it until nothing is left. Then, with a content belly, it slowly drifts back into slumber.

**Mockery**: Sebek
**Rank**: 5
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 0, Wits 2, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5
**Social Attributes**: Presence 3, Manipulation 0, Composure 3
**Physical Skills**: Athletics 3, Brawl (Bite) 5, Stealth 5, Survival 2
**Social Skills**: Animal Ken (Sewer Animals) 1, Intimidation (Roar) 3
**Willpower**: 5
**Vice**: Gluttony
**Initiative**: 5
**Defense**: 2
**Speed**: 13
**Size**: 6
**Health**: 11
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Demon's Call (••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Great Stature (••), Lithargous Body (••), Perfected Bezoar (Blunt Weapons ••, Sharp Weapons •••), Bizarre Weaponry (Forked Tail •••, Tusks •••), Swallow (••••), Titanic Form (•••••)
**Bestowment**: Armor (•••••), Bizarre Weaponry (Fangs ••), Sebek's Gift (•); the Armor Bestowment has been purchased higher than its normal rating as though it were a Transmutation.
**Pyros/per Turn**: 20/5
**Weapons/Attacks**:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 3(L) | – | 14 | – |
| Tail | 2(L) | – | 12 | – |

**Armor**: 5

## The Silent (Galatea Mockery)

It is the *Logos*, the Word of Creation, that animates the Galatea. But sometimes, the Created who utters that word has done something wrong. The *Logos* takes host only in perfection, and if the corpse imbued with the Divine Fire of the Galatea is imperfect, that holiest of words falls on deaf, dead ears.

Driven by the destructive urges of all Pandorans, the Silent are consummate hunters. Masters of remaining hidden, their natural silence and their ability to fly serve them quite well. More than one Promethean has told stories of barely escaping flocks of the Silent who suddenly appeared from out of the night.

The Silent prefer to use attacks that maul the flesh and mar the beauty of those they attack. Attractive Prometheans, particularly Galateids, arouse their ire, and more than one Muse has been horribly scarred by the sudden attack of one of these beasts, its mouth stretched wide in a silent shriek of

rage and hate. The Silent will even go out of their way to maim or even kill beautiful mortals they encounter, though they are careful not to invoke the Dormancy by confronting them directly and alone.

Those captured by the Silent are usually in for a particularly unpleasant time, for these brutes love nothing so much as to mutilate and forever scar the face of those they torment. It is generally agreed that the Silent consider strips of flesh taken directly from the face of imprisoned Prometheans to be quite the delicacy, and they indulge every time they are capable.

In appearance, these Pandorans are horrors, to be sure. They are completely incapable of uttering any sound. Of all the Pandorans, the Silent are the most hideous, possessed of terribly warped bones and unlovely, discolored flesh. Their grace is uncanny and unsettling to see, and they move through the air on the terrifying wings of carrion insects, leather-winged scavengers or black vulture feathers. They are constantly surrounded by the stench of rotting flesh. Theirs is a legacy of corruption and imperfection.

**Dormant Form:** The Silent always take the form of something depicting a human form that has been marred, destroyed or made ugly in some fashion. It is believed by some Prometheans that some of the broken or ugly statuary in some museums could very well be Silent Pandorans in dormant forms, while others have been encountered that seemed to be half-melted mannequins.

**Bestowment:** All Silent possess the Wings (••••) Pandoran Transmutation (allowing flight as a reflexive action).

***Sublimati:*** Silent *Sublimati* are strange, jealous creatures. They often watch from the shadows, keeping their terrible visages hidden as they plot intricate machinations to bring about the humbling of the beautiful. All Silent *Sublimati* find ways of communicating that do not require the spoken word, whether through the use of written messages, sign language or even the development of Transmutations that allow mental communication.

**Weakness:** The Silent are completely incapable of making any vocal sound. Additionally, any time they encounter a person with the Striking Looks Merit or similar signs of tremendous beauty, the player must make a Resolve + Composure roll for the Pandoran to resist immediately attacking the image of loveliness. In the case of human victims, this jealous violence does not override the Pandorans' cautious nature regarding the Disquiet — their assaults must simply be cleverer. This weakness also applies to pieces of artwork and even billboards featuring advertisements with truly beautiful people in them.

## The Harpy of Paris

**Quote:** *(only a moment of silence, before the sound of something large dropping from the sky)*

**Background:** Prometheans who have traveled Europe often tell one another stories of the things they find there. Among these is the story of the Harpy of Paris. Powerful Prometheans, or groups of less powerful ones, have encountered her before, lurking among the roofs of the city's skyline.

She has existed there since the 1920s, coming to life every so often and swooping down to terrorize her prey. She has also discovered others of the Silent, bullying them into a throng under her command. They dwell in midtown Paris, where the sealed-off, crumbling tower of an old church serves as their rookery and as the prison for their prey. They never hold more than one Promethean at a time here, for fear of their victims joining forces and escaping (as a pair did in the mid-1960s).

**Description:** Repulsive and noisome, the Harpy of Paris seems vaguely feminine, with long, stringy hair and with oversized, blotchy dugs hanging from her chest. Her wings are the splotched wings of an urban pigeon writ large, stained in excrement and the filth that accumulates in the upper stories of cities. These wings bear a set of wicked bone spurs at the upper joint, which she often uses to attack her foes, grappling them with her arms and stabbing them repeatedly with her wings.

Her flesh is as hard as the soot-smeared stone that is her constant environment, and she can transform to blend in with its surroundings. Her flesh is hard enough to dull blades that are used on her, and she can cough up a vile, putrid spittle that burns flesh. She is usually surrounded by pigeons — simple creatures she uses to blind and distract her foes.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Harpy is the queen of the roost, and she does not allow the others to forget it. But she must



lead her flock in search of prey often, so she is almost always on the hunt for the gathering places of Prometheans, soaring the dark skies above Paris at night until she can feel the warm crackle of Azoth beneath her. She watches her prey for a while before leading her flock against them. During the day, she remains in her rookery, laying atop her flock's captive as though she and it were lovers, reaching down occasionally to take a bite of its flesh as a lover might kiss her beloved.

**Mockery**: The Silent
**Rank**: 3
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2
**Social Attributes**: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2
**Mental Skills**: Investigation 1
**Physical Skills**: Athletics (Spitting) 2, Brawl (Wings) 2, Stealth (Urban) 1, Survival 3
**Social Skills**: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1
**Willpower**: 4
**Vice**: Pride
**Initiative**: 7
**Defense**: 3
**Speed**: 14
**Size**: 4
**Health**: 6
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Balsam Flesh (··), Demon's Call (··), Acid Phlegm (···), Bizarre Weaponry (Bone Spurs ···), Perfected Bezoar (Sharp Weapons ···)
**Bestowment**: Wings (····)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 14/3
**Weapons/Attacks**:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | (B) | – | 5 | – |
| Wings | 2(L) | – | 8 | – |
| Acid Phlegm | (L) | 20 | 5 | Dissolves armor |

## Torch-Born (Frankenstein Mockery)

The Frankensteins speak with fear of the Torch-Born. Embodiments of the fire that slays the Created, the Torch-Born seem driven to bring destruction by fire to any Prometheans they encounter. Torch-Born Pandorans seem to prefer seared flesh when consuming a Promethean and will do everything in their power to use flame in some fashion against those they hunt.

As such, they are quite cunning in setting up traps and pitfalls that involve flame. Lining pits with old, dry paper and paint, luring their prey over a shaft into the incinerator and dousing with oil are all favored tactics. Often, only the application of the Torch-Born's Crucible of Flesh Bestowment is necessary for success.

Torch-Born Pandorans are utterly fascinated with fire. They will stand around an open flame, staring raptly at it, sometimes even reaching out to touch it. It is often the pain of such attempts that snaps them from their reverie. These pyromaniacs run afoul of their own obsession all too often, and more than one of the Torch-Born has met its death when a Promethean turned the tables on it. Although they love the flame, Torch-Born are no more immune to fire than any other Pandoran is.

Prometheans captured by the Torch-Born are in for an unpleasant time, as well, for the Pandorans prefer to consume the flesh of the Created charred while still attached. Torch-Born have been known to engage in such feasting techniques as setting a limb ablaze and then beginning to feast once it burns out, or dumping a small brazier of coals into the opened torso of a Promethean and plucking out choice seared organ morsels as they can.

Torch-Born usually possess terrible black eyes that gleam red like coals in the darkness, and their skin is usually a waxy, blotched canvas of once-burnt flesh. They stink of burning things, as well, though the specifics vary for each. Some smell of burning bogs, others of the charnel pyre, while others stink of smoldering embalming fluid.

**Dormant Form:** When the Torch-Born assume their dormant Form, they are mistaken for objects left over from a great fire. They seem to be charred, burnt and melted things. In a city, they might appear as the remnants of a homeless camp's fire barrel that got out of control. In a wilderness area, they might seem to be seared boulders and charred, dead trunks.

**Bestowment:** All Torch-Born possess the Crucible of Flesh Pandoran Transmutation.

***Sublimati:*** Torch-Born *Sublimati* are always cruel, enjoying watching those around them suffer from flame. Most of them are dedicated arsonists, and they derive perverse pleasure from witnessing the pain of those who are burnt. Their favorite victims — particularly unlucky Prometheans — often bear brands that mark them as the property of the monster.

**Weakness:** When a Torch-Born is faced with a fire of campfire size or larger, the player must roll Resolve + Composure, with a dice penalty equal to the size of the fire. (See p. 180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Failure on this roll indicates that the Pandoran simply stands and gazes longingly into the flame. Any interruption to this reverie — another Pandoran striking him, an attack by an enemy, another Torch-Born reaching into the flame and being burned — snaps him back into consciousness.

## The Incinerator Monster

**Quote:** *(A low hissing growl, coming from somewhere in the shadows)*

**Background:** The students at Borges High, in upstate New York, still tell stories about the time that bum was found killed on the school grounds. He was half in and half out of a broken basement window, with furrows in the mud around him, like he was trying to get away from something. Nearly everyone says it was an axe murderer or something that got him, because the

police showed up early that morning after one of the janitors found him, and they covered everything up with blue plastic tarps. Some of the juniors who were watching stuff going on from the second-story classroom across the way said it took more than one trip to carry him all away.

All too often, one of the Prometheans is mistaken for one of the dregs of humanity: a bum, a burn-out, something like that. People don't understand much about these guys, really — only that they sometimes do weird stuff in places where normal people don't go. Like raid the local cemeteries where adolescents have died recently, putting together a son of his own. His own maker should have been like a father, but he swore he'd have a son so that he could do it right. Not like his father.

When he sewed all the pieces together to make his perfect son — the legs from a track runner, the arms of one of the football players, the head of the best looking kid in school, the brain of a prize-winning scholar — something went wrong. He threw the breakers that stormy night, when everyone was gone, and he should have had time to be with his son. He should have had time to explain life and the Pilgrimage, and how they were going to help one another with the Great Work to become real people — a real father and son.

He was going to name him Michael.

But something went wrong. Michael jerked, and his father almost cried tears of joy, but then the jerking continued, so spastically that his father cried out to him to stop. He'd tear the stitches.

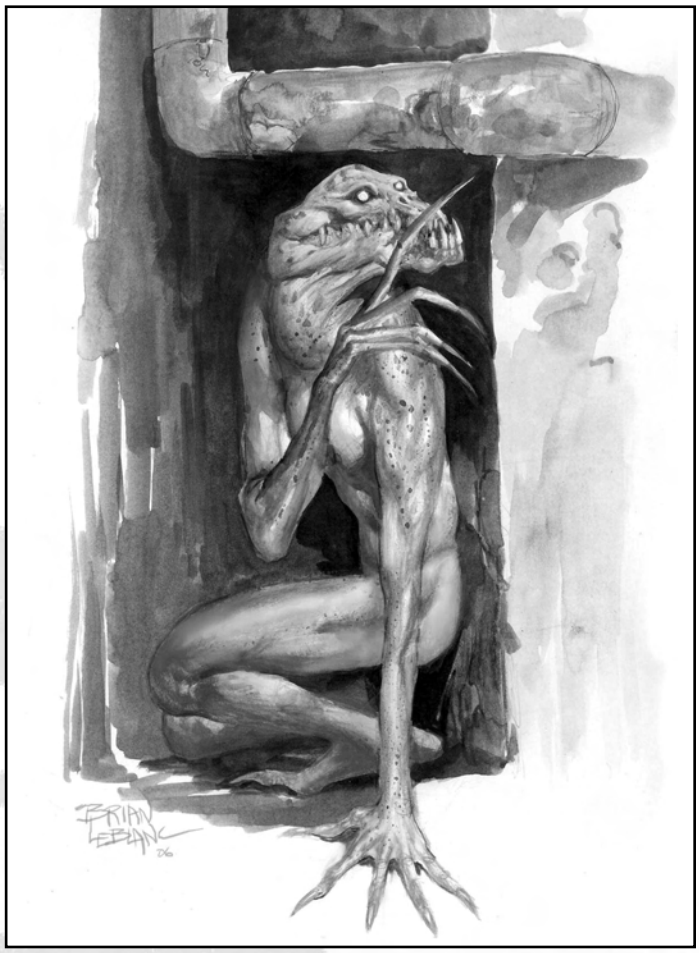
And tear them he did. An arm flopped onto the floor, followed by other body parts, still thrashing. Before his father's horrified eyes, Michael tore himself apart and became three horrible monsters that scurried into the dark, away from the one who should have been their father.

The next week was horrible, as he hunted them down one by one. They'd already gone through their chrysalis, quite quickly. He caught and killed one as it was emerging. He was attacked in the middle of the day by the second, while he was slumbering, waiting for the kids upstairs to go home. (He'd cried sometimes as he listened to them talk and laugh and tease one another, wondering if he'd ever have a child of his own.)

The third one hid, though. It hid well — in the old incinerator. It used the old trash chutes that they used to dump refuse into, to send it down into the incinerator, but had since been walled up, without removing the chutes. This one was smart; it probably got the brain. And it was mean. In the end, it killed its creator, as he realized it was too much for him.

As he lay there, trapped, as the thing gnawed off his legs, he wondered if he would have been a good father.

And now the kids talk about the survivor from that terrible night sometimes. They heard it banging around in the walls shortly after "the bum" died, and they told one another it was the bum's ghost. By the time it got still, though, they knew that it was an incinerator monster all on its own. One of the janitors had a kid, and his kid told people how his dad had seen something lurking in the incinerator — something that fled into the walls.




So now it waits, looking like a mass of hardened ash fused into a strange shape by neglect and the passing years, sitting in the bottom of an incinerator that hasn't seen fire in decades.

**Description:** The incinerator monster is smaller than most Pandorans. Its torso is narrow and fairly sleek and agile, allowing it to crawl through strange tunnels. Its skin is the color of old ash, a strange gray and black mottling, and its eyes are a terrible red. Its mouth is large for its head, and filled with disgusting teeth that look like they're stained with soot.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Incinerator Monster desires nothing more than to survive and feed. It is quite territorial, and understands that the incinerator is an excellent place in which to imprison a Promethean. It isn't yet quite cogent enough to lure one there by any method other than simply running as one gives chase.

**Mockery**: Torch-Born
**Rank**: 1
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 0, Wits 3, Resolve 1
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3
**Social Attributes**: Presence 2, Manipulation 0, Composure 3
**Physical Skills**: Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth (Shadows in a Building) 2, Survival 1



**Willpower**: 4
**Vice**: Wrath
**Initiative**: 7
**Defense**: 4
**Speed**: 12
**Size**: 3
**Health**: 6
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Fangs ·), Small Stature (·), Scurry (··)
**Bestowment**: Crucible of Flesh (····)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 10/1
**Weapons/Attacks**:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | (L) | – | 5 | – |

## Pandoran Transmutations

Although these Transmutations are available to any Promethean, few aside from the Centimani choose to develop and use them. If Disquiet makes it difficult to live around humans, then most of these body-warping Transmutations make it all but impossible. Prometheans who see others of their ilk in possession of these strange defilements of the form know to tread cautiously — for here is one who is a little too closely in touch with Flux.

Because of the inherently inhuman nature of these Transmutations, a Promethean who uses these tainted gifts risks his closeness to humanity. The first time a Promethean uses any Pandoran Transmutation in a scene, he risks losing Humanity. The wielder's player must roll three dice. Success on this roll indicates that he does not lose any Humanity. Failing this roll indicates the loss of a dot of Humanity and requires a roll for a derangement, as usual. These derangements usually serve to highlight the inherent difference between the mad, half-dead Promethean and normal, sane humanity. (See pp. 184-186 for some derangements particularly appropriate to the Promethean condition.)

If the Promethean develops one of the permanent Pandoran Transmutations, he does not have to resist Humanity loss every time he uses it. Instead, when the Transmutation is purchased, he automatically loses a dot of Humanity, while still rolling to see if a derangement is gained from that loss. He also receives a +1 die bonus to his Azoth rolls for Disquiet, however, a bonus that is cumulative with each permanent Pandoran power he gains.

Prometheans who practice the Centimani Refinement do not risk degeneration in this fashion. Centimani who have turned their backs on the Pilgrimage note this with satisfaction, pointing out that perhaps it is actually the mad goals of the Pilgrimage that bring insanity. Those Centimani who are still part of the Pilgrimage suggest that perhaps it is because in embracing the monster they are that they may find and keep their true humanity.

## One-Dot Pandoran Transmutations

### Armor (• to •••••)

Many Pandorans are quite formidable in combat, as their bodies are supremely adapted for violence. Such specimens also tend to be highly resistant to damage as well, whether they're covered in scaly armor, strange calcium deposits or other disfiguring protection.

**Cost:** — (1 Pyros)
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None (Instant)

The Pandoran with this Transmutation gains an Armor rating equal to the dot rating of this power. This armor is always something very obvious and disfiguring: shiny black beetle carapace, alligator's pebbly hide or some other trait.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. It lasts until the Pandoran wills it away, at which point the armor is completely concealed. The cost of this Transmutation still cannot exceed four dots, however, meaning that such armor can protect for up to only four points of Armor.

### Bizarre Weaponry (• to •••••)

Pandorans are known for their horrible forms, which seem to bristle with spines, talons and wicked fangs. These creatures are usually small, but they are almost universally dangerous, thanks to possession of multiple Transmutations of this variety.

The body of the Pandoran bears a natural weapon of some kind. Usually, these changes cannot be hidden, forcing those who bear them to go to additional lengths to hide their monstrous nature. Each differing kind of body weapon is a separate Transmutation purchase.

**Cost:** — (1 Pyros)
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None (Instant)

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action.

• *Body Barbs* (••••): Sharp barbs of bone protrude from within the flesh of the Pandoran with this Transmutation, endangering anything the Pandoran touches or vice versa. A Pandoran with Body Barbs automatically inflicts +1 lethal damage with unarmed strikes and grapples. Moreover, those who strike the creature with an unarmed attack take lethal damage equal to half the damage they inflict (rounded down), reduced by armor. Likewise, those seeking to foolishly grapple a Pandoran with Body Barbs receive a number of points of lethal damage equal to their successes to grab hold of the Pandoran, reduced by armor.

• *Bone Spurs* (•••): At junctures in the body where bone is close to the surface, especially at joints, spurs of bone have

erupted, granting the Pandoran a variety of wicked weapons. The Pandoran may attack with these spurs, inflicting +2 lethal damage.

• *Breath Weapon* (•••••): The power of Flux is inimical to the wholeness of the things of the world. The Pandoran is capable of ejecting part of the Flux within it as a cloud of alchemical noxiousness that breaks down flesh and matter. To make such an attack, the player of the Pandoran rolls Dexterity + Athletics, subtracting armor as usual but ignoring Defense. Each success inflicts one lethal damage onto the target. Each use of Breath Weapon costs one Pyros. Unlike most of the other Bizarre Weaponry Transmutations, Breath Weapon is not obvious until it is used. Its range is (Stamina x 5) yards.

• *Claws* (••, ••• or ••••): The Pandoran sports a set of talons on the ends of its limbs. These claws may be subtle sharpened bone at the end of the fingers that inflict +1 lethal damage (••); large, prominent talons the size of knife blades that inflict +2 lethal damage (•••); or even horrible pincers or other grossly oversized weapons at the end of a limb, capable of inflicting +3 lethal damage (••••).

• *Fangs* (• or ••): The maw of the Pandoran is lined with horrible fangs. These may be smaller rows of teeth that simply allow biting attacks to inflict lethal damage (•) or a mouth full of needle-like or shark's teeth that inflict +1 lethal damage with a bite attack (••).

• *Forked Tail* (•••): The Pandoran possesses a tail appendage. Not very useful for manipulating things, this tail ends in bone weaponry of some kind. Some are forked like the classical representations of imps and devils, while others end in spikes and spines. A common manifestation has this piece of Bizarre Weaponry combined with Poison for a wicked scorpion's tail. This tail may be used to attack, inflicting +2 lethal damage.

• *Horns* (•• or •••): The Pandoran's brow is crowned by a set of horns. Some \ appear as the horns of animals (usually bulls and rams), while others are simply a riot of sharp bone fragments that protrude from the creature's forehead. Smaller horns inflict +1 lethal damage (••), while larger or more elaborate manifestations of this Transmutation inflict +2 lethal damage (•••).

• *Poison* (+••): One of the attacks of the Pandoran is highly infused with the power of Flux, acting almost as a poison in the body of those struck by the Pandoran. The delivery system can range from a poisonous, scorpion-like stinger at the end of a forked tail, a set of cobra's fangs, or venomous talons. This is not a Transmutation of its own, but instead modifies other attacks, increasing their effective level. This add-on cannot increase the effective rating of the Bizarre Weaponry over five dots. Those struck by such an attack are injected with a Toxicity 5 venom that inflicts damage only once. (See **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 180–181 for details on poison.)

• *Tusks* (•••): The jaws of the Pandoran are slightly distended, for some of its teeth have grown into a full set of forward-jutting tusks, giving the creature a brutish appearance. Like a boar, a tusked Pandoran can inflict tremendous damage with its tusks, inflicting +2 lethal damage on a strike.

## Manlike Stature (•)

Most Pandorans are quite small, standing roughly the size of small children (when they stand on hind legs, at least). Some, however, are the size of full-grown men.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None

The Pandoran with this Transmutation is of Size 5. This Transmutation is always active, and cannot be bought as an activated power instead. Those characters who gain this Transmutation in the course of play, however, do actually grow in size.

## Scurry (• to •••••)

Pandorans are often known for their quick scuttling movement, and Promethean tales of the horrors often mention the rapidity with which a horde of Pandorans can close in on their kind, following their hunger for Azoth.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per turn
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Reflexive

When a Pandoran activates this Transmutation, its Speed increases by itself again for every dot in this Transmutation it has. Simply add one to the value of the Pandoran's dots in Scurry and multiply that number by its base Speed.

## Sebek's Gift (•)

Pandorans of the Sebek Mockery are best known for this Transmutation, which allows them to lie in wait within bodies of water without the need to surface for air.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None (Reflexive)

With this Transmutation, the Pandoran need simply never surface for air, absorbing oxygen from the water directly through its skin. This Transmutation does nothing to protect the Pandoran from other hazards in the water, such as the pressures of deep water or potentially toxic conditions in sewers.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and a reflexive action.

## Small Stature (•)

Most Pandorans are smallish creatures roughly the size of children. Though they appear to be whole creatures, they are sprouted from the pieces of a failed attempt to create a new Promethean. Therefore, although they all assume vaguely humanoid shapes, not all of them gain the full size and bulk of a human if they started their existence as the cast-off hand or other smaller body part of a sewn-together corpse.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None

The Pandoran with this Transmutation is of Size 3, while those Prometheans who study this Transmutation are of Size 4. This Transmutation is always active, and cannot be bought as an activated power instead. Those characters that gain this Transmutation in the course of play, however, do actually shrink in size.

