

Pandora's Book™

the World of Darkness

PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED

CERTIFIED COPY
OF AN ENTRY



Pursuant to the
Births and Deaths
Registration Act 1953

DEATH		ENTRY NO. 378
NAME <i>Doyle Conlan</i>		
DATE <i>November 21</i>	SEX <i>Male</i>	
CAUSE OF DEATH <i>By the River</i> <i>"There is a river that flows beyond the boundaries of any physical banks or political borders. You do not want to sail it, because if you find yourself in its murky waters, that means you've done something terribly wrong. It means you're dead.</i> <i>"Few know this, but the river has no current. While it certainly flows, that flow has no defined direction, no absolute and cardinal route. Most people, finding themselves adrift in the river, simply watch the course on which the river takes them. Their faces are forlorn; they are resigned. Others fight the false current. They splash, pole and paddle as they can, though their efforts never amount to much. At best, they delay their trip into death. At worst, their efforts are futile, and they retire to their eternal reward exhausted and frustrated.</i> <i>That won't happen to you, though. You possess that secret spark, that Inner Fire that means you will command the tiller when your craft meets the river's waters.</i> <i>The metaphor is imperfect, of course. Fire and water. That's because it's not a metaphor. It's literal, painfully literal. Metaphysically literal.</i> <i>"Here, let me show you. This is a map of the river's shores and its tributaries. You can have it. It's a copy. I have more, so many more. Take it. You'll need it. Don't lose it.</i> <i>Remember that, for you, direction is not absolute. You may travel in either direction or at tangents to the river's course. The black lines are its waters. The blue and red lines are physical paths, or fissures that lead to warrens you will not be able to enter.</i> <i>"Stop along the way. Take in the scenery. Don't drink the water in the river, or you'll lose yourself to its nepenthean numbness.</i>		

DEATH CERTIFICATE

PATIENT INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL)NAME Doyle ConlanDATE 11/21ADDRESS 1 1554 Stonegate DriveADDRESS 2 Apartment 128CITY StonevilleSTATE GAZIP CODE 30353EMAIL d.conlan@home.orgPHONE 678-555-3428

WORK

HEALTH HISTORY*"Never lose sight of the lamplights that border the river's shores.**"When you make it back, I want you to tell me what you saw.**"Don't fight me. You'll only make it worse for yourself."*** * **

The priest began the funeral service, though depressingly few people were in attendance. Doyle Conlan, age 32 upon his death due to . . . unspecified foul play, which the cops suspected was strangulation, since the medical examiner said the deceased's eyes were bulging as if he were asphyxiated. He seemed to have no close family or friends. The burial and funeral had to be on the same day, otherwise no one would have come. Only a Western Union check wired in from some physically distant relation, combined with a meager contribution by the union, kept Doyle from being dumped in the potter's field.

A plump, round-faced woman in her mid-30s attended the service, decked out in the clothes one might see a grieving widow in a movie wear to a funeral. She wore too much makeup; her lips were too vibrantly red. She wore an anachronistic black veil and dabbed dutifully at her eyes with a wad of tissue.

Three men in dark suits lingered near the back, three rows of empty chairs behind the woman. They looked at once familial and Eastern European. The elbows and knees of their suits were shiny with wear. One of them had a dark blue tie instead of the proper black.

Jimmy Prosser sat in the row behind them. Jimmy didn't even have a jacket, but at least his tie was black and his braces matched his shoes. So many people today don't show proper respect for the passing of life, the expiration of its ephemeral flame. Of course, Jimmy truly mourned - he mourned the loss of Doyle's patronage at the bar, and he mourned that Doyle still had a tab of over 100 dollars running that he would have paid this Friday if he were still alive to have collected his final paycheck.

The eulogy ended: "Although he will forever be part of our souls, we must nonetheless say farewell today to a wonderful man." It couldn't have been more noncommittal.

As the five guests shuffled back to their cars to resume their day, Jimmy Prosser remarked to the Slavic brothers, "Doyle. One fuckin' weird guy."

REGISTRATION

HEALTH HISTORY UPDATE

PATIENT'S NAME D. Conlan

DATE	TREATMENT
	<i>The brothers spoke something guttural in assent.</i>
	* * *
	<i>Doyle sat on a raft. The sky was not a sky - it was just a misty strip of gray that merged into the oily line of the horizon. The water surrounding his raft was black and smelled stale. Not of fish, not as a river should, but like a glass of water left on the bedside table overnight. Dusty. Forgotten.</i>
	<i>That doctor and all his crazy talk. Doyle didn't like that goddamn doctor. This river smelled like his office. How does a man like that even become a doctor anyway? Doyle figured there were supposed to be laws or other kinds of protections that kept so-called doctors from running their businesses that way. Malpractice or something. Or at least there should have been. Laws, that is.</i>
	<i>That the doctor knew the shape of the inside of his mind bothered Doyle. The man knew secrets he shouldn't have been able to guess. He knew things that Doyle barely remembered from his childhood, and the doctor confronting him with them brought them out of that swamp of memory so that he remembered them vividly. The doctor knew that he wanted Jeanette to have an abortion, even though Doyle's endocrinologist said he had no detectable sperm count or was sterile or impotent or one of those things. The doctor knew that the payment on the Dodge was 90 days past due. Shit, he even knew that Doyle had that weird, non-sexual crush on Heather Locklear. That was pretty embarrassing. How does a guy even find something like that out?</i>
	<i>Even here, even after death, the idea still rankled him. Yeah, he knew he was dead. Not much he could do about it at that point. Just do what Dr. Brine told him he should while he was in the river. Keep an eye on things. Make a note of what seems important. Never lose sight of the lamplights on the shore. Something about the lights themselves. Something about the flame.</i>
	<i>"Whatever," Doyle said aloud. "Crazy quack."</i>
	* * *
	<i>Dr. Brine sat at his desk, unmoving but for his eyes. Stacks of books, rolled maps and piles of loose, strange-seeming documents dominated the room, though their collections were orderly. This was not the haphazardly appointed room of an absent-minded eccentric. No,</i>

PROGRESS

PATIENT'S NAME D. Conlan

DATE	TREATMENT
	Dr. Brine was nothing if not orderly. He knew which books were in which stacks, what document was needed when and where he could find it. None of that was important right now. The map on the wall was what held his attention. Behind those scanning eyes, the doctor did a bit of math, albeit math of a decidedly non-numerical bent. Brine sighed and stood, taking a small box of remarkable pushpins out of the desk drawer. From this box, he removed one pin, the head of which was a mote of human bone, and pushed it into the map, just north of the junction where the river merged with one of its tributaries. By the pin, he wrote "D. Conlan. 21 November" in his tight, distinct handwriting. He followed that action by going over to a table, which contained an almost exact facsimile of the wall map spread over its surface. On this, he again marked Doyle's projected location and date, though this time he used a different stylus. This map had been drawn on a much more delicate paper, in fact a vast sheet of papyrus prepared much the way the Egyptians had prepared it thousands of years ago. He had himself laid the strips of pith, soaked them, waited for them to dry and then polished them with a rounded stone. He had mixed his own ink, as well, dissolving a bit of iron in a crucible of vitriol, then adding a pinch of tannin extracted from oak galls. Then he logged the same data on a computerized version of the map, which he kept stored in a laptop that sat at exact right angles to the edge of the table's surface. And then he marked the same information in his handwritten notebook. Finally, Br. Brine took a book of matches from his pocket and lit a dull, gray candle, which he placed in a holder that he drew from the recesses of his desk. The flame sputtered once. The smoke didn't smell as smoke was supposed to. The doctor smiled, because he had dipped the candles himself, too. The process always went in that order: wall map, fine desk map, laptop, journal, candle. Dr. Brine blinked. The air in his office was warm and dry. * * * Doyle felt the fire within him reaching out toward the fire-lamps lit on the shoreline. He'd had that feeling before, of course. He could feel when others of the Made People were close by. It was as if the fire within him were reaching out, trying to touch the others. The way they

PROGRESS

HEALTH HISTORY UPDATE

PATIENT'S NAME *D. Conlan*

DATE

TREATMENT

described it was the same. He imagined two campfires in different camps, their flames licking toward one another, but of course never able to quite touch – they were just fires. They couldn't move by themselves. Even if he moved the actual camps, the two camps would always be separate things. The only way to let the fires touch one another would be to combine the camps and fires, somehow. If there was a way to lay one camp over the other, like layering two pieces of film together so that they made a . . . , what was that? A composite, Doyle thought.

Doyle reprimanded himself. He was supposed to be paying attention, taking notes for the strange Dr. Brine. No time for this crazy-ass campfire talk. He had a ship to steer, or at least a raft to paddle.

Where was he supposed to paddle, though? How was he supposed to get back? Where was he supposed to get back to? The map he had seemed accurate, but it didn't do any good because there didn't seem to be any place to go. Everything was flat and gray. The lampposts didn't look like they actually marked anything.

Doyle had an idea. He imagined a pole, like one of the poles those boat-drivers use in those old cartoons that take place in that city in Italy. Before he knew it, Doyle was poling himself back up the river. Or was it down the river? He couldn't tell. He did notice, though, that when he stopped poling, the raft stopped moving. It didn't continue to float in the same direction, but neither did the raft float down the opposite way.

Frustrated, Doyle turned his attention to the shore with the closest lamppost. A flame burned atop the post, becoming green and then purple instead of the colorless, lightless gray the flame had been until he started moving toward it. That probably meant something. Better remember it for the doctor.

* * *

Jennifer screamed when she found the body. She'd never seen a dead person before, let alone her boss. She'd known Michael was into some pretty kinky things, but she had never thought she'd find him like this. It wasn't like him to get in over his head.

Jennifer had met Michael when she got a job at his family's restaurant, Benedetti's. Why he called it a family restaurant, she never knew, because he was the only "Benedetti" she'd ever seen around the place. No cousins, no aunts or uncles, no brothers or sisters, and definitely no parents or kids. That didn't seem to be very much in keeping with the

PROGRESS

PATIENT'S NAME *D. Conlan*

DATE	I HAVE REVIEWED THE ATTACHED HEALTH HISTORY, MY HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS HAVE CHANGED AS FOLLOWS (IF NO CHANGE, WRITE NO CHANGE)	PATIENT'S INITIALS
	<i>Italian archetype - okay, admit it's a stereotype - that Michael seemed to perpetuate when he was in the place. She'd even heard him say that he Americanized his name into Michael from his birth name, Michelangelo. That made her roll her eyes. Even if it was true, he didn't have to be so dramatic about it.</i>	
	<i>Not too long after starting at the restaurant, Jennifer took a side job cleaning up Michael's condo in town to earn a little extra cash. She told him she wasn't going to do anything weird like dress up in a maid's outfit or anything. He laughed and said it wasn't a big deal or anything pervy. He probably wouldn't even be there when she was. He just needed the floors mopped and the desks dusted and the dishes washed and all that kind of thing. She could watch his plasma TV while she was there, if she wanted, and borrow whatever CDs she thought she might like.</i>	
	<i>It was true, for the most part. She'd run into him at the condo only once, when he was sick. He said he was sorry, that he had forgotten to call her, that he'd pay her for the cleaning but she didn't actually have to do it that week. He looked more moody than sick, she remembered, but, hey, if depression is considered a legitimate disease, Jennifer wasn't going to be the one to second-guess an entire culture and tradition of doctors. It never even crossed her mind again, and she never saw him at the house again.</i>	
	<i>Here he was, though, dead as a doornail on the bed in front of her. His eyes were open, bulging, as if someone had strangled him, but he didn't have any bruises around his neck. He was on top of the comforter, too, like he was never really in bed but had been placed there. He seemed pretty peaceful for a guy who had been . . . well, whatever had gone on here. Jennifer called the police.</i>	
	* * *	
	<i>Doyle poled the boat onto the shore and looked at the map. The hell with that doctor anyway. Who did he think he was, sending a man to his death and then asking him to sniff around Heaven or Hell and write</i>	

PATIENT'S NAME D. Conlan

DATE

I HAVE REVIEWED THE ATTACHED HEALTH HISTORY, MY HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS
HAVE CHANGED AS FOLLOWS (IF NO CHANGE, WRITE NO CHANGE)

a goddamn book report on it? He didn't think he could read the damn map
after all, since where he thought he was didn't match with the placement of
the lamppost. Or maybe the map was upside down. Or, hell, maybe the map
was wrong in the first place and this was the doctor's creepy idea of a joke
that -

The fire leapt down from the lamppost. Doyle jumped back, shocked,
stumbling blindly back toward the raft in hopes of grabbing the pole and
protecting himself with it.

His eyes went dewy. The flame didn't emanate heat, it gave off

something

he couldn't

understand

these weren't fires they were angels and they were warm and wet and
soft and cold and they poured through his head and they were ONE WITH
THE FIRE INSIDE HIM AND HOW WERE THERE MORE
THAN ONE no he was wrong it was just one but it was the one of infinity
as if one was the one that included him and the angels and the fire and
the goddamn gray water oops he probably shouldn't say goddamn and the
perfection of the number three is the same as the perfection of seven and
twenty-one and though seven times three was twenty-one they were each
individual and referred to their own Principle and three and twenty-one and
seven were all just ways of looking at one

infancy

middle age

old age

is all one

sparks is all that's left

sparks

now he was wet for real

sparks can't be wet

HEALTH HISTORY UPDATE

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OF AN ENTRYPursuant to the
Births and Deaths
Registration Act 1953

DEATH		ENTRY NO. 379
NAME <i>Michael Benedetti</i>		
DATE <i>November 26</i>	SEX <i>Male</i>	
CAUSE OF DEATH <i>Doyle's body tumbled down the sloped bank of the river. Water closed over him. As the angel passed by the raft and climbed back to the lamppost that wasn't marked on the map, the raft caught fire. It burned with a wet flame, purple and green, till nothing was left on the shore. Not even a scorched patch remained. Not even a damp stain.</i> * * * <i>The gray candle on Dr. Brine's desk burned out.</i> <i>The doctor sighed and frowned. Inferior subjects, these days. None of them were prepared. Not like they used to be, when people weren't so bitter. It was as much his fault as Conlan's, he reasoned, but these were such cynical times. Even the Created didn't have the reverence for their state that they should have, would have, if the values of the time were different. Prometheans were little more than children, living false lives until they learned of the falsehood, at which point they were forced to start over. Many never overcame that initial feeling of betrayal. Many more were too set in their ways to effectively begin again. They denied what they were or descended into an unhealthy state of Flux.</i> <i>Returning to his desk, Dr. Brine pulled out his box of strange pushpins. He went to his wall map, placed a pin on one of the black, Stygian waterways and labeled it "M. Benedetti. 26 November."</i> <i>Then he went to the table map. Then his laptop. Then his journal. Finally, he lit a candle.</i>		

DEATH CERTIFICATE



Pandora's Book

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THE PROMETHEAN SERIES

PROMETHEAN:
THE CREATED

PANDORA'S BOOK

STRANGE ALCHEMIES

MAGNUM OPUS

SATURNINE NIGHT

COMING NEXT IN THE
PROMETHEAN SERIES:

STRANGE
ALCHEMIES

"I've watched you ever since the day I was made. Watched you love, watched you laugh, watched you kill and die.

You're perfect, even though you don't know it. Perfectly wonderful.

Perfectly awful.

Perfectly human.

I've been watching, trying to figure you out. Trying to figure out how to be you.

I know more about you than you do.

I know more about you than I do about myself."

— The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter, Galateid

This book includes:

- Detailed discussion of each of the Lineages and Refinements, including new Transmutations and Bestowments
- Thoughtful essays discussing many issues important to Promethean chronicles
- "Strangers On a Hill", a new story in the "Water of Life" chronicle begun in Promethean: The Created, set in Boston



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Pandora's Book™

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INTRODUCTION

I don't know why he sent me out here. Honestly, I don't know of much about much. I remember my mother — mother? Sister? Lover? She was all of that and more — telling me, "listen to the doctor, if you should ever meet him, because he can tell you the way."

That was so long ago. I'm maybe misremembering what she said.

In my life I've met only four like me, not including my mother. I met a man who talked like a sailor and cried tears of salt and sand, but I didn't find him good company. I met a man with a second arm that he wore under his shirt, and he frightened me so much that I ran. I met a girl not more than 16, and she and I stayed together under the land around us grew so foul that not even flies could live there, and then she left, leaving me a note saying that she was gone back to the city.

And then I met the doctor. He's older than me by far, he says, and he's met many of us. I guess there are more than I thought, but he says we're still less than one in a million. He says that there's a place beyond death — not like Heaven, but a place, a river, and he says I should sail it. Mother said listen to the doctor, but in that I could not do as he asked, because I was afraid of that river and what it would mean to sail on it. He just said, "Interesting," and then gave me another job. He said walk out to where the river — the real river, the Maumee — crosses under the bridge and write down what I see there.

I'm not dumb. I know something happened there last month. I don't know what it was, but I remember feeling the fire in me burning, blazing up so hot and so hurtful, and I know somebody died there. And now I'm out here, sitting under the bridge and watching the detritus float by, my notebook in hand, waiting to write down.

When thunder starts to rumble, I should feel strong, because thunder stokes the fire. But the thunder is wrong, somehow, it just echoes and makes me feel hollow. The water don't look right, either, and some of that detritus looks...alive. But I keep waiting, ready to write down what he wants to know.

Doctor's orders.





For you are
like the resting-
places of the
dead, which are
made white, and
seem beautiful
on the outside,
but inside are
full of dead men's
bones and of all
unclean things.

— Matthew 23:27

You hold in your hands the first sourcebook for **Promethean: The Created**. Herein you'll learn about all the aspects of Flux and Pyros, from Pandorans to Centimani to *qashmallim* to Firestorms and a few other anomalies of the Great Work that make for good hooks for Promethean characters. This book is part antagonist-construction kit, part heretical manifesto, and part travel guide to the perils of Flux. Its contents aren't solely the purview of the Storyteller, however. While many of its secrets are best enjoyed in the context of the story and not by a player's casual read, **Pandora's Book** does indeed contain things that players (and therefore characters) might know. Whether or not they *should* know these hidden truths of Flux is a question whose answers to light in a Created's actions.

In short, it'll let the Created know just enough to be dangerous to each other — and to themselves.

The Mysteries of Flux

This book has multiple principles behind its design. Naturally, we want a strong start to the **Promethean** line. The initial plan is for a finite run of **Promethean** supplements: four sourcebooks in addition to the core rules. Quite simply, we don't have any room for material that isn't going to be of use to players and Storytellers. This book showcases all the cool things about **Promethean**, which is handy, because one of the features of the game is its portrayal of glimpses of the grotesque. In that light, a book about such creepy concepts as the Pandorans and the Centimani practically begs itself to be written. Likewise, the game is about beings created in a moment of almost divine inspiration, and in this book we're going to examine ways to use divine messengers — of a sort — in the *qashmallim*.

Obviously, a related goal of **Pandora's Book** is to help troupes with their chronicles. At first blush, this book seems more geared to the Storyteller than the players, but on further exploration, you'll find that it appeals to players as well. You'll find the familiar story hooks with which we season our sourcebooks, but you'll also find hooks for players and their characters. What, for instance, might a Promethean following the Refinement of Ferrum learn from an encounter with a Pandoran that leaves him bloodied and drained, lying in the dirt? He's all about physical development and refinement, and yet he's obviously been bested. What, as a player, can you take away from a story like that, that leaves you thinking that it was cool rather than a defeat? Let's be honest: We can talk about "story" and "dramatics" all the live-long day, but the fact is *players like to win*, and the best way to satisfy them with stories in which their characters get hurt or bested is to redefine what "winning" is. This is a book about antagonists, mostly, but it certainly serves as a healthy dose of useful inspiration, as well.

Finally, Prometheans make great crossover characters. Think about it — they can hold their own against the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness, they're designed around the principles of tragedy and purpose, and there aren't that many of them. It makes perfect sense that a single Promethean would bump into a cabal of mages or a coterie of vampires or a pack of werewolves or something even less familiar, and if that cabal/coterie/pack is open minded or curious enough (that is, if they're players' characters), they shouldn't have a problem letting the Promethean share their company and his insights for a while. What does all this have to do with **Pandora's Book**? Quite simply, you'll find it to be useful to Storytellers and players of the other games as well as to Storytellers and players of **Promethean**. That doesn't mean we're including voluminous quantities of crossover mechanics or anything (because honestly, they aren't necessary — one of the many benefits of a streamlined system). Rather, you'll find ample story hooks that involve other supernatural creatures. We won't inundate **Promethean** with them or make them the rule. They'll still be rare and fearsome encounters. They are present, however, in order to lend credence to the idea that the World of Darkness is an integral, consistent whole, even if our mere mortal minds can't define the qualities of that consistency. (Storytellers, that's your cue to keep things weird and scary.)

Theme, Tone and Mood

We all know the myth of Pandora and her box. Created with insatiable curiosity and given a box with the world's sorrows contained within, Pandora opens it, scattering those

evils across the world. At first glance, it's easy to blame Pandora — but upon further consideration, she was *created* to be curious. Pandora's action was a *fait accompli*; what happened was inevitable. The evils of the world *had* to be released, paving the way for Zeus to flood it, paving the way for Deucalion to forge his own race of people, stronger than the ones Prometheus fashioned from clay.

So how does that translate into this book? It's easy and more than a little reductive to see Pandorans as just the product of failure with Pyros. It's easy to see Centimani as just a Refinement for lunatics or power-hungry Prometheans. If the Centimani didn't exist, though, they couldn't hold a mirror up to the Prometheans who still follow the Pilgrimage, spurring them on to humanity. The Centimani serve a purpose, it's just bloody obtuse at times... but that's why we have the *qashmallim*, to help light the way!

The point here is that there's meaning even in the horrible grotesquerie of the maleficent monstrosities this book explores. Even in the visceral horror of fighting a creature that's spent the last few months making a skeleton for itself by removing bones from people who were still using them, you can find something sublime — purpose, clarity, humanity. Of course, the alternative is that it grinds you down until you're so degraded and desensitized that you can't relate anymore and you wind up losing ground, but that just serves to highlight some of the game's themes, too.

Lead into gold isn't easy, or else everyone would do it.

How to Use This Book

Pandora's Book is broken down into the following chapters:

Chapter One focuses on Flux, exploring what it is and its strange and horrific applications. Flux is the destructive aspect of the Divine Fire, but Pyros doesn't just burn. Pyros is the energy of creation and transformation, and if Flux is that made destructive, then Flux *warp*s whatever it touches. Included herein are details on Pandorans and Centimani.

The *qashmallim* serve as the subject matter for **Chapter Two**. This includes a section on dealing with visions, hints, and omens in the context of gaming in this chapter. Additionally, we discuss various interpretations of the Principle and how it can be used in stories.

Chapter Three covers the mysteries of inchoate Pyros, from an investigation into what it actually is to its appearance in the form of Firestorms. You'll find crossover material in this chapter as well — why might a vampire or werewolf need to awaken a Pandoran, and how might a mage interpret Azothic radiance?

Storytelling concerns make up the bulk of **Chapter Four**, including "A Sheltering Storm," which follows up on the events of "The Water of Life," the sample story in the Appendix of the **Promethean** rulebook. As well, we include some plug-and-play sample characters, for when you need a *qashmal* or Centimani on short notice.

References and Inspirations

The "negative force" and the perils of dealing with it are the stuff of many dramatic works.

Faust, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe are both seminal works in the genre of people tampering with forces best left unexploited. The story itself is similar in both tales, and more overtly Christian than **Promethean** typically takes as its focus, but substitute the Devil for a particularly pernicious *qashmal* or even Flux itself, and make Dr. Faust a headstrong Promethean, and the tale is ready to be retold in the context of the Created.

Akira by Katsuhiro Otomo, is a manga that's a bit more cyberpunk than is necessarily appropriate for **Promethean**, but some greater themes apply, especially as Tetsuo indulges his growing power without regard for the consequences. The parallels with Flux (as the power) and Pandorans (as Tetsuo) are valid and inspirational. Additionally, the fact that the manga's personal and ethical issues often take precedent over its cyberpunk trappings shows how science fiction (or horror and weird fiction, in the case of **Promethean**) can still serve as the platform for insightful commentary and existential questioning.

Ghost in the Shell by Masamune Shirow, another manga, deals extensively with the issues of personal identity. Although, like *Akira*, *Ghost in the Shell* is more cyberpunk than **Promethean** concerns itself with, the questions it raises are as valid to mystical and alchemical creations as they are to technological ones. The "ghost" is the spirit, or the sense of self, while the "shell" is the body. How much of the human side or personality remains when it's transported to an artificial vessel?