# Two-Dot Pandoran Transmutations

## Balsam Flesh (••)

As the balsam wax captures the essence of a liquid medicine or perfume in alchemy, the flesh of the Pandoran transforms, absorbing some of the quality of the creature's surroundings. The Pandoran is very difficult to see, until it moves.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None (Instant)

This Transmutation is similar to the Promethean Deception Transmutation Chameleon Skin, except that this Transmutation is permanent and always active. The flesh of the Pandoran (or Promethean) is highly sensitive to its surroundings and can never be mistaken for normal flesh. As long as the creature remains still, it gains three additional dice to all Stealth rolls that involve remaining unseen. Moving up to its Speed in a turn reduces this bonus by one die, while moving at greater than his Speed results in loss of two bonus dice. Wearing drab clothing reduces the bonus by one die, normal clothing by two dice and vivid clothing eliminates the bonus entirely.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action, remaining active for as long as the creature remains perfectly still.

## Beastly Assimilation (••)

The Flux within a Pandoran can find sympathy with the wildness in other things. Some Pandorans have manifested the ability to assimilate animals into their being, partially absorbing those animals and making them part of their anatomy. From Medusa-like heads full of serpents to a layer of fleshy armor made up of the carapaces of half-absorbed cockroaches, these creatures are truly monstrous and unsettling to behold.

**Cost:** None
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** None

The animal to be assimilated must be of Size 3 or less. Generally speaking, this Transmutation grants one of the following benefits:

- *Armor:* +2 bonus, due to a covering of creatures merged into the skin of the Pandoran, such as beetles or hard-scaled lizards.
- *Attack:* Generally speaking, few animals are large enough to be affected by this power to attack individually. The Pandoran may assimilate swarms (see the sidebar on p. 239), though, allowing a Pandoran to attack with serpents on its head or a mass of scorpions attached to its chest that sting opponents during a grapple.
- *Special Ability:* This power may grant some other ability, such as the animals using poison to attack, or more esoteric uses, such as a back full of pigeons that allow the Pandoran to fall from nearly any height without taking damage (though not outright fly).

When this Transmutation is purchased, the animals are merged with the form of the Pandoran. This is permanent, and if the Pandoran wishes to assimilate other animals — or even the same animals in a different fashion — it must repurchase this Transmutation.

This Transmutation may be purchased at +1 dot in order to take advantage of multiples of the above effects. For instance, a covering of scorpions on the torso might provide both armor and the opportunity for said scorpions to attack is a three-dot purchase of the power. Adding their poison to that would make it a four-dot purchase.

## Demon's Call (••)

The arrival of some Pandorans is presaged by swarms of insects, or by attacks by rats or birds. Flux is the essence of wildness and chaos, and Pandorans in close touch with it can use it to manipulate the natural instincts of animals, bending them to their wills. This Transmutation is particularly common among Pandorans of the Render Mockery.

The Pandoran must make a connection to the animals it wishes to control. This can range from making eye contact to feeding them some of its body. What is important is that it finds a method by which its Flux can touch the wildness of the creature. This connection is usually automatically established with animals that have been living near the form of a dormant Pandoran, granting just-awakened Pandorans immediate animal servitors.

The commands given with Demon's Call are silent but simple, for the Pandoran cannot actually speak to the animals. Instead, it must manipulate the instincts of the creatures. Demon's Call can be used to create nearly any natural, instinctual reaction and may designate a target or cause of that reaction (for instance, giving animals a hunger reaction for a given Promethean), but that is as complex as it gets.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken
**Action:** Instant

Demon's Call is rolled every time the Pandoran instigates a new instinct, and the animals must be within line of sight of the Pandoran. The only exception is that a Pandoran may

issue a summons to all animals with which it has a connection within one mile. The Pandoran need not give the same command to every animal within sight. It may select groups of animals or even individuals to affect.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Dramatic failure indicates that the Pandoran not only fails to control the creature or creatures, but its heavy-handedness instills horror in the creature, which attempts to flee the Pandoran's presence and will beat itself to death trying to escape. The connection the Pandoran once had with the creature or creatures is broken.

**Failure:** Failure indicates the Pandoran fails to instill the proper instinct in the animal.

**Success:** Success indicates that the creatures obey the Pandoran's orders to the best of their abilities.

**Exceptional Success:** Flux drives the creature's instincts into a near frenzy. The creature ignores pain and damage in the fulfillment of its instincts, gaining +1 die to any rolls toward that fulfillment.

**Possible Modifiers**

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| –2 | The animal is tamed, including training (most house pets) |
| –2 | Commanding 11–20 creatures or an eight-yard-radius swarm* |
| –1 | The animal is domesticated (most farm animals) |
| –1 | Commanding 5–10 creatures or a four-yard-radius swarm |
| — | Commanding 2–4 creatures or a two-yard-radius swarm |
| +1 | Animal is rabid or otherwise "mad" |
| +1 | Commanding a single creature or a one-yard-radius swarm |
| +2 | Giving the command to return to the Pandoran |

* Add +1 for every 10 creatures or doubling of the swarm size thereafter.

### Swarms

Animals of Size 1 or 2 are generally best recorded in swarms, flocks and other groupings of the animals, as they are most effective in such groupings. This includes not just insects, but also most birds and smaller creatures such as rats.

Swarms are measured by their size in yards radius. A swarm generally inflicts one die of bashing damage to anyone within its radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing. Every time the swarm condenses to cover half of its full area, it inflicts one additional die of damage per turn.

Therefore, a swarm of eight yards in radius inflicts two bashing damage per turn if it constricts down to a four-yard radius, three bashing if it halves that again to a two-yard radius, and four bashing damage per turn it if condensed itself down to a one-yard radius. Though condensing doesn't usually happen all that often in nature (save in the case of creatures such as killer bees), it is an easy enough thing for most supernatural powers that command animals to bid them to do so.

Armor is effective against a swarm only if it covers one's full body, but even then it provides only half its rating. In addition, targets are distracted by the swarm, suffering -2 dice on perception and concentration rolls while they are within the radius, even if they're not specifically attacked.

The swarm cannot be attacked with fists, clubs, swords or guns. Only area-affect attacks such as a torch affect it. Each point of damage inflicted by a flame or other applicable attack halves the swarm's size. Once the swarm is reduced below a one-yard radius, either all insects are dead or the few remaining disperse.

## Flux Within the Shade (••)

Flux resides not just in Pandorans and where Azoth gathers, but in all the world. Places that are sources of fear and terror often are wellsprings of Flux. The fears of mankind have imbued the shadows of the world with small traces of Flux, but these traces are enough to allow characters with this Transmutation to warp the shape of those shadows.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult

**Action:** Reflexive

The Pandoran with this Transmutation is capable of exerting his will over the shape of shadows within his line of sight. These shadows may be used to accomplish a variety of things, but only for a short period of time. Some examples include:

- *Corridor of Shadows:* Flux helps coalesce shadows into more potent manifestation for a moment, granting a bonus to Stealth dice pools for up to 10 turns.
- *Shadowed Menace:* Shadows flicker over the features of the Pandoran, lending an air of threat at just the right time, granting a bonus to Intimidation dice pools on that turn.
- *Shadowboxing:* In combat, shadows warp subtly, distorting perspective, making the Pandoran's attacks harder to avoid and granting him a bonus to Brawl or Weaponry attacks on that turn.

Pandorans who possess this ability are known for their inventive and creative uses of the shadows around them.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Pandoran not only fails to manipulate the shadows around him, but they work against him, inflicting a -1 penalty to the dice rolls that he was attempting to augment for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Pandoran fails to master the shadows.

**Success:** The Pandoran gains a +2 bonus to the dice roll with which he is shaping the shadows to aid him.

**Exceptional Success:** The Pandoran's mastery of the local shadows proves quite powerful indeed, increasing the bonus to +3.

**Possible Modifiers:** Transmutation is used in a place of great peace, prosperity, serenity or other strong, positive emotion (-1); Transmutation is used during the day (-2); Transmutation is used in a place of great despair, fear or poverty, or a place that has seen much violence (+1); Transmutation is used at night (+2)

## Frog Tongue (••)

The tongue of the Pandoran with this Transformation is a grossly swollen, prehensile thing of several feet in length. Though it can be retracted — usually into a throat pouch of some sort — its presence is very obvious. The speech of those with such a thing is quite slurred and thick, and the mouths of such Pandorans produce prodigious amounts of sticky saliva.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

The Pandoran possesses a long, thickly muscled tongue covered in both raspy flesh and a slightly sticky saliva coating, allowing it to be used for a variety of purposes. When using its tongue to accomplish most physical endeavors where an additional limb will assist it (climbing, grappling and other physical undertakings), the Pandoran with this Transmutation gains three additional dice for the effort.

The tongue itself can be used as a hand on its own, but it loses two dice from Dexterity-based dice pools. It can also be used to inflict bashing damage with a normal attack, at a base dice pool of Strength + Brawl with no modifiers.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. The tongue remains until the character wills it to disappear.

## Great Stature (••)

Many Pandorans are larger than the average human. Although they are sprouted from the pieces of a failed attempt to create a new Promethean, many Pandorans absorb other would-be Pandorans in the early parts of their existence, assuming tremendous size.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

The Pandoran or Promethean with this Transmutation is of Size 6. This Transmutation is always active and cannot be bought as an activated power instead. Those characters who gain this Transmutation in the course of play, however, do actually grow in size.

## Lithargous Body (••)

As certain alchemical operations leave behind a litharge — a strange film of waste scum — the body of the Pandoran generates a layer of ashen filth that is the remnant of the



processes of Flux within it. Although the bodily litharge breaks down quickly, it is a powerful irritant to flesh and the lungs. It is so fine that a cloud of the litharge is raised when the Pandoran moves quickly or when someone strikes it.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

The Pandoran's body produces a thin, acrid, choking film. The touch of the stuff on the body produces slight chemical burns, but it inflicts no direct damage. The litharge leaves a thin, grayish film that quickly dissolves or blows away, preventing it from being used to aid in tracking attempts and the like.

Whenever the Pandoran is struck by an attack that inflicts damage, the litharge billows up in a small cloud of stinking, stinging dust that engulfs anyone standing near the Pandoran. The Pandoran may also take an instant action to move forcefully enough to cause the cloud to billow up. Those who choose to take a dodge action may flee the area if they have not acted yet.

Players of characters caught in the dust must make a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll or be negatively impacted by the cloud, limiting the characters' ability to act due to coughing and burning eyes.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** As a failure. The character is also blinded for the rest of the scene, or until he takes an instant action to somehow clean the litharge from his eyes.

**Failure:** The victim suffers a -2 dice pool penalty to all rolls involving Physical Attributes or Physical Skills for two turns. The victim also suffers a -1 cumulative penalty to subsequent resistance rolls against litharge during the same scene.

**Success:** The victim is unaffected by the litharge.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only is the victim unaffected by the litharge, but his accumulated penalties to his resistance rolls against litharge disappear.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. The body continues to produce litharge until the end of the scene.

## Perfected Bezoar (•• to •••••)

Understood to be a thing of resistance, the bezoar that sometimes developed in certain animals was favored by medieval alchemists for treating weakness and helping patients to fight poison and disease. The Flux within the Pandoran can likewise form a bezoar, though its purpose varies.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

The Pandoran or Promethean with this Transmutation becomes immune to a single thing that is anathema to life. A bezoar literally grows within the stomach of the Pandoran who manifests this trait. Should the Pandoran with a bezoar ever be killed, the bezoar can be harvested, ground up and consumed by another Pandoran or Promethean, who may then purchase this Transmutation as an affinity Transmutation.

- *Acids & Other Solvents* (•••): The Pandoran is immune to acids and other solvents. Any chemical or substance, natural or mystical, that would dissolve its flesh is rendered as harmless as water.
- *Blunt Weapons* (••): The Pandoran is immune to blunt weapons and other attacks that would inflict bashing damage from a broad kinetic impact. Such attacks inflict only a single point of bashing damage, rather than their normal damage.
- *Disease* (••): The Pandoran is rendered completely immune to all diseases, natural and otherwise.
- *Fire* (•••• or •••••): The Pandoran's flesh is bolstered by the bezoar, rendering it resistant to flame. Fire inflicts only lethal damage on a Pandoran that purchases the weaker version of this Transmutation. If the greater version is purchased, fire inflicts only bashing damage. If the weaker version is ever purchased, the Pandoran may pay the experience point difference between the weaker and greater versions to upgrade the power at any time.
- *Poison* (••): The Pandoran is rendered completely immune to all poisons and toxins, natural and otherwise.
- *Sharp Weapons* (•••): The Pandoran is immune to stabbing and slashing weapons and other attacks that pierce the skin and inflict lethal damage. Such attacks inflict only a single point of bashing damage, rather than their normal damage.

This Transmutation is always active.

## Tarflesh (••)

The flesh of some Pandorans exudes a sticky, tar-like resin. Such Pandorans are tremendous grapplers and climbers, capable of sticking to both foes and surfaces with great ability.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

Pandorans with this Transmutation gain a +4 bonus to Athletics rolls involving climbing, as well as a +4 bonus to checks to instigate or maintain a grapple. They lose two dice on rolls to try to free themselves from a grapple, however.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. The body remains resinous until the end of the scene.

## Tentacles (•• or •••)

The limbs of some Pandorans do not fully form grasping digits or elongated bone structures. Such creatures possess tentacles in place of arms or even legs, making hiding their monstrous nature very difficult, indeed.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

One or more of the Pandoran's limbs is replaced with a tentacle. A tentacle is not capable of wielding a weapon, but the Pandoran can strike foes with great force, inflicting +1 bashing damage on an unarmed strike. If purchased at one dot higher, the tentacle is covered with lamprey-like mouths, serrated bone shards or another refinement that allows the tentacle to inflict +1 lethal damage on an unarmed strike instead.

A tentacle is also extremely useful for grappling, granting a +2 dice bonus to grapples. It may also prove useful in other situations, such as climbing. In such situations, the Pandoran gains a +2 dice bonus. Additionally, if the tentacle is used to aid movement, the Pandoran's Speed is increased by one per tentacle so used.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, a limb transforms (or the tentacle sprouts from the Pandoran's side, if purchased as an extra limb) with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. It remains until the bearer wills it gone.

### Unwholesome Visitations (••)

The Pandoran with this power has the ability to turn its Disquiet into an active weapon, capable of injecting the unease it causes into the minds of sleeping victims, creating in them terrible nightmares.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** (Wits + Empathy) – (Resolve + Azoth)

**Action:** Extended

Any victim within the Pandoran's presence may be targeted by this ability. The Pandoran need not be able to see the target, but he must know that the target is sleeping. The target number for the extended roll is the victim's Willpower, with one roll per 30 minutes allowed. Success means that the Pandoran successfully injects its Disquiet into its target, causing nightmares. This roll may be affected by the following modifiers:

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| –2 | The target cannot be seen. |
| –2 | The target is a supernatural creature. |
| –1 | The target had all its Willpower points when it went to sleep. |
| –1 | The target is touched by the supernatural (ghouls, kinfolk, Sleepwalkers, etc.) |
| — | The target can be seen. |
| +1 | The target had half its Willpower points or less when it went to sleep. |
| +2 | The target is touched while the power is invoked. |

Once this effect is successful, the Pandoran's Disquiet affects the dreams of the target. The Pandoran itself, however, has no control over the content of these dreams, except by exerting its Flux toward that end.

Exerting one's Flux thus calls for a contested roll. The Pandoran's player rolls its Presence + Intimidation, contested by the target's Resolve + Azoth. The Pandoran may make only one roll per hour, and success indicates the target loses a point of Willpower from haunting dreams.

After three such hours, the target is likely to awaken and not be able to get back to sleep. Additionally, characters who suffer any nightmares at all (whether or not under the control of the Pandoran) do not recover their normal point of Willpower upon awakening.

Upon awakening, creatures with mental powers may have their players make a reflexive Wits + Azoth to realize the dreams are caused by an outside agency.

## Three-Dot Pandoran Transmutations

### Acid Phlegm (•••)

A common power among the Sebek. The Pandoran with this ability is capable of corrupting the watery nature of its body with Flux, creating a volatile acid that it may spit at a tremendous distance.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics

**Action:** Instant

Once this Transmutation has taken effect, the Pandoran's spittle become both copious and caustic for the rest of the scene. The Pandoran may spit a globule of caustic spittle at a foe any time during that scene, to a range of 20 yards per dot of Stamina. Hitting requires a Stamina + Athletics roll, made like any other ranged attack, inflicting lethal damage.

If the damage from an attack exceeds the Durability of clothing or armor worn by the target, those items suffer Structure damage in addition to any damage inflicted on the target.

### Ceration of Form (•••)

Named for the alchemical process whereby a solid material was made more pliable and waxen, this Transmutation allows a Pandoran to squeeze through openings that it might not normally be capable of bypassing, compacting the body and impossibly bending bone.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Athletics

**Action:** Instant

The Pandoran is capable of squeezing through any aperture that it can fit its head through, fully emerging on the other side on its next turn. Until its next turn, the Pandoran does not gain the benefit of its Defense. Moving thus takes one instant action per 10 feet of passageway through which the Pandoran must travel.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the Pandoran fail to navigate the opening, but it becomes stuck, losing its Defense for the period of time while it is stuck. It may escape with a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll, ending up on the side of the opening it began.

**Failure:** The Pandoran fails to pass through the opening.

**Success:** The Pandoran passes through the opening.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the Pandoran successfully navigate the opening, but it retains its Defense while doing so.

## Clockwork Servant (•••)

It is in the nature of Flux that entropy shall reign. Things fall apart and break, they work when they are not expected to, and they fail to work when they must. The Pandoran can raise the Flux within a piece of machinery toward those ends precisely, though increasing the Flux within something usually takes its toll on the object.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Science

**Action:** Instant

The Pandoran must choose an object within line of sight, mustering the Flux within it to a boiling point. He may command the object to perform one of its normal functions. For instance, a car might suddenly lurch forward, an ATM might shoot out money, or an electric fence might cease the flow of power through it.

Machines cannot move on their own unless they have the normal mechanical ability to move, and causing them to do multiple things within their purview (a car's engine roaring to life and lurching forward to hit someone, for example) must be done over successive turns.

The use of Flux in this fashion causes damage to the item, however. Each time it is used, the item takes a single point of damage to its Structure, bypassing Durability.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Flux overwhelms the machine, destroying it in some small but crucial way. A pulse of electricity fries circuits, belts in the engine of a vehicle snap, or gears and moving mechanisms over-stress and break.

**Failure:** The Pandoran simply fails to muster the Flux within the object.

**Success:** The Pandoran causes the item to perform one of its normal functions. In the process, the item takes a single point of damage to its Structure.

**Exceptional Success:** The Pandoran masters the Flux in the object well. He may choose to parlay this skill into one of three benefits: the object gains a +2 bonus to any action the Pandoran is having it take (or reduces the dice pool of those resisting by two), the item does not take a point of damage, or the Pandoran gains two dice for controlling the object again next turn.

**Possible Modifiers:** Object is well maintained and in good condition (-1), object is a simple machine (push lawn mower, hand crank; -2), object is poorly maintained and in bad condition (+1), object is a very complex machine (robotic assembly line; +2)

## Detach Limb (•••)

As the Pandoran was birthed from the failed attempt to create a Promethean, the Pandoran may re-create that process in a minor way. With this Transmutation, the Pandoran detaches one of its limbs (usually a hand) to have it scuttle about on its own. While the detached limb does so, the Pandoran mentally controls it from afar.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Resolve

**Action:** Instant

With an instant action, the Pandoran simply wills the limb or other body part to separate. Each time this Transmutation is purchased, it applies to a new body part he is capable of separating. A Pandoran can sense what is going on within five yards of his body part per dot of Wits.

Different body parts have innate traits, but the Pandoran may allocate successes gained on the power activation roll to those traits, increasing them by strength of will and body. Each body part has a Health rating equal to its Size + Stamina. A portion of damage taken by a body part is suffered by the Pandoran when the body part is reattached.

- *Arm:* Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1; Size 2, Defense 1, Speed 3. With this ability, the arm drops off just below the shoulder and proceeds to worm its way around, often using the hand to aid its movement. When the arm is rejoined to its owner, one point of damage is apportioned to the Pandoran per two points taken. If the arm is destroyed, the Pandoran is rendered armless.
- *Entrails:* Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1; Size 2, Defense 1, Speed 5. The Pandoran's belly splits open and his entrails slither out, moving like a small bundle of serpents. When the entrails are rejoined to their owner, one point of damage is apportioned to the Pandoran per three taken. If the entrails are destroyed, the Pandoran may painstakingly grow them back over a period of time equal to the entrails' Health dots in days. During this time, the Pandoran cannot eat.
- *Hand:* Strength 0, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1; Size 1, Defense 2, Speed 7. When the hand is rejoined to its owner, one point of damage is apportioned to the Pandoran per three taken. If the hand is destroyed, the Pandoran is rendered handless.
- *Head:* Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2; Size 2, Defense 2, Speed 5. With this permutation of the power, the head of the Pandoran rises from the body, pulling esophagus and entrails with it. It moves about in the same fashion that an octopus might, extending bits of entrails to move around, with the head centrally located. When the head is rejoined to its owner, one point of damage is apportioned to the Pandoran per two taken. If the head is destroyed, the Pandoran dies.
- *Leg:* Strength 2, Dexterity 0, Stamina 2; Size 2, Defense 1, Speed 3. Like the arm, a detached leg is capable of moving about clumsily. When the leg is rejoined to its owner, one point of damage is apportioned to the Pandoran per three taken. If the leg is destroyed, the Pandoran is rendered legless.

## Fever Dreams (•••)

Flux is the essence of chaos and madness, and those whose minds are filled by it experience strange waking nightmares and hallucinations. Pandorans with mastery over this Transmutation are capable of roiling the Flux that inhabits all living things, causing the mind and senses to overflow with impressions that are not there.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Intimidation vs. Composure + Azoth

**Action:** Contested

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Pandoran not only fails to affect his target, but his own Flux reacts to his attempt at manipulating and strikes back. The wielder of this Transmutation suffers the schizophrenia derangement for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** The Pandoran fails to affect the target.

**Success:** Flux rises in the mind of the target, and the target suffers the schizophrenia derangement (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 99) for the remainder of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** As success, but the target suffers a -4 penalty on Social rolls, rather than the standard -2.

**Possible Modifiers:** Target is touched by the supernatural (ghouls, kinfolk, Sleepwalkers, etc.; -1), target has all its Willpower points (-1), target has high Morality (-1 per dot above 7), target has half its Willpower points or less (+1), target possesses one or more derangements (+1 per derangement)

## Hundred Hands (•••)

Many who delve into the mysteries of the divisive, strange Flux come to understand that the changes it can wreak on the human form need not be detrimental.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

The Pandoran bears an additional organ or limb. Its placement on the body is entirely up to the purchaser. A mouth set in its palm, a second brain lodged between its lungs, an arm growing from between its shoulder blades — all of these enhancements have been seen among purchasers of this Transmutation.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the limb or organ appears from nowhere, growing in seconds with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action, remaining until the bearer wills it gone.

• *Arm:* The Pandoran gains two extra dice per extra arm for grappling attacks. The character may also perform reflexive functions with his extra arms (holding items, doors, etc.), but they do not allow him to perform additional instant actions per turn.

• *Brain:* Some Pandorans have been encountered with grossly swollen skulls housing two brains, but a secondary brain is usually located somewhere else in the body of the Pandoran. The Pandoran gains a +2 bonus to all Mental Skill checks.

• *Ear:* The Pandoran gains a +1 bonus per extra ear to perception rolls having to do with sound. More extra ears can be purchased at a cost of +1 dot per additional extra ear (granting three additional ears as a five-dot purchase).