Raiders of the Lost Ark, directed by Steven Spielberg, isn't necessarily resonant with the greater themes of **Promethean** but we include it here for the climactic scene in which the Nazi plunderers open the Ark of the Covenant. Think of the Ark as Pandora's box, containing judgment for the Nazis' crimes — and witness how the Nazis are found decidedly lacking. A savvy Storyteller can substitute Flux for the fount of holy power at the end. Sure, it's a stretch, and we're including the whole movie for the sake of the single scene, but to you really need another excuse to see this movie again?

In *Sapphire and Steel*, a quirky British TV series from the 1970s, an undefined cosmic force sends inhuman "elemental agents" to fix anomalies in time and space. This source was a major inspiration for some of the *qashmallim*.

Of course, we should also mention *The Bible*. It doesn't matter which version. This is the best and most easily accessible source for any number of bizarre plagues, strange curses, and angelic visitations.

CHAPTER ONE

CHILDREN OF FLUX

They call it debased, a lie, a heresy. The path of the hundred hands is not the low treachery they would have you believe. I posit that to be Centimanus is too much for them. They would gaze inward, dazzled by the infinite tiny processes of their own minds and bodies. That's the true failing. That's the true heresy. What could be more selfish than forsaking the rest of the world for the sake of one's own whims? Is it a greater sin to take the power that's offered, ready for the taking — or to send the Created knowingly to their possible deaths? Who is the liar? Who is the cheat? Is it I, or is it your murderous patron "doctor"?

What is their philosophy other than the advancement of self before any understanding of the environment that includes the self? They are a culture of withdrawn cowards, ever fearful of the force that animates them. They proclaim to the skies the nobility of the *fyros*! The exaltation of the *Azoth*! Wanton, simpering fools, every last one.

To be sure, the way is arduous and the price is steep — to be paid in blood and bile and one's very humours and not a little of others' humours as well. What is it that Wilde says? That we are all in the gutter, but a precious few of us have the ambition to look to the stars?

I shall not stop. I am immune to their fears of themselves, to their petty judgments and their resentment of any who have greater will than they claim for their own. I have One Hundred Hands. I am eminently able. The force that quails their hearts is malleable for me. I am hope and success and ambition and pride, where all they want is failure and dour acquiescence. They do not want to succeed — they merely want to rail against their own miserable states.

The fire burns, true, but fire itself is change. Describe the shape of fire — you cannot, and even if you could, that fire's shape would only change in the next second and again the next and a hundred other times in the blink of an eye.

Do not recoil from me. You have on your face the look of one who suspects he sups with a madman. I am your key, the divine formula by which the soul transmutes lead to gold and blood into miracles. I am the one who can help you shape the fire external as well as the fire within.

Take my hand. Take it again and again; take my hand one hundredfold. Walk this path with me. Leave your crazed doctor and his incessant demands on you behind. This is your path to walk, not his. Rather, it is ours.

I insist.





But the woman took off the great lid of the jar with her hands and scattered all these and her thought caused sorrow and mischief to men. Only Hope remained there in an unbreakable home within under the rim of the great jar, and did not fly out at the door; for ere that, the lid of the jar stopped her, by the will of Aegis-holding Zeus who gathers the clouds. But the rest, countless plagues, wander amongst men; for earth is full of evils and the sea is full.

— Hesiod,
Works and Days

Flux affects the world of the Prometheans, without doubt. From the raw release tainting places, people, animals and objects to the creatures that are themselves born of Flux, the Pilgrimage involves interaction with Flux just as much as it involves refinement of Azoth. This chapter talks about Flux itself, and those who wield it.

Eternal Transformation: The Nature of Flux

Philosophy approaches many high-minded conundrums. Among them is the question, “What is evil?” Though Prometheans have, if nothing else, extensive time on their hands, those philosophers among them rarely find it beneficial to contemplate such broad questions.

A better question, perhaps, is, “What is *our* evil?” To some Prometheans, the answer is clear: Flux.

Flux is that which the Azoth is not, and is best understood by the process of reflection — understanding a thing by understanding its antithesis. The Divine Fire is utterly transformative as a whole, but that transformation may be expressed as Azoth or Flux.

Azoth is evolutionary, transformation as directed by the principle of unity and cohesion. Azoth joins, merges and makes things whole. Azoth is life-giving — human scientists postulate that it was lightning that provided the first spark in the chain reaction of chemical transformations in the primordial ooze that led to life. To many Prometheans, this is of course quite reasonable. Life comes from Azoth, and Azoth follows where electricity leads. Azoth drives things toward completeness.

Flux, then, is anti-evolutionary, transformation as directed by the principle of divisiveness and dissolution. Flux breaks down, separates, removes the spark of life. This seems confusing, considering the strangely animate nature of Pandorans, until one remembers that the natural state of Pandorans outside of Azothic radiance is one of Dormancy. Flux is also consumptive, however — it is a dynamic agent of conflict, and seeks to overcome or be overcome by Azoth. As a result, creatures of Flux are driven into near-psychotic states by the conflict of Flux and Azoth within them.

Of course, some Prometheans maintain that Flux and Azoth are simply manifestations of the Divine Fire, with neither malice nor beneficence attached to them. Certainly, it is easier to appreciate the influence of Azoth, but just because the results of Flux are not as helpful or beneficial doesn’t immediately render Flux “evil” any more than radiation or cancer is evil. The detractors claim that if any insentient force (though that itself is debatable, considering the *qashmallim*) qualifies as good, it is Azoth, the building stuff of the human soul; likewise, if any force qualifies as evil, it is Flux, which erodes the wholeness of mind, body and soul.

All of these things don’t really answer the question, “What is Flux?” They answer the question of what Flux does, rather than what it is. Yet, as with similarly difficult-to-define phenomena in nature, Flux can begin to be understood by its effects upon the world.

Manifestations of Flux

The presence of Flux is not always automatically perceived. Indeed, though it does manifest in spectacular Firestorms occasionally, this is the exception rather than the rule. Generally speaking, Flux is subtle and lingering.

Appearance

Outside of strange phenomena such as Firestorms, Flux is not generally perceivable to the naked eye. Flux is mainly perceptible by the effects it has on the environment: things seem to move more slowly, very simple forms of life such as earthworms sometimes calcify and crumble away. Plants wither as though poisoned or their roots turn in on themselves or neighboring plants, seeking cannibalist sustenance rather than normal development.

When a tremendous amount of Flux is released all at once (at those times that might spark a Firestorm, but do not), Flux is perceivable as a dull, buzzing static in the area. The source of the Flux may arc slightly with electricity-like sparks of an energy that seems “dirtier” than normal arcs of electricity, as though the normally white purity of the medium had been tainted somehow.

Of course, Prometheans and Pandorans with the “Sense Flux” Transmutation can sense the presence of Flux in an area.

Flux and the Awakened

With the exception of manifestations such as firestorms and the *qashmallim*, Flux is very difficult to perceive. Mages, however, are well-known for their ability to pry the secrets out of the world around them.

Flux’s effects on the resonance of an area are quite overwhelming, though often perplexing. The emotional resonance of an area that has been infused with Flux tends to be overlaid with a sense of separation from normal human emotion — the emotion is still recognizable for what it is, but it seems strange and slightly distant from the human experience. Flux taints resonance with an aura of madness, separation, dissolution and eventual stillness.

A place of joy seems distant and unresolved, the joy of escapism and the mad. A place of peace seems utterly still and lonely, the peace of the grave. A place of anger is a place of towering fury, with the desire to rend and rip somehow implicit in the experience. A place of sadness is utterly desperate, the melancholy caused by abandonment and a sense of isolation from the rest of the world. Unfortunately, these kinds of resonances are possible in the fallen World already, and so most mages simply accept these resonances for what they seem to be.

The actual presence of Flux is difficult to perceive. To those mages who actually know what they are looking for, whether through experience or conversations with a Promethean, Flux can be perceived through a combined Death/Forces/Prime “Unveiling” spell. This lays bare the strange, sluggish energy of Flux, which seems to ooze toward sources of life, motion and joy, attempting to infuse them with death, ossification and apathy.

Once this Unveiling effect is in place, the player of an Awakened character may make an extended Intelligence + Occult roll. The target number is either (6 - Rank or Azoth) for a Pandoran or Centimanus Promethean or (6 - Flux Rating) for an

area. Each roll on this extended action takes one turn of Perception, and Dormant Pandorans do not register to this sense.

This is, unfortunately, the extent to which the Awakened can interact with Flux. For some reason, the Divine fire eludes manipulation by mortal magi — at least, by mortal magi of less puissance than the archmages.

Sources of Flux

The sources of Flux are many and varied. Though Flux only occasionally manifests as Firestorms and the like, the circumstances that lead to such displays of raw Elpis are not the only ones that can taint an area with the dissolutive principle of the Divine Fire.

Flux Ratings

Any given area, creature or object begins with a default Flux Rating of 0. There are numerous ways in which this can increase. The Flux Rating of an area, creature or object determines how tainted it is by the presence of Flux. It is worth nothing that creatures and objects inherently of Flux do not possess Flux Ratings: Flux Rating measures the amount of taint by Flux, and things that are of Flux are not tainted by it. They can and do contribute to the tainting of creatures, place and things they encounter and interact with, however.

Multiple Sources of Flux

It is possible for an area to be tainted by Flux due to more than one occurrence. When Pandorans dwell in an area, spawning more of their kind and are then wiped out by Prometheans, all of these conditions can contribute to the lingering Flux taint that remains.

The Flux Rating of a given area is cumulative. There is no upper limit to this rating, but for the most part, higher ratings simply mean that the Flux taint lingers longer.

The duration of the Flux in an area is based on the longest duration, and drops from there. Thus, while Pandorans spending Vitriol in an area would normally only increase the local Flux Rating for a few days, if that increase is building on a Flux Rating whose duration is measured in weeks, those increases do not fade so quickly. Flux attracts only itself, and when the Flux in an area spikes, it may be a long time before the Flux Rating can drop again.



Pandorans

Extended activity by active Pandorans in an area always taints it, subtly, with Flux. Once Pandorans enter Dormancy, the Flux level of an area tapers off until it returns to normal. It is only when Azoth has sparked the Mockeries out of torpor that the Azoth's activity poisons an area with Flux.

Simply existing in an area is sufficient for Pandorans to begin tainting their surroundings with Flux. The consumption of Promethean flesh and its subsequent metabolization as Pyros, the daily consumption of a point of Pyros by Pandorans, the use of Pandoran Transmutations on an extensive basis — all of these contribute to rising levels of Flux over time in the area a Pandoran claims as its lair.

One certain source of Flux in the environment is Pandoran consumption and use of Vitriol. The superbly transformative inner elixir of Prometheans used to improve on the warping of a Pandoran form always creates Flux as a by-product. Even if that area has never seen any other activity from Pandorans or Prometheans, a single Pandoran consuming Vitriol and bending its potential to serve the Flux is sufficient to taint an area for days afterwards.

Finally, when a Pandoran meets its death in an area, that area becomes tainted by the Flux released at the shattering of the Pandoran's being. Though Pandorans quickly break down into innocuous-seeming bits of crumbled matter, their deaths allow the Flux that animates them to escape into the world around them.

System: For each week that Pandorans are active in an area, the Flux Rating of that area increases by one, to a maximum of the highest Rank of Pandoran present in that lair or nest. Once the area ceases to see Pandoran activity, this Rating drops by one per week in that area.

Likewise, when Pandorans spend Vitriol, the Flux Rating of the area in which this takes place increases by one per Pandoran spending Vitriol. This remains for a number of days equal to the total Vitriol spent in that area.

Finally, when a Pandoran dies, the death adds one to the local Flux Rating for one day. For each additional Pandoran, this time increases by one day. Multiple Pandorans dying in a given area do not increase the Flux Rating of that area. The multiple deaths simply extend the duration of the minor taint in that area.

Qashmallim

In places where the *qashmallim* have appeared, the essential Divine Fire that touches and runs through all the world becomes stirred and excited. When the Elpidos come, the place so blessed by their visitation enjoys a strange aura of blissful rightness. Things seem to fall into place there, and life is more vibrant.

But when the dread Lilithim appear, chaos reigns. Imperfections in inanimate objects become more pronounced, and the area takes on an atmosphere of panic, fervor and un-reality. Emotions fluctuate wildly and passions clash. These harbingers of trouble work their mischief, change the world according to their nature and then vanish.

In their wake, the places of their manifestation are tainted with Flux. The magnitude of the Lilithim has an effect on this: those places where the Lesser Lilithim appear are noticeably tainted, but when the rare Greater Lilithim appear, their appearance is said by some Promethean eschatologists to awaken all the Pandorans of a city and draw them, inexorably toward the point of manifestation. By the time the Pandorans arrive, the Greater Lilith is gone, but she has left terrible monsters behind her, recalling her namesake by birthing demons in her wake.

System: When a Lesser Lilith manifests in an area, the manifestation increases the Flux Rating of that area by two. This fades at a rate of one point per week. When a Greater Lilith manifests in an area, the manifestation increases the Flux Rating of that area by five points, which fades at a rate of one point per month.

Additionally, when a Greater Lilith appears, all Pandorans in a 10-mile radius awaken from Dormancy and immediately charge toward that location, as though following their hunger frenzy. If they encounter a source of Azoth along the way, they will pause just long enough to feed, gaining a few points of Pyros, before moving on in a horde. If an hour passes without gaining a source of Pyros, these Pandorans return to Dormancy, though those that actually arrive at the site of a Greater Lilith's visitation begin to act normally, seeking to turn the site into a lair from which to seek out sources of food. These Pandorans are subject to normal Disquiet, so if a mortal sees them on the frenzied pilgrimage to the Lilith's manifestation, they return to Dormancy as usual.

Firestorms

When Pyros rages unchecked in the world, the effects linger beyond the actual duration of the Firestorm. As the raging maelstroms of Divine Fire burn themselves out, they blanket the area they affect in what amounts to Flux fallout. This fallout may linger for days in such an area.

System: An area affected by a Firestorm adds one to its Flux Rating per dot in the highest rated Azoth that empowered the Firestorm during its lifespan. This drops

by one per day thereafter, unless it occurred in an area affected by the Wasteland Effect. In such instances, the Flux clings tightly to the blighted nature of the land around it, dropping by one point per week.

If you are using the "Creating Custom Firestorm rules" found in Chapter Three of this book, you can also use the following system for determining a Firestorm-induced Flux Rating: an area affected by a Firestorm gains a Flux Rating equal to the rating of the Firestorm. This Flux Rating falls by one point per day thereafter. If the Firestorm was Lilithian (see p. 94), the Flux Rating falls at one point per *week* thereafter.

Clone Death

The strange creatures cloned from Azoth-infused DNA are not normally possessed of any level of Flux. They are an example of Azoth's creative, unifying principle put to ends other than that which Prometheans normally apply the Divine Fire. When these creatures die, however, the Azoth within them decays quickly, becoming corrupted and breaking down. Immense levels of Flux can be released quite rapidly in this fashion, though this Flux, too, breaks down rapidly and is gone.

System: For every clone that dies in a given area, the Flux Rating of that area rises by two. This only remains for one day, however.

Pyros Mishandled

Pyros is fragile. It is the Divine Fire, capable of great wonders and equally terrible horrors. In skillful hands, Pyros can be transubstantiated into the very stuff of a human soul. In clumsier hands, Pyros may take on a poisonous aspect antithetical to life and wholeness.

Prometheans use Pyros to make veritable miracles, working alchemy both spiritual and physical with the world around them. But the Prometheans must be cautious, and use Pyros when it is under their complete control, lest the Pyros manifest as Flux, tainting the world around them. Most Prometheans learn of this danger early on, through discussion with their makers, but few actually understand it until it happens to them.

A Promethean who makes some critical error when releasing Pyros might understand some of what Pandora must have felt at that critical moment when she realized both what had happened and that it was too late to close the box again. A Promethean who fails to use the Divine Fire wisely can only stand there as the Pyros escapes him and poisons the world around him.

But these are not the only ways in which a Promethean might fail to wield the Pyros well. The failure to pass on the Divine Fire as a spark to his progeny, resulting in the spawning of Pandorans, is an event no Promethean ever forgets. The heart swelling with joy as the form of one's carefully crafted child begins to move is suddenly enclosed in a cold fist of dread when the would-be creator suddenly





realizes that it isn't new life that moves his child but the erratic twitching and spastic thrashing of the Flux, ripping the body apart, heralding the birth of new Pandorans.

Perhaps the most devastating misuse of the Pyros, however, is at that ultimate moment, when hard work, Vitriol and the aid of the Promethean's throng have enabled him to grasp the understanding and opportunity to seize up the very Divine Fire that burns at his core and remake it into a human soul. Most Prometheans do not even like to discuss failures of Redemption, regarding it with superstitious fear; in the moment when mortality is within the reach of a Promethean, but the poor creature's grasp proves insufficient, the Pyros reacts violently to the clumsy hand that would remake it.

Flux rolls off the Promethean in waves, nearly physical manifestations of his grief and disappointment, tainting the inauspicious area that saw his greatest failure. Such a legacy can last for weeks, and such Prometheans often remain there in Torment, unable or unwilling to consider the rest of the world, capable only of mourning their own failure and cursing their creators.

System: When a Promethean rolls a dramatic failure on a roll involving the expenditure of Pyros, the failure increases the Flux Rating in an area by one per dot in the Promethean's Azoth. This Flux Rating drops by one per hour. Should the same Promethean make another dramatic failure, it does not increase the Flux Rating but instead causes Flux to linger there. The rating falls by only one per day.

When a Pandoran is spawned, the Flux Rating of the area increases by one, which lingers for one day per Pandoran created in that area.

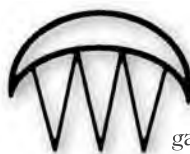
When a Promethean fails the roll to determine if he achieves mortality and a human soul (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 196), the bitter failure and Flux poison the area in which this final test occurred and was failed. The area's Flux Rating increases by one per dot in Azoth possessed by the Promethean, and drops by one per week thereafter.

Tainting the Supernatural

Supernatural creatures may find themselves tainted with Flux in some unique ways that do not affect humans or other creatures. The effects of Flux taint themselves are often slightly different for supernatural beings, but these differences are noted under "Effects of Flux," below.



- **Vampires:** Vampires may become Flux-tainted by feeding from creatures that possess a Flux Rating. A vampire gains a Flux Rating equal to the Flux Rating of the creature the vampire has fed upon, or the number of points of Vitae he took from that creature, whichever is less. This Flux Rating drops by one per 24 hours.



- **Werewolves:** Werewolves may become Flux-tainted by drawing Essence from a locus found within a Flux-tainted area. The werewolf gains a Flux Rating equal to the Flux Rating of the area, or the number of points of Essence he took from that locus, whichever is less. This Flux Rating drops by one per 24 hours.



- **Mages:** Mage may become Flux-tainted by drawing Mana from a hallow found within a Flux-tainted area. The mage gains a Flux Rating equal to the Flux Rating of the hallow, or the number of points of Mana he took from that site, whichever is less. This Flux Rating drops by one per 24 hours.

Flux Taint

Flux does not merely accumulate in places. Living things may come away from a strange experience or visit to a tainted place carrying some Flux of their own, and items left too long in a place contaminated by Flux may also carry some of that spiritual contagion with them. Such a taint might have a variety of effects on a living creature (see "Effects of Flux," below).

Living Creatures

Living entities are susceptible to Flux. The spiritual contagion poisons a person, causing her to carry a Flux Rating with her wherever she goes. More than one Promethean has tracked down a hidden nest of Pandorans by identifying the Flux taint in mortals that worked or lived near it, and following them to its source.

System: Living creatures are not quickly tainted by Flux, for something within them resists the essence that is antithetical to life. A creature adds one to its Flux Rating for every [Stamina] days the creature spends at least eight hours in a place with a Flux Rating, however. The creature's Flux Rating continues to climb, to a maximum rating of one less than the Flux Rating of the area that is tainting him (minimum of 1). For every day the living creature does not visit that area, the Flux Rating drops by one point.

Inanimate Objects

Inanimate objects do not carry Flux much more readily than living creatures. Prometheans postulate that it is the nature of Flux to cause things to devolve into an inanimate state (pointing to Pandoran Dormancy as the most obvious example of this).

System: For every [number of days equal to its Size] that an object remains in an area with a Flux Rating, the object's



Flux Rating increases by one, to a maximum Flux Rating of the area tainting it. This drops at a rate of one point of Flux Rating per day it is away from that site.

Flux Taint Versus Wasteland

What is the difference, one might ask, between a place that is tainted by an excess of Flux and one that is a creeping Wasteland born of the presence of one of the Created?

First, a Flux-tainted area is not affected by the humour of the creatures that create it. The Mockeries are themselves affected by the humours of their progenitors, but the divisive power of Flux is such that it cannot be truly influenced by the humours. Effectively, humours are too “complex” to affect Flux. The divisive principle of Flux breaks down such nuanced expressions the way Azoth, the unifying principle, magnifies them.

Some Promethean sages have explained the Wasteland effect through understanding two principles. The first is “Azoth Calls to Azoth.” As the unifying principle of Pyros, Azoth is attracted to itself. It might be said that if Pyros were a magnet, Azoth is the attractive aspect of that, where Flux is the repellant. All places capable of supporting life contain Azoth, to some tiny degree. When a Promethean enters such an area, however, that trace Azothic manifestation is pulled toward the Promethean, like metal filings toward a powerful electromagnet.

The second principle is “humour Influences the incomplete.” The five humours, according to some Created philosophical thought, are expressions of incompleteness. When the Promethean no longer has to struggle against the flux that poisons its Divine fire, when the Promethean achieves perfection of spiritual balance so completely that his Divine fire is transubstantiated into the Elpis that makes of itself a soul, his humour vanishes in the wake of that transformation.

Thus, humours flood into those areas that are incomplete. As a result, the Promethean’s own humour floods those tiny “spaces” left by the Promethean’s own absorption of the Azoth in an area. In the absence of the principle of spiritual unity, and in the sudden presence of a powerfully unbalanced humour, the land around a Promethean begins to waste away, eaten at by the imbalance that suddenly manifests. The longer the Promethean remains, the more intensely this manifests.

Flux-tainted areas are different, however. Rather than the “natural balance” of Pyros in an area being altered and infused with a humour, Flux

simply bleeds into the surrounding area, breaking it down and pushing it toward a lifeless, inanimate state of being.

Effects of Flux

The influence of Flux in an area is subtle, but those who know what to look for can often find it. Ultimately, all of these effects are symptoms of the essential nature of Flux — that is, devolutionary, warping, madness-inducing, divisive, anti-life and dissipative.

The following sections use the phrase “in the presence of Flux taint.” For the purposes of these rules, a mortal who possesses an object with a Flux Rating, is in a place with a Flux Rating or has a Flux Rating himself is considered to be in the presence of Flux taint.

Flux Empowerment

Pandorans and other creatures of Flux (including the Lilithim) are drawn to areas of Flux for very specific reasons. In such locales, they feel stronger than when away from their strange, unwholesome emanations. The simple fact that the presence of such creatures can also contribute to a rise in Flux taint in an area presents a simple Orbourous: the more they remain in a place, the stronger they become; the stronger they become, the more they favor the place. Mentors and older Created often warn young Prometheans that facing down Pandorans in their lair can be very unwise, as they have a definite “home turf advantage.” Prometheans who see the “Pandorans lurk here” pilgrim’s mark are well-advised to heed it.

System: Pandorans gain a number of bonus dice equal to their Rank or the Flux Rating of an area, whichever is less. These bonus dice apply only to Physical actions and to any action in which Pyros is spent. A creature gaining the benefit of these dice may gain no more than a +5 bonus from them.

Lesser Lilithim gain three bonus dice or the Flux Rating of the area, whichever is less. Greater Lilithim gain three bonus dice or the Flux Rating of the area, whichever is greater.

Madness

The degenerative effects of Flux on the human mind are quite pronounced. Though Flux does not in and of itself cause madness, Flux certainly makes it harder for a person afflicted with derangements to resist them.

System: In the presence of Flux taint, any normal Resolve + Composure rolls to resist the manifestation of their derangements receive a penalty equal to the Flux Rating. This affects both mortals and supernatural creatures.

Additionally, mortals who lose a point of Morality while in the presence of Flux taint lose one die from the



subsequent Morality roll to avoid gaining a derangement. If the Flux Rating of an area is 4 or higher, the penalty is increased to two dice.

Animal Viciousness

In Flux-tainted areas, animals become harder to control, acting angry and predatory. Flux-tainted animals often seem to be rabid and terrifying, prone to sudden strange shifts in mood.

System: Attempts to control animals in the presence of Flux inflicts a -1 penalty to the Animal Ken dice pool, as the animal is restless. Supernatural powers that allow control of animals also suffer this penalty. If the Flux Rating exceeds the animal's Composure, the animal does not behave according to its normal instincts, willing to attack at the slightest provocation and remaining undeterred by even threats to its life.

Animals react strangely to the presence of Flux. Predators and scavengers are drawn toward such areas, individuals or things, while herbivores and other generally docile creatures react with fear and trepidation.

Physical Degeneration

Flux-born effects on the physicality of living creatures are rare, generally occurring only in areas of prolonged, strong Flux taint. In those areas, however, the effects can be quite dramatic.

Flux drives living, animate things toward inanimate states of being. Flux can cause nerve damage, causing creatures to become less capable of feeling nuanced sensations, due to numbness in extremities. Nails thicken and grow larger, and the gums begin to peel back from the teeth, revealing more of the bone underneath, resulting in strange, disturbing smiles.

Eyesight dims, and cataracts are common among those with long-term exposure, as is a lessening of hearing. Other senses are similarly impacted, with olfactory and taste bud sensitivity dramatically reduced.

Moreover, bodily processes become sluggish. Such creatures become tired quickly, they become more susceptible to disease and do not heal easily. Additionally, they find it impossible to conceive within areas of Flux taint, and are likely to miscarry by remaining in it.

System: A living creature only suffers physical degeneration when the creature has been in the presence of Flux of a greater Flux Rating than the creature's Composure or Resolve (whichever is greater for humans or supernatural beings, whichever is less for animals and other beasts) for a number of days equal to the creature's Willpower. When this happens, the creature loses a dot of Stamina. This Stamina loss happens again after a number of days equal to the creature's Willpower, and continues until the creature has dropped to a Stamina 1.

Any creature suffering any amount of physical degradation cannot conceive, and an expectant mother whose

Stamina drops to 1 miscarries unless extraordinary (and likely supernatural) medical steps are taken. Even if she leaves the area, recovering her Stamina, she will miscarry. Emergency medical care begun before the miscarriage starts can prevent this, but the lingering Flux inflicts a penalty on the attendant physician or midwife's Medicine roll equal to the Flux Rating that caused the physical degradation in the first place. If this procedure has not begun within 10 minutes of the miscarriage's onset, all the medical assistance in the world cannot help. The mother miscarries within the hour.

The only exception to this is some kind of supernatural intervention. Simple healing magics are not sufficient, but magic specifically used to strengthen both mother and child may work. Storytellers familiar with **Mage: The Awakening** should apply a penalty equal to the Flux Rating that caused the degradation to any magical attempt to save the pregnancy.

Alternately, a Promethean may use its own Azoth to purify the Flux within the mother. By infusing the mother with a number of points of Pyros equal to the Flux Rating that caused the miscarriage, the Promethean can negate the effects of Flux on the mother's pregnancy. A medical procedure is still necessary, but this is a simple Intelligence + Medicine roll, and may be performed by anyone working in concert with the Promethean.

A child who manages to somehow survive such an ordeal is usually born with the Unseen Sense Merit, with the ability to detect both Prometheans and the creatures and energies associated with them. Some even say that these children may grow into demiurges.

For each point of Stamina a creature has lost in this fashion, the creature also loses one die from all Perception rolls (see p. 45 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Once the creature has spent a week away from Flux taint, the creature regains its Stamina at a rate of one per week.

Vampires and werewolves are immune to this effect, as are ghouls, though mages, wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers are not.

Physical Mutation

If a mortal or animal is present when the Flux of an area spikes suddenly, the changes may be recorded in the very flesh of the vulnerable creatures there. Whether because of the sudden death of several clones or Pandorans, the mishandling of Pyros or any of a variety of other reasons, such sudden rises in Flux can leave mutations in those exposed to it.

These mutations are always strange, though not overtly supernatural. The mutations are almost always something that can be explained medically, even if it is only by theorizing on the part of examining doctors. Strange skin changes and weird calcium and keloid deposits are well within the range of possibility; someone turning into metal is not.

The change always thematically reflects the situation in which the mutation was gained.

Rumors: Flux Mutations

- “Did you ever hear about that homeless guy in Cincinnati? He talks about how he saw a fight between some guy with really bad stitching-scars and some kinda dog-thing. Well, they were fighting at the mouth of the alley he was sleeping in the back of, so he had to wait it out before he could get away. The dog-monster thing died, but the next day, in the shelter, he woke up to find that overnight his skin had built-up these weird bumps and cartilage shapes. When he looked down, he screamed, and said that it looked like the face of the dog-monster was looking up at him.”

- “You ever seen the Sunset Kid? Yeah, he’s in college now, but they say that when he was a teenager, he broke into an old abandoned lab and woke up three clones there someone had worked on. They were apparently crazy — they freaked out and killed themselves, with the setting sun shining through the big plate glass windows. He nearly died in the fire, but the fire department got him out. When he woke in the hospital, however, the docs noticed that his eyes were this weird blur of gel-lowish, pink and violet; the kid said that it looked just like the colors of the sunset on the white skin of the clones as they killed one another.”

- “I’m sorry, miss. There really isn’t any reason. I know your son has occasional seizures, from the power box incident. The one where he claimed to have seen a strange woman trying to do something with the transformer, but it exploded? Despite his claims, ma’am, there is no tie-in between that event and his chronic eczema. The fact that its odd coloration reminds him of the bricks on that wall is entirely coincidental. I’m sorry, but exploding transformers don’t cause skin conditions.”

These changes are generally explainable by medical science, in some fashion. Some scholarly Centimani maintain that these mutations are caused by latent genetic traits within the victims activated by the Flux they are suddenly exposed to, rather than something forced on them from without.

System: In a situation in which the Flux Rating of an area spikes to a level higher than a present creature’s Willpower, the player of the creature makes a contested Resolve + Stamina roll against the Flux Rating. If the Flux Rating wins, the creature develops some form of basic physical mutation.



Generally speaking, this isn't debilitating, unless the Flux Rating rolled more successes than the mortal's total Stamina. In such cases, the deformity may cause up to a -1 to dice pools with one of the Physical Attributes, as determined by the Storyteller, based on the mutation's nature. This may be corrected with surgery, however.

Though Prometheans are immune to this effect by virtue of their Azoth, non-Promethean supernatural creatures may develop these mutations. For this to happen, the being must gain a Flux Rating greater than its Stamina + supernatural potency trait (Blood Potency, Primal Urge or Gnosis). Ghouls gain a +1 effective Stamina for the purpose of determining whether or not they gain mutations; wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers do not.

Effects of Flux on the Supernatural

The following gives an idea of what happens when various supernatural creatures are exposed to Flux Ratings. This can be as a result of being in a Flux-tainted area, possessing a Flux-tainted item or becoming Flux-tainted themselves.



- **Vampires:** Of all the supernatural creatures, vampires hardly experience Flux at all. Its calcifying, anti-life properties are rarely noticed

by the undead, save in two areas: the spiritual power of their Vitae and in their self-control. A vampire that is exposed to Flux for 24 hours or more has a number of points of Vitae rendered inert and unusable equal to the Flux Rating of the source. This sterilization of the vampire's Vitae is subtle, and vampires seldom notice it until they attempt to fuel their powers. Moreover, vampire finds resisting frenzy more difficult, as Flux erodes self-control. A vampire near a source of Flux loses one die from all attempts to resist frenzy. If the Flux Rating is 4 or higher, that penalty is increased to two dice.

A vampire that remains exposed to a Flux Rating for longer than the creature's Stamina + Blood Potency in days begins to slowly calcify: the vampire's artificially animated flesh becomes hard and chalk-like, usually covered with a light dusting of a substance similar in texture and appearance to talc. While under such effects, the vampire's wound penalties are reduced by one, as his body becomes insensate. His flesh is also frailer, however, prone to cracks and deep trauma with impact. Whenever the vampire takes damage, he suffers an additional point of bashing damage (no matter what type of damage caused the initial attack).



- **Werewolves:** Werewolves find resisting Death Rage difficult. In the proximity of Flux taint, reduce attempts to do so by one die (or

two dice, if the Flux Rating is 4 or higher). More than this, however, Flux's warping effects make their bodies more pliable. Any rolls involve shapeshifting receive a +1 modifier. On any action in which the player spends a point of Essence, however, she must also make a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll, at a penalty equal to the Flux Rating of the area. If this roll fails, the werewolf involuntarily shifts into another form. Such shifts are always toward the Gauru form (from Hishu to Dalu to Gauru, and from Urhan to Urshul to Gauru).

2 • **Mages:** Mages find that areas of Flux present a difficult environment in which to work magic. The calcifying effects of Flux work against the mages' ability to work change in the world around them. Mages lose one die from all spellcasting attempts in an area with a Flux Rating, or when an object or person with a Flux Rating is the target of a spell. If the Flux Rating is 4 or greater, the penalty becomes -2.

Terrain and Structures

The effects of Flux on a place can be difficult to find, even for those who know what to look for. Such places may seem to be under the Wasteland effect, but a knowledgeable Promethean might be able to tell the difference. The two overriding principles of Flux are quite present in such a locale: dissolution and anti-life.

The dissolute principle of Flux tends to manifest first in inanimate objects. The corners of buildings, the edges of blades: all of these sharply defined things begin to dull and weaken. Plaster crumbles, and in a matter of a week, the accumulation of dust in the area increases at a dramatic pace. Keeping such an area free of dust is nearly impossible. Objects that remain in such a locale begin to weaken slightly, as well.

Moreover, this dissolute principle extends to electricity, as well. Though electricity carries the Divine Fire, this tends to be more of a manifestation of the Azothic, energetic side of the Pyros. The principles of Flux cause electricity to ground and short out more often than normal, dispersing the charge. Batteries run out of power quickly, copper connectors corrode to the point where they do not carry a charge and, in some extreme cases, conductive material that has been onsite for a while loses much of its conductive property.

Food kept in such an area is still edible, but ceases to be appetizing. The smell of such food is always somewhat antiseptic, the color faded, the normal crispness of fruits and vegetables gone in favor of a slightly waxy pliability. Such food does not nourish very well. Those who eat normal amounts of such food are likely to be hungry again soon afterwards.

Tied into this is the dissolution of many of the basic processes that drive thriving life. Plants in the area wither slightly and do not continue to grow, and fruit and blossoms wither quickly from the plant. This withering is subtle, a simple touch of brown at the edges of leaves. Many of the insects and other simple life forms in such an area die out and growths such as mold do not form.

This extends even to a microbiotic level. Soil loses many of its rich nutrients as they break down into useless component parts, and the soil becomes dry and ash-like, without the rich consistency necessary for healthy plant life.

System: Determining that a given locale is Flux-tainted rather than a Wasteland is an Intelligence + Occult roll, with a dice penalty equal to 7 – the area's Flux Rating.

Each week that an object is in the presence of Flux with a Flux Rating equal to the object's Durability or higher, the object takes one point of Structure damage. Additionally, electricity has a harder time remaining within such objects. Electronic items that have taken damage from Flux taint receive a -1 equipment penalty per point of Structure damage they have taken, with failures on rolls coming from shorts, corroded contacts and the like. Moreover, electricity damage taken from objects in the area, including electricity outlets, is reduced by one die after one week of any Flux taint. As a result, Flux-tainted areas tend to have less electricity flowing through them, making life more difficult for those Prometheans in need of electricity for healing.

Finally, in places where the Flux rises quite suddenly, or where the remains of a very Flux-tainted creature or object are simply left, the plants and animals of the area may develop into *kryptae* (see p. 44).

Rumors: Flux

• "Flux is like a disease. Humans can catch it, if they're too close to Pandorans and other things that carry it. Worse than that, someone who lives too close to a place that is Flux-tainted might have kids who are deformed, or worse – if one of those kids dies, I hear that its body rips itself apart in the grave, becoming a whole new swarm of Pandorans."

• "It's not just Pandorans and other freaks that create Flux. Every time we create a Wasteland, after we leave it, it goes through a period where it is highly Flux-tainted. Any Pandoran who spends time in your Wasteland after you've left can track your scent from miles away. That's why we have to keep moving."

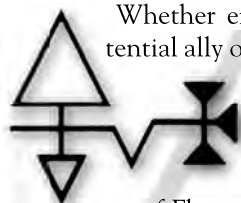
• "To see Flux as evil is short-sighted. It has its uses – just ask Old Jack Valentine, this Centimanus I know who's studying its uses in applications of medicine. He says he's learned to completely heal some diseases that depend on cells or viruses reproducing quickly, like cancer and HIV. Of course, from what I've heard from others, his patients become . . . something else entirely, but that's probably just old fearful rumormongering. No one respects a pioneer and visionary, and Old Jack is definitely that."





* “Flux? Flux is the Fall, man. It’s why God warned Adam and Eve ~~not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge~~. It’s why Zeus refused to give the Divine fire to men. We contain the sum total of human’s potential for evil, for hubris, for pride within ourselves, refined and passed on by our makers. It’s the reason why, when we become human, every one of us goes mad. We’ve looked into the face of the serpent, and realized that we harbored him. We are on a Pilgrimage to insanity and more than one asylum houses a Promethean that finally managed to complete the Pilgrimage.”

The Hundred Handed



Whether encountered as an antagonist, a potential ally or even a member of the troupe’s own throng, Centimani provide a unique challenge to Promethean characters. While it would be easy to simply dismiss those who follow the Refinement of Flux as “Freaks,” the reality is much more complex and thought provoking.

Undisputedly, Centimani are dangerous. Many deal extensively with Pandorans, not only one of the greatest physical threats to Promethean survival, but also the philosophical antithesis of the Promethean’s potential for rebirth as a human — the refinement, literal and metaphysical, of taint coming from the same source as each Promethean does. Not only do Centimani study these polluted beasts, but many take their perverted Transmutations upon themselves, wrapping themselves soul and body in the same taint that other Prometheans seek to leave behind.

However, the company that Centimani keep isn’t the worst of their dangers. If a Promethean is an inhuman creature, shunned by humanity and his environment both, and a Pandoran is simply a monster, then a Centimani is the monster’s monster, the thing that even the fiend fears, and for good reason.

The Centimani remind other Prometheans of what they truly are: monsters, freaks, walking corpses animated through mystical alchemies they can never completely comprehend. For all that Prometheans strive toward attaining humanity, the Centimani are a cruel mirror held up to remind Prometheans of their true nature. While one of the Wretched may pretend while in the company of his throng that his stitches do not exist, that he is not merely an amalgam of mismatched corpse limbs stitched together and granted some semblance of sentience, when faced with the obvious inhumanity of one of the Freaks, pretending is

not so easy. Extra limbs, horns, wings or carapaces made of insect shells are unwavering reminders of the Centimani’s inhumanity, and by extension, that of all Prometheans. Unlike the Pandorans, who are easily labeled “other,” for all that the Centimani follow a different path, they are Promethean and each of the Created knows that there, but for a choice, goes him.

It is not only the physical deviations of Centimani that chafe other Prometheans. Every non-Centimani knows that with each step he takes along the path of Flux, he deviates further from the ideals of humanity. For each Pandoran Transmutation he learns — indeed, for each time he uses a non-permanent Pandoran Transmutation — his grasp on the mores of humankind slips a bit and his Great Work seems further away. While Centimani claim to be immune to this Flux-forced deviation from humanity, it is difficult for others to believe their claims. Why should a non-Centimani believe that one of the Freaks, bearing the effects of his close interaction with Flux openly, is less vulnerable to the dehumanizing effects of Flux than those who study other Refinements? A hard sell, to say the least. Perhaps it’s true, perhaps it’s not, but few are willing to risk their lives to trust the word of a Freak on the matter.

Despite the Centimani’s claims of immunity to the debilitating effects of Pandoran Transmutations, Centimani are often much less humane than their non-Flux-studying kin. The degenerative influence of Flux and the monstrous company of Pandorans (not to mention the inhumane places, people and practices that the Refinement of Flux leads those who follow it to encounter and even embrace) tend to whittle away at a Centimani’s Humanity more quickly than other Prometheans. Few Centimani, even those who claim to be pursuing the study of Flux without abandoning their Pilgrimage, maintain too tight of an adherence to the ideals of humanity. Some Centimani argue that humans are far from these ideals, but that does not alter the fact that most outsiders believe that the path of Flux inherently leads a Centimani further into his inhumanity, a journey from which it is extremely difficult to return. This deviation is not merely a philosophical one. Prometheans, better than most, know that action follows quickly upon the heels of thought and belief. It is the tiniest of leaps from justifying a Pandoran’s “need” to prey upon a fellow Promethean’s Azoth-infused flesh to survive to looking the other way when the attack happens — and an even smaller one from there to aiding in the next ambush.

And yet, even this danger is not enough to motivate most Prometheans to shun a Centimani, should they encounter one. Regardless of how far from the ideals of humanity the Refinement of Flux may take a Centimani, a simple truth remains: no matter how twisted, no matter how deviant a Promethean a Centimani may become, he is still Promethean, and more akin to the rest of his kind



than any other being can be. And upon a lonely Pilgrimage, when all other beings shun one's presence and are repulsed by one's very existence, it is difficult to cling to differences above similarities.

Walking the Flux Road

When all the dangers of Flux are considered, it seems inconceivable that the path would hold appeal for those seeking enlightenment and striving to attain humanity. What leads one to study degeneration, entropy and chaos incarnate, especially if the goal is growth? Prometheans sometimes become disillusioned with other Refinements or grow to feel that they have stalled in their Pilgrimage and become desperate to find something — anything — to bring them closer to their Great Work. Created of a philosophical bent may believe that to eschew studying Flux is to ignore half of the nature of Pyros, and to leave half of one's lessons unlearned. Some, after being spurned by humans and running afoul of other Prometheans, turn to the Flux path out of loneliness, convincing themselves that the macabre company of Pandorans is better than complete solitude. Others have abandoned their quest for Humanity altogether and embrace the Refinement as a symbol of turning their backs on the Pilgrimage. Regardless of what leads a Promethean to the Refinement of Flux, she is likely to find the path a longer and harder one than she had imagined.

Monsters, Wise and Terrible

Seeking the light of Mortality through the study of dissolution takes a certain strength of will. While others seek their Great Work on the high road, pursuing edification and enlightenment as they strive to achieve humanity, Centimani journey along their Pilgrimage by a baser route, one that often leads them into the depths of human misery and malevolence. Few would argue that this path is more dangerous than that of any of the rest of the Refinements, that the risks to body and spirit are both more plentiful and more lethal than on the lighter roads to humanity.

So, what would possess anyone to attempt to take on the study of something as degenerative and destructive as Flux to understand the ideals of humanity?

Some among the Centimani view Flux as the base of the alchemical operation that will lead them to their Magnum Opus, the achievement of Elpis. These individuals see the journey from newly created Promethean to human as an alchemical formula. One cannot, they would posit, have any hopes of creating a successful alchemical transformation until one understands the nature of what is defiling one's starting compound. How can one know what is to be removed and what remains unless one truly understands what exists "in base?" These individuals, dubbed Oculars by those who mock their "stand aside and watch" views, tend to study

Flux analytically and frequently from more of a distance than other Centimani. Perhaps because of this, Oculars are more frequently able to mitigate Flux's influence on them than other Centimani. Some conjecture that this makes Oculars more likely to achieve Mortality, that by holding themselves separate from the chaotic influence they study, they are less prone to fall prey to it and be sidetracked from their Pilgrimage. Others argue that the opposite is true: that by merely observing, rather than immersing themselves wholly in the experiences that bring inspiration, Oculars are less able to truly understand the lessons of humanity on a deep and meaningful level. The truth of the matter is that the Pilgrimage and achievement of Great Work is such a highly personal process that drawing any conclusion as to a particular path's effectiveness is a suspect process at best.

Other humanity-bound Centimani compare their path to Mortality through Flux to the night sky. Only on the darkest night, they say, is one able to fully see all of the stars. These philosophers claim that only by seeing the worst of humanity can they truly understand the whole of it, a necessary step toward achieving it themselves. Unlike the Oculars, these Centimani delve deeply into humanity's degenerative side, dealing hands-on, to whatever extent is possible, with those among humankind who seem to embody its most discordant aspects. Through interactions with serial killers, rapists, drug pushers and pimps, these Centimani hope to understand better the contrasting human ideals of compassion, selflessness, dignity and kindness. Unfortunately, for all that their intent is true, far more who set out with this philosophy as their guiding light fall to Flux entirely than find humanity. What this says about the power of Flux compared to Elpis, or the conclusions that can be drawn about the strength of the dark aspects of humankind compared to its ideals, is open for conjecture.

Centimani Athanors

While many Centimani leave their quest for humanity behind when they begin following the Refinement of Flux, not all do. And for those who still aspire to their Great Work, many believe that developing an Athanor is an essential tool to avoid deviating from their Pilgrimage. Depending on their individual viewpoints, they may seek Athanors that focus their ability to understand other's motivations, strengthen their resolve against corruption or protect them physically — all valuable tools when one walks the Flux-driven path.

Athanors are affiliated with individual Lineages, which are permanent features of a Promethean's existence, rather than with Refinements that may change multiple times throughout a Promethean's existence. While a great deal of personal choice and perspective is involved with the choosing of an Athanor, as they are each most conducive to a certain Lineage, some are more common choices than others for Centimani.



Griffon — Duality (Frankenstein)

Half lion and half eagle, supernatural creature of both land and air, throughout history griffons have served as a symbol of duality encompassing opposite attributes within the same being. With their leonine strength and ferocity and eagle-eyed perception, they were often seen as embodying the best (and worst) of both worlds.

While many Prometheans eschew Flux as tainted, Centimani frequently see the need to understand the base as well as the refined, the light and the dark, the brutal and the savvy. Centimani who adopt Griffon as their Athanor aspire to balance their study of Flux and quest for Elpis simultaneously.

Trait Affinities: Brawl, Investigation

Promethean Boon: The character can switch his Strength and Intelligence dots. This requires an instant action and can only be activated once per 24-hour period. The change remains in effect until sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, at which point the change automatically switches back. Once activated, the change cannot be undone until it automatically switches back; the character is stuck with the change.

Redeemed Boon: Upon attaining Mortality, the character gains one dot of Empathy for every dot of Intelligence or Strength, whichever is lower.



Pelican — Sacrifice (Tammuz)

Early observers believed that pelicans fed their young by biting open their breasts and allowing the chicks to feed off their own lifeblood.

Since the earliest of times, pelicans have thus been associated with self-sacrifice and giving on the truest and deepest level.

While some Tammuz rebel against their servile nature, seeing humanity as the ultimate freedom from self-sacrifice, some who have walked the Flux path through the cesspool of humanity and have managed to retain their drive to achieve their Magnum Opus have done so through realizing that giving of one's self for the betterment of others is among the noblest of human ideals.

Trait Affinities: Composure, Resolve

Promethean Boon: Giving on a deep and personal basis is integral to the essence of Pelican. The Promethean can heal the wounds of others by spending Reagent. The cost is one point per two bashing wounds or one point per one lethal or aggravated wound.

Redeemed Boon: In any situation where the Redeemed is actively aiding another rather than acting for his own

gain, the player may spend one point of Willpower to remake any single failed roll. This ability is useable only one time per 24-hour period.



Fox — Unnatural Cunning (Ulgan)

In almost every human civilization where foxes can be found, the sleek vulpines are associated with guile and slyness as well as with ghosts, spirits and the supernatural.

While all Ulgan learn a certain amount of astuteness while dealing with the spirit world, the Refinement of Flux leads the Riven even deeper into their intuitive nature, emphasizing traits that will serve them well upon entering the sometimes conniving and underhanded world of humanity.

Trait Affinities: Wits, Larceny

Promethean Boon: The player may spend one Reagent point to gain +1 on any roll dealing with a supernatural target. This ability may be used more than once per day, but only one Reagent point may be spent per roll. The bonus can be applied to Social rolls, combat, Transmutations, rolls meant to resist other supernatural powers or anything else in which a supernatural being is involved.

Redeemed Boon: The Redeemed character enters human existence with the Unseen Sense Merit, but instead of choosing a specific area, she is left with a sensitivity to all supernatural phenomenon. When this Merit is triggered, the player may roll Wits + Occult for the character to recognize a previously encountered phenomenon, but does not gain an inherent knowledge of it. For example, upon encountering a werewolf, a player whose character has previously encountered a werewolf may roll to realize she has felt this feeling before. The character will not, however, know that this feeling was tied to werewolves specifically, unless she has encountered werewolves before and learned to associate this feeling with them. The Storyteller is encouraged to consider what specific feelings a given type of supernatural being might evoke and keep them consistent — a werewolf, for instance, might trigger an increase in heart rate and a feeling of being hunted, while a spirit might grant a similar feeling of paranoia but without the physical component.