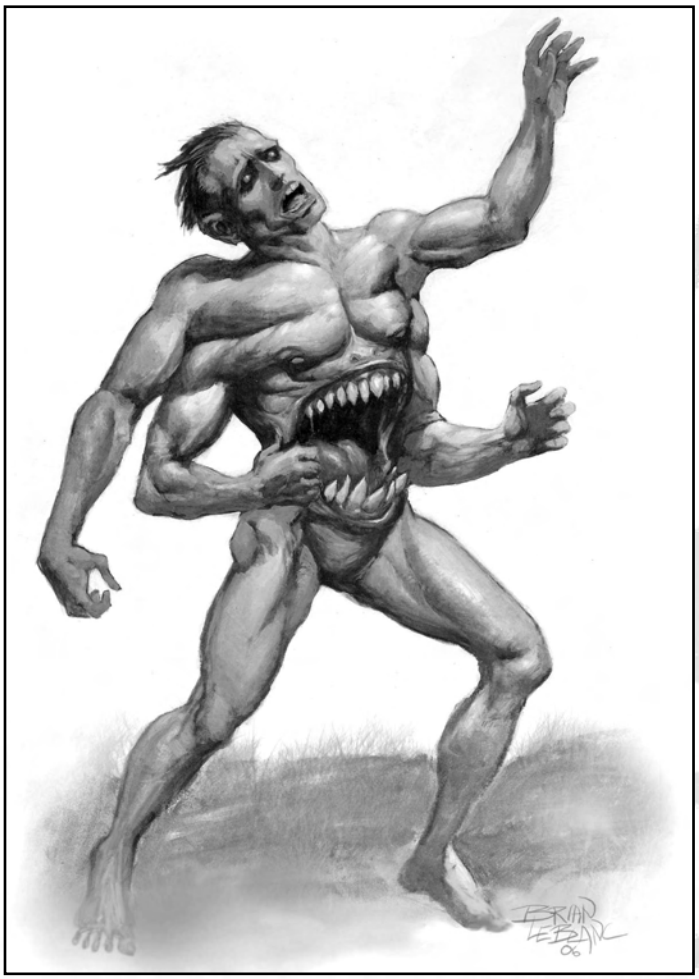
• *Eye:* The Pandoran gains a +1 bonus per extra eye to Wits + Composure rolls to avoid being surprised. Additional eyes do not actually aid other perception rolls. Having one can allow visual-based perception rolls in situations where the character might not normally get a roll if the eye is located in a place situated to allow it to see what is going on. More extra eyes can be purchased at a cost of +1 dot per additional extra eye (granting three extra eyes as a five-dot purchase).

• *Gallbladder:* The Pandoran that possesses an additional gallbladder is capable of digesting things that most other creatures could not manage, alchemically transmuting them into nourishment. Dirt, sewage and a variety of other filth can provide nourishment, as can plastic and other inorganic substances. The gallbladder does nothing to prevent any illnesses that might be associated with consuming the substance, though. Additionally, because the gallbladder is the alchemical source of phlegm, a Pandoran with an extra gallbladder may spend a point of Pyros to flood his body with the phlegmatic humour, making him very calm and analytical, gaining the 9-again quality on any single roll involving a Mental Skill. For the rest of the scene, however, the character is withdrawn and distant, suffering from the fugue derangement.

• *Heart:* The Pandoran with this Transmutation gains +1 Health. Additionally, it cannot be felled by a killing blow (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 168) to the torso. A character may purchase more than one heart, and each extra heart gives +1 Health. A character can have a total number of extra hearts equal to his Stamina or Size, whichever is lowest.

• *Leg:* Each additional leg possessed grants a +1 Strength when defending against attempts to overpower the character in a grapple attack. The Pandoran also adds +1 to his Speed per leg, and a character with two extra legs (for a total of four) gains a +1 Defense.

• *Liver:* The Pandoran gains a +2 Stamina against toxins and poisons. This bonus increases by an additional +1 Stamina per liver (should a Pandoran purchase more than one). Because the liver is the alchemical source of yellow bile, a Pandoran with an additional liver may spend a point of Pyros to flood its body with the choleric humour. Doing so grants it the 9-again quality on a single melee attack roll, as it gives in to the terrible anger that comes with an overabundance of that humour. For the remainder of the scene, however, it lashes out at every little source of aggravation and displeasure, requiring a successful Resolve + Composure roll to resist the urge to strike out in such circumstances.



• *Lungs:* The Pandoran may hold his breath for longer than normal, based on how many sets of lungs it possesses. One with two sets may hold its breath for twice as long, one with three may go for three times as long without breath, and so on. Additionally, because the lungs are the alchemical source of black bile, a Pandoran with an additional set of lungs may spend a point of Pyros to flood its body with the melancholic humour, inuring itself to fear. For the remainder of the scene, it is not affected by any power that operates by causing fear or terror in the target. It does, however, suffer from the melancholia derangement for that entire time, as well.

• *Mouth:* The Pandoran possesses an additional mouth somewhere on its anatomy. Although this mouth cannot ingest food (as it has no connection to the stomach), it can be used to speak instead of — or even in addition to — its normal mouth. Speaking with multiple mouths simultaneously creates a strange, unsettling dissonance of voice, granting the Pandoran a +2 bonus to Intimidation checks while using it. The extra mouth's tongue can taste, and the mouth may be used to deliver a bite, as normal for a human mouth. If the Pandoran purchases the Bizarre Weaponry (Fangs) Transmutation at one dot higher than normal, both of its mouths may possess the fangs.

• *Spleen:* The Pandoran possesses an additional spleen, allowing it to heal bashing damage in half the normal time. Additionally, because the spleen is the alchemical source of blood, a Pandoran with an additional spleen may spend a point of Pyros to flood its body with the sanguine humour, gaining a +1 die bonus to Strength rolls during times of stress and exertion, including combat. This bonus persists for the scene, as long as the exertion continues. For the remainder of the scene, however, it also suffers from the obsessive compulsion derangement, with a focus on manic, overly happy behavior, finding humor in nearly everything and laughing at inappropriate times.

(**Note:** A Promethean who purchases this power cannot gain the +1 Strength benefit in conjunction with the Might Transmutation's Strength bonuses — see p. 149. He gets one or the other, but not both at the same time.)

• *Tentacle:* The Pandoran possesses a tentacle as an extra limb, rather than a deformation of one of its normal limbs. All of the other options of the Bizarre Weaponry (Tentacle) Transmutation apply to this limb, save that it costs one dot higher than normal, as it is a new limb, rather than replacing one.

## Plague Cibation (••• or •••••)

In alchemy, cibation is the process of adding one substance to another that is considered already whole. In this case, the Pandoran introduces Flux to the body of his target, infecting that target with a terrible disease. Those who fall victim to this illness run a terrible fever and suffer from seizures.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Medicine vs. Stamina + Resolve

**Action:** Contested

This plague causes terribly high fevers, dehydration and seizures. While a victim suffers from it, he loses two dice from Strength- and Dexterity-based rolls, due to tremors and weakness. This disease inflicts one point of lethal damage per day, and victims are permitted a Stamina + Resolve check to throw off its effects once per day. Throwing off its effect requires a number of successes equal to the number of successes the Pandoran's player scored when infecting the target originally. This disease is not contagious. It can be contracted only by deliberate action on the part of a character who possesses this Transmutation.

Finally, using either the Fever Dreams or Unwholesome Visitations Transmutations on a target suffering from this Transmutation grants a two-die bonus to the Pandoran for the purpose of activating those Transmutations.

The Pandoran must be touching its victim in order to infect it with Flux contagion**.** (See "Touching the Target" on p. 119 for more details on activating powers while touching a target.)

If this power is purchased as a four-dot Transmutation, it may be used on a target within a range of the Pandoran's Medicine Skill dots x 10 yards.

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the Pandoran fail to infect its target, but the Flux contagion backlashes. Within an hour, the Pandoran itself is caught in the grip of the disease, becoming chilled and feverish. The disease is gone after eight hours of sleep, however.

**Failure:** The Pandoran simply fails to infect the target.

**Success:** The target is successfully infected with the Flux contagion.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the Flux contagion take hold in the Pandoran's target, but it is a particularly virulent manifestation, causing the target to lose three dice from all Strength- and Dexterity-based rolls, rather than the normal two.

### Wall Walking (•••)

With the power of Flux, the Pandoran can create tremendous sympathy between his extremities and the surface of a wall, causing his flesh to take on a texture complementary to that of the wall, allowing him to cling to it with ease.

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics

**Action:** Instant

• *Normal Surfaces:* With this Transmutation active, the Pandoran can easily climb those surfaces that others might climb. The Pandoran moves at its normal Speed up, down or across the surface. It even retains its Defense while doing so. Pandorans clinging to a surface may take normal actions, such as attacking, but doing so causes the Pandoran to be unable to use its Defense in such situations.

• *Impossible Surfaces:* When climbing surfaces that are normally impossible for even skilled climbers to navigate (such as the sheer sides of a steeply pitched marble building), the Pandoran uses the normal climbing rules (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 64–65), with the following modifiers:

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| –3 | Surface is upside-down (ceilings, etc.) |
| –2 | Surface forms an acute angle with the ground |
| –2 | Surface is very smooth (chemically smoothed metals, glass, ceramics) |
| –1 to –3 | Bad weather |
| –1 | Surface is moderately smooth (newly polished marble, textured glass) |
| +1 | Surface is moderately textured (wooden wall) |
| +2 | Surface forms an obtuse angle greater than 135 degrees with the ground |
| +2 | Surface is very textured (rough natural mountain face, brick wall) |

### Wings (••• or ••••)

A set of wings sprouts from the Pandoran's back. These wings vary dramatically among Pandorans. Some have wings of feathers in a variety of colors, others have leathery chiropteran wings, and some even have the massive gossamer wings of giant locusts or dragonflies.

**Cost:** None (1 Pyros)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None (Instant)

The Pandoran with wings can fly at his normal Speed as an instant action. If the four-dot version of the Wings Transmutation is purchased, this is a reflexive action.

This Transmutation is always active. If purchased at one dot higher, however, the change may be activated with the expenditure of one Pyros and an instant action. The wings remain until the character wills them to disappear.

## Four-Dot Pandoran Transmutations

### Crucible of Flesh (••••)

In the alchemist's crucible are his materials rendered down, through the principle of heat. A Pandoran can transform his very body into a crucible, exuding tremendous heat and destroying matter by touch.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult

**Action:** Instant

The Pandoran inflicts one point of lethal damage per success on the activation roll, to a maximum of three points of lethal damage. This assumes the Pandoran is touching the target with his hand. This effect can inflict up to four points of lethal damage if the Pandoran is grappling or otherwise in contact with the target with a significant portion of its body.

This power can inflict aggravated damage if it is purchased at one dot more.

### Inertia (••••)

Flux is the antithesis of Azoth. It is slow and entropic, generating disunity and division. The Pandoran with this Transmutation is capable of infusing the power of Flux into the workings of Azoth, disrupting the manifestations of Azothic mastery (i.e., Promethean Transmutations).

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Occult

**Action:** Extended (target number = Azoth; one roll represents one turn of effort)

The target number for this extended roll is the Azoth rating of the Promethean who created the effect. Once the Pandoran has achieved sufficient successes, the targeted Transmutation deactivates and dissipates. For every success the Pandoran achieves in excess of the successes needed to dispel the Transmutation, that Transmutation cannot be activated for a full turn after it is dispelled.

### Malleate (••••)

The very essence of transformation is Flux, and not even flesh is spared its ravages. With this Transmutation, the

Pandoran secretes an alchemical ooze that makes flesh and other living matter malleable without harming it. This is a living alchemy, and it affects only matter that is alive. Dead matter is the province of mundane alchemy.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per minute

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts

**Action:** Extended (one roll represents one minute of sculpting)

The changes that this fleshly alchemy can work are many, and some Pandorans are known for their tremendous skill at creating horrors and terrible weapons with them. Using this Transmutation is an extended action, requiring one minute of work and the expenditure of one Pyros per roll. If the Pandoran is working changes on himself, he must also spend a point of Willpower at the beginning of the process (though he gains no dice bonus when doing so).

Pandorans can re-create any of the permutations of the Beastly Assimilation, Bizarre Weaponry or Wings Transmutations, requiring a target number equal to double the Transmutation dot cost of the mimicked Transmutation.

Some other possibilities include:

- *Hiding Monstrousness:* Some Centimani have been known to use this Transmutation to go among humans for a short period of time. Any general ugliness may be removed with three successes, though this effect does nothing to assuage Disquiet. Transmutations that have altered the body may also be removed, requiring a number of successes equal to double the dot cost. These changes do not go away, though, they are merely subsumed within the body. A Pandoran may spend one Pyros to instantly regrow those physical Transmutations.
- *Rarefied Features:* It is possible to use Malleate to make the target more beautiful, smoothing away flaws. With four successes, the target may be given the effects of the two-dot Striking Looks Merit. It costs eight successes to grant the effects of the four-dot Striking Looks Merit. (See p. 117 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)
- *Monstrous Visage:* Using this Transmutation to make oneself more hideous is an ancient endeavor, and many of the most horrible broods of Pandorans have at least one of their number with this Transmutation. For every success, such creatures gain a +1 to Intimidate rolls. Each such bonus die subtracts one from all other Social rolls, however.
- *Healing:* Malleate need not only change flesh — it can actually renew it as well. By spending a point of Willpower at the beginning of the process, Malleate can be used to heal wounds. The Pandoran must study the wound first, making a Wits + Medicine roll. It may then heal a number of points of lethal damage equal to the successes gained on that diagnosis roll. The Pandoran may heal an unlimited number of points of bashing damage. Each point of bashing damage requires one success to the target number, while lethal damage requires two successes per point. Once the Pandoran has worked on a wound, it may not attempt to heal that target again until it becomes wounded again, or has spent two days healing on its own.

With the exception of healing performed with this Transmutation, none of the changes to the form are permanent. These changes heal as though the successes accumulated in the extended action were points of lethal damage. That is, the handiwork loses one success per two days, unless the malleated creature has an improved regenerative capability of some kind.

## Shrink (••••)

Refinement of the gross physical mass into something more refined is a goal of alchemy, and the Pandoran with this Transmutation is capable of accomplishing that goal on its own physical form. When activated, this Transmutation allows the Pandoran to literally shrink, compacting its form supernaturally.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

When activating this power, the Pandoran simply chooses his new Size, to a minimum of Size 1 (roughly the size of a small cat). This transformation is not symmetrical or proportionate: the Pandoran seems to collapse from within, his body folding in on itself and compacting in on its softer, fleshy portions. The result is a strangely proportioned creature of roughly humanoid shape.

For each point of Size by which the Pandoran reduces itself, the following changes to its traits occur:

- Health decreases by one.
- Speed and Strength decrease by one.
- Dexterity increases by one.

The Pandoran also gains a +1 Defense at Size 2. Moreover, the Pandoran can simply fit into some places that it could not have fit into before, including ventilation ducts and the like. This Transmutation lasts for a scene.

## Swallow (••••)

In some alchemical processes, more alchemically pure substances are said to consume those that are less pure, destroying them without themselves being altered. To those who understand this concept, this Transmutation should come as no surprise. The alchemical being, whether Pandoran or Promethean, can consume even massive objects, storing them in an alchemically rare form within itself.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Survival

**Action:** Extended (target number = Size; one roll represents one minute of engorgement)

The Pandoran with this Transmutation is capable of gruesome acts of consumption and regurgitation. The target number for the extended roll is equal to the Size of the item to be consumed, to a maximum Size equal to the Pandoran's own. Each roll requires one minute during which the Pan-

doran must gnaw on the item, transmuting it. If this process is interrupted, the item springs free in a gout of vile-smelling humour, reassuming its full shape and solidity.

To begin this process, the Pandoran fits part of the object into its jaw, which may dislocate and stretch obscenely. It then spends a point of Pyros, activating the alchemical process that breaks the object down into an alchemically pure substance that allows the internalization of the object.

To those watching, an acrid, eye-stinging vapor suddenly seems to pour from the Pandoran's mouth as the object being swallowed suddenly slides in much more easily than it should. Long planes fold up as though they were made of clay, in order to fit them into the Pandoran's mouth.

This alchemical mulch is not digested unless the Pandoran chooses to do so. The Pandoran may retain the object within itself indefinitely. An entity with this Transmutation can store multiple such objects, but the total Size of the objects thus stored cannot exceed the Size of the Pandoran itself.

At any point in the future, the Pandoran may elect to regurgitate the object. Doing so takes a minute, but the Pandoran may elect to spend a Willpower point to quickly vomit forth the alchemical mulch in a single turn, which solidifies into the object's normal form once more without loss of either strength or shape, though some objects are discolored by the process. In this fashion, many Centimani make sure that they are never without weapons, and more than one Centimanus has used this Transmutation to ensure a successful smuggling career.

Note that this power works only on objects, not living creatures. A dead body could conceivably be hidden this way, though.

## Five-Dot Pandoran Transmutations

### Mantle of Lordship (•••••)

Those who truly seek mastery over Flux may learn this Transmutation. By reaching out with his own internal understanding of Flux to those mindless creatures driven by that force, a Centimanus or *Sublimatus* may create connections of sympathy with those Pandorans, exerting control over them.

**Prerequisite:** *Sublimatus* or Promethean
**Cost:** 1 Pyros
**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult vs. Resolve
**Action:** Contested and extended (1–5 successes; one roll represents one turn of imposition)

The wielder of this power extends his will into a Pandoran within his line of sight, overwhelming it with his control over Flux. This is an extended action, with one roll allowed per turn. The target number for this action is equal to the Rank of the Pandoran the wielder is seeking to control. This roll is contested by the Pandoran's Resolve. Mantle of Lordship cannot be used on *Sublimatus* Pandorans.

Once control is achieved, the Pandoran remains obedient to its master for one scene. At any given point, the wielder of this power may extend the duration of this control to one day by spending a point of Willpower. Doing so extends the duration of control over all Pandorans currently controlled through the use of this power. The user may continue to extend his control indefinitely by spending one Willpower point per day.

Controlled Pandorans understand their master regardless of what language he speaks. They will attempt to obey him as best they can, though all commands will be interpreted through the unique perspectives of each of the Mockeries. A command to kill intruders causes Pandorans of differing Mockeries in the same group to attempt to do so in different ways, for instance. Pandorans also maintain their base personalities. They do not adore their master, they only obey. As a result, they might growl or attempt to snap at his hands, unless given explicit orders to avoid such actions. Most Pandorans cannot understand orders that are too complex.

Only a Promethean or *Sublimatus* Pandoran can develop this Transmutation. Non-Centimani who use this Transmutation risk Humanity loss, as normal for using Pandoran Transmutations. The demands of this power — aligning one's psyche with those of ravenous inhuman manifestations of Flux — takes such a toll on the Promethean, however, that his player rolls only two dice when resisting potential Humanity loss.

### Titanic Form (•••••)

Calling upon the inner alchemical forge, a Pandoran with this power can grow to tremendous heights. The Centimani consider themselves to be embracing their legacy as the children of the Titans when they use this Transmutation.

**Cost:** 1 Pyros per +1 Size
**Dice Pool:** None
**Action:** Instant

With this Transmutation, the Pandoran can increase its Size by up to +4, and the change lasts for one scene. The change is disturbing to watch, as the creature swells and bulges obscenely, its muscle bulk doubling with unsightly speed, its bones creaking as they strain under the effort of reinforcing themselves to accommodate the new mass.

For each increase in Size, the Pandoran gains the following:

- Strength and Stamina increase by one.
- Dexterity decreases by one.

The Pandoran also gains a -1 Defense at Size 7, and a -2 Defense at Size 9 (not cumulative). However, the Pandoran gains +1 armor (bashing only) at Size 7, and a +2 armor (bashing only) at Size 9, though these bonuses are not cumulative. The Pandoran's Health also increases along with its Size.

### Sanguine Victory (•••••)

With this Transmutation, the Pandoran alters the balance of its bodily humours, bringing the sanguine humour to utter dominance and transforming its body into a pool of slightly

crimson goo. In this form, it retains control of its body and movement while remaining aware of its surroundings.

**Cost:** 2 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

Watching this transformation is disturbing, as the Pandoran's flesh runs like melting wax in grainy, red rivulets. In the span of a few heartbeats, the Pandoran's entire form collapses into a pool of this liquid, leaving behind all clothing, equipment and jewelry.

This goo can travel at a Speed of 5. It oozes across a surface by extending small pseudopodia that look like mobile muscle fibers ahead of it, then allowing the rest of the body to seep up those strands. Doing so, the Pandoran can move at a steady pace up even vertical (but not upside down) surfaces.

In this form, the Pandoran is completely incapable of manipulating anything, though it does remain aware of its surroundings. An actual barrier will stymie the pool of animate protoplasm, but if there is enough room to allow other liquids to leak through, the Pandoran may eventually pass through the barrier.

It takes one minute to re-form, and this transformation lasts until the sun next rises or sets (one hour at minimum). Anyone seeing the mass of strange, reddish muck is unlikely to mistake it for something natural, though the mass can easily hide itself in a variety of places, including bodies of liquid (as it is heavier than most liquids). Additionally, the passage of this mass leaves behind a thin film of reddish, oily residue that others can use to easily track the Pandoran, granting +3 dice to all attempts to follow its trail. This residue dissolves once the Pandoran returns to normal physical form. When in this liquid form, the Pandoran is immune to being forced into Dormancy by mortal witnesses.

This form lasts until the sun next rises or sets (one hour at minimum). For 24 hours after using this power, the Pandoran or Promethean who used it suffers from the obsessive compulsion derangement, with a focus on manic, overly happy behavior, finding humor in nearly everything and laughing at inappropriate times.

## Vaporous Form (•••••)

It is with this Transmutation that a Pandoran or Centimanus gains complete control over his form — not simply its shape, but its very solidity. With supreme effort, such a creature is capable of dissolving its physical form, transforming into a cloud of vapor.

**Cost:** 2 Pyros

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

By spending two Pyros, the Pandoran activates an internal alchemical process that dissolves its physical form into a thick mist that is difficult to mistake for anything natural. Those who pass through it can feel a strange grainy texture



in the air, and their players must make Resolve + Composure rolls to resist a temporary Disquiet effect (or a temporary one-stage increase in an existing Disquiet effect). Animals are immediately driven into fits of terror by the touch of this mist, inflicting a -3 penalty to any attempts to rein them under control again. In this form, the Pandoran is immune to being forced into Dormancy by mortal witnesses.

The Pandoran does not remain in active control of the mist. Once assuming the Vaporous Form, the mist travels at a Speed of 20 toward its destination, via the shortest route possible. It hugs the ground during its entire trip, seeping over and around obstacles and washing over living creatures without notice. Once the mist reaches its destination, the Pandoran immediately re-forms.

The Pandoran is completely unaware of the mist's surroundings while it is in Vaporous Form. It experiences the entire process as seemingly instantaneous travel, with its last memory being the beginning of the process of dissolution before it recalls the final seconds of returning to normal form. The mist has the ability to penetrate nearly anywhere, as long as there is a surface to flow over or up in order to reach it. (It could not reach an aircraft that was in the air, for instance.)

This transformation remains until the destination is reached, or until the sun rises or sets. This effect does affect a small amount of equipment and clothing as well (approximately 10 pounds worth).

## The Raging Conflagration

The Divine Fire is ultimately beyond the power of even Prometheans to fully comprehend or control. It has its own purposes. Perhaps it *wanted* to be stolen by Prometheus. Maybe it tired of being kept apart from humans by Zeus. If the god would not release the flame, then it had to find someone who would. Even though Prometheus' name is "forethought," implying that he knew ahead of time everything that would come of the deed, including his own punishment, that doesn't mean he had a choice in the matter. Fate weaves its web among gods as well as men.

Two phenomena imply that the Fire is more than just a random, chaotic thing. Or even if it is, it gives birth to angels and storms.

### Qashmallim: The Flame Incarnate

*And all should cry, Beware! Beware!*
*His flashing eyes, his floating hair!*
*Weave a circle round him thrice,*
*And close your eyes with holy dread,*
*For he on honey-dew hath fed,*
*And drunk the milk of Paradise.*
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"

There's an account of how, at the end of the 18th century, a poet lost in an opium-induced stupor, had a sublime vision of a world transformed into a heavenly kingdom. Coming to himself, he felt that he had no choice but to write down in verse a revelation that was not so much composed as given to him whole. He didn't finish it. He got down about 50 lines before someone from a nearby village arrived at his door and refused to go away until the poet spoke to him. The visitor left the poet shaken and filled with a certain… disquiet. When he got back to his writing, the vision had gone, fading like a dream.