Swan — Grace (Galateid)

Although awkward and ungainly on land, in their element, Swans are the epitome of grace, and symbolize gentle and effortless beauty.

Not all physical power is brute strength, and those who have spent time in the Refinement of Flux tend to see enough of the dark and ugly side of humanity to treasure the combination of prowess and beauty. By taking on the Athanor of Swan, they promote and emphasize physical poise and magnificence within a particular element.

Trait Affinities: Athletics, Dexterity or Manipulation (choose one when this Athanor is first developed)

Promethean Boon: The player can spend one Reagent point to apply his character's full Defense to all incoming attacks, including those from multiple attackers and even firearms, for one scene.

Redeemed Boon: Upon attaining Mortality, the Redeemed character gains one dot of Dexterity, Wits or Manipulation, even if this takes him above normal human limits.



Owl — Intellect (Osiris)

The owl has been a symbol of truth and wisdom for centuries. Ancient Greeks associated the bird with the goddess Athena,

who carried an owl on her shoulder. Her pet and advisor, the bird was purported to whisper hidden truths to her, lending to her reputation as the goddess of wisdom.

While some may consider the Osirans to be cold and calculating, their unemotional intellect serves them well in

dealing with the constant corrupting influences of Flux. Centimani of the Osiran Lineage find that the Owl Athanor lends them additional ability to look at situations logically, a vital trait when dealing with the chaos of Flux.

Trait Affinities: Academics, Intelligence

Promethean Boon: The character gains +2 Composure or Resolve (but not both in the same roll) to resist attempts to emotionally influence him. This Boon aids not only in defense against supernatural influences such as vampiric Disciplines or magical Arcana but also against mundane efforts, from goading and intimidation to seduction attempts. The Boon only aids against external influence, and thus is no assistance against the effects of Torment.

Redeemed Boon: Upon attaining Mortality, the Redeemed character gains the benefits of the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit.

Paths to Deviancy

A Promethean's existence is never an easy one, but even more difficult is the life of a Centimani. While most Prometheans prefer to eschew contact with Flux whenever possible, the Centimani brave its





dangers in hopes of resisting its corruptive influences long enough to find the secrets of Humanity within the chaos. Few succeed.

Some Created come into consciousness with little in the way of mentoring, and are forced to learn the reality of their true nature through painful trial and error. These individuals, if they do not manage to stumble across the path of one who teaches them otherwise, may fall to Flux before they are ever truly afforded a say in the matter. While brought to the Refinement of Flux by a route different from that of those who deliberately choose this Refinement, they are proceeding along a path of enlightenment most highly influenced by Flux and thus are default “members” of the Centimani. These Created are, however, at a distinct disadvantage. They may never receive even the most basic of training about Promethean existence, never be given words to express their own internal struggle between their monstrous nature and their yearning for mortality. While the rare individual may overcome this lack of resources and guidance and successfully traverse his entire Pilgrimage without having ever learned from — or even met — another Promethean, many fall into Flux-tainted decrepitude, never knowing what they have lost. Other Centimani wisely go out of their way to avoid such individuals. The danger of interacting with one who has completely fallen to Flux is far greater than any possible knowledge gleaned from observing her tainted state of existence.

Likewise shunned by all but the bravest and most foolhardy are those who, rather than falling to Flux, gallop headlong into it, knowingly choosing to abandon the constant trials and tribulations of their Pilgrimage. These individuals frequently align themselves with Pandorans either as slaves or compatriots and, having denied themselves the opportunities for growth and renewal through most milestones, seek to strengthen themselves through methods such as the lacuna — preying upon their own kin in a cannibalistic orgy of murder and mayhem that drives them even further away from their Magnum Opus. Few truly understand what drives a Promethean onto this path of depravity, but it can happen for a multitude of reasons. Some see the horrors that humanity visits upon itself and cannot bring themselves to strive to join its ranks any longer. Some have simply lost faith in the possibility of achieving what seems to be a distant and unattainable goal. They leave the Pilgrimage out of hopelessness, depression and despair. Others come to revel in their “superhuman” abilities and eschew trading them away for something as elusive as a mortal soul. These individuals are particularly dangerous, as they have little compunction about preying upon those seen as weak.

For many, the Refinement of Flux leads only away from, rather than toward, the Magnum Opus. While many Prometheans begin studying Flux with the intention of utilizing the frenzied insights divined there to better understand

the chaotic and destructive side of humanity and, hopefully, bring them closer to their own Great Work, Flux is entropy incarnate, and it sullies all that it touches. The Centimani who attempts to grasp deeper understanding of what leads humans into the shadows soon finds himself at home in the darkness. In seeking to understand the evils man visits upon man, the Centimani finds himself not only comprehending but also emulating them.

Treading in Dark Places

The balding man in the stained wife-beater glanced outside, his eyes shifting side to side quickly before he pulled down the window shade. He thought he was protecting himself, but that was simply the Watcher's cue to move closer.

With the cooling brick of the brownstone against his cheek, he tugged off his gloves and raised his left hand to the window. His palm rose above the sill, cupping the glass at the corner where the shade did not cover. The protective eyelid shuttering his third eye fluttered open, and a wave of nausea swept over him as his mind struggled to process the extra visual information. He squeezed his “normal” eyes shut and focused on the view from his third one.

Flabby flesh, paler than his once-white shirt, shook rhythmically in the growing darkness. The Watcher could not see his face, but he had witnessed this scene from other windows. The Watcher could imagine the grimace-like grin, the bulging eyes, the furrowed brow as the man went about his fevered task.

Another face was visible, however, and it was this one that the Watcher focused upon.

Stretched perpendicular, she wore no expression. Her only movement was the undulating of the bed as the man continued his frantic motions. Her eyes were open, and, for a moment, the Watcher feared she would catch him spying, but her glassy gaze was fixed somewhere far beyond the confines of the room.

At length the man gave a final shudder and withdrew. The room was still, the girl not moving, not even to pull down the flowered flannel nightgown her father had shoved up around her waist.

Behind the Watcher, a streetlight flickered to life, its blue-white beam streaming through the crevice between the window sill and the shade. It struck the girl's face, where a single silver stream leaked from the corner of her eye to her pillowcase.

The Watcher lowered his hand and slipped away into the dark. This is humanity, he mused silently.

In attempting to understand humanity through Flux, Centimani find themselves in the underbelly of civilization: slums, street corners and back alleys, of course, but also the seemingly respectable homes where adults abuse their children and each other, the prisons and courtrooms where the guilty and the innocent are tried and punished with equal apathy and anywhere that the darker side of human nature runs amok. Centimani are drawn to organizations that exhibit apathy toward or take advantage of those in need, from



corrupt churches to “public aid” organizations that spend more time with red tape than aid, propagating inhumanity in “humane” endeavors. Likewise, Centimani are also often called to study subjects that humans consider taboo. Sites associated with death and dying or with sex are often favorite Centimani haunts; hospitals, military bases, slaughterhouses and packing plants, morgues, funeral homes, brothels and back alleys often teach the Centimani more about human nature than most humans are ready to understand. In the cesspool, amidst the hatred, stupidity and desperation, the Centimani hope to find the key to transforming their own monstrous natures into something greater.

Unfortunately, while humankind’s coarser side is as much a part of it as the nobler one, holding on to one’s Humanity while dealing with the inhumane is difficult. More often than not, the path to Magnum Opus is not discovered through the Refinement of Flux, but that does not mean that the Great Work is impossible. More often, however, Centimani who will eventually complete their Great Work do so after having left the Flux path for other Refinements.

On to Other Roads

Although others whisper about the Hundred Handed having been dragged into, seduced by or become addicted to the profane Refinement of Flux, there are as many reasons for a Promethean to become a Centimani as there are Centimani. Just as many different reasons motivate a Centimani to leave the Refinement.

For those who have engaged in the Refinement as part of their study of human nature, a time may come when they simply feel they have learned all that they can from humanity’s darker side. These individuals may flee to the study of Mortality, seeking to counterbalance the horrors they have seen and experimented with as a Centimani.

Others may find themselves embittered by their experiences and may seek delve deeper into their Torment, channeling the negativity into growth through the study of the Refinement of Tin. Still others, after a period of focusing their study externally on Pandorans, turn inward. Cuprum offers introspective former Centimani the opportunity to find inner solace and strength after the trials of following the Flux path. Those who dabbled heavily in Pandoran Transmutations often leave the Refinement of Flux for that of Quicksilver, although the alchemical studies may seem constrained after those of Flux. All told, the least common Refinement for Centimani to pursue after studying Flux is that of Ferrum. The study of chaotic Flux often leads a Promethean to believe that something as transitory as her physical form is hardly likely to reveal any true insights into her Great Work. On the other hand, it is not impossible to imagine that one of the Hundred Handed, especially one with an interest in the martial arts, might seek to refine his

Transmutation-enhanced physique, tempering the unique weapon that his time as a Freak has created of it.

No matter where his post-Flux path takes him, a Centimani often finds himself facing a challenge that someone leaving other Refinements does not habitually have to deal with. Overt prejudice from those on other Refinements is not uncommon among the Prometheans. While some Prometheans consider someone who has walked away from the Flux path to be a refugee, even more in need of the philosophical guidance and mentorship of a non-Centimani than any other, others may shun him, refusing to tolerate his company long enough for a Ramble, let alone deeper spiritual sharing.

As well, studying Flux leads a Promethean away from Humanity, despite any efforts she makes to the contrary. While leaving the Refinement for another, she may find that her time as a Freak has left not only physical scars but emotional and social ones as well. Rebuilding dangerously low Humanity can be a daunting task for a newly non-Centimani Promethean, especially when hampered by the prejudices of humans, who react especially poorly to the alien wrongness of a low-Humanity Promethean.

While most Prometheans can pass for human, Centimani who have been touched by or who have embraced Flux’s warping influence are rarely so fortunate. Humans might overlook a missing finger or shortened limb, but are hard-pressed not to notice horns sprouting from one’s brow or an insectoid carapace over one’s torso. Such obvious effects of Pandoran Transmutations do not sit well with non-Centimani Prometheans either — while they may be more intellectually prepared to deal with encountering a tentacled individual who can turn to vapor or bloody goo at will, these manifestations are reminders to each Promethean of his most hated and feared Pandoran nemeses, as well as of his own monstrous nature. As such, Centimani who are obviously Flux-touched are more often viewed with suspicion, revulsion or contempt than with approval. To deal with these prejudices, Freaks (and ex-Freaks) have adopted a variety of means of hiding their natures.

Many Centimani do their best to mask their disfigurements through simple physical means — hats, bulky coats and the like — as well as through simply avoiding close scrutiny when possible. Others expend the time and energy to utilize the flesh-melding abilities of Malleate (or more intense study in the physical Transmutations themselves) in order to reduce or obscure the physical marks of their Transmutations for a time.

A few, desperate for human interaction and possessing Transmutations too severe to overcome with more mundane methods, have delved deeper into the power of Flux and spun from its chaotic tides the ability to mask themselves in Manskin (see p. 53), a Pandoran Transmutation that allows them to appear entirely human for a short time. However, as with all powerful gifts, the cost is commensurate.

Centimani Characters

While it is not unusual for a Promethean to develop a small amount of rivalry or disdain for members of another Refinement, these contentions rarely develop beyond minor prejudices. Most recognize that it is likely that along their Pilgrimage they may find themselves called to change roads and because of this, the animosities among the primary five Refinements are normally kept to a minimum. This cannot be said for outsiders' views of the Refinement of Flux, however. While tolerance levels vary among the members of any group, for the most part, non-Centimani view Freaks with varying degrees of distrust, fear and even hatred. As if the Centimani's interaction with Pandorans and the often highly visible and disturbing effects of their Transmutations were not enough to set the average Promethean on edge, some among the Centimani's numbers are also rumored to be cannibals. These individuals kill Prometheans and consume their Vitriol in order to become more powerful and push their Transmutations even further.

Why then, would any non-Centimanus tolerate the presence of one of the Freaks? What drive is so strong, what need so great as to convince any Promethean to willingly endure the company of one of the Flux-tainted?

First and foremost is the same desire that leads any Promethean to seek others of his kind: companionship. Few enough of the Created exist at any given time that denying oneself the company of any of them out of hand may seem overly harsh to a lonely Promethean. When one is shunned or even hunted by the vast majority of the world's population, turning one's back on any sentient comradeship is a difficult prospect to consider. Even for those who have had the fortune to find and bond with others of their own kind, a new face, a new voice, a new perspective is a rare commodity. Even if that interaction is dangerous and reminds one of one's own deep and inherent flaws, it is still full of potential for companionship.

New perspectives also offer the possibility of exposure to new experiences and new insights on the Pilgrimage. Not all Centimani began their existences following the Refinement of Flux. Most came to it through one of the more traditional pathways, meaning they may have traveled the same philosophical road and dealt with the same dilemmas that a non-Centimanus they encounter is currently facing. And, as few situations in life are simple enough to have only one answer, additional insights, including those found upon the Refinement of Flux, are invaluable upon the Pilgrimage. Contact with and counsel from an allied Centimanus may give a Promethean the advantage of this viewpoint with far less danger than following the Refinement himself.

From a practical, rather than philosophical, point of view, one of the Centimani's biggest dangers — their dealings with Pandorans — may also be one of the largest

strengths the Centimani have to offer non-Centimani. In interacting so closely with the Flux-beasts, Centimani tend to learn more about them, including their strengths, weaknesses and whereabouts, than do those who only encounter them as the target of a Pandoran attack. Some Centimani, through their Pandoran Transmutations, even learn the ability to influence or control Pandorans directly, an invaluable skill. Prometheans who are willing to risk the danger of interacting with Centimani learn tricks such as evading Pandoran attacks by darting into crowded areas where humans' observation is likely to send the creatures into Dormancy.

In general, while interacting with the Centimani is dangerous, such tolerance has its advantages. Whether the gains outweigh the risks is a question each Promethean must answer for herself.

The Pilgrimage of the average Promethean is lonely enough that some are willing to look past the rumors, false or no, and the risks associated with dealing with the Centimani, and welcome them into an alchemical pact as part of a throng. This isn't simply a case of "any company is better than no company," although that sentiment certainly figures into the equation. Centimani throng members also offer their brethren some unique advantages.

First among these advantages is also the largest danger thereof — the Centimani connection with Flux and the Pandorans. This double-edged sword, the knowledge of and ability to manipulate and defend against creatures of Flux and Flux itself, has saved more than one throng from falling prey to Pandoran attacks or devastating Firestorms.

Of the five major Refinements, pursuers of Mercurius are, surprisingly, among the least likely to accept Centimani into their throngs. While Ophidians recognize Flux to be a part of the Pyros they themselves study, most feel that to focus on the taint rather than the purity of Pyros is not only foolish but counterproductive to ever achieving true enlightenment. Adamists, as well, are likely to bar Centimani from their numbers, although if the Freak is able to convince the Mimic of her sincere beliefs regarding using the Flux Refinement as a way of studying humanity's darker nature, the Mimic might come around.

Followers of Ferrum, for the most part, are accepting of Centimani, especially those of the Hundred Handed who have parlayed their Flux-studies into martial skills. Likewise, Stannum Prometheans often find that they can learn much from the Centimani, and many a Fury has found himself walking the Flux path after a long conversation with one of the Freaks.

Copper Prometheans sometimes envy the power of Centimani to alter their forms so extremely, but note that when changing oneself, being able to change *back* is always preferable. From a practical standpoint, many Copper fear the Hundred Handed, for the Pariahs are often



alone, while the Centimani frequently have Pandorans at their sides. The trust of a Pariah, once won, is lasting, but the Copper Prometheans do not extend this trust to the Freaks easily.

Regardless of Refinement or the persuasiveness of the Hundred Handed, not all of the Created are willing to accept that the advantages of including a Centimanus into their throng outweigh the disadvantages. But, for the Centimani, as with any Promethean, the advantages of being part of a throng are undeniable. So, when faced with the desperate choice between deceiving and being accepted, or being honest and facing the next milestone alone, it is not unheard of for a Centimanus to lie about her Refinement. While some bear evidence of their Pandoran Transmutations that make this deception difficult, not all wear their Flux-influence externally. And, with the use of Malleate (or simple disguise), even some who do are able to pass for long enough to worm their way into a throng, hoping to prove themselves invaluable and thus be allowed to remain once their deception is discovered.

Sticks and Stones

Cultures and cliques within humanity almost universally share a tendency to label themselves and those outside of their immediate social group in an “us” and “them” fashion. Many societies have a name for themselves (usually roughly equating to “the People”) and other, often derogatory, names for those outside of the society. Prometheans share this tendency with humanity. While names, formal and informal, exist for those who follow each Refinement, over the centuries labels have also developed along other dividing lines. The largest rift (and thus the largest divide when nicknames develop) is between the Centimani and those who follow the other five major Refinements.

Non-Centimani Prometheans tend to refer to those who follow the Refinement of Flux as Centimani, the Hundred Handed or simply Freaks, while labeling themselves more nobly. Perhaps the most wily (and most insulting) traditional self-naming pattern is for the non-Centimani to simply claim the label Promethean for themselves, using it only to refer to the non-Centimani and refusing to acknowledge direct connection with those who study Flux. These individuals may refer to the Centimani as “Epimetheans,” referring to Prometheus’ legendary brother who married Pandora and thus was in part responsible for her releasing of the world’s ills from her legendary box. These individuals tend to see the division between Promethean and Epimethean as one that runs deeper than a temporary path of study. They tend also be among those with the greatest intolerance for those who study Flux in general.

Others, acknowledging that following a certain Refinement is often a temporary journey and not quite so willing to build a permanent and unassailable wall among themselves based on this classification, refer to themselves as

non-Centimani by using terms such as “Laborers” (tied to the Labors of Hercules), drawing a contextual line between their own journey toward Humanity and the Herculean tasks placed upon the Greek demigod. These individuals label non-Laborers as “Geryons,” likening them to the three-headed, six-legged giant who attempted to stop Hercules from achieving one of his challenges.

Some see the lines between the five major Refinements and that of Flux as being more a matter of belonging or not, with less emphasis on good or bad. These non-Centimani Prometheans find the Flux path so different from the rest that they label everyone who studies one of the five as “Nostertra,” meaning “ours,” while referring to the Centimani as “Advenae,” meaning “foreigners.”

Centimani, of course, have their own traditions. Some, especially those who see the Refinement of Flux as a vital part of their continued Pilgrimage, refer to those not of their Refinement as “Homerians.” This refers to the Greek hero Homer’s blindness, as well to the origins of the word that means “sons of hostages.” These Centimani believe that the Homerians’ own narrowness of perspective and unwillingness to seek wherever necessary to find the keys to Humanity is akin to them being held hostage by their own fears. Other Centimani, most often those who have turned their back on their quest for Humanity, refer to the non-Centimani Prometheans by many derogatory nicknames: “the Lost” (mocking their search for Humanity), “Livestock” or “Herd” (for their desire to return to the fold of humankind) or “Shams” (because of their attempts to pass in human society as one of their own.)

Rumors: Centimani

• “I know it sounds insane. But, she swore he had two mouths. Well, no, I didn’t see it myself, but my ghoul is extremely trustworthy. She thought he was a haunt, but . . . and this was the really crazy part . . . he was out in the day. She had no idea what to make of it.”

• “They’re all freaks, I tell you. That’s why they call them freaks. I met this one, outside of Chicago. You’d have never known she was one until she told you, I swear. But then one night I wake up and she’s kneeling over me with a knife and she’s gibberin’ about how I’ve got all that Vitriol I’m not really using . . . and how she’s so hungry. She’d have done it, too. I could see it in her eyes. You gotta watch the ones that look normal. They’re the ones that hide the freak on the inside.”

• “So, this guy comes in last week, and right off, he’s giving me a weird feeling. He’s got his hands stuck in his pockets of this big ol’ trench



coat, and it's the middle of August. I mean, I'm looking for the gun, sure that he's going to try to try to rob the shop. But then he starts in asking about some old texts, stuff from the Middle Ages and all. And I'm thinking that he's one of those creeps that rip the pages out of the books in the archive libraries when no one's looking and sells them on the black market, you know? 'Cause there's just something shiftg about the gurg. I told him we didn't carry anything like that . . . Just to get rid of him, you know? And he left . . . but I swear, as he walked out, the back of his coat . . . moved . . . like he had some sort of animal in there or something. I couldn't get him out of there fast enough."

Bastards of the Divine Fire: Pandorans



If Prometheans are the children of the Divine Fire, their troublesome, vicious siblings are the Pandorans. Though some Prometheans prefer to view Pandorans as mockeries of the Prometheans' own state, vicious and cruel accidents, some Prometheans have other views on the Pandorans.

Through a Mirror, Darkly

From the memoirs of Anastasia, a Galateid

I saw one of the Mockeries today. Not up close and personally, mind you — in the newspaper, there is a lovely little article on some heiress or other who got it into her mind that she needed pieces of statuary from Europe in order to legitimize her new, massive home. I suppose if she manages to fool herself and her peers that it's "like in Europe," the sheer vileness of building a house that size when there are literally entire sections of town where homeless mothers go to cradle their starving children will somehow disappear.

Of course, imagine my surprise when one of those "antique pieces of statuary" was quite clearly a Pandoran. Oh, certainly, it blended in nicely with the other gargoyles, but I recognized it from a description I'd heard before.

It's strange. She is the kind of person I might very well become, were I suddenly given mortality today. Was this Pandoran a reminder? Is it supposed to be there, forcing me to acknowledge that any time I look into the mirror, the face that looks back at me might not be a beautiful socialite but a lurking horror?



It is fitting, I think, that this woman's home should be an edifice of greed and shortsightedness, with its vicious, wicked mascot directly beneath her nose. She could have done wonderful things for her fellow humans with that money, but she chose to build herself a mansion of absurd proportions instead.

For all my pretensions to morality, I must remember: not even humans are always humane. When the day comes that I look into a mirror and see a living, breathing woman staring back at me, instead of a cold, waxy mockery thereof, I must remember that my cautious Pilgrimage is not at an end. It has simply changed.

It is strange to think of wanting to thank a monster for that little reminder.

My Path, Beset by Satan

Words from an old wandering Ulgan, to a young Nepri

First of all, I do want to thank you for the help back there. I don't mind telling you that I never expected those old field stones used in that wall to turn out to be Pandorans. Those things must have been stuck in that short wall for a hundred years or longer. Blighters.

Those your first Pandorans? I noticed you standing off a way, just looking at them like they were . . . well, I guess they were monsters, come to think of it. Ah, I see. Well, I appreciate the thought, but in the future, you rush in and lend a hand whenever you can. Leave that stuff about "honorable combat" in the picture books where it belongs. You see someone about to get eaten, don't wait for them to call for help. Better to be unappreciated when the fight's over than to let somebody die, after all.

But those were your first Pandorans, weren't they? Heh. Yeah, I could tell. Let me tell you something about Pandorans. Now, this will be the best piece of advice you ever get, so listen: we need those things.

Nope. I am dead serious. See, you're on your Pilgrimage, right? Sure. So am I. Think about that word. Pilgrimage. Conjures up all sorts of old stories, doesn't it, about moving from place to place, finding all the holy places, praying there, to make yourself a better Christian, or whatever you are.

It's the same for us. You find what you need to do. Now, you're sort of blazing your own trail. You don't have the luxury of following a pilgrimage trail or anything the way they used to during the Crusades and whatnot, but that's okay. It should be yours.

Those old pilgrims used to talk about being tempted by devils along the path. "Beset by Satan," and all that. Well, most of the time, they were talking about the temptation to spend some of their money in some cute French girl's bed while they were away from home, or to just turn back and pretend they'd been all the way to the Shrine of St. Ignatius way on the other side of the country.

But the devils that plague us are something real. They let you know you're on the right path. You ever fall from

that path, you ever walk away from it . . . well, have you heard of the Centimani? Freaks that don't undertake the Pilgrimage anymore?

Well, they collect *packs* of the little rotters. Train them like hounds, and those Pandorans don't try and eat them. No, sir. You see? You stop walking that path, they stop trying to eat you.

There but for the Grace of God

From a sermon by the Evangelist, an Osiran

Don't you doubt my words in this, friends. Do you think it is an accident we are all here, in this place and in this time? In the sewers beneath this city — in the pits beneath this very building, that we have all gathered in — are the things we have come together to fight.

But before we go to do so, before we march forth pretending we are soldiers of God, you make sure and remind yourselves of one thing. These things are our fault.

These things are the plague that wells up in our footsteps, and we spread disease and discord in our wake. Our aspirations are noble, but be ever humble. Remember this: we are the fathers of monsters. We are fortunate, because not all men understand this. But when that glorious day comes, when God sees your trails and commends you to the Greatest Hope in all the world, when you become a mortal man, a simple man in the sight of God, you make sure you remember those Pandorans, if you remember nothing else.

All men leave monsters in the steps they take. A simple arrogance here, a biting remark there, hurt feelings left untended to because it is inconvenient to take other people into account: these are man's demons. Because we do not understand this from the day of our creation, God has given us literal monsters — literal, flesh and fang monsters, my brothers! — so that when we are men, we understand it. Everywhere a man walks, he awakens monsters with his simple presence.

Look into those monstrous little faces when we go down there tonight. Take a brief moment, and look. Those monsters are you, brethren. They are me. There but for the Grace of God go I, and the only thing that separates me from those things is my Pilgrimage, my desire to do right before God, to share in his Miracle of Life.

Now, to arms!

Total Sum

From the diary of Archeron, a Frankenstein

It's strange. I found some Pandorans today. Or, really, they found me. I think the rest stop I paused at was a burial ground of some sort. All I know is that while I stayed away from the family eating dinner at one of the picnic tables before continuing on, those damnable little things dug themselves up from the hills that near surrounded the stop. They climbed the roof of the structure I was sitting under, but I heard them snuffling about, creeping around on taloned feet.



I took off at a full run, toward the hills, yelling at the top of my voice. From the quick glance I took, that family left pretty quickly. Probably didn't want to be there when I got back. Which was, of course, the point.

Well, not the only point. The other purpose was to lure the Pandorans away, and that worked like a charm. I heard them impact the turf behind me from their leaps off the roof, and I finally let them catch up to me out in the hills, away from the sight of the highway and anyone at the rest stop.

It was ugly, but they were pretty weak from their Dormancy, I think. They didn't have the strength to use their powers, and I had plenty. The one that managed to take a big, fat bite out of my leg lasted the longest, probably because he managed to eat on me some.

I'm sitting alone at the picnic table the family abandoned. One of the kids dropped a teddy bear under the table, and they forgot it in their rush to be out of here. It's pretty cute, with glossy eyes, and wearing a set of blue overalls.

I hate to think of what might have happened if this picnic table had just happened to be right over the spot where those monsters burst up through. The family probably would have just been an appetizer.

I can't help but think — what if these little bastards are the world's attempt to zero sum us? What if we exist, but we shouldn't, and the world is introducing these monsters in an effort to wipe us out? We're a big positive number (or hell, maybe a negative number) away from the "zero" that is "the normal world" on my imaginary numerical scale of reality.

What if Pandorans exist to make us go away, to make the Freak Math come back to zero, so that we cease existing, and they cease existing, and the world is a safer place all around?

Who knows. Stupid questions. Stupid diary. I'm going — chances are good they called the Highway Patrol on their way out, and I'd rather not explain the big bite taken out of my thigh and why I'm not *really* bleeding.

The Qlippoth

From a letter by Josiah Stone, Tammuz, to his throng-mates during a time of separation

My head is on fire, it feels like. I am raised up and short of breath, and it feels like I'm one step closer to understanding our Great Work. My Great Work.

Let me backtrack. I met an old gentleman at the library today, and we were exploring the same part of the stacks. He chuckled and came over to introduce himself. I'm not sure how, but he know what I was. He even made a joke.

"You hide your Word on your forehead very well," he said. When I just looked at him, he explained to me that according to legend, a golem has the word "emet" (Hebrew for "truth") upon its forehead, and that the only way to destroy it is to erase the first letter, so that the word become "met" (Hebrew for "dead").





I've spent the last two days at his house. We talk long into the night, and I stay up reading once he goes to bed. I fear that constant exposure to me will be detrimental to him, but he says he is unafraid. Still, he seems more short-tempered with me lately, and I shall likely leave soon.

He told me about the kabbalistic Tree of Life, a diagram that supposedly traces the "emanation" of the Divine Fire into less and less divine manifestations. He said that it is the duty of wise men to try and climb the ladder once more, to become closer to G-d, but there is an abyss that men cannot cross, for true godhead lies on the other side, and living men cannot know it.

But this is the exciting part! He told me that his own master in kabbalistic lore was once one of us! He says that the man claimed to have used the Tree of Life to help structure his Pilgrimage, and that once he had attained Kether, the top of the Tree of Life, he found the Elpis. He says something about the top of one Tree of Life being the bottom of one above it — that once we have achieved the top of our "Tree," we then stand at the bottom of the Tree other mortals use.

He even mentioned Pandorans! He calls them the *qlip-pothim*. He says that each of the spheres on the Tree of Life has a negative association, an inverse, if you will. He says that as we strive to embody each of the spheres, we will find those things that embody the *qlip-pothim* opposing us.

I've very excited about this, and hope to get as much information from him as I can. I hope to see you all again soon. In Madrid, then, as we've planned, in one year.

Best Wishes,

Josiah Stone

The Mockeries

There are many theories about the nature of Pandorans, and the role they fulfill in the world. Some would paint them as warning stories about what Prometheans might become. Others believe Pandorans to be simple by-products of the existence of the Created, existing simply because Prometheans exist, in a sort of strange cosmic balancing act. Still others believe that, like most of the permanent marks the Created leave in their wake, Pandorans are mistakes and abominations, the result of being an unnatural thing trying to live in a natural world.

Pandoran Forms

Although Pandorans usually begin their existences as pieces of human physiology, they are not necessarily humanoid in shape. In truth, once Pandorans emerge from their Chrysalis, they can bear nearly any form.

- **Humanoid:** Some Pandorans are humanoid in shape, if not human in appearance. Most Pandorans are smaller than the average human, however, so they end up appearing as strange diminutive things, devils, elves and even

aliens. A few European Prometheans still tell the story of the massive horde of Pandorans inadvertently awakened by a young Promethean within a hollow hill in central Ireland. The little creatures that swarmed up out of the hill might easily be mistaken for brownies, buckawn and other "Good Neighbors" of Irish folklore.

- **Animals:** Other Pandorans may take shapes reminiscent of animals, at least at a quick glance (though these quick glances don't save them from Dormancy when the human mind registers the Flux within them). The precise nature of the shape often depends on a variety of things, but some Centimani maintain that the shape of an animalistic Pandoran is often influenced by the humour within the Mockery and the origins of the Lineage that spawned the Pandoran. Sebek Pandorans have been known to take the form of watery creatures and desert creatures, while some Render Pandorans have been seen in shapes reminiscent of taiga and steppe animals such as antelope and foxes.

- **Other:** Perhaps the rarest of the Pandorans are those whose shapes aren't overtly animalistic or humanoid. These strange creatures may exist as animate swarms, liquids or even clouds of particles or gas. Seemingly intelligent and certainly predatory pools of ooze, or masses of tendril that seem to be nothing more than tangled masses of animate muscle fiber with a few sensory organs have all been encountered.

Creatures Without Life

The natural state of Pandorans is that of Dormancy, although Prometheans rarely have the luxury of witnessing it. During those times that Pandorans are not animate due to the agitation of their Flux by Azothic radiance, they are inanimate, unmoving and thoroughly not living.

Many Prometheans are forced to acknowledge that if they did not exist in the world, the world would have fewer monsters in it. But, though a few of the Created allow themselves the luxury of guilt over something like that, most Prometheans take a much more useful sense of ownership over the plague that is Pandorans: if the Prometheans awaken the Pandorans, the Prometheans put the Pandorans down.

Most Prometheans hold themselves responsible when they awaken a pack of the monsters, and excise that responsibility through the destruction of the Pandorans and the righting of any damage they may cause, to the best of the Prometheans' ability. It is said that the Ulgan even have a directive, supposedly passed down from Tengri, that tells them to "Walk softly through the world, and blur the marks of your passage." The Ulgan include Pandorans in this responsibility.

Prometheans have also noted that because of this fact, Pandorans can turn up almost anywhere. From museums where they are assumed to be some sort of artwork or relic



of ancient religion to dumps, sewers and alleys, Pandorans might appear in the most unlikely sites. When they meet, Prometheans tell one another some of the stories of these appearances.

Within 24 hours of death, Pandorans return to their Dormant form one final time, and remain that way. Before this 24-hour period is up, though, a mortal who encounters the Pandoran may find a very strange corpse, indeed, and scavengers and other animals might consume some of the flesh, potentially creating one of the *kryptae* (see p. 44).

Pandoran Disquiet

Disquiet is a strange thing. Around Prometheans, Disquiet seems to disturb mortals, causing them to regard the Created as monsters and subjects of fear and hate. In return, this feeds back upon the Created as Torment — almost forcing the Promethean to play out the role of monster. Mortals don't understand why they suddenly feel this hate and fear, but once they begin experiencing it, generally only a short time elapses before the Created give the mortals a reason.

Pandoran Disquiet works in much the same way, though with a different focus. Where Promethean Disquiet creates hate and fear, Pandoran Disquiet generates disbelief and denial. Though the mortal has clearly seen the creature for the horror the Pandoran is, he denies this to himself. This, too, feeds back on to the Pandoran. Instead of Torment, the disbelief and denial manifest as Dormancy.

These two manifestations work together to a potent effect. As the creature enters a Dormant state, the Disquiet works on the human mind, instilling extreme doubt over what the viewer just witnessed. Generally speaking, most mortals subject to Disquiet dismiss the notion of having just seen a monster. The little boy who calls his mommy about the monster is relieved to find that the thing scraping at his window was just a tree branch, after all, and the police officer who swore he caught a glimpse of some horrible, scaled thing down that alley checks again to find that it was just a bit of old masonry.

Sometimes, however, Dormancy doesn't overtake the Pandoran right away. Some Pandorans are particularly strong-willed, capable of fighting off its effects. In such cases, witnesses can only watch, in horror, as the Pandoran continues to act. In some instances, out of fear of Dormancy, Pandorans have been known to suddenly turn and attack a mortal who has stumbled into their presence.

Once the witness is out of sight of the living Pandoran, however, Disquiet begins to work, often in a way to permit the human to excuse what he's just seen. Someone who glanced a little too long at a Pandoran before it succumbed to Dormancy might see hallucinations for the rest of the night. Others might black out entirely, foggily coming to their senses the next morning in a strange part of town, with no recollection of how they got there or what they saw the night before.

In these cases, the witness' own normal psyche forms how this Disquiet manifests. Some Prometheans maintain that the Disquiet takes advantages of the weaknesses in each victim's mind. Alcoholics seek out their libation of choice, drinking themselves into a blackout stupor, while those with some history of mental illness begin manifesting those signs quite severely.

Ultimately, most mortals discount what they witnessed, though in many cases they don't actually forget it. They simply don't believe it. Of course, these memories often emerge at strange times: many of the people in the World of Darkness who have seen Pandorans have memories of the strange, singular experience, remembered only as nightmares, psychotic episodes and drug trips that took a turn for the worst.

The denial caused by Pandoran Disquiet is quite powerful, fed by the warping, madness-inducing Flux that is the essence of the Pandoran. As a result, human perceptions aren't the only things that are affected by it. Even recording devices manifest some strange flaw or disruption. Photographs develop as blurs or simply blackened film, video cameras succumb to a burst of unexpected static or lack of focus, sound recording equipment picks up only a distorted garble. This has no negative repercussions on the Pandoran, or the mortal viewing the media.

Dementia and Denial

Some humans, in fact, have seen Pandorans, and remember the experience. Certainly, the human witnesses fall victim to the Disquiet in the short term, but with therapy, personal growth or simply coming to terms with their nightmares, they realize and understand that they live in a world full of monsters. Why, then, doesn't the world know?

The World of Darkness is full of people, many of them who have seen Things That Should Not Be. Not just Pandorans, or Prometheans who stand revealed in their power, but vampires, werewolves, works of magic by witches and wizards, ghosts and a host of other things.

The fact is, the World of Darkness is a place of fear. No one wants to be thought to be mad, so those who see something strange tend to keep it to themselves. Moreover, on the occasions when someone does stand by what she has seen, and wishes to inform others, those who likewise have seen strange things are the first to suggest therapy and pharmaceutical treatments for the poor unfortunate. After all, it is human nature to want to believe that anyone who has seen a monster is crazy — even if that means believing oneself insane. Better to be mad than to live in a world of monsters.

Of course, there will always be some people who know what they have seen and refuse the refuge of safe self-delusion. These are the type of people who often stumble into the midst of the supernatural in the World of Darkness, ending up either as Sleepwalkers, ghouls and the like or as those short-lived fools who elect to keep their secrets but hunt the horrors (see **World of Darkness: Antagonists** for more information on those brave or foolish few who do so).

Even the most savage and bestial Pandoran instinctively understands that with the attention of humanity comes Dormancy. As a result, Pandorans generally try to avoid being seen by humans. Pandorans lurk in out-of-the-way places, scuttling about only at night or when no one is about. Some Pandorans even understand that humans avoid places that look dangerous, frightening or unsafe, and thus actively search for such locales in which to make their lairs.

Moreover, intelligent Pandorans have been known to take steps to ensure that their lairs meet those outward appearances that discourage snooping. Of course, this doesn't stop the occasional rowdy teenagers looking for some place to party or criminals looking for some place to hide out for a while from stumbling into the Pandorans' midst. But, generally speaking, those who come to such places under those intentions rarely tell anyone where they are going, and even when they are missed, no one knows where to start searching.

Supernatural Beings and Pandorans

The Disquiet of Pandorans does not rouse in the hearts and minds of creatures who are already touched by the supernatural. This is perhaps understandable — by dint of their existences, incredulity is a stranger to them. The hate and fear instilled by Promethean Disquiet, however, is not.

Despite this, Pandorans avoid other supernatural creatures with as much tenacity as Pandorans avoid mortals. The precise reasons for this are unknown, though a subject of much conjecture among Centimani. Generally speaking, though, it is assumed that they are aware of their own fragile existences. Encounters with supernatural creatures rarely present any benefit to Pandorans, as they can harvest Pylors only from Prometheans, and are likely to end in violence. Even if the Pandorans survive such encounters, they likely lead to a loss of Pylors.

Those mortals who are touched by the supernatural, however, do not invoke Dormancy in Pandorans, either, and Pandorans are often fascinated by such mortals. To Pandoran senses, the humans seem mortal, yet the Pandorans do not experience the upwelling of the Flux within that mortals usually bring, inducing Dormancy. Not only are ghouls, wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers so gifted — even mortals with the Unseen Sense Merit (regardless of the Merit's focus) may encounter Pandorans without invoking Dormancy.

The Pack Instinct

When Pandorans gather, they work well with one another. Though, as a general rule, they are not possessed of higher intellectual functions until they are fairly potent creatures, Pandorans possess a razor-sharp pack instinct, working together toward the same goal.

This pack bond is formed once Pandorans have spent time in one another's company. Generally speaking, this takes about a week, though a new Pandoran that accompanies others in the pack hunting or defending the lair generally melds into the pack bond fairly quickly.

Hierarchy in a Pandoran pack is established almost immediately, with the most powerful Pandorans dominating those beneath them. The Pandoran with the highest Rank in the pack runs it, with only occasional scuffles among members of the pack necessary to reassert occasional dominance.

The exception to this is *Sublimati*. *Sublimati* do share in this bond, but only if they dominate the pack. Upon finding a Pandoran pack, the *Sublimatus* must usually kill the highest-Ranking Pandoran in the pack before the others will accept the domination of the *Sublimatus*. For this reason, many *Sublimati* learn the Pandoran Transmutation "Mantle of Lordship."

The pack bond is really only of benefit while members of the same pack are within one another's proximity. Members of the pack do not telepathically know what others in the pack are doing a block away — but on the same floor of a building, or in the same junkyard, for instance, to be seen by one is to be seen by them all.

This pack bond has a few benefits:

Purity of Intention: Pandorans are characterized as frighteningly silent creatures, seeming moving and acting of one accord, and with good reason — the pack bond allows the pack to know what the leader of the pack desires accomplished, and all contribute to the best of their ability to fulfill this. Pandorans gain a bonus equal to the Intelligence of the pack's leader (or +1, whichever is greater) when performing teamwork actions (see p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Pandorans not in the vicinity of the pack leader do not gain this benefit.





Awareness: Any time one of the Pandorans in a pack notices something, all the Pandorans that the Pandoran shares the pack bond with in its proximity are aware of it. Thus, it is quite difficult to surprise Pandorans. This operates whether or not the pack leader is in the area.

It should be noted that Prometheans — even the Centimani — cannot come to dominate packs in this fashion. They must use the “Mantle of Lordship” Transmutation in order to seize control of a pack, and even then they do not truly share in its pack bond, unless they possess the “Horde in Unity” Pandoran Transmutation (see p. 51).

Pandoran Agenda

The “desires” of the Pandorans, as presented in **Promethean: The Created**, seem simple enough. They wish to survive, and to do so they require Pyros. Prometheans are a renewable source of Pyros, should a Pandoran (or a pack of them) be able to trap one, or at least a good, filling meal if the monsters have to kill the Created.

But what if the Storyteller needs something other than a simple fight? Not all Pandorans are mindless creatures — some, like the Lady of Chains, are even savvy enough to form cults (see the Cult of Chains later in this chapter). At heart, this desire for worship goes back to a desire to survive; by expanding her influence, the Lady of Chains has minions to hunt Prometheans for her.

Any Pandoran’s motivations relate back to its desire to stay alive, if its existence can truly be called “life.” The way in which this desire manifests, however, can vary based on the Pandoran in question, the circumstances in which the beast finds itself, and the needs of the story. Following are some suggestions as to courses of action that a Pandoran or a pack of Pandorans might take. Would these plans actually work? Some of them bend or break the “rules” of **Promethean**. That’s not really important, though. A Pandoran trying to claw out a Promethean’s innards and replace them with its own bilious fluids in hopes of turning the Created into a Pandoran might have no hope of actually achieving its goal, but that’s small consolation to the victim.

Reproduce

Pandorans cannot make more of their own, because their genesis is the failed creation of a Promethean. Since Pandorans lack Azoth, they cannot perform the generative act, not even with the same slim chance that Prometheans have. But that doesn’t mean that a Pandoran couldn’t try to create more like itself, especially if it has evolved to the point that it remembers something of its “birth.”

How might a Pandoran go about trying to reproduce? Connecting reproduction to sexual activity is probably quite beyond most of the Mockeries, although a more humanoid Pandoran might try rutting with another of the beasts (or even a captive Promethean) if it had the chance to observe

living creatures engaging in sex. Pandorans, though, recall their births as an influx of the Divine Fire, a brief sense of consciousness, and then searing pain as the body shredded itself and Flux took over. Therefore, the way to create more Pandorans is to infuse human flesh with Flux. If a Pandoran grasps this concept, it might undertake any number of unsavory practices in an attempt to make a family.

For instance, if a reproduction-minded Pandoran captures a Promethean, it might hollow the unfortunate Created out and try to cough up some “humour,” in much the same way a Promethean would when attempting the generative act. The humour thus produced is nothing more than acidic waste, but as mentioned above, that’s no comfort to the now-hollow Promethean. A Pandoran with the Sanguine Victory Transmutation (see p. 248 of **Promethean: The Created**) might simply assume its liquid form and force its way into a Promethean’s body through any available orifice, all in hopes that its natural Flux will pollute the Promethean’s Azoth and cause her body to sunder itself.

Another option, of course, is for the Pandoran to take the captive Promethean to a place with a Flux Rating (see p. 19) and immobilize her there, letting the natural taint of the area do the work for it. The Pandoran might even get the idea that if the Promethean were already divided into smaller chunks, she would take on the Flux-taint faster.

Farm

Most Pandorans hunt and feed from Prometheans, either by consuming their Pyros-rich flesh or tearing them open to feast on precious Vitriol. Some intelligent Pandorans even get the idea to immobilize Prometheans so that their bodies become lasting resources. But what if an especially cunning Pandoran got the idea to create a *sustainable* resource?

Consider: An Ulgan investigating a haunted house awakens a small pack of Pandorans. They attack and immobilize him, chaining him in the basement and tearing out his tongue so he cannot scream. Because the house is haunted, the Ulgan regains Pyros every night (as well as every morning when the sun rises), and since he is only immobilized, not being actively harmed, he is a constant food source. He will eventually starve to death unless his captors think to feed him, but if they resist the urge to gorge upon his flesh, he will heal any damage they inflict in a few days. A Promethean in such a predicament could conceivably languish until the Pandorans grow powerful enough that they don’t feel they need him anymore (at which time they might eat him, or try to use his body to create more Pandorans). Then again, the Promethean might be overcome by the Flux around him and become a Centimani, potentially embracing his captors and eventually coming to rule them. This isn’t to suggest that Flux exposure can force a Promethean to change his Refinement, merely that prolonged time in such a place might induce a kind of “Stockholm Syndrome” in the unfortunate Created.



Another method of using Prometheans to “farm” Pyros plays more to the Pandorans’ tendency to hunt. If a Pandoran pack could render a Promethean unable to move under his own power but keep him otherwise mobile, they could not only retain their own freedom of movement (see *Mobility*, below) but have a “fly trap” in the form of Azothic radiance. As other Prometheans search out the source of the Azoth they feel, the Pandorans lay traps and ambushes, picking them off and consuming their Pyros. This only works until they try to attack a Promethean too powerful to handle or savvy enough to escape, but the tactic could well claim the lives of many inexperienced Created first.

Mobility

One of the greatest limitations that Pandorans have is their inability to move freely. Human population density combined with the scarcity of their prey means that a Pandoran has a much greater chance of succumbing to Dormancy than of finding a suitable meal. Of course, once in Dormancy the Pandoran isn’t dead, but the Pandorans would much rather stay active. As such, an intelligent Pandoran might try to seek out a means of moving undetected through the human masses.

The Pandoran Transmutations presented in **Promethean: The Created** and in this book provide a few options, but an enterprising Pandoran might come up with something else. A small Pandoran might tear open a Promethean, crawl into her chest cavity and try to use her as a mask or a vehicle. This approach is especially appropriate for Pandorans capable of assuming liquid or gaseous forms, or for creatures such as the Chaos Swarm (p. 107).

Another method of increasing mobility is to have a moving source of Azoth. A Pandoran might follow a Promethean around, not feeding on her (or letting her go after attacking her, at least), but attacking any other Created that comes near her. A *Sublimatus* or Centimanus might incapacitate a Promethean and keep her in a vehicle, in effect creating a mobile Azothic radiance field. The enterprising Pandoran, now almost immune to Dormancy, could travel around awakening others of its kind to work toward whatever long-term goal it likes.

Revenge

Every Pandoran could have been a Promethean, and vice versa. Most Pandorans don’t fixate upon their creators for any reason than food, but an especially aware Pandoran might feel anger or envy towards its Promethean “siblings.” If a creator failed in one attempt to create a Promethean but succeeded in a subsequent one, the monsters thus birthed might recognize the Azoth of their creator in another Promethean, and strive to take it, either out jealousy, spite or a perverse kind of hope that in consuming this Promethean, they might gain what he had.

Hunting down one particular Promethean out of this deranged sibling rivalry takes on a different tone than the

usual Pandoran hunt. The Pandoran doesn’t necessarily want to eat its target (though that’s probably part of the plan), so much as inflict as much pain on him as possible. Depending on the Pandoran’s Mockery, this might include setting him on fire and letting him put himself out, attacking any humans with whom the Promethean has formed a relationship (a dangerous gamble, given the problem of Dormancy) or trying to turn her throng against her by pretending to be in the Promethean’s service.

As an aside, a Promethean who confronts a Pandoran “sibling” almost certainly completes a milestone.

Service

Other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness might appreciate having servants with a Pandoran’s ferocity. Vampires and mages, especially, might find a way to make use of these creatures, and since they do not send Pandorans into Dormancy (see p. 41), a mutually agreeable arrangement might be reached. A Pandoran in service to a supernatural being might act as a spy, a bodyguard or an assassin. Some inquisitive beings might even prefer to use Pandorans as test subjects in a quest to learn about Flux or Pyros. As long as a Pandoran is getting a safe place to live and some Pyros to feed on, it probably considers itself lucky.