The poem is still in print. The few Prometheans who have made a study of such things can see that it hides more than the dreams of an opium addict. The key lies not in the words themselves (although the poem's apocalyptic images are surely no coincidence) but in their hypnotic meter.

As affecting as the poem's content is, its syllabic qualities are such that if it were completed (adding maybe another 150 lines), it would do more than uplift the soul. There's an incantation hidden in those syllables, in that meter, but it's incomplete. It's just a poem, and whatever effect it might have had was lost, and the purpose of the poet's sublime vision was foiled. The beings who communicated the vision did not try again, no matter how willing the poet was. That is the way of the *qashmallim*. Each comes into this plane of existence to pursue one Plan, to obey one order. Then it's gone.

The *qashmallim* are no more or less than the incarnation of the Pyros. They are the Dominions, the Scintillating Flames. They protect reality. They adjust reality. They are the power of creativity and change, evolution and progress, for good and ill.

Once, they would have been mistaken for angels. A close reading of some of the chapters of *Daniel, Ezekiel* and *Revelation* suggest that perhaps they were. They appear as visions wreathed in blazing light, sometimes taking the form of beings with many heads and many wings, wielding ancient weapons coruscating with celestial fire. Sometimes they manifest in dreams or visions. Sometimes they are balls of light or voices speaking from white-hot flame. Sometimes, only briefly, they take human form, although their flashing eyes and strange manner give them away as *something other* very quickly.

For the most part, the *qashmallim* remain "in the flame," dormant and invisible, at one with the Pyros that either waits at the center of all things or permeates material and spiritual reality. When they are one with the Pyros, they have no being, no identity, and no will as a human or Promethean would understand it. They don't really exist at all. When a *qashmal* comes into our plane of existence, it has no memory of any previous existence, and no purpose other than to follow a Plan. Where its orders come from is impossible to know. Those *qashmallim* that are able to speak and have the time to do so explain quite patiently that they have a mission, and that they are doing the will of the Principle. If anyone asks them who or what the Principle is, they blankly say that it is the Principle. And that is all. If anyone asks them to describe the Principle, they say that it is the Principle. If they are asked what the Principle wants, they say that it is the Principle. And so it goes. They seem unable to explain why they do what they do, or what it is that drives them. They simply do, even if the way they do what they do is baffling to mortal or Promethean thinking.

Whatever the Principle is, it is neither omniscient, nor is it omnipotent. Rather, if it is, it does not impart these characteristics to the *qashmallim*, who often have a clear mission without knowing exactly where they are to go or whom they are to contact. They might have to kill one man in order to make a government fall or avenge some act of hubris, yet not know who the man is. They might have to punish a Promethean, manifesting a few miles away from her location, not knowing who she is. Or they might know exactly where she is, yet three days before a *qashmal* materializes to destroy her, another *qashmal* might warn her of the exact time she is sentenced to die.

The *qashmallim* never repeat a mission. They try only once, and regardless of whether they succeed or fail, they never try again.

According to the few Promethean eschatologists, the *qashmallim* appear to be divided into Greater and Lesser Orders, and into two opposing Choirs.

One Choir, the Elpidos, serve the Transformative Fire. These *qashmallim* promote change. They grant creative power and fertility of every kind. They appear in the dreams of scientists. They inspire prophets. They punish anyone who would misuse the Divine Fire. They offer warnings and scourge the unworthy. They seem, however, to have a rather idiosyncratic view of what makes one unworthy. Sometimes they aid Prometheans on their Pilgrimages, granting warnings or advice. Sometimes they punish those same Prometheans for tasks they had previously appeared to encourage. Some Prometheans find the Elpidos dogging their every step, from the moment they open their eyes to the moment they find their humanity. Some never see one.

The other Choir is that of the Lilithim (not to be confused with the demonic Lilim). They serve Flux, in all its forms. They encourage the wastage of Pyros. Their purview seems to be entropy and chaos. Their presence awakens Pandorans. The Lilithim's powers can control them. They can cause mutation and transformation.

Both Choirs grant visions to mortals. Sometimes they give them scientific insights. There's no proof that Doctor Frankenstein was shown how to create his monster by a *qashmal*, and there's no proof that Rutherford split the atom with a *qashmal's* help, but Prometheans who know of the *qashmallim* and their Plans wonder, and they share stories.

While *qashmallim* of the two Choirs appear to oppose each other, they never directly attack each other. Some Prometheans suggest that actually, both Choirs work to do the Principle's will, no matter how contradictory and alien that will is.

The fact is that there really is no readily explicable method behind a *qashmal's* appearance. The Promethean who prevented the poet from completing the incantation sensed the being's presence as it imparted its knowledge to the poet, but he had no idea if what he was preventing was right or wrong. He had only the conviction that the poet, and the human race he represented, should be allowed to follow its own destiny.

The *qashmallim* meddle. They change things. Whether they change things for good or ill seems to depend on no more than the whim of an unknowable Principle.

## Qashmallim Traits

The *qashmallim* share several traits like ghosts or spirits. Unless they materialize, they appear in Twilight as ephemeral beings, composed of electricity or sparkling flame. Like ghosts and spirits, the Dominions have no Skills or Merits, and they have only three traits, namely Power, Finesse and Resistance. *Qashmallim* derive Willpower, Corpus, Defense and Resistance from these three traits in the same way that ghosts do. Their Size can vary dramatically, ranging from 2 to 10. *Qashmallim* reckon Speed as Power + Finesse + a species factor, which varies, depending on the form the being takes, from 5 to 12.

While the two Choirs of *qashmallim* differ only in their motives and in the powers they use, Greater and Lesser *qashmallim* do vary in power. Lesser *qashmallim* appear far more often. They are the usual agents of the Principle. They often serve as obstacles and aids on Promethean Pilgrimages. They lead Prometheans to practice Centimani or punish them, scourge or bless Prometheans who dare to create others, and they grant warnings and visions of great truths… and great lies.

Greater *qashmallim* rarely manifest in the material realm. When they do, they are invariably party to truly momentous events. Nations rise and fall in their presence. Scientists make great discoveries. When Greater *qashmallim* come into existence, armies of Pandorans awaken and lay waste to cities, and Prometheans reach the end of their quests with their aid or despite their opposition.

Rumors exist of a third Order, of Arch-*qashmallim*. If they exist, their Plans are literally world changing, and if they appear in a **Promethean** game, they should be central to an entire chronicle. The traits of an Arch-*qashmal* can't be rated with dots. In the rare instances of their manifestation, Arch-*qashmallim* are beings of godlike power.

| Order | Trait Limit* | Attribute Dots | Maximum Pyros | Numina |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lesser | 6 dots | up to 18 | 15 | 2–5 |
| Greater | 15 dots | 19-45 | 50 | 6–10 |

*These limits represent permanent traits, not temporarily boosted ones.

*Qashmallim* have no Morality trait, but they do have Virtues and Vices. Elpidos regain Willpower from Virtues and Vices in the same way that Prometheans and mortals do. They regain all their spent Willpower points by fulfilling their Virtue, or one point for indulging their Vice. Lilithim, on the other hand, gain Willpower in the opposite way. They regain one point of Willpower from acting according to their Virtue or all of their Willpower from acting in line with their Vice.

*Qashmallim* use Numina, which work in the same way as the powers commanded by ghosts and spirits. *Qashmallim* do not power their Numina with Essence, though, they use Pyros. Therefore, Prometheans using the right Transmutations can detect *qashmallim* in the same way that they would detect Pandorans or other Prometheans.

Under normal circumstances, *qashmallim* can regain Pyros only when they return to the Divine Fire and cease to exist as independent sentient beings. They lose one Pyros for every day they exist. This means that most Lesser *qashmallim* have simple, short-term missions. Greater *qashmallim* last longer, but are still present in the material realm for only a short period. Some, however, have gained Numina that allow them to drain Pyros from Prometheans and Pandorans. Others have the power to replenish Pyros from electrical sources, in the manner that some Prometheans who practice the Vulcanus Transmutations do.

## Numina

*Qashmallim* powers are often unique, but some powers are common to many of their manifestations.

• **Command Pandoran:** Lilithim cause Pandorans to awaken, simply by being present, and they can directly control them with this Numen. The *qashmal's* player spends two Pyros and makes a roll of Power + Finesse, contested against the Pandoran's Resolve + Composure. For every success the Lilithim gains, it can control one Pandoran, body and mind, for one scene. Spending one Pyros extends the duration of this power to 24 hours.

• **Grant Vision:** Elpidos can invade the dreams of humans and Prometheans alike, granting vivid revelations in which they can impart valuable information, reveal truths or show apocalyptic visions of things that might come to pass. The Elpidos' player spends one Pyros and makes a roll of Power + Finesse, contested against the victim's Resolve + Composure. A *qashmal* with this Numen can impart visions to people who are wide awake, at a -2 dice pool penalty. If the victim is under the influence of drugs, particularly hallucinogenic drugs, the *qashmal* gains a +2 bonus to its dice pool.

• **Materialize:** This Numen allows the *qashmal* to take on a solid form of any kind it wishes. Until it uses this Numen, it cannot be physically attacked or take any physical action. The *qashmal's* player spends three Pyros and rolls Power + Finesse. If the roll succeeds, the *qashmal* can remain materialized indefinitely, until it chooses to cease being material.

• **Pyros Drain:** Many *qashmallim* of both Choirs and both Orders, have access to this Numen, which allows them to steal Pyros from any being that has it. The *qashmal's* player rolls Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the victim's Resolve + Composure. For every success the *qashmal* gains, it steals one Pyros point, which it can use to fuel powers.

**Transmutations as Numina**

*Qashmallim* powers are fueled by Pyros, and they can duplicate single Promethean Transmutations. To convert a Transmutation, simply convert the Transmutation's dice pool into an appropriate dice pool, composed of whatever of the *qashmal's* traits best represent those normally used for power. For example, to use the Alchemicus Transmutation Identification, roll Power + Finesse instead of Intelligence + Crafts. Pyros costs remain the same. *Qashmallim* don't need to know prerequisite Transmutations. For example, a Lilithim can know the Electrification Transmutation Arc without having to know the Shock Transmutation, which is its prerequisite. Lilithim often have Pandoran Transmutations. Transmutations from the Electrification, Vulcanus, Mesmerism and Disquietism lists are particularly appropriate for both Choirs.

## *Qashmallim* and Other Supernatural Beings

Mages and werewolves who run into the *qashmallim* discover very early on that although the Dominions have some traits in common with ghosts, angels or spirits, they are none of the above. Werewolf Gifts and mage spells that affect spirits do not affect the *qashmallim*. Although *qashmallim* are technically made from incarnate fire, Divine Fire is not the same as material fire, so spells cast using the Arcanum of Forces don't affect them either. *Qashmallim* who have materialized can be affected by magic that causes physical attacks. Assaults that directly attack a *qashmal's* ephemeral being require the conjunctional use of both Prime and Mind at four or five dots.

As beings entirely separate from angels and spirits, it's impossible to siphon magical power or Essence from the *qashmallim*. Of the very few mages who have met these creatures, some have theorized that the *qashmallim* are the inhabitants of a sixth Supernal Realm and the scions of the Lone Watchtower. It might be true, but it's just conjecture, with no real proof behind it.

## Messenger of the Principle

**Quote:** *Do not be afraid. Things will change, and they will change quickly, but you are not to fear. Listen now…*

**Background:** This *qashmal* has come to grant a vision to someone, and it must grant that vision at midnight, in one week's time, or not at all. It has no idea to whom it is supposed to grant the vision. It knows only that the person is near. It might be someone who will create a cure for cancer. It could be a vision that will lead the person to write something in which is hidden an incantation of world-shattering power — perhaps a summoning charm for an Arch-*qashmal* or the means to create a quasi-magical weapon of awesome destructive potential. It might need simply to warn someone of danger, so that that person will bring about some destined change in the future.

**Description:** As a being in Twilight, the *qashmal* appears to those who can see as a shapeless sphere of electricity and flame. When it materializes, it appears as a boy of about 17. The boy has longish red hair, which is fine, and which floats around his face, appearing in a certain light as if it were flaming. His eyes, the palest blue, flash and twinkle with light. His skin is pale, flawless and smooth; his features reminiscent of an androgynous pre-Raphaelite angel. He wears simple, unremarkable clothes. He is polite and soft-spoken. Although he never raises his voice, he is always perfectly audible.

**Storytelling Hints:** As befits one whose Plan depends on finding someone, this *qashmal* is intensely curious and highly intelligent. It does not rest from its mission — it does not sleep. If its mission takes too much time, it tries to find more Pyros. It will explain its mission in the clearest terms it can, and it might even politely ask for the energy, but it *will* take the Pyros, freely given or not. If it finds that the person to whom it is to grant its vision is in some sort of danger, the *qashmal* will defend that person right up to the point at which it is to grant the vision. When it has done so, it will vanish.



**Choir**: Elpidos
**Order**: Lesser
**Attributes**: Power 5, Finesse 5, Resistance 3
**Willpower**: 8
**Virtue**: Temperance
**Vice**: Wrath
**Pyros**: 15
**Initiative**: 8
**Defense**: 5
**Speed**: 17 (species factor 7)
**Size**: 5
**Corpus**: 8

**Numina:** Burn (dice pool 8), Materialize (dice pool 10), Grant Vision (dice pool 10)

**Burn:** This Numen is similar to the Electrification Transmutation Divine Lightning. The *qashmal* spends two Pyros and rolls Power + Resistance – the victim's Defense. The attack inflicts one point of lethal damage per success rolled. The *qashmal* can spend one more Pyros to make the damage aggravated. This power has a range of 100 yards. Instead of causing damage to one person at distance, the *qashmal* can choose to apply the power to everyone in a five-yard radius.

## Firestorms

Sometimes, Prometheans open Pandora's Box. They sometimes discover too much, too soon, on their Pilgrimages, and the energy of Elpis builds up too quickly. Sometimes, they fall prey to Flux. When this happens, when the energy is too much, a storm of Flux rises up in the air around the Promethean. The air rages with fire and electricity, blown back and forth on gusts of unholy wind. Pyros fills the air. These Firestorms, these so-called "Eumenidean Vortices," concentrate themselves around one Promethean and assault him, body and soul.

Others rise less through the fault of a Promethean, and more through his triumph. As Elpis amasses and a throng of Prometheans draws ever nearer to the goal of Mortality, Flux itself might protest, becoming one of the final obstacles to be overcome as the Pilgrimage ends.

Others still rise because the Pyros has intruded into the world in the form of one of the Greater or Arch-*qashmallim*.

### Game Effects

Firestorms can begin when Pyros is wasted or when too much Pyros or Elpis is released at once. Whether Firestorms appear is up to the Storyteller, but if the Storyteller wishes to use them, they might appear under the following circumstances:

- When the player of a Promethean with five or more dots of Azoth rolls a dramatic failure on any roll in which he spends two or more points of Pyros.
- When the player of any Promethean rolls two dramatic failures in a row on any roll using Pyros.
- When the player of a Promethean rolls a dramatic failure on the first roll of any Attribute, Skill or Transmutation after the Promethean raises his Azoth, creates or animates a Pandoran, or creates another Promethean.

A Firestorm centered around one Promethean has a radius of one yard per dot of Azoth the Promethean has. For each dot of Azoth, the storm lasts one turn. Any other Prometheans caught within the Firestorm also suffer from some of its effects. While a Firestorm rages around a Promethean, it's almost impossible for her to take any action other than to cover her face and scream. A Promethean caught in a Firestorm centered around another Promethean can perform actions, but any actions other than stumbling out of the radius of the storm suffer a -4 penalty to all dice pools. Other supernatural beings and humans caught in a Firestorm suffer the -4 dice pool penalty to their actions, but they don't suffer any other ill effects.

The Storyteller rolls a dice pool equal to the Azoth of the character on whom the Firestorm is centered. Prometheans caught in a storm centered on someone else can contest the Azoth roll with a reflexive Stamina roll, reducing the number of successes that affect them by the number of successes they roll. Although the Storyteller makes only the one Azoth roll, this means that the Firestorm can assault different Prometheans in different ways.

Firestorms can also arise without a Promethean having done anything wrong, such as:

• When a Promethean or a throng of Prometheans has neared the end of the Pilgrimage, particularly if they are in the process of creating another Promethean and have — between them — spent a combined total of not less than 20 points of Vitriol.

• When a Centimanus or *Sublimatus* tries to summon one intentionally (perhaps to awaken the local Pandorans). The player spends three Pyros and at least one point of Vitriol, then rolls his Azoth. He can spend additional Vitriol to add dice to his pool. If he succeeds, a Firestorm arises. He must then make a Humanity degeneration roll, with a dice pool of three dice. If he fails, he loses one dot of Humanity and must roll to avoid gaining a derangement.

• When a Greater *qashmal* appears, particularly one whose role is to prevent a Promethean or throng of Prometheans from achieving the goal of Mortality.

• When an Arch-*qashmal* manifests.

This kind of Firestorm affects a whole area of ground — an entire valley, a street, a hill, a mountain, a field. The storm builds up slowly, shadowing the whole area with glowering black clouds, highlighted with lightning. When the storm hits, it hits with the same force. Any dormant Pandorans in the area awaken and remain awake for at least a scene, during which time they will usually go into a feeding frenzy searching for Pyros.

This time, the Storyteller rolls a dice pool equal to the highest Azoth present in the area. The players of any creature — Promethean and mortal — caught in the storm can roll Stamina to contest its effects, subtracting successes on the Stamina roll from successes on the Azoth roll.

The Azoth roll is modified as follows:

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | Each Promethean caught in the storm after the first. |
| +1 | Each active Pandoran in the vicinity, awakened by the Promethean. |
| +1 | Each non-Pandoran creature created from Pyros in the area (including, for example *qashmallim* and clones, although neither kind of creature is affected by the storm). |
| +1 | Each stage of the Wasteland effect suffered by the immediate area in which the Promethean currently stands. |
| –1 | Each Promethean in a Branded throng with the Promethean who brought on the storm, whether he or she is caught in the storm or not. |

If the roll is *successful*, the Storyteller picks one of the following things that happens to Prometheans and Pandorans caught within the storm, depending on how many successes the Storyteller gains on the Azoth roll. Mortals caught in the storm are subject to only some of these effects.

**Any number of successes**

**Damage:** The creature (Promethean, Pandoran, mortal or animal) suffers one point of lethal damage for each success rolled.

**One to four successes**

**Torment:** The Promethean must check for Torment at the moment the Firestorm ends, with a -1 dice pool penalty for each success rolled. Mortals are not affected.

**Disquiet:** The Wasteland effect generated by the Promethean who brought the Firestorm on advances by one stage in the immediate area, or to stage two if there is no Wasteland effect active there. Any human within the area must resist Disquiet again, suffering a dice pool penalty of -1 for each success rolled.

**Five or more successes**

**Mutation:** The creature (Promethean, Pandoran, mortal or animal) suffers a mutation of some kind, gaining a physical change represented either by the two-dot Pandoran Transmutation Tentacles (pp. 241-242) or the three-dot Pandoran Transmutation Hundred Hands (pp. 244-245). This mutation cannot be hidden, and the creature suffers a –1 penalty to all dice pools for the scene as she struggles to control the way her body has changed. Further, a Promethean's disfigurements are revealed. This effect lasts for a scene.

**Ersatz Mortality:** The storm strips the Promethean (Pandorans and mortals are not affected) of the potency of his Azoth. He suffers wound penalties and can fall unconscious in the same way that a mortal can. His disfigurements disappear. He cannot use Azoth, Pyros or Transmutations. He loses all of the special benefits and drawbacks of the Promethean condition. This sham-Mortality is an illusion, however. The Promethean has not gained a soul. The effect lasts for only one scene. When the Promethean inevitably reverts to his "normal" condition, the player must immediately make a Humanity roll to resist Torment. This brief taste of Mortality only serves to remind the Promethean of how much he has yet to gain, and how much he does not yet have.

# Other Supernatural Creatures

Prometheans exist in the World of Darkness, a dark vision of our world that has deeper shadows… and things moving in those shadows. Like any supernatural being encountering the furtive edges of the mortal sphere, Prometheans are bound to bump into things in the night.

## Twilight

Twilight isn't a place, it's a state of existence. Mortals can perceive material things, and many of them believe that the world consists only of material things. They're wrong. Immaterial things exist in the same spaces. These things are said to be in Twilight, made not of matter but a substance called ephemera. Ephemeral things seem solid to other ephemeral things, but they are not solid to matter. They pass through it as if it's not there, and vice versa. Ephemera isn't even visible to material senses, which is why mortals can't see the ghosts, spirits or even the ghostly husks of houses and objects that exist all around them.

The Ulgan can see Twilight objects and beings with their Ephemeral Flesh Bestowment (p. 116), as can Prometheans with the Sensorium Transmutation Ephemeral Gaze (p. 147).

## Ghosts

The shades of the departed dead still haunt the world in some places, bound to their anchors and acting out their miseries on all who tread too close to what is theirs. Ghosts are described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, beginning on p. 208. While most of them probably shy away from the Created and the strange fires burning within them, some might be drawn to them out of curiosity — or rage. Unless a Promethean has a power that allows him to interact with the dead, he is as hapless as a mortal when haunted by shades.

## Spirits

Besides ghosts, spirits can also be encountered in Twilight. Most are associated with the forces of Nature, but some are born from thoughts or concepts that belong exclusively to human culture. Spirits are not native to the Twilight state of existence or to the material world. They come from their own world, one that exists on the other side of a barrier — the Gauntlet — that prevents them from commonly acting upon the material realm. Werewolves can traverse this barrier, as can some mages. Prometheans are ignorant of it and have no powers that allow them to pass over it. (They can be brought over by a mage with the power to create a portal or "spirit road," though.)

Spirits that find themselves on this side of the Gauntlet usually arrive in Twilight — their bodies made of ephemera. They use a Numen such as Materialize to form a material body, which is visible and solid to mortals.

Spirits need an energy called Essence as sustenance. They exist in a predator-and-prey ecology whereby bigger spirits eat smaller spirits (or small spirits gang up in packs like wolves to take down bigger spirits), gaining Essence as their reward. They tend to congregate near places where Essence naturally wells up (as do werewolves), but they also prefer places that resonate with their particular Influence, from which they gain sustenance simply by being nearby.

Mechanically, spirits are treated the same as ghosts, except that they have two special traits: Rank and Influence.

**Rank**

Spirits are classified into rankings based on their type and power. A low-level spirit (Rank 1) might be simple, perhaps the guardian of a mushroom field or the spirit of a hearth, while a minor god (Rank 5) might have vast powers over his purview, whether he is a god of fire, love or writing.

| Rank | Trait Limits* | Attribute Dots | Maximum Essence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 dots | 5–8 | 10 |
| 2 | 7 dots | 9–14 | 15 |
| 3 | 9 dots | 15–25 | 20 |
| 4 | 12 dots | 26–35 | 25 |
| 5 | 15 dots | 36–45 | 50 |

* These limits represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted traits.

There are Ranks above 5, but they are almost never encountered on the material side of the barrier called the Gauntlet.

**Influences**

All spirits have an ability to influence the thing that gave them existence. As they grow in might and Rank, they can then manipulate or even create such things. Most spirits have only the Influence that most directly corresponds to their own nature. A dog-spirit likely has the Influence: Dogs, and a spirit of wrath has the Influence: Anger. As a spirit merges with other spirits to grow in Rank, it gains other Influences.

Each use of an Influence requires a Power + Finesse roll and the expenditure of one (or more) Essence. When a spirit attempts to use an Influence to affect the emotions or thoughts of a sentient being (Promethean, mortal, mage, werewolf, vampire or the like), the roll is contested. Resolve or Composure is rolled for mortals, whichever is higher, to resist. Supernatural beings, which are harder to affect with simple Influences, resist with Resolve or Composure + the appropriate supernatural trait (Azoth for Prometheans).