But there’s the rub: Where would a mage or a vampire get Pyros? A mage’s Mana or a vampire’s blood, though mystically potent, is not charged with the Divine Fire and therefore carries no appeal for the Pandorans. In order to feed a Pandoran servant, a master needs a Promethean. A Pandoran might therefore work for shelter and safety rather than Pyros, unless the master for whatever reason has also captured one of the Created. Such a situation, while not impossible, stretches the boundaries of plausibility just a bit.

Far more likely is the Pandoran who goes deliberately searching for a Centimanus, or, for truly conniving monsters, tries to nudge a Promethean away from her present Refinement and toward the path of Flux. In the presence of such a master, the Pandoran is not only resistant to Dormancy but is never far from a potential meal.

Designing a Pandoran

Promethean: The Created and **Pandora’s Book** both contains several examples of fully described Pandorans. Future **Promethean** supplements will present others. While these monsters can be useful in a pinch, if the Storyteller can personalize her Pandorans a bit, she can create truly terrifying foes that will have her players glancing over their shoulders at the end of the chapter. Presented here are some thoughts on how to do that.

• **Mockery:** The write-ups for the five Mockeries on pp. 227-235 of **Promethean: The Created** should give you a good start. Each of those write-ups contains some descrip-



tions, habits and an evocative example of the Mockery. But beyond a simple base, the Mockery also determines much about that particular Pandoran's history, because it determines the Lineage of the would-be creator. From there, you can start to make some decisions about that Pandoran's back story.

- **History:** Why did the generative act go wrong? From a game mechanics perspective, it all comes down to one roll, but in terms of the story months of planning and energy go into the making of a new Promethean. What happened at the last second to foul it up? Was the creator distracted? Did she simply not care? Was she unwilling to let go of her Divine Fire, afraid of becoming human at last? Did she obsess over the notion of creating Pandorans to the point that she made it so? Was she *trying* to create these monsters, either because she followed the Refinement of Flux or because she wished to end her lonely existence?

And what happened after these creatures burst forth? If the creator still survives, maybe she holds some critical insight into the Pandorans, or maybe they still have her captive somewhere. Did the Pandorans flee, or did they fall immediately into Dormancy and remain there until awakened by your troupe's characters?

- **Appearance and Transmutations:** A Pandoran's outward appearance should help determine its concept and its powers. The Impalpable, for instance (p. 108), are the creatures that never seem to appear directly, but skitter around in the periphery of one's vision, only striking when their victims are truly terrified. The Great Albino Alligator, however (p. 231 of **Promethean: The Created**) is a decidedly non-subtle creature, exploding from the water with a roar to drag its prey back to its lair. In both cases, the Pandoran's Transmutations follow its concept and visage.

- **Connection to the characters:** As mentioned above, any Promethean might have a Pandoran "sibling." How might a character recognize such a creature? A Frankenstein might recognize in a Torch-Born a left hand identical to his right one. A Galateid facing one of the Silent might her own profile mirrored, as though their flesh was somehow sculpted by the same hand. A Tammuz struggling against an Ishtari might see the Word of God, now horribly marred, written on the beast's forehead in the same handwriting as upon her own.

But sharing a creator isn't the only way in which a Pandoran might connect with a Created character. Maybe the Pandoran has been hunting the Promethean for some time and has collected trinkets from people in whom the Created has formed some kind of connection, Disquiet notwithstanding (with or without actually harming the person, depending on the Pandoran's ability to strike without succumbing to Dormancy). An Ulgan corners a Render and sees that it has deep folds of skin on its chest

much like pockets, and in each pocket is a set of keys, a piece of jewelry, or even something more gruesome like a fingernail or a used tampon. Each of these items came from someone the Ulgan knows - are these people now dead? How many others has the Riven brought doom upon?

- **Involve the players:** If your players enjoy making characters, ask each of them to create a Pandoran. Tell them, "Imagine that the generative act that created your Promethean character went horribly wrong. Stat out the Pandoran (or Pandorans) that would have resulted." Give them guidelines as to the Pandorans' Rank if you wish, but beyond that give them a copy of this book and **Promethean** and let them have fun. And then, of course, later in the chronicle you can hit them with those creatures and watch their faces as they recognize what's coming for them.

Flux-Spawn

Flux is nothing if not pervasive. It clings tightly to living things. It is, as an aspect of the Divine Fire, ineffable and constant, and changes what it touches. A variety of strange things that are not properly Pandorans, Prometheans or *qashmallim* exist that seem touched by Flux. Though rare, they have entered the "urban legend" of the Prometheans, who trade stories with one another about them.

Kryptae

In places where the Flux has risen sharply or where an object or creature heavily tainted by Flux has been absorbed back into the local environment, the *kryptae* may rise. The *kryptae* seem to be normal plants or animals. In fact, *kryptae* are quite healthy, though a medical examination of them always reveals a bezoar within them, a small, hard stone of calcified matter at the core of their bodies.

In truth, this solid matter is their body's reaction to storing Flux within them — though it can't be said to actually be "physical Flux," it is a substance that reflects the presence of a spiritual principle, much as the strange liquid that forms in Promethean bodies called Vitriol is a physical reflection of the potential for change the Promethean possesses within.

These animals and plants go through their life processes normally, until they encounter Azothic Radiance. At this point, the bezoar within them uncoils, rapidly dissolving into their form, transforming them into the *kryptae*. They develop a low cunning and a hunger for the Azoth-infused flesh of Prometheans.

Animals become vicious and predatory, more apt to attack a person who stands in their way than to avoid him. Only predators and scavengers ever become *kryptae*, as a carnivore or omnivore must consume the flesh of a heavily Flux-tainted creature in order to become *kryptae*. Generally, this is the corpse of a Pandoran within 24 hours of its destruction.

Plants, on the other hand, become somehow more intelligent, and animate. Their intelligence is still a low, savage understanding of their environment rather than an intellect, as humans consider such things, but this intelligence is often more than sufficient to lure Prometheans into traps, with the plants remaining completely still until their prey is close enough. Though *kryptae* plants are animate, they do not have the ability to uproot themselves and travel about.

Plants often become *kryptae* because items that are heavily tainted with Flux are left nearby, or because the corpse of a Pandoran, having assumed its final Dormant form, has sat nearby for months or even years, slowly breaking down due to rain and weather, leaching its Flux remnant into the soil.

Occasionally, particularly hardy plants might become *kryptae* in areas with high Flux Ratings, but usually the environmental degeneration such areas suffer precludes this (see p. 27). Such areas must maintain high Flux Ratings (3+) for many months, and the plants that become *kryptae* generally grew there, germinating and growing while the place was already tainted.

System: When a plant or animal awakens as *kryptae*, it manifests a single Pandoran Transmutation. Generally

speaking, this is of a rating equal to the Rank of Pandoran that died there, or the half the Flux Rating of the item (minimum 1). Hardy plants that become *kryptae* by growing despite the wasting effects of Flux in an area receive a Transmutation of half the Flux Rating of that area. In rare circumstances, *kryptae* may manifest multiple lesser Transmutations, the total of which cannot exceed the Rank of the Pandoran or half the Flux Rating of the item or place, as above. *Kryptae* have traits equal to Rank 1 Pandorans, except that the *kryptae* do not belong to Mockeries and therefore do not receive Bestowments.

Se'irim

The Tammuz pass down a legend, of the first of the *se'irim*. The Tammuz tell of a small Jewish community. Its precise location varies from telling to telling. Some say that the community was in the middle of France, while others claim the community was in northern Africa, or Eastern Europe. Others go so far as to claim that the community existed some time during the Biblical era.

It is said that at this time, the community had need of a Golem, so the rabbi had constructed one, or bound one into service of the community. The stories differ as to the reasons for this need. In some versions, the inhabitants



were under attack from bandits; in others, the knights of the local lord were harassing them, or the soldiers of another kingdom. The land was under a blight, the crops dying in the fields that yielded only dust and even the well had begun to dry.

What all versions of the story agree on is that when Yom Kippur arrived, two goats were chosen, as was tradition. One was offered on the altar of G-d, while the rabbi offered up the sins of himself and his family, then those of his community leaders and finally all the Jewish people, laid upon the goat. Then, the scapegoat was sent out into the wilderness, where no one lived, to bear away the sins of the community, as was proper. The scapegoat took with it the hopes of the community that the blight might be eased as their sins were dealt with.

Sadly, this did nothing to alleviate their suffering, and the blight grew worse. Then the hairy demons were first seen. Small, horrible things, these demons bore the horns of their scapegoat upon their brows, were hoofed and had fur the same color and texture of the scapegoat that was sprinkled with blood and sent into the wastes. They came, and began to torment and attack the people.

It wasn't until the seventh day after Yom Kippur that the people realized something: the *se'irim* ("goats," in Hebrew, though also used to connote "hairy/goat-like demons") were tormenting those whom the Golem had aided. On that seventh night, the Golem faced the *se'irim*, and the battle was terrible. The Golem slew them, but not without terrible wounds to itself.

Then, finally, the fear and despair of the people broke over them like a wave, and they understood: their pride in binding a Golem, in allowing their rabbi to use the infelicitous name of G-d to such arrogant ends. They turned on their rabbi, killing him. Their fury unsated, they splashed the rabbi's blood upon the Golem, which lay exhausted in the street from its battle. Then, with clubs and fire, they drove the Golem from their village, sending it into the wastes, to truly bear away their sins.

From that night forward, no more *se'irim* appeared, and the land began to become healthy again. Water and green shoots returned to the land, and though the people no longer had any protection from those they bound the Golem to defend them against, the people understood that this was G-d's will, that the chosen people of G-d were strengthened in this way.

Tammuz and others who hear and tell this story understand that the true curse of the village was the Golem's Wasteland, and finally their Disquiet caused not only their attack upon their Tammuz guardian but also the death of the rabbi. What, then, were the *se'irim*?

In truth, the *se'irim* were Pandorans, though not born of the flesh of humans. These creatures are created from the corpses of animals, in one of several ways. Generally speaking, one of the *kryptae* is involved.

In the case of animal *kryptae*, *se'irim* are created when the dead, tainted animal is buried near other animal corpses. The bezoar within the "living Pandoran" corpse breaks down and poisons those corpses near it. Usually this simply results in a lingering, faint Flux taint. But, when the bezoar was particularly powerful, it may actively animate the other nearby corpses, which rip themselves apart and become Pandorans. These creatures always bear some features reminiscent of their original body. Lacking an Azothic Radiance, however, they likely enter Dormancy immediately.

The *se'irim* in the story, however, likely resulted from plant *kryptae*. When a plant *kryptae* is eaten, its bezoar is likely to be exposed. Should this bezoar be accidentally consumed, it poisons and kills the animal. This animal then splits, tearing itself apart as Pandorans are born from it. As mentioned, these Pandorans always bear features of the original animal body that formed them. Likewise, they most often immediately enter Dormancy, unless there is a source of Azothic Radiance nearby.

System: When animal *kryptae* die, if the bezoar is not dug out of them and destroyed in a fire, the bezoar can taint the area around it, though not sufficiently to merit a Flux Rating. If the bezoar was sufficient for a Pandoran Transmutation of ●●●● or ●●●●●, and there are other animal corpses within a number of yards equal to the rating x5, then the *kryptae* may transform into *se'irim*. The Storyteller rolls a number of dice equal to the rating of the Transmutation; each success creates a single Rank 1 *se'irim* Pandoran.

Likewise, an animal that eats a plant *kryptae*'s bezoar and then dies within the next week might tear itself into a number of Pandorans. The Storyteller rolls a number of dice equal to the rating of the Transmutation(s) possessed by the plant originally. Each success results in the creation of a single Rank 1 *se'irim* Pandoran.

Se'irim Pandorans are born one point of Size smaller than the animal that they were created from, and cannot advance beyond Rank 3. *Se'irim* may join other Pandoran packs, but are considered to be one Rank lower than normal Pandorans for the purpose of determining leadership of the pack. *Se'irim* Pandorans also usually develop only half to two-thirds of the Transmutations of other Pandorans, and can never gain an Intelligence or Manipulation higher than 1.

Risen from Savagery: The Sublimati

The *Sublimati* are the terror of Prometheans: creatures with the hunger and powers of Pandorans but with the intellect and cunning that base Pandorans often lack. *Sublimati* are usually difficult to fool, and often enwrap themselves in layers of plans, plots and contingencies. They

have long memories, and understand their dependence on Prometheans.

Genesis

The means by which a *Sublimatus* achieves that state is important in understanding the personality of that creature. Pandorans are, by nature, bestial and instinctive creatures, existing to feed, and when they are incapable of doing that any longer, effectively ceasing to exist. The means by which they transcend that existence of immediacy frames what they become.

Sublimati who found sentience in the melding of bodies that is the *Præcipitatus* tend to be pack- and group-oriented. The realization of sentience comes as a shock to them in the aftermath of the amalgam Pandoran's dissolution. Their existence has undergone a rapid cycle of Instinct-Unity-Sentience, and they are influenced by it forevermore.

At first, this inclination is focused primarily on establishing and maintaining a pack of Pandorans, easing the means by which the *Sublimatus* might acquire a more permanent source of Pyros — after all, it is much simpler to capture and hold a Promethean with a virtual army of monsters at its beck and call.

Eventually, though, many such *Sublimati* find the urge toward growth and establishment of organization (or at least numbers) growing. *Sublimati* who are born from the *Præcipitatus* understand the value of cooperation and teamwork. They understand the synergetic effect of multiple powerful individuals, working toward a common end.

As a result, *Sublimati* often establish webs of contacts, students, servants and even worshippers, in some cases. *Sublimati* have been known to try and organize other *Sublimati*, vast networks of Pandorans and even humans, usually through indirect communication, but sometimes through the use of those immune to Pandoran Disquiet, or by Transmutations that protect them from the Dormancy while they are in the presence of mortals for a while.

Those *Sublimati*, however, who gained their sentience through the ingestion of Vitriol, literally transforming themselves, tend toward more solitary efforts. Such Pandorans are the result of their own efforts, and often consider the sudden enlightenment and separation that comes from the others of their packs as a result to be a great boon.

In numbers, such *Sublimati* find only base instincts and impulse. It is in individuality that genius and enlightenment comes. These *Sublimati* generally find the most benefit in their own company and effort, refusing to be “weighed down” by a group or pack. They are often loners, though they develop a wicked survival instinct as a result — because they have existed as pack-creatures for so long, nearly all of their newfound intellect is turned immediately to mastering the skills and tricks necessary for a solitary Pandoran to survive on its own.

Heresies and Cults

Many *Sublimati*, in exploring their new, unique condition of sentience, come to strange conclusions and beliefs. A *Sublimatus* is a monster that is not only intelligent but is not human and has no desire to be human. The worldview of such a creature, aligned with the principle of creation that drives both mutation and stagnation simultaneously, is a very strange thing.

As such, *Sublimati* sometimes are responsible for founding radical new philosophies, moral systems and even full-blown religions, usually with themselves in some position of power, whether concealed or — rarely, though possible with some Transmutations — acting as direct messianic figures.

There are a few whose understandings are so powerful or revolutionary that they don't simply draw mortals in — they attract other *Sublimati*, or even Centimani Prometheans. The philosophies such figures espouse are brutal in their honesty and monstrous insight of the world, and it is in their brave evaluation of their own abhorrent condition that others are drawn to them.

A few of these philosophical gatherings are presented below.

The Epimetheans

In direct contradiction of the term the Created often use for themselves, the Epimetheans name themselves for the titan Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, to whom Pandora was given, that she might release the ills of the world into it with her insatiable curiosity. Epimetheus is held as the patron and spiritual ideal of this group.

Prometheans strive toward the future, always looking for that day when they can finally change. Epimetheans compare Prometheans to the cattle of the world, who get through their day-to-day affairs by telling themselves that this isn't the best life has to offer; surely, things will be better once they have a better job, lose some weight, just get over this health issue, get a little less busy. Prometheans are just the same, always anticipating the assumption of their mortality, and for what?

Epimetheans find meaning in the past, looking behind them to see where they have been and how far they have come, rather than focusing on the misty horizon of What Might Be. Epimetheans understand that they should take pride in the heights that they have achieved — once, they were mindless monsters, slaving and snarling at one another for a few scraps of meat from a convenient Promethean body.

Epimetheans take pride in having become more than that. They know, as well, that they will become greater still, usually through cooperation with one another, but they do not really make an effort to plan such things — that smacks of forethought, and they'll have none of it.

As a result, Epimetheans tend to come off as somewhat nostalgic, reflective braggarts, with a tendency toward

impulsivity. When in one another's company, they love to tell stories of where they've been and what they've done, congratulating one another on their successes, and seeking to outdo one another in their heights of achievement. When an Epimethean sees an opportunity, he is apt to seize it, lash it and ride it to see where it takes him.

In truth, the Epimetheans are something of an informal social club, rather than an organization, per se. Membership is by invitation (though no one keeps track of exactly who is a member, making infiltration for whatever reason simple), and the closest thing they have to future plans is their regular annual Midsummer meetings in Berlin in Germany, Detroit or San Diego in the United States and Medellín in Colombia. When Midsummer rolls around, most of the Epimetheans make their way to one of these locales — whichever is closest — to meet with the others.

There, they spend approximately a week in one another's company. Sustenance is to be had, as the Epimetheans take pride in showing off those Prometheans they've managed to capture (though rarely more than one or two per site each year), and at the end of the week, they break off in pairs and threes, deciding to accompany one another in their travels, to see what happens. They aid one another, or end up rivals in some city, until they part from one another's company until next Midsummer.

It is worth noting that Centimani are sometimes referred to as "Epimetheans" by other Prometheans. It is generally assumed that this confusion isn't accidental. It is possible that the Epimetheans once included some Centimani. It is also possible, however, that some young Promethean who'd never heard of a *Sublimatus* assumed this strange fraternity was made up of Centimani. It may also simply be that this organization decided to deliberately take its name from the nickname for Centimani, in hopes of throwing off any suspicion from Prometheans who may find out about it. Of course, the similarity in names could be meaningless coincidence.

However the confusion came about, the Epimetheans do not hesitate to take advantage of it, when they can.

The Cult of Chains

Founded by the Lady of Chains (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 228), the Cult of Chains exists to serve her, though not all its adherents know this, and fewer know what she truly is.

Outwardly, the Cult of Chains is a collection of loosely affiliated free agents, prison wardens and guards, S&M club owners, dominatrices, criminals and a ragtag collection of others. The only thing that binds them together is the fact that all of them have some fascination with the philosophy espoused by the Lady of Chains: that imprisonment is actually a form of sublime freedom.

Flux, as she understands it, is the essence of immobility and inaction. Witness, after all, the stagnating effects Flux

has on the environment, and the very Dormancy of the Pandorans. Yet, Flux is simultaneously a warping, changing principle — implicit in Flux is the essence of madness.

Likewise, imprisonment manifests these traits. The one imprisoned is forbidden from traveling or even, in some cases, moving at all. Yet, the changes that imprisonment creates in people are so dramatic that they are, for all intents and purposes, entirely different people following the imprisonment. The greater the limitation, the greater and more extreme the change.

This, she believes, is the essence of Flux. It is outwardly stagnating, while creating greater transformation within than supposed freedom does. And there may very well be something to this, for the Lady of Chains has demonstrated tremendous knowledge of and mastery over Flux, so much so that she is often sought out by not only other *Sublimati* seeking to learn at her feet, but also Prometheans, particularly those of the Centimani Refinement.

The Cult of Chains exists for one ultimate purpose: to serve the Lady of Chains. Cult members aid one another, recognizing one another through the secret society's ring, which is a delicate chain of tiny, black iron links looped about the finger.

Cult members aid one another in whatever ways they can, but they know that one type of command is not to be ignored: any request made "in the Lady's name" must be met, if at all possible, or the consequences are dire. Though no one dares to name these consequences, nearly every member of the Cult is aware of at least one other member who simply disappeared, usually for either talking about the Cult or refusing requests made in the Lady's name.

One of the primary tasks that the Cult is called upon is aiding in capturing or securing Prometheans for the benefit of the Lady and her subordinate *Sublimati*. Prison vans help transport them, underground sex clubs help hold them, private detectives and underworld informants help hunt them down. Such imprisonment — though it invariably involves some of the Promethean's flesh being eaten — isn't always a monstrous experience. Or at least, sometimes, it is as sublime as it is horrific.

The Lady of Chains showers such attention, conversation and seeming affection on those Prometheans she has imprisoned that they sometimes manifest some bizarre adoration for her, as though the Prometheans in question were suffering from Stockholm syndrome. It is clear that this time leaves an impact on those she imprisons and then frees: such Prometheans sometimes seek out the Centimani Refinement, as though seeking validation for what they have experienced.

Though the Lady of Chains of course uses the Cult for its benefits to her, she has noticed that the Cult has grown into a strange phenomenon — an assembly of explorers, who take and adapt and change her theories, exploring

them in ways she cannot or will not. She has found more that a few of these erstwhile philosophers has increased her own understanding of Flux, so she maintains the Cult as more than a source of money and influence.

The Lady of Chains has taken a single extraordinary measure to ensure the safety and sanctity of her Cult: she has gone public with it. Incorporating as a non-profit organization that often holds fundraisers benefiting women's shelters, literacy programs, support groups for the family members of convicts and other strangely connected programs, the Cult of Chains is a tax-exempt organization. It even has its own website, complete with a forum for users 18 years and older to discuss sadomasochism, bondage and domination and similar concepts.

In this fashion, the Lady of Chains curtails and deals with any strange stories that may spread regarding the Cult's activities and those of its members, making sorrowful public statements about rumormongering among those influenced by puritanical repression and the religious right, calling for open-mindedness and a cessation of such sensationalism and yellow journalism.

The Ethoni

Where the Cult of Chains and the Epimetheans hardly seem to deserve the term "cult," the Ethoni are something else entirely. Founded by a triumvirate of ancient *Sublimati*, the Ethoni revere a spiritual manifestation of Flux, which appears as an eagle. Named Ethon, for the eagle that consumed Prometheus' liver every other day, the triumvirate (called the Sons of the Eagle) claim to receive visions of Ethoni during their bouts of Dormancy.

The Ethoni are based in a small island off the eastern coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, called Isla del Aguila. It does not appear on most maps. In the vast network of sea-caves and other subterranean constructions, the Sons of the Eagle commune in Dormancy with Ethon.

Once a year, on the winter solstice, a Centimani known only as the Acolyte comes to the island, and his Azothic Radiance awakens the triumvirate. At this time, the *Sublimati* who belong to the Ethoni gather here to hear their words, while they feed upon the Vitriol the Acolyte has accumulated in the year since. Others of the Ethoni may bring prizes of their own, to work their transformations in the sanctuary of Ethon, asking the great manifestation of Flux for the wisdom to understand the process by which they are transformed.

At other times, the Ethoni are skilled hunters. They consider themselves to have a mandate from Ethon to hunt down Prometheans, particularly in order to consume their Vitriol. The Ethoni know well the legend of Ethon and Prometheus, and seek to reenact it as often as possible, capturing, binding and chaining one of Prometheus' own, and eating of the flesh.

Understandably in a group that makes a point of actively hunting down creatures as potent as Prometheans,

the Ethoni have a very high mortality rate. When one of the Ethoni are destroyed, members of the cult do their best to track down the Ethoni's remains and bring them, powdered, to spread upon the winds of the high cliffs off Isla del Aguila, freeing the soul to soar with Ethon.



Rumors: Pandorans

* "It is said that Pandorans extract Vitriol not just to change themselves. Some believe that in each city where there are Pandorans, every time a Pandoran consumes Vitriol, the Pandoran comes to a particular place and vomits up a small amount. Over the years, these mix and evolve, until another Lilith is born."

* "Look, it's very simple. They hang around the south side of town. They first started showing up about the same time we noticed all those weird spirits hanging around there. Ever since that weird storm last month, the other packs in the city have been seeing them, too. We need to go into the south side and clean house, and I don't want to hear any stupid stories about the 'Torn Man' this time."

* "If a Pandoran manages to gnaw or claw a limb off you, it's best to just let it go. If you get a limb reattached that was pulled off by a Pandoran, it will kill you some night when you aren't expecting it. Pulling limbs off Prometheans is how Pandorans breed, after all."

* "They say that there is one night every thirteen years when something weird happens in the sky, and all the Pandorans all over the world wake up at that moment. No one knows what it really is, or why it happens, though."

New Traits

Though Flux is many things, it is, ultimately, a manifestation of the Divine Fire, as potent as Azoth. As such, Flux is an agent of change, and both Pandorans and Centimani are constantly discovering new ways to permit Flux to manifest in their forms.