The following are powers that derive from the levels of Influences.

| Level | Effect |
|---|---|
| • Strengthen | The spirit can enhance its sphere of influence: make an emotion stronger, an animal or plant healthier, or an object more robust (gaining an extra point of Health or Structure per Rank of the spirit, for example). These changes last for one minute per success. The cost is one Essence. |
| •• Manipulate | The spirit can make minor changes within its sphere of influence: slightly change the nature or target of an emotion, or make minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's function. These changes last for up to 10 minutes per success. The cost is two Essence. |
| ••• Control | The spirit can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence: twisting emotions or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's function. The changes last for up to 10 minutes per success. The cost is three Essence. |
| •••• Create | The spirit can create a new example of its sphere of influence: create an emotion, create a new sapling or young plant, or create a young animal or brand-new object. The creation lasts for up to one minute per success. The cost is four Essence. |
| ••••• Mass Create | The spirit can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence: trigger its emotion in multiple people, create new copses of trees, small groups of animals or multiple identical items. The cost is five Essence. |

A number of subjects equal to the spirit's Rank come into existence. The creations last for up to one minute per success. Alternatively, the spirit may create one instance of its sphere of influence permanently (although a spirit cannot permanently alter the mindset of a sentient being).

Changes made through Influence are usually temporary. A spirit with sufficient Influence can increase the duration of the effect to a level based on the difference between the Influence score necessary for the effect and the spirit's total Influence dots. See the following table.

The level of the effect and the level of potential duration are added together to determine the Influence required. For instance, a fear-spirit with Influence 3 could use a Strengthen effect lasting for one hour per success (at the cost of two Essence), a Manipulate effect lasting for 10 minutes per success, or a Control effect that lasts only one minute per success. The spirit need not use the Influence power to its utmost ability. The fear-spirit with Influence 3 could use the Strengthen effect with a lower duration, such as one minute per success.

| Level | Duration |
|---|---|
| 0 | One minute per success. No additional Essence cost. |
| • | Ten minutes per success. No additional Essence cost. |
| •• | One hour per success. The cost is one additional Essence. |
| ••• | One day per success. The cost is two additional Essence. |
| •••• | Permanent. The cost is two additional Essence. |

Spirits have their own unique Numina, but they can also draw from the same lists as ghosts.

## Vampires

Bloodsucking devils prey on mortals. They look human (sometimes preternaturally so) and have a host of powers that aid them in staying hidden and extracting their precious prize from humans — and in warring with other vampires over their chosen herds. Complete details on vampires can be found in the **Vampire: The Requiem** book.

Prometheans might stumble upon vampires when they're trying to mix with mortals, and vampires might encounter Prometheans on the outskirts or in the forlorn places they tend to hide out in. Both types of beings often seek the same sort of refuges from humans, close enough to watch them but far enough to avoid them. A vampire using the Auspex Discipline power Aura Perception (**Vampire: The Requiem**, p. 120) can detect a Promethean by his inhuman, fiery aura, although he might not know what sort of creature he's looking at. (See the "Aura Signifiers" sidebar on p. 147.) Otherwise, a vampire would have no more clue that a Promethean he might encounter is inhuman than a mortal would, except for the growing sense of Disquiet it causes in him.

A vampire might, however, pick up on the Disquiet in his herd and come to realize that there is a focus to it, a particular person everybody blames for their troubles. Whether this piques his curiosity and his desire for knowledge, or whether he wants to get rid of the offender so that his herd is not harmed, is up to the individual vampire involved.

One society of vampires, the Ordo Dracul, might have some inkling about Promethean-caused Wastelands. If such an effect occurs in their region, they might know enough to start looking for a lone offender (or a group of them), even if they aren't sure exactly what the Created are.

As described in the "Flesh and Blood" sidebar on pp. 161-162, Promethean blood doesn't provide the same sustenance as mortal blood does, so the Created make poor prey for vampires.

A vampire who comes to understand the Promethean's desire for Mortality might sympathize with him. If he realizes that Mortality is actually a possibility for the Promethean, he might become obsessed with the matter, seeing in it some means of breaking his own curse. Or he might see the promise of Mortality as a folly, a trap to make him waste his time pursuing fairy tales.

## Werewolves

The old legends say that a person bitten by a werewolf is cursed to change into a savage beast when the full moon rises high in the night sky. Like many mortal legends, this is mostly untrue. Instead, werewolves are not men made into beasts, but a whole other race of beings entirely, part flesh and part spirit. They can pass back and forth between the material and spirit worlds, and they seem to have some sort of duty to police interactions between these worlds, preventing mortals from encountering spirits and vice versa.

Although werewolves, who call themselves "Uratha," live in both cities and the wild, they are most brazen in wilderness areas, where they can run and fight without interference from meddling mortals. Prometheans who go to the wastes or spend lots of time out of doors might encounter werewolf packs. The likelihood increases if they interact with spirits or places that generate Essence (even if they don't know they're interacting with these beings and/or places). Werewolves can identify Prometheans by using the Scent of Taint Gift (**Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 123).

A Promethean's Wasteland effect is almost certain to be of some concern to werewolves upon whose territory it impinges. At first, they might chase wrongful leads, believing the culprit is based in the spirit world. Eventually, however, they'll trace it back to the Promethean, and they might not have the patience to let him leave alive.

Werewolves who learn of the Promethean Pilgrimage will likely be perplexed by the desire for Mortality. They aren't human and don't desire to be, although some preferred their lives before their First Change. But to seek to become human? Some believe this is a weak dream, but others might respect the courage required to achieve it.

Complete details on werewolves can be found in the **Werewolf: The Forsaken** book.



## Mages

Some monsters are human, or more precisely, somewhat more than human. Occasionally, a human's soul ascends to new heights — otherworldly heights — and awakens him to the power of magic. While he is still human, unlike a vampire after his Embrace or a werewolf who was never really human to begin with, he isn't really the same as the rest of his brethren, who remain ignorant of the possibilities he has seen. His exalted status sets him apart, which can cause him to become callous and uncaring of the needs of mere mortals — needs that are never as important to him as matters that concern the higher world.

Mages are insatiably curious. Every event is a potential cipher revealing a truth from the higher world, and the art and science of reading these clues is of paramount importance to every mage. For this reason, certain mages can prove more deadly to Prometheans than a typical vampire or werewolf can. Whereas the latter might avoid the Promethean out of self-preservation, a mage meddles. He might simply want to know about the Promethean and the ways of the Divine Fire, or he might *need* to know and be willing to go to any lengths to find out, even resorting to kidnapping, torture or magical vivisection.

A mage can detect a Promethean with the Prime Supernal Vision (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 221) spell, reading his fiery aura. He can also use the Grim Sight (**M:TA**, p. 134) or Pulse of the Living World (**M:TA**, p. 181) spells, although these spells require more careful scrutiny before a Promethean's unnatural life is revealed. (The target number of successes for scrutiny actions is equal to 10 – the Promethean's Azoth. It would take seven successes to identify a Promethean with an Azoth of 3.) If the Promethean's disfigurements are ever revealed, such as when he spends Pyros, then these spells automatically reveal the Promethean's nature, even if his disfigurement was clear for only a moment.

Mages are concerned with the state of the soul and its stages of development. The idea of a being without a soul seeking to attain one might be of intense interest to them. They might aid the Promethean for solely compassionate reasons, though they believe aiding souls is in everyone's self interest. Alternatively, they might fear that a Redeemed soul is tainted or somehow dangerous to the progress of actual mortal souls, and work to prevent such an unnatural thing from ever occurring. Despite such a theory, the Redeemed show no signs whatsoever of being unnatural to a mage's magical scrutiny, although perhaps the legendary archmages could prove otherwise.

Complete details on mages can be found in the **Mage: The Awakening** book.

## Unexplained Phenomena

Besides ghosts, spirits, the undead, shapeshifters and modern sorcerers, a host of unexplained phenomena exists in the World of Darkness, from such quaint mysteries as Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster, to more terrifying manifestations like Bloody Mary or demonic possession.

Nobody, not even a master mage, can explain everything that goes on in the shadows, though not for lack of trying. Mysteries and horrors don't behave according to rules. They refuse to be cataloged to final satisfaction. Prometheans can encounter all manner of unexplainable — and impossible — manifestations on their Pilgrimages. By dint of courage, Inner Fire, and Elpis — hope — they can see their way through whatever confronts them and tries to bar their way to the New Dawn. Nothing comes between a monster and the promise of Mortality.

# APPENDIX

# ATHANORS AND THE WATER OF LIFE

Tomorrow I complete the work.

Tomorrow she will open her eyes and see me for the first time. I know what that moment will be like for her. The confusion, the fear. The sudden intrusion of your own thoughts, that you have thoughts, followed by the realization that until some recent moment you did not. The struggle to comprehend the borders of your own body, to take control of limbs that seem determined to act on their own.

The first weeks will be critical. I must establish trust early on. Make her understand that the turmoil inside her, the burning need to create and comprehend a new sense of self, is nothing to be afraid of. Make her realize that I'm here to help, if she'll let me.

If things go well, they'll go slowly. I've tried to create a calm, consistent environment here. Where one day can ease into the next with no surprises. The desert may not be the most comfortable of places sometimes, but the isolation will be good for us both.

I have so much to teach her. How much time do I have? How long will it be before she articulates the concept that her existence is fundamentally incomplete, and blames me for it? Before she takes her first unknowing steps on the pilgrimage and away from me? Such a separation is inevitable. It's the reason I've undertaken this profane and unforgivable affair. I must remember that.

If I could begin again, I would. But it's been too long since I lost my way. If I was ever following the pilgrimage, I've wandered so far from the path that I'll never find my way back alone. My only hope is to follow in her footsteps.

She has so much to teach me.



> The praxis of this arcanum goes beyond all secrets of Nature and it be not revealed or taught, it will not be learned out of books.
>
> —The Philosophical Canons of Paracelsus

## Athanors — Preparations for Mortality

Prometheans who have traveled the Pilgrimage for a while often choose to develop or adopt a practice whereby the Vitriol gained through milestones is sealed away, protected from lacunae but also unavailable to the character to be spent as experience points. Instead, it is placed into an Azothic Athanor, or furnace, in which it is transmuted into a unique substance that changes the Promethean, giving him special qualities and abilities.

More than just that, however, an Athanor prepares the Promethean for actually being human. While it does not aid his chances of attaining Mortality or hasten the time when he will face the New Dawn, it does impart an indelible quality to his essence, one that survives the transformation into Mortality. Whereas all vestiges of a Promethean's other supernatural traits are lost upon becoming mortal, an Athanor imparts a boon that the Created takes with him into mortal life. Most Prometheans look forward to becoming human with all their hearts, but some want an insurance policy to make sure that, once human, they aren't doomed to suffer from too many slings and arrows. Athanors represent that insurance — or so Prometheans believe. Their promise cannot be proven, but stories from the Redeemed seem to suggest that they are true.

There are different types of Athanors, each bestowing different powers to the character, but a character can develop only one Athanor. Once chosen, it is an indispensable and irreplaceable part of the Promethean's being, even after he achieves Mortality.

Eastern Prometheans have likened Athanors to the practice of "internal alchemy," such as yoga or Qigong. The Athanor is thought to be similar to the chakras, the energy centers in the body that illustrate the qualities of *prana*, an organism's vital energy. While there are seven chakras in the human body, each associated with a location, an emotion, an ideal, a color and a host of other correspondences, a Promethean only ever has one Athanor, and it is conceived to be situated in the center of the torso, near the navel. In this respect, it is similar to the Taoist Qigong concept of the *dantian*, a ball of energy in the belly.

## Choosing an Athanor

Unlike practicing a Refinement, developing an Athanor requires instruction from a Promethean who has already developed one himself. The teacher does not need to possess the same type of Athanor that the applicant wants to develop. Any Athanor will do. Once a Created has built one for himself, he can teach others the basics, allowing them to develop their own.

A Promethean cannot choose to develop an Athanor until his Azoth is at least three dots. Then he can seek out a fellow Created who already possesses an Athanor and convince him to train him in the process. It takes about a week of instruction and practice. Once the training is complete, the Promethean chooses an Athanor type and the player records it on the character sheet.

All Athanors give the Promethean the ability to produce Reagent points from stored points of Vitriol. In addition, each type of Athanor embodies a symbolic theme associated with an animal or mythological beast, providing special abilities based on that theme. Finally, each Athanor holds the promise of giving the Promethean a boost in his mortal life, should he actually achieve Mortality. This is one of the chief reasons Prometheans choose one type of Athanor over another. It's not just about cool powers, but about the kind of life he dreams about living once he becomes human.

With three dots of Azoth, a Promethean can choose an Athanor that is conducive to his Lineage.

With four dots of Azoth, he can choose any Athanor, even one not conducive to his Lineage, as long as he hasn't already begun developing an Athanor yet.

With five dots of Azoth, the Promethean can create his own type of Athanor (assuming he hasn't already developed one by now). Guidelines for doing so are provided on p. 264.

Even if the Promethean subsequently loses Azoth by going to the wastes, he retains his Athanor's abilities.

# Reagent

Once a point of Vitriol is placed into the Athanor, it creates a pool of temporary points (similar to a character's pool of Willpower points) that can be spent for various effects. These points are called Reagents, because they effect change. Each Vitriol point that is "banked" into the Athanor increases the Reagent pool by one point. (It might be helpful to view Vitriol points that are deposited into the Athanor as *dots*, which allow for Reagent *points*.)

**Example:** *John Ash chooses to create an Athanor. His player places five Vitriol points into the new Athanor. This allows him a pool of five Reagent points.*

Spending Reagent points is a reflexive action, and only one Reagent point can be spent per turn, regardless of the character's Azoth. Reagent points can be spent to achieve the following effects:

• One Reagent provides a +1 dice bonus to the character's dice pool to contest supernatural powers that would affect him.

• One Reagent provides a -1 dice penalty to the character's Azoth roll when determining Disquiet.

• One Reagent provides a +1 dice bonus on the character's Humanity roll to resist Torment.

• One Reagent can hide the character's disfigurements for one turn.

• One Reagent can reduce the character's Azothic radiance by half (divide his Azoth by two, rounding down) for one scene. A point can be spent only once per scene to gain this effect, so a character's radiance cannot be reduced by more than half.

Vitriol placed into an Athanor cannot be stolen via lacunae or by Pandoran assault. However, it also can't be spent to gain new Promethean traits until it has been removed from the Athanor and allowed to mix back into the character's body for one week, during which time it can be stolen by others.

At least one Vitriol point must be banked in the Athanor for the character to be able to use his Athanor's boon. If he ever removes the last Vitriol point from his Athanor, he cannot use his boon until a point is put back in. The boons are described under "Types of Athanor." Note that a character who has spent his final Reagent point can still use his boon. He loses the boon only if he has emptied his Athanor of all its banked Vitriol.

## Sacrificing Reagent

The Vitriol points used to create the Reagent pool can be sacrificed for certain effects. Once sacrificed, they are gone. Reduce the Reagent pool by the amount sacrificed.

• One Vitriol can be taken from the Reagent pool to force a Pandoran into Dormancy. This effect is automatic against most Pandorans, though *Sublimati* may contest it. Roll the Promethean's Resolve + Azoth, contested by the *Sublimatus*' Resolve + Composure. If the Promethean wins, the *Sublimatus* goes dormant. Pandorans rendered dormant this way will not be awakened by any Created's Azothic radiance for the remainder of the scene.

• One Vitriol can be taken from the Reagent pool to quell another Promethean's Torment, which requires a roll of Composure + Azoth. If successful, the Promethean's Torment ends at the end of the turn. This does not, however, prevent Torment from overtaking the Promethean again in the same scene, should conditions force a new roll. (A Promethean cannot use Vitriol to quell his own Torment.)

## Recovering Reagent

Reagent is renewed over time, and only time can restore it. It takes a while for the Athanor to produce new Reagent from its store of Vitriol. A character regains spent Reagent at a rate of one point per day (usually at sunrise). If he adds new Vitriol points to his Athanor, those points immediately translate into new Reagent points, increasing his total pool.

# Types of Athanor: The Bestiary

Medieval alchemical treatises used a bestiary of animals to symbolize aspects of the Great Work. In a similar vein, Prometheans associate the Athanors with certain animals or mythological creatures that symbolize the key quality the Athanor imputes to the Vitriol cooked within it.

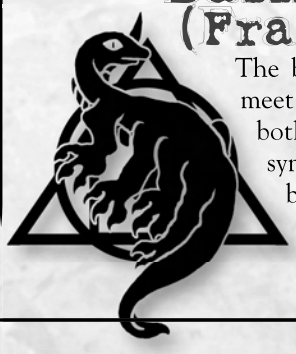
Some of the known types of Athanors are described here, with the following features:

**Trait Affinities:** Characters who develop this Athanor can purchase dots in the listed traits by spending Vitriol points. Normally, Vitriol can be spent only on Promethean-specific traits, but Athanors allow for exceptions to this rule. A Promethean cannot, however, spend Vitriol that is presently stored in his Athanor. He must first transfer it from his Athanor and wait for the week of transition before spending it on traits.

**Promethean Boon:** A special ability the character has as long as he has at least one Vitriol stored in his Athanor.

**Redeemed Boon:** Prometheans believe that Athanors train them for when they become human. For instance, a Promethean who fears he will be weak and easily influenced once he becomes a mortal might develop a Lion Athanor, so as to be indomitable once he become human, even though he will lose all his other Promethean traits. Or he might develop a Basilisk Athanor, so others will fear him. The descriptions that follow list suggested boons for Prometheans who become Redeemed under the influence of these Athanors.

## Basilisk – Fear (Frankenstein)



The basilisk's gaze terrifies those who meet it. This mythological beast, with both serpent and rooster features, symbolizes the sheer terror caused by looking upon a horrible visage — specifically, a Promethean's disfigurements.

A Promethean with this Athanor wants to be feared by others. He might think that only through fear can he get what he wants, or get others to leave him alone. Maybe he just likes the sweet essence of others' terror. He might exempt his close friends from this dictate, but overall, it colors how he interacts with strangers and rivals — with threats rather than an open palm.

**Trait Affinities:** Presence, Intimidation

**Promethean Boon:** The character can reflexively choose to reveal his disfigurements even without using a power or spending Pyros. While they are visible, players of humans (and other supernatural beings such as vampires and werewolves) who see them must roll to resist Disquiet, as per the rules on p. 169. (The Promethean's player also rolls his Azoth.) Those who fail to resist are frozen in fear, unable to act or move for one turn. Prometheans' players must roll Composure + Azoth — failure means the Prometheans, too, are frozen in fear. Victims can be affected by this power only once per scene.

If a frozen victim is physically affected in any way, whether he is bumped into or outright attacked, the effect ends immediately, although the victim loses his Defense for that turn.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character is especially intimidating. He gains the 9-again effect on any Intimidation Skill rolls.



## Cerberus — Protection (Tammuz)

The vicious, huge three-headed dog (or hundred-headed hound, depending on which legend you use) guards the gates to the Underworld. It symbolizes the powers of protection and warding.

Prometheans who develop this Athanor feel the need to protect themselves above and beyond the normal means. Perhaps they constantly feel threatened, or they need to ensure their staying power while defending others from harm. They tend to view new situations tactically, measuring a crowd by its potential to cause harm or a room for its possible dangers, before they commit to direct interactions with people or places.

**Trait Affinities:** Stamina, Danger Sense Merit

**Promethean Boon:** The character can spend one Reagent to gain two Armor points for one turn. This is a supernatural protection that applies even against attacks or phenomena against which armor doesn't normally work, such as fire or falling damage.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character has a charm against wounds. Once per scene, he can convert the lethal damage inflicted by a single attack to bashing damage. In this way, he might survive a gunshot wound that would kill another man.



## Chimera — Change (Ulgan)

The chimera, a monster that combined the heads and features of a lion, goat and dragon, is the symbol for change. It is sometimes wrongfully associated with Flux, but its power is that of change wielded for fruitful ends.

Prometheans who choose this Athanor enjoy change and dislike the status quo. They might try to convince others to embrace change by intentionally causing conflicts or decisive events, or they might simply opt out of organized tasks and go their own way.

**Trait Affinities:** Choose one Attribute or Skill when this Athanor is first developed.

**Promethean Boon:** The character can shift one of his Attribute or Skill dots onto another like trait (Attributes to Attributes, Skills to Skills), temporarily reducing the original by one dot and increasing the targeted Attribute by one dot. Doing so requires an instant action and can be activated only once per scene. Once activated, it cannot be reversed until the scene ends. The character is stuck with her choice for that time.

**Redeemed Boon:** Upon attaining Mortality, the character can choose to permanently transfer one dot from any one trait to any like trait (Attributes to Attributes, Skills to Skills).



## Dove — Purity (Galatea)

Associated with Elpis, the pure white dove represents the expulsion of all base matter. While the Promethean with this Athanor has not achieved this state, his choice of the Dove shows that he aspires to it.

Prometheans with this Athanor tend to be highly spiritual. While some adopt a holier-than-thou attitude, this spirituality might nurture in others a true compassion for their fellow Prometheans.

**Trait Affinities:** Humanity, Elpis Merit

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean gains the following benefits:

- +2 to his Resistance Attributes for the purpose of resisting supernatural powers, whenever an Attribute would be subtracted from the attacker's dice pool. This does not affect his own dice pools for making contested rolls.
- When the must make a Humanity degeneration roll, he can add one die to the roll by spending one Reagent.

**Redeemed Boon:** Upon attaining Mortality, the character can add his Azoth to his Humanity dots. Doing so cannot cause him to have a score higher than 10 dots, though.



## Dragon – Power (Osiris)

The dragon is a chthonic force of flame and wealth. Its scales protect against the fire and heat of its own internal furnace, and its lair is scattered with the treasure that rightly accrues to it.

Prometheans who choose this Athanor tend to be highly ambitious. They exult in overcoming obstacles that would cause others to hesitate, such as confronting fire itself.

**Trait Affinities:** Strength, Brawl

**Promethean Boon:** Fire is a Promethean's enemy, but the Dragon's scales offer some protection from it. Whenever the character suffers damage from fire, on the turn in which the damage is inflicted he can reflexively spend one Reagent to convert the aggravated damage to lethal damage. This boon affects only fire damage taken in that turn.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character attracts money and wealth like a magnet. Upon achieving Mortality, the character gains one dot of the Resources Merit per dot of Presence he possesses. This effect is not immediately evident. It trickles to him in the form of gifts, lottery winnings or contest earnings (even if he didn't buy a ticket or enter any contest).



## Eagle – Authority (Osiris)

Sometimes called the Vulture, this Athanor is associated with Zeus' Eagle, which ate Prometheus' liver every other day. The Eagle symbolizes authority and the right to wield it.

Prometheans who develop this Athanor like to be in charge. They want others to heed their words, and might get more than a little miffed when they do not. They aren't stupid, though, and will listen to others who contribute better ideas.

**Trait Affinities:** Presence or Manipulation (choose one when this Athanor is first developed), Persuasion

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean projects an aura of inviolability. Anyone who seeks to initiate a physical conflict with him (even those suffering from Disquiet) require a successful a Resolve + Composure roll lest they suffer a -1 dice penalty to any roll associated with the conflict, such as a Brawl roll to punch the Promethean. They fear to revolt against the authority of a natural leader, even if he's an enemy. If the Promethean himself initiates the conflict, the victims are not subject to this boon's effect. They can respond without compunction.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed character is especially persuasive. He gains the 9-again effect on any Persuasion Skill rolls.



## Lion – Indomitable (Frankenstein)

The lion is one of the more ubiquitous symbols used in alchemy. One of the more dramatic images of it is the lion devouring the sun. Among Prometheans, this image symbolizes the Vitriol's conquest of Mortality. The Lion is the king and ruler of the Royal Road of the Great Work.

Those Prometheans who develop a Lion Athanor will not be swayed from their goals. Once they make a decision, they stick to it through thick or thin, regardless of outside pressure. This does not mean they won't willingly reexamine a goal's value to themselves, and abandon it if it proves unnecessary to their greater goal. The final decision must their own, though, not based on peer pressure.

**Trait Affinities:** Composure, Resolve

**Promethean Boon:** Whenever the Promethean would be forced to give up or seriously delay an important goal (such as achieving a milestone, rescuing a friend or finding out who his creator is) because of a mundane influence or a supernatural power (such as the Mesmerism Suggestion Transmutation), he can reflexively spend one Willpower to negate the effect for that activation attempt. He can resist successive attempts in the same manner, as long as he has Willpower to spend. Note that this boon cannot be used to negate all supernatural powers that would influence his behavior or thoughts, only those that directly and clearly hinder important goals.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed retains his Promethean Boon, although his important goals in mortal life are likely to be fewer and less dramatic than those he held on his Pilgrimage.



## Phoenix – Regeneration (Tammuz)

The resplendent bird that is consumed by self-immolation and rises from its own ashes.

Prometheans who choose this Athanor are resilient, rarely beaten down by life's surprises. They just pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and look forward to the next challenge.

**Trait Affinities:** Stamina, Medicine

**Promethean Boon:** The character can spend Reagent to heal wounds. It takes one point per two bashing wounds or one point per one lethal or aggravated wound.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed gains the effects of the Quick Healer Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 113), even if his Stamina isn't high enough to purchase that Merit.



## Toad — Immunity (Ulgan)

In alchemy, the toad is associated with the first or base matter that is then purified by the Great Work. A medieval belief about toads was that their skulls held a gem — a "toadstone" — that could be used to protect against poisons. Among Prometheans, the toad symbolizes immunity from a particular form of attack.

Prometheans who develop the Toad Athanor tend to be cautious and wary, preferring to plan ahead rather than waiting to see what arises spontaneously. While they don't like surprises, this Athanor gives them some degree of protection against what they might bring.

**Trait Affinities:** Stamina, Survival

**Promethean Boon:** Upon choosing this Athanor, the Promethean declares one class of Transmutations — Deception, Vulcanus, etc. — and he becomes highly resistant to its effects. Whenever he is allowed to resist or contest a Transmutation power that is being used against him, he can choose instead to spend one Willpower to automatically negate its effects upon him for that activation attempt. He can resist successive attempts in the same manner, as long as he has Willpower to spend.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed retains his Promethean resistance to poisons and diseases, as described in "Superlative Constitution," pp. 163-164.



## Unicorn — Charisma (Galatea)

The unicorn is an image of beauty symbolizing the sense of wonder associated with magic and the impossible. It is an alluring mythological animal, sought by many but too often untouchable.

Prometheans who choose this Athanor want to be loved. They might not trust their own powers of attraction, so they call upon the Unicorn's allure to get them what they want: if not the adoration of others, at least their anguish for daring to oppose them.

**Trait Affinities:** Presence or Manipulation (choose one when this Athanor is first developed), Socialize

**Promethean Boon:** The Promethean projects an aura of inviolability somewhat similar to that of the Eagle, but different in effect. Anyone who seeks to initiate a physical conflict with him (even those suffering from Disquiet) require a successful Resolve + Composure roll. If they fail, they can still initiate the conflict, but if it gains any successes against the Promethean, the attacker's player must then reflexively roll Humanity to avoid gaining a temporary derangement from the crushing guilt he feels for having violated such a fragile, precious creature. The Storyteller chooses the derangement based on the context. The derangement lasts for the next 24 hours, although its effects can be avoided if the person gains the favor of the Unicorn Promethean, perhaps by performing a penance of the Promethean's choice or by defending him against other attacks or insults.

If the Promethean himself initiates the conflict, the victims are not subject to this boon's effect. They can respond without guilt.

**Redeemed Boon:** The Redeemed enters mortal life with the four-dot Striking Looks Merit (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 117), regardless of what her Promethean features looked like.

## Creating New Athanors

The Athanors presented here are not the only possible Athanors. The bestiary is huge and inexhaustible. Storytellers and players can create their own Athanors by pondering a theme, an animal or mythological beast to symbolize it, and its meanings for the Pilgrimage and mortal life.

Consider the following points when creating new Athanors:

• *What's its symbolic theme?* Summed up in a single word, what concept does the Athanor try to embody? Is it Hate, Love, Conspiracy or Prophecy? The Athanor's boon should be related to this singular theme.

• *What animal symbolizes the theme?* Don't feel constrained by a single set of guidelines here. Even alchemical texts used the same animal for different concepts, and different cultures associate them with different ideas. Just go with what seems appropriate, although don't just rely on a tenuous connection. Try to dig up some mythological or folkloric leads to support your decision.

• *What Lineage is most conducive to the Athanor?* Again, there are no firm guidelines here — go with what feels right. You'll notice in the sample Athanors that they ignore elemental boundaries. The Dragon is conducive to Osiris even though it's associated with fire rather than water. This is because its chthonic and Plutonic connotations are stronger than its fiery ones.

• *What sort of Prometheans are attracted to the Athanor?* The theme is the key here, telling you the sort of psychological bent most prevalent in those who develop the Athanor. A Promethean who chooses an Athanor that embodies Hate is probably an angry or resentful person.

• *Choose Trait Affinities.* Decide upon a single Attribute and/or a Skill that seems appropriate.

• *Devise a Promethean Boon.* This is where it gets tricky, but also fun. You get to create a power, very similar to a Transmutation, that somehow reflects the Athanor's theme. Making sure it's balanced is the hard part. If it seems too powerful, try requiring a point cost (either in Willpower or

Reagent — Pyros is probably too plentiful to be useful here) and maybe an activation roll.

• *Devise a Redeemed Boon*. This is more about flavor than a game-play advantage, since most players won't continue to play a character once he becomes mortal. Still, it succinctly illustrates the benefit the Promethean is trying to give his mortal self, to help him prepare for life in a less-powerful but more fulfilling state.

## Further Progression

Athanors might seem simple upon first glance. They give characters a new pool of supernatural points to spend for various effects, along with a boon that somewhat resembles a Transmutation and a cost-break on certain traits, not to mention a boon for when they become mortal. Once a character chooses an Athanor, where does he go from there?

Most characters continue to bank new Vitriol points into their Athanors, increasing the amount of times within a chapter that they can call on this interesting energy. Or players take advantage of the cost break on certain traits to raise them with Vitriol when they don't have enough experience points, or when they want to spend those points elsewhere.

Since Vitriol comes from gains on the Pilgrimage, the character's Athanor can be said to grow with every step he takes on it. There is, however, a more unsavory method of claiming Vitriol — by stealing it from others through lacunae (see pp. 199-200). An Athanor does not discriminate between one or the other. Vitriol from any source can fuel the furnace. This raises interesting ironies when a Promethean with a Dove Athanor performs a lacuna to feed his need for more Purity.

More than increasing points or powers, however, Athanors provide permission for roleplaying. They tell a player something about his character and his attitudes toward the Pilgrimage, and his expectations of what mortal life will be about. Players should keep this in mind, making sure that their characters' goals and behavior reflect their Athanors. If a Storyteller feels that a player isn't playing within the spirit of his character's Athanor — perhaps his Promethean with the Unicorn Athanor is going around threatening and beating people up — he can temporarily remove the Athanor's benefits. The furnace seals shut due to inactive use, and nothing can be extracted from it (no Vitriol, Reagent or boons) until the character gets back on the proper path.





# THE WATER OF LIFE

The night following Halloween, All Saints' Day, comes rainy and dolorous to the city of Chicago. The skies are a pregnant gray, threatening to burst with rain at any minute. Traffic on the streets stops and starts as night falls, with weary revelers on their way home after working through hangovers engendered by the night before. Likewise, parents of overstimulated children slog homeward to one more night of dealing with stomachaches and sugar frenzies.

Beneath this human tedium, however, burns a pulsing flame of mystery. Tonight the streets belong to a new brood of the Created, Promethean constructs who feel that flame burning in synchronicity with the one that rages inside them. This is no night for costumed boojums or made-up monsters. Tonight is the night when the truly fearsome denizens of Chicago take to the streets for their own unfathomable purposes.

## Using Chicago

We've chosen to set the first story of this **Promethean** chronicle in Chicago to allow Storytellers greater flexibility in building their own events. Storytellers who own **World of Darkness: Chicago** have a wealth of local information from which to draw, as well as a wide gallery of personalities with whom Promethean characters might come in contact. Storytellers who don't want to cross their chronicle's Prometheans with other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness or Chicago will still be able to use that book for its history and its synopses of weird, mystical events that aren't inherently tied to vampires, werewolves or mages.

Future installments in this story will take place in other locations covered in various White Wolf supplements, such as New Orleans, the Rockies and Boston. Again, if you own these supplements, you'll have additional material to draw from. If you don't own these supplements, don't worry. Nothing in them is critical to the completion of the **Promethean** tale.

## Act One: The Clarion Call

Storytellers, conduct brief introductory scenes for each player's new Promethean character, introducing them to the world and exploring just what it is each character does on a night she assumes to be normal.

Most new characters will likely be largely unaware of their Promethean conditions, though they should have had some degree of introduction to the world of the Created in their preludes. Ideally, the characters should know what they are, but not the ins and outs of how that state causes them to function.

Punctuating this night, however, is an unmistakable call to attend… *something*. Characters won't quite be able to discern exactly what the calling is or where it's taking them, but they know it's taking them somewhere, and they feel a supernatural compulsion to follow it. What's truly happening here is that Calogero, a skilled alchemist, is using a false, mystical fire to replicate the effects of Azoth calling to Azoth. (See p. 91 for more information on this Promethean phenomenon.) He's unaware of exactly who he's going to reach with his experiment. Honestly, he's trying this for its own sake, to see what answers the call. He's not even certain his false fire will work.

It does work, though, and it's quite effective. Players of characters who wish to resist the alchemical beacon need to succeed on a contested roll that pits their Resolve + Azoth versus Calogero's Intelligence + Occult. (See the "Dramatis Personae" section of this Appendix for Calogero's traits, and don't forget his applicable Specialty in Alchemy for this situation. Also, Calogero's willing to invest a point of his own Willpower into the roll, as this is a speculative and potentially informative use of his abilities. His dice pool for this roll is 12 dice.) This isn't an effect Calogero can normally create, so don't worry about it being a long-term power you'll have to keep track of. It's an alchemical "amulet" he's created that has a one-time effect. It's very expensive for him to create and is experimental besides. Depending on the outcome of

this performance, Calogero might decide that he never wants to replicate the effect again.

(**Note:** Normally, the rules stipulate no compulsion for a Promethean to follow an inkling of Azoth. Remember that Calogero's amulet is a unique application that functions as described. If the Azothic radiance of the amulet becomes important, consider the amulet to have a rating of 8.)

## Following the Flame

Characters who acknowledge the amulet's call find themselves drawn toward Englewood, a bleak and depressed neighborhood in south Chicago. A scene of gothic grandeur lies crumbling before them in this neighborhood, its once-proud Victorian houses crumbling under the degradation of poverty and urban neglect. The rain and cloudy skies make the vision all the more dour. Characters with a degree of psychic awareness (whether through Lineage- or Refinement-based abilities) feel a spiritual malaise from the neighborhood as well. Addiction, violence and despair are the prevailing currencies in Englewood, which takes its toll on both the physical world and its spiritual counterpart. Characters sensitive to death might also pick up a distinct twinge of omnipresent death-energy, as Englewood was home to the "murder castle" of America's first serial killer, H. H. Holmes, where at least 50 victims met their untimely and agonizing demises.

As they approach the neighborhood, characters feel the pull growing stronger, leading them down blighted alleys and beneath the eyes of god only knows what lurking in the shadows. Eventually, the call leads them to a ramshackle garage hidden in the sub-basement of a brownstone building off the main drag. All that remains of the garage's original signage is three-quarters of a pediment sign that says "INSON & SONS, MECHAN" — implying that this was once a commercial facility. A cracked driveway leads into the garage, beneath the surface of the street while boarded-up windows mask all but the softest green glow emanating from within. The garage itself is boarded and locked, so the first character there will have to figure out some way to get in. Various Larceny attempts might be used to jimmy locks, pry bars from doors or windows, et cetera. Consider these efforts to require three successes on the extended roll, as the garage is (until recently) abandoned and left to its own security. (See p. 74 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for more information on Larceny.) Lifting the dilapidated garage door itself is a Strength 4 feat, which encompasses both lifting the door itself and breaking the rotten broom handle that serves as a security lock inside the door's track. Feats of strength are discussed on p. 47 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Inside, the garage is just as depressing as the outside suggested, with dusty shelves, counters and archaic automotive equipment. The air is musty and dry, smelling like gasoline. At the center of the garage, however, on the floor, sits a brazier about a foot across. It's made of some cheap, silvery material, and in its bowl burns a cracked wafer about two inches across. The small, chemical disc burns with a bright green flame that Promethean characters can immediately recognize as the beacon that called them here. They can literally feel their own Pyros reaching toward the fire and then drawing back from it, as if disappointed.

The characters enter the garage one by one. No one else is in the building.

## Earnest Introductions

As the characters arrive, it's a good opportunity to introduce them to each other and allow characters to take actions and behave in ways that establish their personalities. Trust is probably in short supply, but that's fine, as nervous energy tends to exaggerate people's identifying traits. Bear in mind that Prometheans can see one another's disfigurements even if they're not actively spending Pyros. Some characters might swagger and threaten, while others search the garage for clues as to what might be going on. Some bold souls might investigate the brazier (disturbing it doesn't affect the call to other Prometheans), which they will recognize as an alchemical device with success on an Intelligence + Occult roll.

Allow the characters a few minutes to interact with one another, to begin defining character roles in the nascent throng. Play up the fact that, despite the fact that the alchemical fire lacks any real substance, their own Azoths now react to one another in each other's presence. Not only are their Inner Fires acting up — here are several other people like them! Of course, familiarity can breed contempt, too, and some tension between characters might arise.

Remember also the brief ritual of sorts Prometheans sometimes enact when they meet one another, even if nobody taught them to do it. The Measure (see p. 74), essentially allows one Promethean to read another's Azothic radiance. If it's tainted by Torment, the Promethean might not want to spend much time with his new acquaintance. There are no hard rules here. Simply nudge the players' memories if you need to, or suggest that they take each other's Measure. Naturally, a fledgling character probably has an untarnished Azothic radiance.

Mind the pacing and interest level of this rude introduction. When the enthusiasm calms to its normal level, have Calogero arrive.

### Characters Who Resist the Call

It's eminently possible that certain of the players' characters might resist the compulsion Calogero's amulet creates. It's unlikely, given how many dice Calogero can contribute to the pool (12), but stranger things have happened. If such is the case, Storytellers should have a contingency plan on the back burner.

Some characters might feel the roar of the Azoth, resist it, but then choose to investigate out of curiosity anyway. Bless you if you have such positively proactive players. Characters who have ties to a mentor or creator (who have

their own desires) might ask characters to investigate the odd "spike" in the Azoth's flame. They're probably all the more intrigued when the players' characters claim to have felt the fluctuation as well.

Outside supernatural influences might take an interest, too. Those who are sensitive to such things (mages, perhaps, or certain factions of werewolves or vampires) might ask known Promethean characters to find out what went on. This contingency requires explicating existing ties to other supernatural characters in the prelude, however, or in previous stories if Storytellers incorporate "The Water of Life" into an extant chronicle. Likewise, other supernatural characters might sense something "off" about a Promethean and literally chase her into the garage-cum-laboratory.

Storytellers will need to be creative here. We made the call dependent on a roll in order to keep characters from feeling that they have been railroaded into events. Bringing a strong-willed character who shrugs off the call into the story anyway will require working with individual motivations and actions, again to avoid perceptions of story events being a directive rather than an opportunity.

## Involving Other Prometheans

The story as written assumes that the Storyteller wants to use this as an introduction to the world of **Promethean** and as a launching point for a larger chronicle. As such, the only people who answer Calogero's mystic call are the players' characters (and Carla Two; see pp. 277-278). That's not to say that any other Prometheans present in Chicago didn't hear the call. We simply assume that they "succeeded on the contested roll," or however the Storyteller chooses to justify their absence.

If the Storyteller actively wants to introduce other Prometheans into the story, however, that's fine. Even if they aren't compelled to heed the call, other Prometheans might be curious as to what just stirred such a response in their Azoth. That is, other Prometheans almost certainly felt the call, even if they were able to suborn its mandate, and might choose to investigate.

It's also conceivable that characters who have close ties to their creators or other Created mentors might hear the call as suddenly as their patrons. Although their patrons fight down the urge, the characters don't — and any creator or mentor worth her salt is going to follow her protégé to see exactly what the hell just compelled her to up and leave.

## The Alchemist Appears

"I came as quickly as I could," a sloppy, portly man says breathlessly as he clatters through the service-hallway door at the back of the garage. He carries a beaten leather valise not unlike the archetypal doctor's bag. "Thank you for coming."

Depending on the players and their characters, this sudden entrance might provoke a deluge of questions, or it might simply result in the characters waiting to see what happens next. Calogero knows he's put the characters on the spot — it's what his amulet was designed to do — so he'll indulge them any hurt feelings or aggressions they have. He won't put up with being hurt, however, and if the introduction turns violent, he'll do his best to escape the way he came.

This is the alchemist who contrived the mystical call to bring the characters to the garage. He introduces himself as Calogero and explains that the assembled group shouldn't hold any secrets from each other. They're all Created, since that's who the amulet calls, so no one will have to worry about protecting any delicate identities. He explains that he's dealt with the Promethean condition before, that he knows how terrifying and isolating it is, and that he can help the characters deal with their mysterious state of artificial life.

At this pronouncement, Calogero produces his valise and withdraws from it a strange device consisting of a pair of beaker-like glass chambers, a thin tube connecting them, and a burner. This is Calogero's alembic, the alchemical crucible in which he distills his elixirs. As he stokes the device, it burns with a green flame. "I want to help you. I want to help you create the key to your condition, the *aqua vitae*. The water of life."

The alchemist will be as forthcoming as he can with the characters, answering all their questions as well as is possible. As part of his personality, however, Calogero always attempts to turn the conversation and line of questioning back to the characters. He doesn't do this aggressively, but, rather, unctuously, attempting to place their best interests at the forefront. He's genuine, but his manner is untrustworthy, which is important to remember as Storyteller. He truly wants to help the characters, but he's a little forthright and socially awkward, which makes communicating that willingness to help seem less than sincere. If the characters seem to be swaying their opinions against him, though, scale back his oiliness or have him offer to do something in the short term to earn their trust.

If asked, Calogero provides the following answers to questions. He doesn't offer any information without being asked, however.

- Calogero knows what Prometheans are because he's done extensive study on them in the past. He's an alchemist, and his field of expertise has placed him in contact with many artificial constructs given life.
- The water of life can aid a Promethean's transition from Created to human. If asked how this works, Calogero goes into a grand discourse on the Great Work, transmutation of one substance to another, the chemical composition of the soul ("which need not be born human, but can be fabricated as can the flesh"), and other raptures of an intellectual given free reign to discuss his passion.
- Calogero wants nothing in return for creating the *aqua vitae*. He simply wants to observe it in action.
- At the same time, he will create only one "dose" of the water of life. He's never done it before, and he wants to know

its vicissitudes before he crafts any more than the solitary application. He is frank when he states that the characters will have to choose who among them gains its boon.

• The characters will have to gather the ingredients for the *aqua vitae*. That's the only way he can alchemically distill it to suit them individually. Also, given his understanding of the Pilgrimage (which he keeps to himself), he explains that he can't do the work for them. He can only help them achieve the objective.

• *The only time Calogero will openly lie* is if the characters ask him directly if he was a Promethean. He will dodge this question as deftly as he can. For example, if asked "Are you a Promethean?", he will honestly answer that he isn't — because he isn't *now*. If asked if he was *once* a Promethean, he will avoid the issue directly, claiming "I was never one of your kind" to characters of certain Lineages or Refinements, which isn't technically a lie but casually avoids the actual question asked. If the characters truly attempt to nail him down, he'll lie if it's the only recourse he has.

## A Tentative Trust

With luck and diplomacy, the characters should agree to let Calogero help them, to his great delight. He's purchased the garage, which they may use as their safe haven as long as they wish it. He'll be doing all of his alchemical work and study at the garage, away from his own laboratory. He acknowledges having another lab if pressed, but he doesn't want to show it to the characters, as he's worried about "spiritual contamination and principles of contagion that would render my work useless to me by the introduction of alchemical connections to another." Any character who succeeds at an Intelligence + Occult roll can verify the validity of this concern. Calogero's worried that introducing someone else to his alchemical sanctum would "disconnect" the spiritual ties to himself and anything he created there. By effectively giving the characters the garage as their temporary home, his work done here will have that mystical connection to them.

# Act Two: By Mortar and Pestle and Fire

Calogero is a practitioner of Greek and Egyptian alchemy. The nature of the artifacts he asks the characters retrieve for him draw a sympathetic alchemical connection to the deity Thoth from components collected in the city of Chicago. The act of linking the god, the city and the characters is part of the alchemical ritual Calogero wants to perform in order to distill a powerful artifact for the characters. He plans to gift them with the *aqua vitae*, the water of life.

If asked why the characters need to retrieve the items and not Calogero himself, the alchemist explains that the elixir he plans to make is for the characters' use and not his own. Therefore, it must have some connection to them, and a point of origin in all the ingredients is a fine way to establish this mystical tie. Further, Calogero reiterates that he wants to help the characters, not do the work for them. Feel free to use alchemical terms with double-meanings related to the Promethean state to drive this home. He can refer to the Great Work being an effort of the individual, not an outsider, for example, or explain that elements combined by an alchemist without any investment by the intended recipient can cause a perilous state of flux. If pressed as to the ambiguous meanings of these terms, Calogero will ramble and intentionally confound the conversation, hoping to hide behind his eccentric alchemist ruse.

The retrieval of these items can take as long a time as the characters spend on each item. It's possible that a very expeditious throng could collect all of these items in a single day. As such, pacing is key to the Storyteller's role here. The *aqua vitae* can play a critical role at the end of the stories that connect in each Appendix of the forthcoming **Promethean** supplements, so just going out and grabbing whatever's convenient for an elixir of this gravity can certainly come back to haunt the characters in the end. The Storyteller should subtly encourage players to really think creatively. Unfortunately, Calogero is ultimately detached from the decisions they make. He wants the characters to succeed or fail based on their own choices, so he won't lecture them on quality or efficiency. That's going to have to rely on the description and demeanor of the Storyteller.

## The First Ingredient: The Eye of Thoth

The first ingredient in Calogero's elixir is the least intrusive and difficult to find. He tells the characters that he requires "the eye of Thoth" to begin his alchemical distillation. Calogero explains that any item representing vision or sight will suffice, as will any representation of the moon.

In Egyptian mythology, Thoth was the moon personified as a god. Egyptians understood the moon to be one of the eyes of Horus, the other of which was the sun. Calogero can explain this, and describes also how only the moon is relevant in this elixir. The sun is tied more to true life, and the artificial life of the Created is watched over by the eye of night.

To that end, the characters are free to retrieve whatever item they wish to represent the eye of Thoth. Storytellers should pay attention to the manner in which the characters procure the eye. Characters who sneak into an optometrist's office and steal a model of an eye, or who abscond with a moon rock from the Adler Planetarium are setting an entirely different sort of precedent than characters who paint a portrait of an eye or gather photos depicting a lunar eclipse. Humanity might come into play at even this stage of the story, and Storytellers should be on the early lookout for any activities that might satisfy milestones. Also, if the

characters don't make an earnest effort to supply a valuable or substantial item as the ingredient — if they just scribble an eye or moon on a sheet of paper — their laxity will undermine the value of the *aqua vitae* Calogero creates. Note that Calogero won't encourage them to improve their efforts or procure a better item. He wants them to make their own choices and exert as much effort as they choose in their pursuit of their Pilgrimages.

Storytellers should also make a note of what object characters retrieve for later use. In selecting this item as the eye, the characters are building a mystical bond to themselves through which a skilled sorcerer or alchemist can spy on them by using this item as a focus. The characters almost certainly won't know this at first, but when they later discover rivals or antagonists with similar items in their possession, they might gain a value clue, or simply find an unsettling coincidence in the matter.