New Merits

The following two Merits both deal with applications of Pandoran Transmutations.

Incrruptible(....)

Prerequisites: Composure •••

Effect: While Centimani are immune to the debilitating effects of learning and using Pandoran Transmutations,



Prometheans on other Refinements are not, and neither are former Centimani. While the power of Flux is strong, individuals with the Incorruptible Merit are more resistant to the dehumanizing taint of Flux than others. Incorruptible grants a +2 on the degeneration roll to resist the loss of Humanity due to learning or using Pandoran Transmutations, as well as on the roll for derangement afterwards, should the degeneration roll fail. This bonus does *not* apply to any other degeneration rolls, only those related to using Pandoran Transmutations.

Permanent Pandoran Transmutations that result in an automatic loss of Humanity are unaffected by this Merit.

Fighting Style: Multi-Limbed Combat (• to ••••)

While possessing more than two arms would certainly seem to have obvious benefits in battle, for individuals untrained in hand-to-hand-to-hand combat extra limbs can prove as much a distraction as an advantage. Untrained individuals tend to focus on one offense or defense at a time, negating the possible benefits of their plentiful limbs. To counteract this tendency, combat-minded Centimani have, over the centuries, developed their own fighting form that uses multiple limbs to full advantage. While not all

Centimani learn this fighting style, it is frequently taught when one of the Hundred Handed meets up with another of like mind and build. A character may also teach herself this ability, although it is much more difficult and time-consuming to do so.

Prerequisites: More than two prehensile limbs, Brawl •• or Weaponry ••, Dexterity •••, Athletics •••

Effect: While not all of the Centimani are adept at combat, enough emphasis has been put on turning their unique physical qualities to martial use for a specialized fighting form to have developed. For the purposes of this Merit, limbs are limited in definition to those that end in hands. Tentacles only apply if specifically designated.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, a character can't have "Manhandle" until he has "Outnumbered." The maneuvers and their effects, most which are based on either the Brawl or Weaponry Skill, are listed below. All bonuses given are in addition to the bonuses granted by the Transmutations "Hundred Hands" or "Tentacles."

Outnumbered (•): Most combatants are unaccustomed to encountering opponents with more than two possible avenues of attack. Defending against three or more limbs





is simply outside of the realm of experience of most foes, allowing the well-trained Centimanius to cut through an opponent's defenses by attacking from unexpected angles. For every limb or tentacle over two, the opponent's Defense is reduced by one.

Manhandle (••): By virtue of having more than a normal quantity of grappling extremities, the character's ability to take other actions while wrestling is drastically increased. While in a grapple, for each limb or tentacle above two, the character may make an overpower maneuver that does not immobilize the target. This is an instant action. Tentacles may be used to grapple or for non-immobilizing overpower maneuvers with the exception of draw weapon, attack with drawn weapon or turn a drawn weapon (see p. 157 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*). Weapons disarmed by tentacles are considered to be dropped.

Protected Attack (•••): One benefit of extra limbs is the increased ability to avoid leaving oneself vulnerable even when pressing an attack strongly, and characters with Protected Attack have perfected the ability to deliver an attack without leaving themselves defenseless. This Merit allows the character to Dodge and attack in the same turn. **Drawback:** A single attack while not dropping one's guard is complicated enough — multiple attacks are impossible. Protected Attack cannot be stacked with Bountiful Blows.

Bountiful Blows (••••): The character's limbs rain attacks down upon his foes. For every prehensile limb above two, he can make an additional attack per turn upon a single target. Each extra attack is made at a cumulative -1 modifier, thus characters with three prehensile limbs may make two attacks (the second of which is at -1), characters with four may make three attacks (the third of which is at -2), five may make four (the fourth of which is at -3) and so on. In the case of characters wielding weapons that require more than one hand, maximum additional attacks are limited to one per weapon wielded. This maneuver does not give Centimani the ability to wield a shotgun or two-handed sword single-handedly or to attack more than once per turn with any weapon. **Drawback:** The character cannot use his Defense against any attack in the same turn in which he intends to use this maneuver. If he uses Defense against attacks that occur earlier in the Initiative roster, before he can perform this maneuver, he cannot perform the maneuver this turn. He is considered to have used his extra limbs to aid in his Defense.

Pandorans Transmutations

The Transmutations of the Pandorans are as varied and diverse as the unholy creatures themselves. A Promethean might make a lifetime study of these beasts (if he is truly brave or foolhardy) and still never see all of the danger they have to offer.

Horde in Unity (••)

This Transmutation is a refinement of the "Mantle of Lordship" Pandoran Transmutation. Centimani who purchase this ability gain access to the pack bond that forms among groups of Pandorans, though only if the Centimani herself dominates the pack.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

In order to purchase this Transmutation, a Centimanius must already possess the "Mantle of Lordship" Pandoran Transmutation.

The bearer of this Transmutation gains the ability to become part of the Pandoran pack bond, sharing in its benefits and granting the experience of his own intellect to his pack, transforming them from a pack of loyal hounds into monstrous extensions of his will.

It costs one point of Willpower to activate this power when the character takes leadership over a new pack. After that point, the bond remains until the pack is dissolved, destroyed or the Centimanius deliberately separates himself from the bond by spending another point of Willpower.

Subjecting oneself to this bond results in the automatic loss of one point of Humanity, whether the Promethean is Centimanius or not — there is no way to merge with the monstrous awareness that is the Pandoran state of mind while keeping one's Humanity intact.

Zeus' Benediction (••)

Even the gods have birthed their own from parts of their bodies. Just as Athena springing from the forehead of Zeus, or Dionysius born from his thigh, the Pandorans that are spawned from the *Sublimatus* aware of this power may share in part of the power of their parent.

Cost: 1+ Pyros, 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Only Pandorans that have evolved into *Sublimati* may learn this power.

When spawning a new Pandoran (see "Division," *Promethean: The Created*, p. 225), the *Sublimatus* with this power may elect to expend some of its Pyros pool in order to make its children both more powerful and loyal to it.

At the moment of division, the Pandoran spends 1 Pyros per +1 bonus to Rank the Pandoran wishes an individual spawn to have, to a maximum Rank one lower than that of the *Sublimatus*. These expenditures are made per spawn, and are limited to the normal per-turn Pyros expenditure limits of Pandorans.

Thus, if the Lady of Chains spawns three Pandorans, as a Rank 4 Pandoran, she may spend up to 4 Pyros. She elects to spend two points on one of her new get, and one point on each of the others, effectively spawning a Rank 3 Pandoran and a pair of Rank 2 Pandorans.



Newly spawned Pandorans empowered in this fashion do not consider their progenitor a rival or predator. In fact, they look upon their “parent” with devotion and obedience. Being poorly treated can still cause them to turn on their creators, but their default interaction with their *Sublimatus* creator is one of subservience and willing obedience.

Azothic Furnace (*** or *****)

Some Pandorans learn to better metabolize the Azoth-infused flesh of Prometheans, extracting the precious Pyros from the flesh more efficiently. But that is not the cause of this Transmutation’s sinister reputation. That lies in the fact that those Prometheans who learn this Transmutation are capable of gaining Pyros from the flesh of other Prometheans, in an act of horrific cannibalism.

Cost: 1 Willpower (None)

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive (None)

Pandorans that learn this Transmutation must “stoke the Azothic furnace” in their bellies by spending a point of Willpower. For the remainder of the scene, any Promethean flesh they consume grants double its normal Pyros.

Prometheans who learn this Transmutation may simply consume Promethean flesh as a Pandoran, gaining Pyros from the flesh’s metabolization. If this Transmutation is purchased as a five-dot Transmutation, the Promethean not only gains the ability to consume the flesh of his fellow Prometheans, but he may stoke the Azothic furnace as a Pandoran with this power.

Flux Attunement (***)

Though Pandorans are naturally attuned to the Flux in an area, breathing it in and allowing themselves to become stronger and faster, they are limited by their own personal power. The weaker a Pandoran is, the less capable it is of using this resource. Some Pandorans, however, are so well attuned to the energy of Flux that they wield it adeptly.

Likewise, some Centimani who have studied the power that Pandorans gain in tainted areas can learn to tap into that power themselves, though doing so does not come without risk.

Cost: — (1 Pyros)

Dice Pool: None (Wits + Occult)

Action: None (Reflexive)

Pandorans with this power benefit from the normal benefits they gain while in areas with a Flux Rating (see “Flux Empowerment,” p. 23). Rather than gaining bonus dice equal to the lower of their Rank or the Flux Rating of the area, however, they gain bonus dice equal to the Flux Rating, regardless of their Rank, to a maximum of five dice.

Prometheans who learn this power must activate it by spending a point of Pyros to attune themselves to the flows of Flux around them and making a Wits + Occult roll.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Fumbling the wielding of Flux in this fashion has dramatic drawbacks. Roll the Promethean’s Azoth. If the number of successes is equal to or greater than the Azoth Rating of the Promethean, this mishandling sparks a minor Firestorm (this is a Maniae trigger; see p. 99). If not, the Promethean takes lethal damage equal to the successes.

Failure: Opening oneself to Flux and failing to master it can be traumatic. Failure at this roll means the Flux ravages the form of the Promethean, rebelling against the Azoth that infuses him. Roll the Promethean’s Azoth Rating. Each success inflicts a point of bashing damage.

Success: Each success on this roll grants the Promethean using this power one bonus die to any physical action or action that involves the expenditure of Pyros, per the “Flux Empowerment” rules (p. 23). The Promethean gains a number of bonus dice equal to the successes rolled, or the Flux Rating of the area, whichever is lower.

Exceptional Success: The Promethean gains a number of bonus dice to appropriate actions equal to the Flux Rating of the area, to a maximum of five dice.

Possible Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	Promethean using this power does not practice the Centimanus Refinement.
–1	Promethean using this power belongs to a throng of Prometheans who adhere to Refinements other than Centimanus.
–1	For every point the Flux Rating exceeds the Promethean’s Azoth Rating.
+1	Promethean using this power controls one or more Pandorans.
+2	Promethean has lived in the area of the Flux taint for at least one week.

Pandora's Lament (***)

As Pandora released all the ills in the world, the presence of the Pandoran may unleash the worst in those unfortunate to encounter it. Those who are tainted by this power become unhappy, vice-ridden people, finding little satisfaction in the fulfillment of their better natures, indulging instead in their worst habits and hang-ups.

Cost: —

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

When the Pandoran remains in an area with a Flux Rating of 1+, the Pandoran’s presence poisons the locale further. Those who are exposed to this spiritual contagion reverse the conditions for the recovery of Willpower via Virtues and Vices. That is, fulfilling a Vice requirement causes the mortal to regain all his Willpower, and fulfilling a Virtue requirement recovers only a single point of Willpower.



This taint poisons the Flux of an area for one week per point of Azoth or Rank possessed by the bearer of this power, or until the Flux dissipates from the area. The bearer has no control over this power's manifestation. All that is required for the taint to happen is that the bearer of this power must spend a single hour in the Flux-tainted area. This taint lingers on those exposed to it for one day per point of Azoth or Rank possessed by the bearer, once he leaves the area of the Flux Rating. Creatures that are tainted in this fashion register to senses that detect Flux.

Supernatural creatures, including ghouls, wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers, are only affected by this taint if they fail a Resolve + Composure roll, at a penalty to the dice roll equal to the Flux Rating of the tainted area.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Not only does the creature not resist the taint, but it takes hold in some part of the creature's supernatural nature, lingering for one week per point of Rank or Azoth possessed by the bearer of this power, even if the creature leaves the area.

Failure: The creature is subjected to the effects of this power for one day per point of Rank or Azoth possessed by the bearer of this power.

Success: The creature resists the effects of this power. This grants an immunity to this specific manifestation of the power for 24 hours. This does not apply to the taints of other Pandorans or Centimani that may be lingering in the same area, or to the taint of the same Centimani or Pandoran if the taint has infected a different area. The creature must recheck every 24 hours.

Exceptional Success: The creature not only resists the power but is rendered immune to it for a week.

Manskin (****)

While the power of Flux is in degeneration, some would posit that humanity itself, despite its polished veneer, is more degenerate than any of the monsters that exist alongside humans. Pandorans, in bringing themselves into alignment with humanity's inherent monstrous side, are able to briefly emulate the form and function of a human being.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

By spending two points of Pyros, the Pandoran briefly aligns its own chaotic energies with those of humanity at large, effectively causing humans to perceive the Pandoran as human. While it does not change its appearance physically, all humans directly interacting with it react to the Pandoran as if it were a normal human being for the duration of the Transmutation's effect, no matter how inhuman the Pandoran's appearance. Indeed, so powerful is the alignment of energies that even the effects of Disquiet are temporarily held at bay in an area, and the Pandoran is immune to being forced into Dormancy by mortal wit-

nesses. This Transmutation has no effect on Prometheans or other supernatural beings witnessing the Pandoran. They still perceive the creature as the Flux-tainted monstrosity the Pandoran is, which makes Manskin ineffective for hiding Pandoran Transmutations from Prometheans. Most Pandorans (or Centimani) who wish to do so instead use Malleate or expend extra effort in their Transmutations (i.e., buy them at the additional point cost to allow them to be turned on and off at will).

No power is without its cost, however. At the end of the scene, the Pandoran's true self is revealed, and the immunity the Pandoran enjoyed is unleashed upon it. It must make the standard effort against being forced into immediate Dormancy (see p. 222 of **Promethean: The Created**) unless the Pandoran is in an area of Azothic Radiance at the time the Transmutation wears off. As well, any Promethean utilizing Manskin must check for Humanity loss upon activating Manskin, including Centimani, who are normally immune to the dehumanizing effects of Pandoran Transmutations.

Visceral Cording (****)

Pandorans and Centimani are known for the bizarre control they have over their physical bodies, but few understand the extent to which this might go. This Transmutation pushes even those limits, granting its bearer the ability to perfectly control the individual fibers of his musculature, separating them from one another, animating them to his will and exuding them from breaks in his skin to entangle his foes, allow him to extend climbing tendrils upward or use as a whip.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

By activating this Transmutation, the bearer begins controlling the muscle fibers that lie beneath the surface of his skin. These changes last for a scene, or until the wielder chooses to release the power. He may perform a variety of impressive and often-horrific feats with this mastery:

- **Muscle Augmentation:** By shifting his musculature, detaching currently unnecessary muscles and reinforcing those being actively used, the bearer of this Transmutation can increase his Strength or Dexterity by +2. Doing so causes the opposing Attribute to drop by -2. Thus, increasing his Strength impacts his Dexterity, and vice versa.

- **Muscle Hardening:** By moving muscle fibers around in his body to compensate for impact, the bearer of this power may gain an Armor Rating of 2. This armor is cumulative with armor from other sources. This shift is performed as an instant action, and he suffers a -1 to Strength and Dexterity while using this ability.

- **Entanglement:** By exuding muscle fibers from a cut in his forearm, the bearer of this Transmutation may entangle and enwrap an enemy. This grants a +2 to all grapple



rolls, but inflicts a -1 to his Strength and Dexterity for all non-grappling purposes. To use this ability, the bearer must inflict a point of lethal damage on himself, in order to exude the muscle fibers.

- *Brachiation*: By exuding muscle fibers from his shoulders, back or arms (generally through a break in the skin somewhere), the bearer of this Transmutation may use muscle tendrils to climb, either allowing them to do his climbing for him, or aiding his own climbing efforts. If he chooses to allow the fibers to climb for him, he is capable of using his hands for other things. He gains a reflexive action each turn that is only used for climbing (whether to perform climbing as an instant or extended action).

If he chooses to aid his own climbing efforts, he gains a $+3$ to his climbing rolls, and each climbing roll in an extended action takes only 30 seconds, rather than the normal minute. Use of this ability inflicts a -1 to his Strength and Dexterity for any non-climbing purpose. To use this ability, the bearer must inflict a point of lethal damage on himself, in order to exude the muscle fibers. See “Climbing” on p. 64 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

- *Attack*: By exuding muscle fibers into a strong, thin whip-like tendril, the bearer of this Transmutation can attack his foes. This may be exuded from the body anywhere he bears a wound, creating a mobile tendril that can attack any opponent with two yards. This tendril can be used to open terrible gashes by making the end of it thin, or may bludgeon opponents with a thicker ball of muscle at the end. This is a Strength + Brawl roll, with a $+2$ bonus (if it inflicts bashing damage) or no bonus (if it inflicts lethal damage).

If the tendril is exuded from the arm, the bearer may use his arm to facilitate the attack; this adds one die to the attack pool. While using this ability, the bearer gains a -1 to his Strength and Dexterity for any non-attacking purpose (as well as to Defense). To use this ability, the bearer must inflict a point of lethal damage on himself, in order to exude the muscle fibers.

- *Other*: This ability can be used for a variety of effects not covered above. With the Storyteller’s permission, assume that this ability can be used to gain a $+2$ to a roll involving muscle power, though the bearer suffers a -1 to Strength and Dexterity for all other tasks not directly related to those the muscles are dedicated to at that moment.

Unholy Repast (•••••)

A Pandoran's hunger is a palpable thing, driving every action the monster takes. While most Pandorans must content themselves with consuming only the Pyros or Vitriol of a Promethean, the beast with this Transmutation can subsume a victim's entire being — body, mind and soul.

Prerequisite: *Sublimatus* or Promethean

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Resolve

Action: Extended and contested (variable successes; each roll is equal to 10 minutes of consumption)

In order to use this Transmutation, the Pandoran's victim must be subdued and unable to move. The Pandoran then consumes as much of the victim's body as possible. Eating flesh and bone, especially from a still-living Promethean, is difficult in a purely logistical sense. Even if the Promethean is unconscious or completely incapacitated, her Azoth resists this violation. The Promethean's player contests the Pandoran's attempt with a roll of Stamina + Azoth. Every roll indicates 10 minutes of the Pandoran chewing away the Created's flesh. The Pandoran has a limited amount of flesh to consume, though — once the Pandoran eats the Promethean's heart, the attempt is over and no further rolls can be made.

Unholy Repast can be used on a Promethean who has been slain but has not yet resurrected himself, provided that the heart is still intact. If the Pandoran eats the heart right away, then Transmutation is resolved with a single contested roll. Assume that an entirely intact Promethean body (Size 5) yields enough flesh for six rolls, or one hour of nonstop feasting. Once begun, the feast cannot be interrupted.

While Centimani and other Created can learn this Transmutation, it causes the automatic loss of one dot of Humanity each time a Promethean uses it.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Instead of the Pandoran consuming the Promethean, the Promethean's Azoth overwhelms the Pandoran. The Pandoran is destroyed, its flesh melting away into sludge. If the Promethean was dead, she resurrects normally (unless she has already done so once). Otherwise, she retains whatever damage the attack inflicts, but her Pyros pool is completely full.

Failure: No progress is made toward the goal. The Pandoran eats the flesh, but fails to metabolize it. If the heart is consumed but the Promethean scored more successes than the Pandoran, the Pandoran fails to gain any benefit from the Unholy Repast. The Promethean will resurrect normally, unless she has already done so once.

Success: The Pandoran scores more successes than the Promethean. The Promethean is dead and gone, whether she would normally resurrect or not. The Pandoran gains the following benefits:

- **Residual Memory:** As the Merit, equal to the Promethean's Azoth. The Merit allows the Pandoran to access the Promethean's highest-rated Skills. For instance, if the Promethean had Azoth 2 and her highest Skills were Occult and Stealth, the Pandoran gains the Merit: Residual Memory (Occult, Stealth) 2.

- **Pyros:** The Pandoran's Pyros pool is completely filled by the Unholy Repast.

- **Memories:** The Pandoran gains access to any recent or significant memories of the Promethean. This is largely up to the Storyteller, but knowledge of the Promethean's creator, Pilgrimage thus far, throng and any Promethean she herself has created are good choices for absorption.

- **Vitriol:** The Pandoran gains access to any and all Vitriol that the character had at the time of death.

Exceptional Success: Significant progress is made toward the goal. No further effect.



CHAPTER TWO

THE QASHMALLIM'S GUIDANCE

Everybody thought Lucy was crazy because she said she talked to angels. They felt a chill when they came around her. Plants spoiled when she walked by. Dogs were afraid of her, and the McElroy kid up and died in her mother's arms when she sat in the same row as Lucy in church.

It only got worse after that out-of-town doctor came to see her. He went into her house and the lights were on all night and he put ice on her forehead and menthol and bugs or something underneath a jar on her chest. That's why I never trust a doctor. A barber will do you just as well, and without the bugs and pinpricks.

Truth is, Lucy did talk to angels. She was crazy, but that was because of the things the angels told her. They told her words that weren't real and they told her about things that used to be and things that would come to pass.

Lucy wasn't like anybody else I knew. She used to tell me she wasn't born like everybody else, but that she just happened. I said, "Lucy that's crazy talk," and I was sorry right away that I said it so I said, "You mean like Jesus just happened?" and she just smiled.

Her smile was so strong. It made her so pretty, so beautiful that I couldn't look at anything else but her and for those scant, scary moments, I thought I was looking at an angel myself. I just had the good sense not to tell anyone about it.

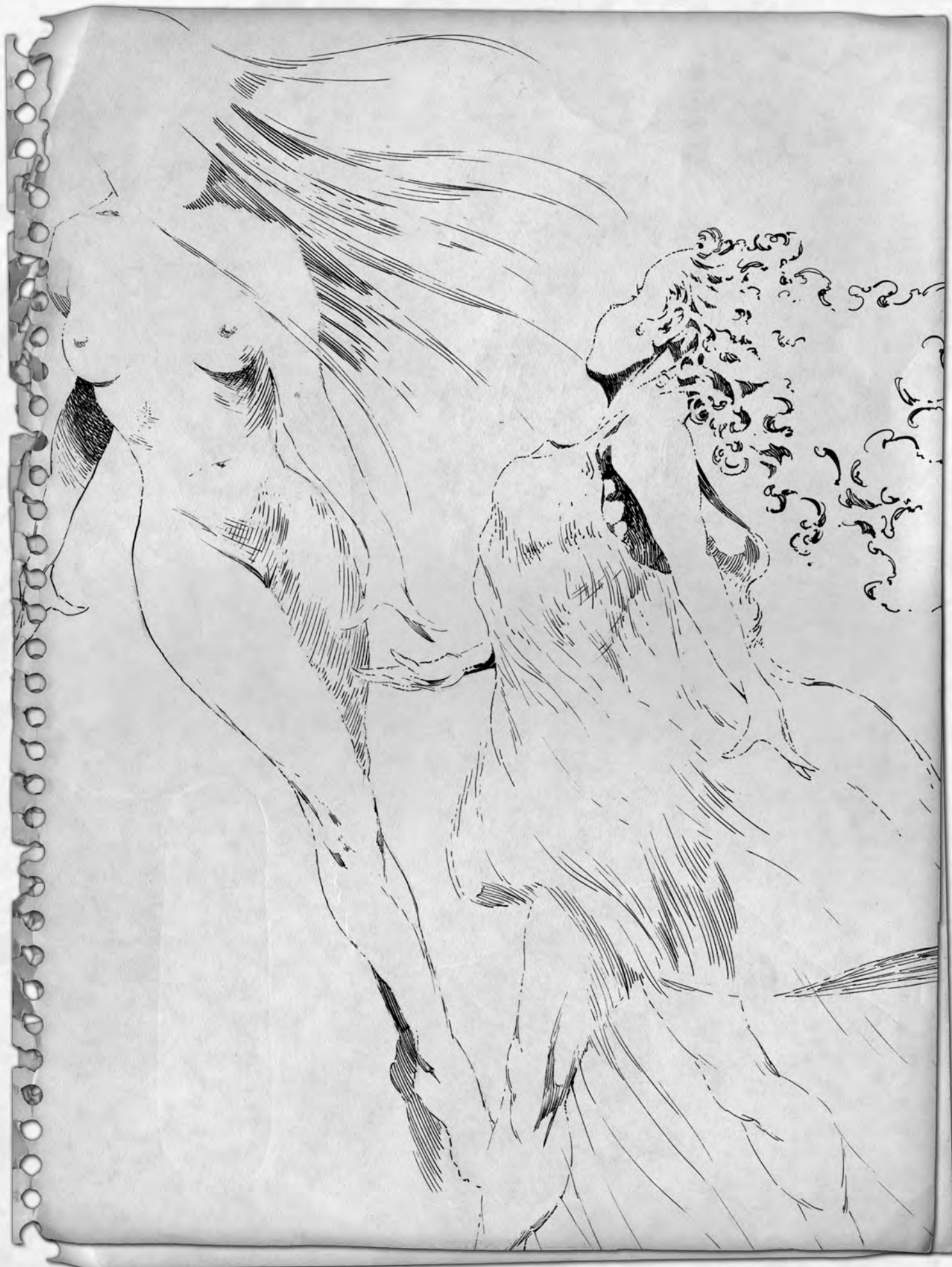
The angels took Lucy back, I know. I went by her house with a bushel full of corn that she asked me to bring and we were going to husk it together. I brought that brush of mama's that I can use like nobody else, the brush that takes the silk right off the corn. We were going to use the silk to make my sister a doll. That's not what happened, though.