### I Spy...

For the remainder of the chronicle, anyone seeking to make an arcane or mystical connection to the characters may use the item they designate as the eye of Thoth to aid in doing so. This connection grants a +1 equipment bonus to attempts to do so. The exact nature of such things is (for now) left in the Storyteller's hands, but relevant examples include uses of The Spirit's Touch (see **Vampire: The Requiem**, p. 121), magical Scrying (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 235) or Clairvoyant Senses on p. 146 of this book.

Naturally, not every antagonist will know exactly what items the characters gave to Calogero for him to distill his elixir, but enterprising Storytellers should have few problems finding ways for key rivals to learn of such things.

Whatever course the characters take, obtaining this first ingredient on Calogero's list probably won't take too long. This first test is as much a gauge of their commitment to learning about the Great Work as it is a way to introduce a recurring item (also a setting element any time you want to use it) into the plot.

## The Second Ingredient: The Breath of Life or Death

Calogero's second ingredient is similarly up to the characters to decide what to procure. The alchemists states that he needs the "breath of life or death, either the first or last breath a person takes." The symbolism here is not one of Thoth directly, but rather the ultimate transition from the Created state to that of a fully realized human.

The characters may choose to gather a literal exhalation of air. In this case, Calogero suggests that they use a glass vial to collect the breath and then stopper it so that it doesn't escape. Of course, obtaining someone's first breath requires being present at a birth, while taking a person's last breath requires attending his death. Doing either presents obvious difficulties, possibly providing opportunities to both satisfy milestones and test moralities. The characters may choose to kill an individual, for example, which comes with its own host of consequences beyond retrieving the ingredient for the alchemist.

A metaphorical breath of life or death will also work. If the characters decide upon this route, before they depart, Calogero will wax philosophical for a bit and question the characters as to what metaphors they might choose and how they relate to the characters themselves. He might ask one Promethean when he believes he took his first breath in his Created life. Was it literally when he rose from his creator's act of genesis? Was it when he became aware of his Promethean nature? Was it something else entirely? Or was rising as a Promethean not an act of life at all, but rather a breath of death, the suspension of life and the false semblance of a power that belongs truly to some entity far beyond the ken of mortals and the Created?

Again, Storytellers should keep an open mind about what constitutes a metaphorical breath of life or death. Some examples might be the first work of a poet that signifies the birth of a great contribution to the artistic form, or an idea sent to patent that will make the inventor a recognized genius among great thinkers. A breath of death might be a damning letter that implicates an individual in a scandal that eventually brings an entire company to its knees. It might be the wisp of smoke that escapes from a gun used to perpetrate a murder or suicide.

The intent here is to have the characters think creatively, both in their interpretation of what constitutes life and death, and in the methods by which they plan to obtain the breath in question. These heavy questions could even relate to a character's milestones, whether or not they involve protecting life or snuffing it out.

Depending on what course of action the characters take, they may collect this ingredient very quickly, or the task could truly become protracted. Either result is fine. If the characters move quickly, the story can move on to its next point. If the characters spend a good deal of time in introspection and perhaps a bit of conflict with one another about what's an acceptable way to approach the task, that's all to the good. If you find the pacing dropping a bit, revisit them in the persona of Calogero, who reminds them that they have other ingredients to find if they want his continued help.

## The Third Ingredient: Aspect of the Ibis

The god Thoth is depicted as having the head of an ibis in Egyptian mythology. In Greek mythology, Thoth is identified with Hermes, whose winged cap and sandals make him swift.

Calogero requires the curved beak of a bird as well as its wings as the third ingredient. This is another potentially straightforward task, in that characters can sneak into the Lincoln Park or Brookfield Zoos and purloin an ibis (or something close enough to it to suffice). Such larceny is probably grounds for taking a look at Humanity, again, as few moral people have much sympathy for animal sacrifice. In fact, certain Storytellers might consider cruelty to animals to be a greater sin than violence to another human being. Sociological studies have shown that people would rather see other people hurt than animals (if forced to make a choice), arguably on the basis that people can at least rationalize suffering, while animals simply experience it as an unavoidable force.

Ethics notwithstanding, symbols and creative thought work well for this ingredient, too. Thoth was the god of wisdom, inventor of writing, and patron deity of scribes, often depicted with a reed stylus and a scribe's palette. Characters wishing to draw symbols might suggest a pen or other stylus as representative of the ibis' bill. An Egyptian crook (often seen paired with the flail on the sarcophagi of pharaohs) might also work as a symbol of a fowl's bill, but more on the level of an Egyptian symbol than any direct connection to Thoth himself.

As the god of wisdom, Thoth was also a counselor to the other gods and a mediator in their disputes. Some depictions of the familiar Spirit of Justice statue feature the female form with attached wings, and might qualify. The Classical Roman symbol of the eagle, which adorned many of its military standards and public sculpture, might also make a good symbol based on Rome's governmental cultural contribution to the world. Rome's oft-precarious relations with both Egypt and Greece might strain the value of that symbol, however.

In all practicality, Hermes' connection to magic and alchemy is so close that almost anything described as hermetic could potentially serve as the wings, for better or for worse.

## The Fourth Ingredient: Unadulterated Vitriol

As the roster of ingredients takes a darker cast, so does it increase in ambiguity.

For many Prometheans, Vitriol is the substance of personal refinement, the viscous fluid within the Promethean body that represents change, learning and achievement. Therefore, it might seem macabre or perverse for Calogero to request "vitriol" as his next ingredient.

In truth, Calogero requires the traditional alchemical vitriol, sulfuric acid. A character can ascertain this with a successful Intelligence + Occult roll (at a -2 penalty for obscurity, unless the character has an appropriate Specialty) or an Intelligence + Academics or Science roll (at a -4 penalty for obscurity and field specificity). Of course, if the *player* knows what Calogero means and it's reasonable for the character to know it, that's fine, too. Alternatively, if the characters have no idea what Vitriol or vitriol are and ask Calogero, he can explain. Sulfuric acid can be obtained from a variety of locations, including home improvement stores (raw and in fertilizer), scientific laboratories, wastewater-processing facilities, and even car batteries. (Some sources of sulfuric acid will have to be refined, though, such as fertilizer and car batteries.)

Calogero is careful not to impart any moral judgment on the characters, however. He sees his role as facilitator, not mentor. If the characters ask him if he literally requires the alchemical, experiential substance found within other Prometheans, he responds, "If you can get it." He doesn't want to lead them away from doing their own research or answering their own questions — or making their own decisions, despite how ill informed those decisions might be. If they assume he means Promethean Vitriol, it's not his place to dissuade them.

At some point as the characters are discussing this course of action, they feel their Azoth respond to the call of another Azoth. It would seem that a latecomer is heeding the same call that the characters themselves responded to the first night that they met each other and made Calogero's acquaintance. This is an opportunity for the Storyteller to play to the throng's interests. Another Promethean, named Carla Two, has just discovered the garage and waits outside. If the characters are largely predatory, treat this episode as a game of cat and mouse, in which the players' Prometheans hunt down this interloper and decide what to do with her. If they're more diplomatic, have Carla request aid or understanding and let them take it from there. If the characters are mystically inclined, you might wish to present Carla Two as an omen or as someone fated to meet her end at the characters' hands and also provide them with a key ingredient. In any event, Carla Two represents an opportunity for the characters to take the Vitriol they think they need by reaping a lacuna.

Carla's no real challenge to an assembled throng of Prometheans. She's a fledgling herself, heeding the call of Azoth to Azoth just a few nights after she recalls being aware. If the characters decide to jump her, run the combat as normal, but she'll surely fall to their greater numbers. Thereafter, if the characters choose to perform a lacuna on her, use the system presented on pp. 199-200.

Hopefully, the characters will choose not to murder or harm Carla. If this is the case, she will eventually take her leave from them. (She has a role later in the chronicle, to be described in future **Promethean** supplements.) Don't hasten this process, however. If the characters don't steal Vitriol from Carla Two, you can perhaps lead them to the more mundane sulfuric acid with conversations involving her and Calogero. At this stage, Carla is lonely and scared and isn't yet sure she trusts this fortuitously discovered throng of purposeful Created. Have her question the characters as to the odd feelings

she's experiencing (the Azoth seeking like fires) and let them play "older sibling" for a bit. Indeed, if some characters have milestones related to helping other Prometheans, this might be a good time to lay that groundwork. It probably doesn't satisfy any large-scale milestone, since they're just talking right now, but who knows what the future might hold?

Carla intends to remain on civil terms with the characters, but she's just not ready to commit to their company right now, as they obviously have some degree of history and relationships forming, no matter how brief. If the characters seek to restrain her or otherwise prevent her from leaving, she'll fight back, but not to the point of destruction. (Remember, though, that Prometheans can potentially return from at least one "death." See p. 163 and the Osiran Bestowment on pp. 116-117.) In such a case, the characters will have their captive as a new responsibility to balance with Calogero's tasks. If the characters don't prevent her from leaving, she promises to meet up with them in a few nights when they can discuss anything they might have learned about their new condition, and she'll share any insights, too.

## The Fifth Ingredient: Light from a Dead Star

This is perhaps the most subjective ingredient, and almost certainly the one with the most daunting name. Retrieval of such a thing sounds like a tall order to fill, but clever characters should be able to find something that will suit their needs accordingly.

Part of Thoth's alchemical tradition, that of the Egyptians and Greek and which Calogero practices, is the idea of a "sacred geometry." Thoth is sometimes credited as the architect of the Great Pyramid of Giza, and as a key-holder of the halls of lost Atlantis. Part of the philosophy behind Thoth's alchemy is the understanding of new ideas and previously unknown concepts as geometric patterns of light. In expressing ideas thus, the alchemist could describe ideas without the limitations of mortal writing or speech, by imparting visions of the concept directly into the "reader's" mind.

Lofty stuff, to be sure, and far beyond the capabilities of this cynical, modern world. That sense of resignation accompanies Calogero's request for the collection of light from a dead star.

Naturally, the Storyteller will have to be very open-minded as to what satisfies the qualification here. Characters might again take a trip to the observatory, seeking information as to stars that have died, but the light from which hasn't finished making its final travel to earth's perspective, for example. From there, perhaps it's a question of recording the mathematical formula for the light's wavelength.

On the other end of the spectrum, maybe that interpretation is too literal. A "dead star" might refer to a celebrity whose time has past. Light from a dead star might be a piece of work from a local celebrity's filmography or musical catalogue.

Storytellers who wish to lend a metaphysical or weirdly occult tone to their chronicles might have a "well" of sorts where light collects like dewdrops and can be withdrawn as such. It might be light reflected and somehow collected from Lake Michigan or it might be a somehow-tangible darkness plumbed from urban caverns such as those beneath Randolph Street Station or the Carbide and Carbon building.

Whatever the case, whatever the Storyteller chooses to allow, the success or failure of retrieving this final ingredient depends on the creativity the players bring to their characters' endeavors. More so than the symbology or metaphysical metaphors encouraged by the other ingredients, this one truly requires some high-level thought. The players' first idea almost certainly won't qualify, since it will most likely be a gut-level reaction to the strangeness and seeming impossibility of the task. That's not to suggest that all first ideas are bad ones, just that the Storyteller should encourage some debate among the players and some discussion of alchemical symbols and mystical philosophy in the context of the game.

(It's also encouraged that, if the Storyteller plans to use this story arc as the basis for his own chronicle, at least one of the characters should have a milestone related to either solving this puzzle or to the completion of the *aqua vitae* in finality. Milestones such as "Answer an alchemical riddle," or, "Participate in the creation of an alchemical elixir," are excellent milestones for mystically oriented characters and characters whose concepts involve expansion of thought or understanding of personal motivations.)

In the end, this ingredient provides an opportunity for Calogero to discuss philosophy with the characters as well. Although the alchemist is no great master or hugely powerful individual, he can certainly serve as a capable ally, contact or mentor once this story resolves. Dynamics between characters might benefit from the alchemist effectively "taking sides" in a discussion between characters on the matter of occultism and alchemy. Again, this isn't an opportunity for players to go after each other, but some rivalry between *characters* is certainly appropriate.

### Sally Forth!

As the characters move around Chicago in their collection of the various alchemical items, remember that certain events can trigger Promethean-specific occurrences not discussed in the larger plot direction of the story.

Storytellers should check for Disquiet (p. 169), for example, in any mortals with whom the characters come in contact. You might also wish to familiarize yourself with the conditions that cause Torment to build within a character (pp. 180-181). Storytellers with more combative troupes might introduce brief struggles with security guards in some cases. (See pp. 204 – 205 of the **World of Darkness** rulebook for security guard traits.)

# Act Three: The *Aqua Vitae*

Once the characters have assembled all of the items Calogero has requested and given them to him, the alchemist begins his efforts in transmutation.

Characters who watch the process witness the alchemist working fervently for hours. First, he suspends the eye of Thoth over the laboratory. Next, he passes the aspect of the ibis through the breath of life or death. He heats the vitriol in the alembic's retort over its green flame, then dissolves the aspect of the ibis in the vitriol, which bubbles and churns. Through the distilled colloid, he sends the light from the dead star, at which point, the center of the fluid becomes a vibrant blue and seems to ebb and flow like a body of water in which a mighty tide holds sway. At the end of the process, Calogero pours the essence of the *aqua vitae* into a vial and seals it. Whom he hands it to depends on what the players' characters decide. Before all of that occurs, though…

## Feasting on Fire

While Calogero's alembic bubbles hotly over the fire, a chill wind blows through one of the garage's open doors. Following in the wake of the wind, a trio of ravenous Pandorans bursts into the makeshift laboratory.

The Pandorans are described in the "Dramatis Personae" of this Appendix. They rush the scene using bestial pack tactics, but no real coordination beyond that. They're starved for the potent sustenance of the Azoth, and they're not about to let a throng of neophyte Promethean whelps stand in their way.

It's important to distinguish that Pandorans require edible Pyros. The amulet's false Azoth won't be edible to them, thought it has certainly attracted them to the garage, where they can then target actual edible sources. Alternatively, the Storyteller might decide that Calogero's fire is something unique that might give a lot of Pyros to the Pandoran that consumes it. This makes the amulet more powerful, but also significantly more dangerous. In this case, however, it might serve to distract the Pandorans from their Promethean prey while they gorge themselves on valuable Pyros. This is a good option for Storytellers whose players' characters aren't exceptionally physically powerful.

Begin the conflict by establishing an Initiative roster as usual (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 151), then resolve the combat as normal. The Pandorans don't know anything besides fury and hunger, and they will fight to the death. Yet, although they're not particularly canny, these Pandorans use some cunning tactics in combat. They are more quick than strong, and prefer to harry their foes like a pack of wolves instead of facing them in direct, one-on-one fights. They won't take any killing blows once a character drops, though, unless it's absolutely necessary or that's what the dice indicate. They would prefer to neutralize all threats before settling down to feed.

Calogero avoids the combat entirely. If he can continue working while the melee ensues, have him do so. Describe his frantic efforts to protect the alembic with his body. Have him spilling precarious amounts of the roiling elixir. He might hurl a vial of some caustic fluid as a distraction, but he's not going to leap into the fray by any means.

The Storyteller should take the opportunity to make the combat dramatic and thrilling. In addition to the reliable techniques of good description and narrative pacing, the Storyteller should let players take advantage of the environment. As long as it's not too action-movie, encourage the characters to perform certain exciting stunts. Have one of the Pandorans meet his end beneath a rusted automobile chassis or have an exceptionally strong character pin an enemy against the wall with a metal spar or exposed bit of rebar. With the alembic working amid the scenery and the years of spilled oil in the garage, the potential for a fire exists to the degree that the Storyteller wants to employ it. Electricity from exposed wires or collateral damage is a consideration, too. Indeed, don't think of this as a combat so much as it is an assault. People are going to get hurt, they're going to get hurt *badly*, and the whole scene should have a grisly resonance with the fragility of life.

## Intrusions and Answers

Characters who flee the garage or who explore its outside environs after the Pandoran attack might discern a bit more about the nature of the creatures' sudden assault.

Those who succeed at a perception roll (**World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 45) hear the telltale sound of fleeing footsteps echoing into the night. Alternatively, characters might recognize the feeling they first felt at the beginning of the story, or when Carla Two first visited the garage: Azoth calling to Azoth.

Dashing off under the cover of night is, in fact, Carla Two. If characters notice someone and pursue, use the rules for chases starting on p. 65 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Carla Two's traits can be found on pp. 277-278 in "Dramatis Personae."

If the characters apprehend Carla Two, they'll almost certainly want to question her. She won't fight unless attacked first, and she makes gestures and protestations of surrender if she is overtaken.

Carla's motivations depend on what transpired between her and the throng previously. If she departed on reasonable terms, Carla reveals that she had no idea what to do. She was attacked by the Pandorans on her way back to the garage. She led them to the garage in the hopes that the characters could deal with them. They outnumber her, after all, and she's no match for three of the fiends. She had planned to return afterward and give the characters some of the information she'd overheard.

If the characters hurt Carla or performed a lacuna on her, the facts of the matter are different. In such a case,



Carla was still beset by Pandorans, but while on an errand of her own. After she was ambushed, she planned to lead the Pandorans to the characters' lair in hopes of turning the Pandorans' attention upon the characters. Carla hopes her honesty will allow her to reconcile with the characters. If not, she's prepared to face whatever punishment they deem appropriate, short of death. She won't stand around and wait to be killed, but the odds are against her if the throng has murder on its mind.

In any case, it's obvious that the characters' adopted stronghold in the garage is compromised. Created who reason through it will probably come to understand that the Pandorans caught the "scent" of the Azoth, whether among them, a lingering effect of Calogero's original amulet or the alchemical work currently occurring in the makeshift lab. They'll have to find new digs. If Carla Two is effectively an enemy at this point, she's one more person who knows the location of their would-be sanctum. If she's on good terms with the throng, she reveals more information that might encourage them to pack up and find a new place to call home.

(Storytellers, note that even if they stay, the characters will eventually have to deal with the Wasteland effect — see pp. 174-179. If the characters linger for more than a week, the area around their lair takes on an even more blasted, barren characteristic than the crumbling Englewood neighborhood already has. Also note that the characters' retrieval of the alchemical ingredients might have taken them far and wide, which means the radius of the Wasteland grows faster than it would if they confined their search to a smaller area.)

Carla reveals that she overheard a few suspicious individuals discussing the new group of "squatters" staying in the abandoned Englewood garage. Someone needs to do something about them, or so the conversation went — and the "Brotherhood" was ready to do just that.

Pandorans. Lone Created with everything or nothing to lose. An alchemist of unproven intention and mettle. This "Brotherhood," whatever it is. With so many people readily aware of the characters' hideout, will they really waste any time in concluding their affairs at the garage before moving on? Only time will tell.

## The Brotherhood

What's the Brotherhood?

That remains to be seen. If you plan to continue the **Promethean** chronicle presented in future supplements for the line, the answer will appear in the first support title, **Pandora's Book**. Indeed, Carla has mistakenly overheard the word "Brotherhood" in place of the group's real name, the "Botherútd," which will be explained in the next segment of the story. For a little more on the Botherútd, see Carla's description on pp. 277-278.

On the other hand, if you plan to take it on your own from here, or you just can't wait that long, here are a few suggestions.

• **Other Prometheans:** If you choose to use other Prometheans as antagonists, the Brotherhood can be a (small) society of them looking to protect their own skins. They probably felt the Azoth call at the beginning of the story and decided to undertake a little investigation of their own. And when they did, they found a bunch of unsupervised fledglings who are about to blow the top off the whole secret society of the Created and bring the wrath of the mortal population down on everyone's heads.

• **Other Supernaturals:** If you want to use other supernatural characters in your chronicle, the Brotherhood is a great opportunity to employ them as antagonists. In such a case, the Brotherhood is a collective of one supernatural type — vampires, werewolves or mages, or perhaps a combination of all three — that resents the intrusion of unknown supernatural elements in what they consider their domain. Whether they're paranoid or simply territorial (or justifiably defensive), these characters have seen strange things going in and out of that garage, and they're just about ready to put a stop to it. Storytellers can create their own antagonists of their preferred type, or any of the secret factions in **World of Darkness: Chicago** can serve as the hostile group in question.

• **A Mortal Threat:** The Brotherhood might be a secret society of monster-hunters, organized criminals or even an overzealous neighborhood watch group. Whatever their ideology, whether they're in the right or wrong, mortal groups have something Prometheans don't: numerical superiority. If the Prometheans physically crush the Brotherhood, who's to say they don't have other members who will react poorly to the aggressive action? If the Brotherhood is less overtly violent but still fearful, what if they can expose the Promethean "menace" to the police or media? What if they come knocking (or barging in) when the characters are up to something overtly supernatural or morally dubious?

• **Watchers or Allies:** There's nothing saying that the Brotherhood has to be antagonistic. Perhaps Carla Two misunderstood the intentions of the Brotherhood members she overheard. The Brotherhood might be an organization of occultists who want to observe this supernatural phenomenon in its neighborhood. It might be a burgeoning cult, ripe for exploitation by a savvy Promethean "godling." It might be any of the previous groups in this sidebar, but they're looking for recruits or allies instead of enemies.

If the characters killed Carla Two or captured her and didn't let her go, the Pandorans simply found the garage on their own, and no fleeing footsteps would have been heard. The Pandorans just followed the trail of Azoth-heat and alchemical experimentation to the hideout and raided it of their own accord. Of course, this precludes characters from learning about the Brotherhood, but such is the price of their violence and callousness.

## Distilling the Water

Consider the *aqua vitae* a piece of equipment. Its functional value is a direct result of the quality and effort the characters have invested in obtaining its ingredients. Because the elixir is supernatural, it's not limited to the mundane limit of a +5 value. The *aqua vitae* may achieve a value of +7 total. If the following system suggests a value of more than +7, simply limit the equipment's value at +7.

Although the *aqua vitae* will not be used in this introductory chapter of the ongoing **Promethean** story, it's still important to determine now, at its creation, the elixir's potential. If consumed, the *aqua vitae* will serve as an equipment bonus to the character's Rebirth roll (see pp. 194-198). This bonus vanishes after a single day, however. Since it's impossible that any of the characters will be ready to attempt Rebirth after a single story, its use now would be an utter waste of a tremendously valuable artifact.

Alternatively, if you decide that you don't want to run the full story arc that's going to be presented over the course of **Promethean** supplements, you can define its function as whatever you want right now and still judge its efficacy on the same criteria.

For each of the five ingredients that went into the *aqua vitae*, make a judgment call based on the characters' efforts to obtain them. Once you've determined the value of each ingredient, add them all together and determine the elixir's potential. *If the net result is +0*, set the value of the *aqua vitae* at a +1 equipment bonus. Otherwise, use the result itself. If the characters dutifully gathered the items, but did so without insight or inspiration, they'll receive an *aqua vitae* of +1 value, simply for doing what they were told. If the characters recklessly, sloppily or neglectfully assembled the items, the result may well be a poor-quality elixir that ends up imparting a penalty rather than a bonus when it's finally used. Such is the self-made destiny that Calogero wants the characters to have the opportunity to craft for themselves.

| Modifier | Situation |
|---|---|
| +1 | Ingredient is particularly creative or insightful |
| +1 | Ingredient is of a high quality or notable rarity |
| — | Ingredient is of satisfactory quality. |
| –1 | Ingredient is of poor quality or hasty fabrication |
| –1 | Ingredient isn't exceptionally insightful or creative* |
| –1 | Ingredient caused suffering in its procurement** |

* This doesn't mean players should be penalized for an ingredient provided as literally as possible. For example, the literal beak of an ibis is at least "satisfactory quality" if not "of notable rarity." This penalty refers more to a crayon sketch of an ibis or a burnt-out light bulb in place of "light from a dead star." As always, Storyteller discretion is the greatest determinant.

** Note that *suffering* need not indicate *harm*. If property was damaged in the item's retrieval, or if the character had to fight for the item, that's fine. If the characters were exceptionally cruel in retrieving the item or caused unnecessary damage, for example, that's when this modifier would come into play.

# Dramatis Personae

## Calogero, the Alchemist

**Quote:** *I can't help you with this if you won't allow yourself to trust me.*

**Background:** A scholar of Egyptian and Greek alchemies, Calogero has long been fascinated by the proximity of the mystical to the mundane in the World of Darkness. He found it uncomfortably ironic, then, when he discovered that he was himself an alchemical creation — a Promethean.

Abandoned to his fate by a disaffected Osiran creator, Calogero studied his fate with similar detachment. He made progress personally and mystically over his 20 years as a Promethean and ultimately achieved its pinnacle, the Rebirth. He is one of the Redeemed.

While Calogero never thought his condition strange, he did consider it anomalous, like the other mysterious creatures with whom he shared the night. He has visited the court of the vampire Prince Maxwell. He has met with luminaries of the Architects of Steel werewolf pack. He has traded secrets and sorceries with mages of the Castle chapter of the Silver Ladder. Indeed, he has ranged far and wide through Chicago's supernatural demesne, learning names and collecting information on various states of being and how they relate to the Great Work.

Since his Rebirth, Calogero has had a change of heart. Originally possessed of a very medieval mindset — he did all his own alchemical research and was loath to share it with other would-be miracle workers or Prometheans — part of Calogero's Pilgrimage was learning human compassion. After attaining a state of true humanity, he realized that he needed to help others do it insofar as he was able. While he's not a mentor, per se, he's now willing to share his alchemical expertise and occult prowess.

**Description:** Middle age seems to have worn Calogero down. He's a slouchy, paunchy man with a Mediterranean complexion and curly black hair going to gray from the temples. He breathes loudly, whether through his mouth or nose, and seems profoundly out of shape. He wears loose, non-constricting clothes like khakis and sweaters that make him seem even less defined than he actually is.

**Storytelling Hints:** You are a lonely man, driven by the burden of your knowledge rather than preferences of your own. In learning the secrets of alchemy, you have acquired great wisdom, but you underestimated the responsibilities it would impose on you. As such, your interactions with people come off as dutiful and a little sinister, despite your mostly altruistic motives. You genuinely want to help people, but you often grow frustrated with people who don't want your help, or don't want to help themselves.

**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2



**Social Attributes**: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4
**Mental Skills**: Academics (Classics) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult (Alchemy) 4, Science 2
**Physical Skills**: Drive 1, Larceny 1, Survival 2
**Social Skills**: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Persuasion (Fast-Talk) 2, Subterfuge 1
**Merits**: Allies (Occultists) 2, Contacts (Supernatural Societies) 1, Holistic Awareness, Languages (Alchemical Egyptian, Greek, Latin, German)
**Willpower**: 7
**Morality**: 8
**Virtue**: Charity
**Vice**: Sloth
**Initiative**: 6
**Defense**: 2
**Speed**: 9
**Health**: 7

## Carla Two

**Quote:** *Something told me to come here. Something inside me. What's going on? Who are you people?*

**Background:** Only recently created, Carla heeds the same Azothic call that brings other young Prometheans to Calogero's temporary laboratory. She knows very little about either the Promethean condition or her creation. In fact, while the players' characters almost certainly have memories regarding their early days, and might have chosen their names themselves, Carla doesn't have that luxury. Her name is "Carla Two" because that's what she recalls it always

having been (over her short life, at least). Of her creation, she recalls only dragging herself out of a swampy bog. She has no recollection of having met her creator.

In truth, Carla was built by members of the Botherúd, a small but vicious sect of Prometheans who believe that Pyros is a finite source. They resent the creation of new Prometheans, believing that new Created pose a challenge to the limited quantity of Pyros that exists in the world. They created Carla Two — the second in her line and purpose — to discover groups of new Prometheans and lead them to their destruction, before they can acquire (and waste) any more of the world's Pyros. They created Carla with a broad variety of skills, so that she might find something in common with other Prometheans and thereby make their acquaintance and earn their trust.

Carla knows none of this secret agenda, however. The ethics of her creation are certainly flawed, and Carla will eventually develop a natural attachment to her own personality and acquire her own goals and sense of self. The Botherúd knows this and sees its hypocrisy in creating *another* Promethean to solve the problem of too many young Prometheans. Desperate times demand desperate measures, though, and the cult will destroy Carla Two once she's brought down an adequate number of other Created, and hopefully (in their minds) before she nurtures too much individual purpose.

**Description:** Carla appears as a rather plain-looking young woman in her late 20s. She has mousy brown hair and an upturned nose. She looks perpetually disheveled, as if she didn't care much about her appearance. Her clothes are a random assortment of stolen basics — jeans, a pullover, athletic shoes — that are all the wrong sizes. She hasn't yet changed her attire. She's been wearing the same thing since she was Created and it's beginning to show.

When her disfigurements are visible, Carla Two appears to be streaked with mud and drips dirty water when she stands still. A visible symbol marks her left shoulder, an alchemical symbol for "flaw" or "error."

**Storytelling Hints:** You don't know what you're doing, but you can feel that these other people are like you somehow. You feel hollow, but being in their presence somehow abates that, at least for a short time. Something inside you makes you feel like you shouldn't trust anyone with such power over you right away, though. You need to find out more about yourself, more about what you are before you commit to anyone or any group. You are occasionally gripped by a sense of shame or self-loathing that you can't explain. Better find out more about that, too.

**Lineage**: Tammuz
**Refinement**: Cuprum
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
**Social Attributes**: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3
**Mental Skills**: Crafts 1, Investigation (Snooping) 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1
**Physical Skills**: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth (Hiding in a Crowd) 3, Survival (Urban Foraging) 3, Weaponry 1
**Social Skills**: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1
**Merits**: Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fleet of Foot 2, Mentor 1, Residual Memory 2
(Note that Carla Two is entirely unaware of the Botherúd's mentorship. They call on her and help her at their discretion, not hers. They are worth more than a single dot in the Mentor merit, but the fact that their mentorship exists only on their terms abates the cost by a dot.)
**Willpower**: 5
**Humanity**: 7
**Virtue**: Hope
**Vice**: Envy
**Initiative**: 6
**Defense**: 2
**Speed**: 12
**Health**: 8
**Azoth**: 1
**Bestowment**: Unholy Stamina
**Transmutations**: *Corporeum* — Autonomic Control (·), *Metamorphosis* — Blessing of Tethys (··)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 10/1
Weapons/Attacks:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawl | 0(B) | – | 3 | – |

**Armor**: none



## Pandorans: Gelzas, Marrib and Vane



**Quote:** *[Teeth gnashing and claws clicking.]*

**Background:** These hungry fiends follow their ravenous hunger to any source of Azoth they detect. They are the spawn of other, more powerful Pandorans, little more than hellish animals.

**Description:** These Pandorans are small and spry, seemingly made from only bone and muscle. A purple ichor drips from their exposed sinew and occasional wreaths of purple flame pulse over their bodies. They have sharp, black finger-talons and mouths full of sharp, distended teeth.

**Storytelling Hints:** Although primitive, these Pandorans use some cunning tactics in combat. They are more quick than strong, and prefer to harry their foes like a pack of wolves instead of facing them in direct, one-on-one fights.

**Mockery**: Torch-Born
**Rank**: 1
**Mental Attributes**: Intelligence 0, Wits 2, Resolve 2
**Physical Attributes**: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
**Social Attributes**: Presence 1, Manipulation 0, Composure 2
**Physical Skills**: Athletics 2, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2
**Social Skills**: Intimidation 1
**Willpower**: 4
**Vice**: Gluttony

**Initiative**: 5
**Defense**: 3
**Speed**: 12
**Size**: 4
**Health**: 8
**Transmutations**: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••, Fangs ••)
**Bestowment**: Crucible of Flesh (••••)
**Pyros/per Turn**: 10/1
Weapons/Attacks:

| Type | Damage | Range | Dice Pool | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 1(L) | — | 7 | – |
| Claw | 1(L) | — | 6 | – |

**Armor**: none

# Epilogue— My Hideous Progeny

## The First Day

It went better than expected.

It has been a long, long time since I last attempted to do such a thing. I'd forgotten how careful one must be in knitting the tissues together. The scents of decay and putrefaction, the greasy feel of fat and mucus, the stubbornness of bone and tendon. They brought back strong memories.

It's fortunate that I have so much of her fresh body to start with, but it still took time to locate the appropriate attachments and transport them here unseen. The heat in this place makes it difficult to keep all the parts in reasonable condition.

My throat is still raw from bringing forth the bile and expectorating it into her. The surgeries were a challenge. I had to be creative to make things fit. When all the pieces were assembled and the last stitch was sewn, I stepped back to regard my work. Overall, I was pleased. It would have been nice if the left arm was a bit longer, or if I had located a matching pair of legs. But there's no need to get bogged down in such minutia. I must see the bigger picture.

The electrical field made me a bit lightheaded. I worried that I'd used too much voltage or hadn't made clean connections to the terminals, especially the one at the base of the skull. As the generator powered down and the scent of ozone began to settle, I wondered if I had the fortitude to make a second attempt. But then I saw her chest rise and fall. Breath. Life.

"You can open your eyes." Those were the first words I said to her. I watched her eyelids flicker. I had turned down the lights so she wouldn't be blinded, and to keep her from seeing me too clearly too soon. I held her hand and stroked it softly. She opened her eyes and they were bright, clear and calm. And wise. She shed only a single tear, then she looked at me and waited to see what I would do.

My beautiful girl.

## The First Week

After seven days, she's become strong and confident. Her motor control is progressing rapidly, and she speaks clearly, without the labored breathing she exhibited early on. We go for walks at night to look at the stars, and she asks me simple but profound questions. I give her the simplest answers I can, for now. I've told her nothing,

yet, of the outside world or of our kind or of humanity. She knows that I created her, but not how. She hasn't asked who created me, or why. If things could stay this way, I might be almost happy.

She's shows no signs of remembering her former life. I won't explore that any further right now. It's too soon.

## The Second Week

A bit of a regression today. I found her in her room, sitting on the end of the bed, staring at her hands. She said that she'd been having odd sensations, as if her arms were trying to tear themselves from her body. She said that sometimes she feels that her arms aren't hers, that they're used to being "on someone else" and don't always want to listen to her. In fact, I'd noticed that morning that simple tasks like opening a door or pulling up a chair seemed to require her to exert extreme concentration. I explained that her body was still new, and that its different parts might gain their full strength at slightly different rates. I told her how I had once felt such sensations, but they'd passed.

This led to questions of how she was made, of where she came from. I answered her in the vaguest terms she would accept. She wanted to know if everyone was made this way. It seemed to her, she said, that most "people" begin their life as very small children and grow gradually into adults. Wasn't that the normal way, she asked, and why was she different? Even though I'd been expecting such questions, it was disconcerting to hear her ask them. I could sense that if I wasn't careful, each answer would lead to a flood of new questions. I tried to explain that she and I were different from most people, and that there would be plenty of time for her to learn why, but that too much information too soon would be difficult for her to understand. I told her that if she would be patient and trust me, I would answer all her questions in time. She protested, but I think she was also relieved. She's beginning to sense the burden that awaits her.



## The Third Week

I've been testing her vocabulary and language skills. She remembers common words and phrases very well, and she understands the colloquialisms and idioms of her native language. She can name some, though not all, of the cultural and historical events she must have known before her death. She seems to understand some of the technical language of her previous profession, but she has trouble articulating the meaning. She has no memory of any names, places or people from her old life.

But this doesn't mean she never will. It may be too soon. I've been listening to the recordings I have of her conversations with me, from the time before. As far as I can tell, her speech patterns then and now are virtually



unchanged. The recordings aren't extensive, of course — we only knew each other for a few days — but the rhythms and inflections seem the same to me as the way she's talking at present. That's a good sign, isn't it? There must be something of the same person there.



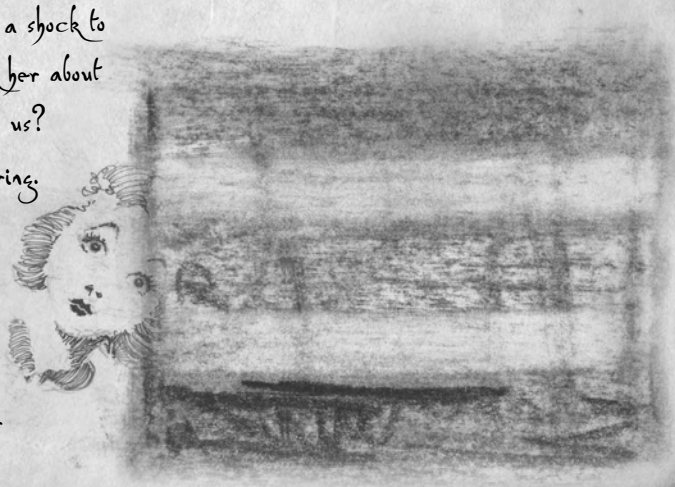
I'm well aware how unlikely it is that my experiment will bear the fruit I desire. I know of no Promethean who can recall details of a previous, mortal life, after all. We are new beings, not reincarnations of those whose bodies are crafted to make us. But she was not just an ordinary woman. This horrible thing I've done may be unprecedented, who can say what might happen? And anyway, what choice did I have? I need to know what she knew. Perhaps some other of my kind would know of a different strategy, but I can't trust anyone when the consequences are this important.

## The First Month

She's been reading. I give her select books from my library so she can slake her thirst for facts of the world beyond this desert. Maybe that was a mistake, but it keeps her distracted. Keeps her from asking questions I don't want to answer. When she's not reading, she walks the desert. I think she's on the verge of performing her first Transmutation. I've taught her the rudimentary principles of Pyros and Azoth and given her some alchemical texts to peruse. I'm curious to see what she does with the knowledge.

Lately I've noticed an anger in her. A clenched fist, a tightened jaw. She tries to cover it up, but I can tell that her blood is boiling. Whether her rage is just a general consequence of the humour of our Lineage, or is something that will be directed at me — or both — I can't yet tell. She won't speak to me of it. Sometimes at night, when she's off walking (I'm no longer invited on these excursions), I hear the faintest of wails in the distance and wonder if it's her giving vent to her rage.

I think she's been in my workroom. I always keep it locked, but perhaps she's found a way to enter without leaving an obvious trace. This morning I went there for the first time in a week to locate some papers, only to find several items out of place. It's possible I'm remembering the arrangement of the room incorrectly... I don't know. But if she was in there, she must have seen the drawings still tacked to the walls. The surgical equipment soaking in alcohol. The jars of unused tissue and discarded flesh. My notes on how I would repair her broken neck, join new arms and legs to her existing torso. I've told her in general terms how she was constructed, but it would be a shock to come face to face with the details so abruptly. Should I ask her about it? Or would that just widen the rift that's growing between us?



Breakthrough today. I think, God, I think she may be remembering. We were having a discussion — a heated argument, actually. She wanted me to take her out of the desert, and I tried to convince her it was too soon. Just as I was losing patience, she called me "Verney." Not Father, but Verney. I've never used that name in her presence, she's never heard me utter



it or seen it in writing. I asked her why she said it and she told me that she didn't know, it was just some meaningless slip of the tongue. But it can only be a trace of memory, a small shoot that's risen from the soil and can perhaps be cultivated into something more robust.

## The Last Day

Disaster. She is gone.

It was my fault, of course. I'd been listening to one of the tapes, in fact, the one that documents the moment of her death. It was late at night and she was out walking. She'd been gone for some time, and I was wondering where she was. I thought I heard her approach, so I went outside to meet her. But there was no one there. I stood outside for a while, regarding the stars, watching for meteors. When I returned to my study, she was there listening to the end of the recording. She recognized the sound of her own voice and of mine. And perhaps the man's. I'll paste the transcript at the end of this journal entry, so I won't forget the moment of my undoing.

I'd never seen that expression on her face before — such naked hatred.

"So now you know everything," I told her. "You know that you and I are made to be reviled by man and nature alike. And that the only release is to transform the Inner Fire into a true, human soul."

I won't write down the words that we exchanged. I didn't resist when she struck me. I didn't try to stop her when she stormed away. I suppose I thought I would wait a bit and then catch up to her. There was nowhere she could go, only desert. By dawn it would be an environment inhospitable even to the likes of us. But she'd found the vehicle I'd hidden, and she was long gone before I thought to check for it.

Maybe if I'd told her I needed her, asked her not to leave, she might have stayed.

**AG:** Wait… Brian? Brian, help me.

**BT:** Aggie, I can't. He has Marie. And the judge's grandson.

**V:** Yes. When Sheriff Tierny's m-men found me in the cemetery, I h-had an intuition that I should g-go with them. And then you came, and you s-seemed familiar. I w-wondered if it was you the angels p-promised. It seemed best to c-continue the charade. The next night I p-paid a visit to Sheriff Tierny and Judge Carter, to m-make them k-keep you here. And n-now, finally, I remember. It was y-you at the windmill, wasn't it? With my Bride? Did she send you h-here to question me, to f-find out what my plans are? You know where she is. I n-need that knowledge.

**AG:** …into… lead… into… gold…

**V:** There. No n-need to pretend these pathetic chains can hold me now. Shhhh…

**AG:** Now I know… lead into… gold. That's what you want… to transform yourself… make yourself human.

**BT:** Stop it. Don't hurt her! I won't let you! I don't care—

**V:** Quiet, Sheriff. Don't get up. Don't make m-me do that again.

**AG:** Wait, please, don't. I have two… children…

**V:** Why don't you f-fight back, Doctor? The time for pretense is over. You were there with my Bride. You're one of my p-progeny, corrupted by her. Prove your worth. Try some Transmutation. Show me your strength, and you may yet survive. I'll s-stand you the first blow.

**AG:** Ahhh… hahh… I can't… huuhh… huhhh…

**V:** Surely you've learned something in the century since trying to kill me.

**AG:** Wait. Please… don't choke me again. Let me… let me see if Brian's all right.

**V:** Forget him! It's me you should worry about.

**AG:** You're a monster.

**V:** We all are.

**AG:** Oh God. How can this all be true? I…

**V:** Where is my B-Bride? Tell me n-now.

**AG:** I don't know! Why are you doing this?

**V:** Don't try to stall me. It won't help you. No one can help you.

**AG:** [inaudible]—know that much… I know why you're tormented.

**V:** What did you say?

**AG:** I know why. Lead into gold. Monster into… into human. That's what you're after, isn't it? You see yourself as the lead, and humanity as the gold. You… Prometheans. You're all trying to become human, truly human.

**V:** Stand up.

**AG:** Am I wrong?

**V:** It's c-called the Great Work. To transform the Azoth into a human soul. A slow process by which a Promethean moves ever closer to humanity. And it's a l-l-lie I no longer believe.

**AG:** But that's not true, is it? You… You do believe it. Don't you see? That's why you're tormented. Some part of you still… still does believe that a thing like you can become human. If it was impossible, you'd make some peace with your nature. You'd, you'd resign yourself

to your lot. But as long as there's the, the slightest chance that you could become one of the humans, the ones you so envy, you have to find out how. You have to find out what you're doing wrong. Why you're still a monster. And you can never rest until you figure it out.

**V:** G-get up, d-damn you. I'll kill you on the floor if I have to. Get up. Tell me now where m-my Bride is, and you might stand a chance.

**AG:** Isn't that… Isn't that why you're obsessed with her? It's not revenge or wrath. It's, it's because during that brief time with her, you felt something, and you've never felt it since. You felt human.

**V:** ENOUGH!

**V:** …

**V:** Don't pretend you're that fragile.

**V:** This blood…

**V:** This d-doesn't make sense. We're not so easily b-broken. How could she b-be… Have I killed her? This m-must be some ruse. Doctor?

**BT:** Take… your… hands… off her.

**V:** She's… she's actually d-dead. But h-how…

**BT:** Ugly… son of a… bitch.

**V:** I've… I've k-k-… I've k-killed her. But this isn't p-possible. I knew her b-before. I remember her f-from a century ago. How could she be just human? How?

**BT:** You… ugly…

**V:** Shut up! I k-killed her, d-don't you understand! She's d-dead! She… She w-wasn't l-like m-me. Not any more!

**V:** She was h-hu-human! T-truly human! She'd f-found the way! Damn her! D-Damn the qashmallim! Why didn't they t-tell me what they were sending? She'd f-found the w-way. And I k-killed her. Oh, God! She might have t-told me how she d-did it. She might have g-given me the secret. I would have made her t-tell me… I c-could have… What have I done?

**BT:** Where… is… Where is… my wife?

**V:** How d-did you do it, Doctor Gray? I w-would have m-made you tell me. And n-now you're out of m-my reach.

**BT:** Please…

**V:** W-wait. No. N-no, you're n-not. I s-see what I need to do. I c-can still use you, Doctor. I can bring you b-back, can't I? I can m-make you all over again, and make you tell me what y-you know… or else make you walk the Pilgrimage f-from the beginning. Yes… Your body's lovely. It will be a shame to replace those legs…

**BT:** Please… Where's my wife?

**V:** All right, Sheriff. You served me, in your way. I told you your w-wife was hidden in the mines, but that was a lie. In the church where I was dwelling, there's a closet with a false wall. Behind it, a ladder to some chambers in the basement. Your Marie is d-down there, and the Carter boy. Down in the dark with the bodies of the children… including your own. I left them food and water. If you survive the shock I gave you, go and find them. And hope she's the same as you remember her.

**BT:** You… You put her… [inaudible]

**V:** Farewell. We will not meet again.

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## PROMETHEAN TRANSMUTATIONS

**Code**: A = Alchemicus, C = Corporeum, De = Deception, Di = Disquietism, E = Electrification, Ms = Mesmerism, Mm = Metamorphosis, S = Sensorium, Vi = Vitality, Vu = Vulcanus

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# PROMETHEAN
## THE CREATED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name: | Concept: | Lineage: |
| Player: | Virtue: | Refinement: |
| Chronicle: | Vice: | Throng: |

## ATTRIBUTES

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| POWER | Intelligence | ●OOOO | Strength | ●OOOO | Presence | ●OOOO |
| FINESSE | Wits | ●OOOO | Dexterity | ●OOOO | Manipulation | ●OOOO |
| RESISTANCE | Resolve | ●OOOO | Stamina | ●OOOO | Composure | ●OOOO |

## SKILLS

### MENTAL
(-3 unskilled)

Academics ..... OOOOO
Computer ..... OOOOO
Crafts ..... OOOOO
Investigation ..... OOOOO
Medicine ..... OOOOO
Occult ..... OOOOO
Politics ..... OOOOO
Science ..... OOOOO

### PHYSICAL
(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ..... OOOOO
Brawl ..... OOOOO
Drive ..... OOOOO
Firearms ..... OOOOO
Larceny ..... OOOOO
Stealth ..... OOOOO
Survival ..... OOOOO
Weaponry ..... OOOOO

### SOCIAL
(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ..... OOOOO
Empathy ..... OOOOO
Expression ..... OOOOO
Intimidation ..... OOOOO
Persuasion ..... OOOOO
Socialize ..... OOOOO
Streetwise ..... OOOOO
Subterfuge ..... OOOOO

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Lineage (record Lineage Bestowment) • Refinement • Azoth 1 (may be increased with Merit points) • Transmutations 3 (1 dot must be Refinement affinity) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills, or Merits cost two points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult human-sized Prometheans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Humanity = 7 • Pyros = Humanity

## OTHER TRAITS

### MERITS

..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO
..... OOOOO

### BESTOWMENT

.....

### EQUIPMENT

.....
.....
.....

Armor .....
Defense .....
Initiative Mod .....
Size .....
Speed .....
Experience .....

### HEALTH

O O O O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### WILLPOWER

O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### PYROS

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### AZOTH

O O O O O O O O O O

### HUMANITY

10 ..... O
9 ..... O
8 ..... O
7 ..... O
6 ..... O
5 ..... O
4 ..... O
3 ..... O
2 ..... O
1 ..... O

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I know that look of disgust in your eyes.

You can't hide it from me.

I've seen all its expressions in many faces like your own.
I am intimately familiar with rejection.

Yes, these scars and stitched wounds are horrifying to behold.
Were I truly alive, they'd be enough to kill me.

But I am not alive.

Not yet.

Not in the way you know it.
A fire burns within me and animates this dead flesh,
these legs that have wandered the far regions of the Earth,
these hands that have killed men.

And I walk with a purpose.

You will not stand in my way.

These hands have killed men.

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