I went to Lucy's house and all the lights were off, like she wasn't home. I knocked but she didn't answer, so I went in (because Lucy said that was okay, because sometimes she was in another room and couldn't hear me knocking).

I saw her in her parlor, talking to an angel. She looked at me and smiled like she always did. The angel looked at me, I think, but I'm not sure because the angel didn't have a face. Then they walked through the front parlor window, but it didn't break. They walked up into the sky. I watched them walk up and up in the night sky, the angel all aglow but no light coming from him.

I felt dizzy and I blinked. Lucy was sitting in that rocking chair of hers in the parlor. She didn't go anywhere with that ol' angel. She was dead. I must have been thinking of something else.

Gotta call the doctor to come take Lucy away.



**There exists a
Principle which
transcends being;
this is the One,
whose nature we
have sought to
establish, insofar
as such matters
lend themselves
to proof.**

Plotinus,
Enneads V. 1. 10.

Listen: the Scintillating Flames walk on earth. Invisible burns mark the ground they tread. Change follows them, life and death and evolution and mutation, chaos and order and hope and despair, visions born of fire. Eschatologists call them the *qashmallim* — the Dominions. They speak and souls change direction.

Listen: whispers in the night, a celestial choir in the sky bringing tidings of great sorrow for the world. Each night brings an alternative apocalypse, a contradictory vision. Each day brings a new catalog of minute adjustments in the lives of the people of our world. They pass seen and unseen through little moments of people's lives.

The *qashmallim* meddle. Sovereign emanations of the kingdom of destiny, the Dominions fold themselves into Time from outside. They make adjustments. They alter lives, opinions, timelines. They set things right, they make things wrong.

They exist only for a time, and they only try their hand once. Someone brave and resourceful might be able to stop them. The question is, who would want to?

The Lie

When sleep doesn't come, Sister Stitch sits for a time on the side of the pallet bed. Then she puts on her habit and goes out for a walk.

It's a half an hour's walk around the marina, and then back home. But in front of the door of the boathouse she's made her home, there is a light. A figure made all of light stands in front of her door. Three children, two boys and a girl, none of them older than five or six at the most, are seated on the pavement in front of the figure, listening to it speak.

The Sister hides herself, peers around the corner of the rope-maker's workshop. It's like a girl, a teenage girl with long, white hair and a smile like Heaven and a dress made of sunlight.

The figure's wings and hands are covered in blood. The angel speaks to the children. She talks to them in a voice like music, tells them stories and sings songs, and plays games, and then, as the Sister listens, the angel tells the children what they are to say to their parents about the creepy nun who lives in the boathouse, about how she took Chloe's panties down and where the creepy nun put her hands, and the other things the creepy nun did, and how Chloe and Jack and Danny need to promise to tell their mums and dads about this. And the three children promise.

And then the bile rises in the Sister's throat at the injustice of it all, and she steps out into the square and shrieks out her protest at the lies and runs for the angel, and the two boys run and the angel looks upon her with angel eyes that show no surprise, a face that says, I knew you were there. And when the Sister clutches at the angel's throat, the angel is gone, and there is only the memory of light on the Sister's mismatched retinas, and a child, a little girl, cowering in the doorway of the Sister's home.

And the Sister's bile will not be gainsaid, and she reaches for the weeping, shaking child with fingers that spark and burn, and when the Sister comes to herself, she finds that the angel's lies were mild, harmless things, compared to the truth of what she has done.

And she's sorry, so sorry, but sorry isn't going to help one bit when they come for her.

The "A" Word

So. Are the *qashmallim* angels?

Yes.

No.

Maybe.

We don't know.

The *qashmallim* are not angels. They do not behave as angels. They are not the messengers of the God of the Bible. They are not the benevolent guardians of children. A *qashmal* did not appear to the Virgin Mary. A *qashmal* did not tell Lot and his family to leave Sodom. A choir of *qashmallim* did not appear to Ezekiel.

Except . . . they take the shapes of the multi-headed angels of apocalyptic literature and the benevolent, androgynous forms of the New Testament. They master chariots of fire, grant revelatory visions, bring about virgin births, strike sinners dead, appear in dreams.

But that's only some of the *qashmallim*. Some could never be described as angelic. There are tentacled horrors of the dark, vengeful ghosts, men of cloth and stone who bring terrible

judgment upon the malefactor. There are rains of blood and fishes that hide amorphous, liquid beings that exist in order to infect and destroy.

They meddle in the affairs of humanity, and in the affairs of those beings whose existence revolves around humanity — the Prometheans, vampires, werewolves and mages. But the *qashmallim* don't care about humanity. There is no benevolent force for good controlling the *qashmallim*, only the central Pyros that permeates everything, a force that might not even be sentient, let alone omniscient.

But then, on the other hand, the *qashmallim* have so many of the aspects of angels that perhaps they're the source of many of the stories of angels.

“Messenger” is simply what the word *angellos* means in Greek, and that's all that angels are: supernatural messengers. Tales of angels could well have arisen from imperfectly recalled stories of *qashmallim*. On the other hand, it could just as easily be that the *qashmallim*, tapping into a tradition of world mythology, adopt their forms and take some of their practices because some of them wish to appear as the angels in the stories. Which came first? The divine eagle or the fundamental egg?

There's no way of knowing. The *qashmallim* might be angels, inasmuch as they're the nearest thing that exists. But they might not be, because they're not the angels of myth, not by any stretch of the imagination.

Missions and Thought

Every *qashmal* springs fully formed from the Pyros with a Mission. These Missions are the reason for the *qashmallim*'s existence. The Mission is all. The Mission is the consuming purpose. The Mission is the only vehicle for thought the *qashmallim* have. They cannot conceive of anything outside the focus of their Missions. It doesn't matter what the Mission is. The *qashmal* could be here to destroy a city or to stop a child from dying, to start a plague or tell a Promethean how to reach the end of his Pilgrimage. It doesn't matter. The Mission is all there is for the *qashmal*. When the Mission is over, successful or failed, the *qashmal* ceases to be. It returns to its source in the Pyros.

The Dominions can appear to be independent. Some can pass for human and make perfectly rational conversation with the people they meet. Other Dominions appear to be nothing more than wholly alien monsters, mindless creatures that seem to be nothing more than huge viral infections in the world. Neither of these perceptions is wholly true or untrue.

Strictly speaking, the *qashmallim* don't have a consciousness, as such. They're not really sentient. They might materialize bodies with working synapses and neural networks, they might be able to formulate byzantine schemes that reveal an apparently nuanced understanding of human psychology, physics, politics, magic and all manner of things, but it's an illusion. Any understanding a *qashmal* has is linked inextricably with its Mission. It's not that the *qashmal* has

no interest in matters outside of the Mission. The *qashmal* has no mind except that dedicated to the Mission.

This isn't to say that the *qashmal* can't react to the unexpected. Someone who appears out of nowhere to hinder a Dominion in its task becomes connected to the Mission in that he's become an obstacle. If a *qashmal* is able to make small talk, it's because the act of making conversation, and putting someone at ease, advances the Mission. The *qashmallim* can always communicate with whomsoever they wish. If some appear unable to talk, it's because the act of communication does not further their Missions. They can adapt to new stimuli and change their plans to take into account new obstacles, but they literally cannot conceive of anything outside of the circle of their Missions.

Once

No *qashmal* can ever repeat its Mission. A *qashmal* gets one try and one try only. Some work to a deadline. Some have until they finish or their flames burn out, whichever comes first. However long the *qashmallim* have to finish their Missions, they never try again if they fail. Likewise, the form that a *qashmal* takes is unique, partly suited for its Mission, partly drawn from the expectations that people in any given region have about angels and devils. *Qashmallim* appearing in Kolkata, Shanghai, Tripoli, Rio de Janeiro, Accra, St. Petersburg and Cleveland, Ohio, are all going to be vastly different in appearance and ability. The *qashmallim* don't have to appear this way. They choose to. It makes their work easier.

When a *qashmal* has completed or failed in its task, the *qashmal* vanishes back into the Pyros. Whatever form the *qashmal* took is gone, and although that same form might appear again for a different task, the reborn *qashmal* has no memory of any other existence. The *qashmal* exists as a new entity, with only its new Mission as the context for its existence.

This is one of the strangest things about the *qashmallim*. Their purpose is intervention. If they really wanted to effect change, surely they would be able to intervene again, and again and again until they had succeeded in getting what they want? They don't, or won't. They perform their Missions once.

It's not relevant to any *qashmal*'s Mission to know why it can't do its Mission more than once. A *qashmal* can know it has only the one chance, the one deadline, but why the *qashmal* has only the one chance is irrelevant, and thus something the *qashmal* does not, cannot know. Only the Principle that guides the *qashmallim* knows, and its reasons depend as much on what it is as it depends on what it wants (see p. 69 below).

The Tongues of Men and of Angels

If the *qashmal* wants a person to understand what it is saying, he will. Everyone who hears the *qashmallim* hears them speak in his own native language: one *qashmal* speaks to a German, a Frenchman and an Englishman, and the

German hears German, the Frenchman hears French and the Englishman hears English.

The Dominions don't strictly speak. They may open their mouths and may even materialize with vocal chords, but they don't really speak in any way we understand. They resonate, sending forth messages composed not so much of words as vibrations tailored to their targets.

The fact is, if a *qashmal* wants someone to understand it, he *will* understand it. If not, he'll just hear nonsense, a mixture of white noise and sonic glossolalia.

The Butterfly Effect

The Missions of the *qashmallim* are often directed toward small ends. One *qashmal* might be sent to ensure that a man doesn't get a taxi home before eleven at night. Another *qashmal* grants a dream to a woman, making her turn up in a certain public park at a certain moment to witness something happening. One *qashmal* manifests to make sure that two Prometheans meet, or to ensure that they do not meet. Two *qashmallim* appear to stop a ghost haunting a single building. Another *qashmal* appears to kill a man.

Although the *qashmallim* do work on a greater level as well, preventing or causing plagues and natural disasters, allowing no one to find the terrorists until it is much too late or blighting crops across a whole Indian state, they make no distinction in the importance of their Missions. All are equally important.

The fact is, even apparently minor changes to human lives can have enormous effects on the world. Minor changes to lives can have drastic repercussions to millions of others, and can change world history.

Take, for example, the case of a young Georgian peasant at the turn of the 20th century. He enrolls in a seminary, and it seems that he's going to be a priest. One day, he changes his mind, and decides to try his hand in the secular world. There he falls in with some revolutionary activists. He becomes prominent among them in the space of a few years. He changes his name to Josef Stalin. Later, millions die because one day a young man decided not to stay at the seminary.

A scientist is about to dispose of some moldy samples, but stops as he notices that the mold has killed the bacteria. Alexander Fleming discovered the powers of penicillin and saved untold millions of lives, because of a contaminated slide.

Even people who don't immediately appear to have any significance in the grand scheme of things can affect hundreds, maybe thousands of people. The driver of a car loses concentration for a moment, and he runs over a child, who dies. The courses of the lives of the child's parents, siblings and friends are irrevocably changed. Grief enters into their lives and affects their courses. The life of the careless driver changes, too. He's got guilt to contend with, and his own relatives, friends and children have to contend with the way the he handles what he's done. And then there's the unborn

to think about, the children and grandchildren that little girl will never have. The relationships she'll never start, the lives she'll never touch, the people who might have known her, but who won't now.

A momentary decision has wide-reaching consequences. The "butterfly effect," in which the butterfly flaps its wings and causes a hurricane on the other side of the world, may or may not be true in meteorological terms, but as a metaphor for the way that tiny changes have huge effects on the patterns of human life, it's perfectly applicable. Human lives, and the lives and unlives of those creatures that coexist with and depend upon humans, are a massive network of connections and tangents. A single alteration to the system can cause vast effects.

It's further complicated by the effect of the *qashmal*'s appearance itself. When the Pyros chooses to observe the web of human (and inhuman) interrelation, sending a *qashmal*, things change. Quantum phenomena alter through observation. The very act of looking at some subatomic particles changes them. Even if a *qashmal*'s manifestation is really quite subtle, even if it appears as a human or never becomes visible, the *qashmal* will have an effect above and beyond its actions. *Qashmal* Numina cause odd phenomena to occur. A *qashmal* disguised as a friend or family member makes a difference because she acts strangely. A *qashmal* disguised as a complete stranger changes things in a different way, because the people around have to get to know this new person in their midst.

Sometimes, a *qashmal* only needs to appear in order to fulfill its Mission.

Prophecy and Advice

Many *qashmallim* can grant visions and prophetic dreams. These can be mundane or intensely bizarre, symbolic or direct. Some *qashmallim* reveal flashes of the future to their subjects. Small premonitions can be just as life-changing or life-saving as large ones. A *qashmal* tells a man to take an early lunch break; he misses the armed robbery and so does not get shot. Another *qashmal* predicts that the ball will land on 17 black.

The *qashmallim* also grant advice. If it serves their Missions, they will order people to travel, to go to a certain place at a certain time. *Qashmallim* tell Prometheans where their unwanted Pandoran children are, and exhort the Prometheans to face the Mockeries. The *qashmallim* explain to a military researcher how best to refine weapons-grade plutonium. They stand alongside Prometheans and tell them how to reach the next stage of the Work. The *qashmallim* show a Centimanus how to reproduce a particular Pandoran.

What the *qashmallim* don't do is force people to do the *qashmallim*'s dirty work. They represent a power that may or may not be the Creator of Everything. The force they serve has awesome power, and can do what it wants. But humans have free will, and whether created or evolved, humans



and the beings that live with them and prey on them make their own destinies.

The Dominions are here on Earth to alter things. Sometimes they give advice and instructions, but the instructions a *qashmal* gives are *always* directly relevant to the immediate Mission the *qashmal* is on.

A *qashmal* that instructs or advises doesn't send people to do jobs it can do on its own. It's not the result that's important to the *qashmallim*, it's who's involved.

For example, if a *qashmal* wants to save a family from a disaster, say, a dam collapsing, the *qashmal* might well appear and repair the dam. Or the *qashmal* might appear and warn the family, because it is important to the plan that the family goes through the ordeal of escaping, and that their home is destroyed by the flood.

Another *qashmal* might want two or more Prometheans to unite in a throng. The *qashmal* manipulates humans to chase the Prometheans out of town. The *qashmal* then appears to one of the Prometheans as a friend, telling him where to go next. The *qashmal* appears to another Promethean as an enemy, destroying her home and driving her away. The *qashmal* could, if that were the plan, pick the Prometheans up and drop them in the middle of Death Valley, 10 feet away from each other and let them get on with it. But the *qashmal* doesn't, because the plan is that the Prometheans find each other. The *qashmal*'s job is to provide the circumstances necessary to force the Prometheans to do it themselves.

The Messenger of the Principle (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 252) comes to pass in a vision. It might be, for example, the key to a scientific breakthrough ("if you want to find the key to cold fusion, you need to begin with this process"). The *qashmal* could, if that were the plan, give the scientist to whom the *qashmal* appears the key to cold fusion on the spot. The *qashmal* doesn't. It tells the scientist where to start, because the scientist must be the one who finds what he finds, which may not even be cold fusion, but something entirely different and terrible.

The *qashmallim* can and do appear in order to do their own dirty work. Take Ruby and Mr. Gold (p. 113), for example, whose job is to "fix" an anomaly, and who will do whatever they have to in order to finish their job, or the Dancer in Tatters (p. 112), whose job is to spread a post-modern plague among a group of privileged rapists.

Sometimes the *qashmallim* lie. Not as often as one might think, but they do, granting prophecies that serve no purpose, giving false revelations to humans and Prometheans, for the purpose of furthering the *qashmallim*'s Missions. A mild-mannered man could become a serial killer, if the angel talks to him in the right kind of way. The Centimanus takes advice on how to escape his Promethean pursuers from the same *qashmal* who tells the raging throng chasing him exactly where to find him.

The Bloody-Handed Angel (p. 113) encourages others to lie, or perhaps manipulates the situation so that a lone



Promethean is forced to act in a way necessitating remorse and flight. Duplicity is just another tool, and all who come across the Scintillating Flames would be well-served to remember that.

Contradictions and Flaws

The *qashmallim* are not perfect. They are flawed. The Principle doesn't appear to know everything. One *qashmal* appears on Earth miles from the person to whom the *qashmal* is to grant its vision, with no way of finding her. Another *qashmal* manifests in human form near the target, but with no knowledge of the person to whom the Mission applies.

A *qashmal* knows its Mission well, but won't necessarily know the result of its actions, and may try several wildly contradictory tactics. Will this Frankenstein's reaching of his goal of Mortality cause Flux to decrease in the area more than his death? What if the Promethean he creates makes the situation worse? Suddenly, the *qashmal* who helped a Promethean draw closer to his goal attacks.

The *qashmallim*'s single-mindedness can betray itself with naiveté; the *qashmallim* can be lied to (although woe betide the liar if the *qashmal* perceives the obstruction the liar has posed to the *qashmal*'s Mission). And sometimes, *qashmallim* simply get it wrong. A *qashmal* settles upon a person who has nothing to do with the target. A *qashmal* causes merry hell in a family's lives for no reason, while the family that the *qashmal* should have chosen to tear apart carries on, just as it always has. Another *qashmal* aids the wrong Promethean, its goal being to inspire the destruction of a *Sublimatus*, instead showing the Centimanus who would ally with the creature how to get there first.

The *qashmallim* are not helped in their task by the fact that they're given deadlines. An Elpidos manifests, knowing that it has to stop a mage from destroying a Galateid in anger. The Elpidos has a week. Deadlines vary. Some are measured in months. Some Missions can only be completed at given moments. The Messenger of the Principle has a vision to grant, but can't give it until the time is right. In the week leading up to that, he'll make very sure that he finds the subject of his vision and ensure that his subject remains safe and alive, but after that, the subject is on his or her own.

The *qashmallim* of both Choirs find further, seemingly arbitrary, restrictions placed upon them. The Dancer in Tatters cannot spread its plague to the "innocent." A Greater Lilith must warn its victim before transforming her into a pillar of salt. The Living Creature (p. 114) is forced to give its insights in cryptic, mystical form, singing them out from the heavens by night and dropping hints during the day. And the Creature has to do this over the space of 12 days. Why not reveal the insights all at once? Why not make them in plain English?

The *qashmallim* gain an even greater sense of urgency from the fact that they're not suited to the world as it is.

The Pyros is a natural phenomenon, which runs through all life, all inspiration, but the Pyros was never meant to exist in such a concentrated form. Just as the Azoth of a Promethean causes the fabric of the world around to rebel, so, too, the Pyros that composes the *qashmallim* escapes. It evaporates, returning to the elements and invigorating reality (in the case of the Elpidos) or sickening it (in the case of the Lilithim). Every day, a fragment of the *qashmal*'s pyretic substance escapes, and unless the *qashmal* has been granted the ability to steal Pyros from Prometheans and Pandorans or from electrical appliances, the Dominion will eventually have to return to the Flame.

Pyros Bleed

Every day a *qashmal* remains in Twilight, Shadow or in the material realm, the *qashmal* loses one point of Pyros. The *qashmal* can only recharge this Pyros if the creature has a Numen allowing it to take Pyros from another source.

When the *qashmal*'s Pyros pool is gone, either through using Numina or losing Pyros through this daily drain, the *qashmal* has no choice to return to the Pyros, ceasing to continue an independent existence, whether the *qashmal* has succeeded in its Mission or not.

Choirs and Orders

There are two distinct Choirs of *qashmallim*, which appear in at least two Orders of power.

The Elpidos are the servants of the Pyros, in its function as a force of life, development, inspiration and evolution. They are the *qashmallim* that most commonly appear in the shape of angels and humans. If the Elpidos are terrifying, the terror they bring is the terror of holy awe. They bring healing and life. They herald auspicious births. They usher in prophecies. They call judgment down on sinners.

The Lilithim are the Elpidos' opposites. They appear as monsters, phantoms, amorphous horrors hidden in rains of blood, tentacled horrors from the sea, the deformed inhabitants of the Garden of Earthly delights. The Lilithim bring fear and Flux, Pyros as a form of mutation and chaos. They radiate Flux, and their presence awakens Pandorans (although it's difficult to tell if this is actually part of the Lilithim's Missions).

Qashmallim is not a term the Dominions ever apply to themselves. Likewise, "Lilithim" and "Elpidos" are names given to the creatures to differentiate between the two apparently opposite groups, which eschatologists refer to as "Choirs," thinking of them, perhaps erroneously, as angels (in fact, *qashmallim* is, originally, a term used to describe a

kind of angel, not unlike “cherubim” or “seraphim”). On those occasions where the *qashmallim* have needed to explain themselves, they simply describe what they are in terms of what they are doing, simple terms such as “judge,” “bringer of vengeance” or, most often, “messenger.”

The Elpidos don’t accept that the Lilithim oppose them. The Lilithim don’t accept that the Elpidos oppose them. They cannot; it’s not relevant to the Mission. On those surpassingly rare occasions where Elpidos and Lilithim manifest in the same place at the same time, they ignore each other, failing to even realize that the other exists. To the *qashmal*, its opposite number appears as no more than an absence in its senses. It stands to reason that they never oppose each other, even though they seem to have opposing purposes (chaos against order, plague versus healing, mutation opposing evolution). Two *qashmallim* of opposing Orders can appear in close proximity to each other, but even so, their Missions will be at the most complementary, if not entirely unrelated.

The same scholars who assign the *qashmallim* to antagonistic Choirs also divide them into Orders, based upon the level of power they hold.

The Lesser *qashmallim* are the messengers and the foot soldiers. They affect mortal lives, appear as humans. They exist for a brief time and then they’re gone. Their goals (if not their means of achieving them) are simple, and their power is limited.

The Greater *qashmallim* are much the same as the Lesser, although their Missions tend to affect many more people in the short term (as opposed to the Missions of the Lesser *qashmallim*, which, although they might indirectly affect many people, only adjust the lives of a few people, at most, at the first degree). The Lesser *qashmallim* grant dangerous scientific breakthroughs. They cause disasters, start religions, call rains of frogs and end famines. They wield immense power.

Their power, however, is as nothing to the power the possibly apocryphal Arch-*qashmallim* hold. They are beings that, if they even exist, hold in their grasp the mystic strength of gods in their own right. They are beyond Choirs. What Mission could ever be significant enough to bring about the manifestation of a being such as this? What conditions could cause its appearance?

Numbers

How many *qashmallim* are there? How many appear on Earth at any one time? A handful? Dozens? Millions?

It could be that the *qashmallim* are on Earth only to make changes that are significant. Or it might be that they are everywhere. Everywhere that people go, everywhere the world goes on, un-



told numbers of ting, weak *qashmallim* are briefly coming into being, invisibly, imperceptibly changing reality. They trip up a foot, make a pair of eyes meet another pair of eyes, cause a driver to lapse attention, direct one particular sperm above all the others toward the ovum. And then they vanish, without anyone knowing what they've done.

But then, how is it possible to know? The only ones that anyone knows of for sure are the bright, active, dangerous *qashmallim*, the ones that need to manifest in forms that we can perceive in order to change things, and of those, the number that exists is the number needed to create **Promethean** stories, no more, no less.

Documents

Of all the supernatural beings of the World of Darkness, the *qashmallim* are among the most written-about and the least understood. They've been appearing to mortals and supernatural beings alike for millennia, and they have made their mark in many ways; although the *qashmallim* might not be as numerous as creatures whose existence has been hidden from human view, the *qashmallim* are nonetheless the stuff of stories. They're far better known among the other night-people than the Prometheans themselves in many cases.

Books written by mortal mystics tell of the existence of angels and devils. Meanwhile, the lorekeepers of the vampires, the storytellers of the werewolf tribes and the Awakened scholars alike tell truths, half-truths and outright falsehoods to their students.

The problem is that although many among them might know about the *qashmallim*, hardly anyone would actually know one when they saw one. After the fact, it might be possible to figure out that a *qashmal* was a *qashmal*, but that won't change what's already happened. Stories about the *qashmallim* frequently get them confused with spirits, demons and cryptozoological beasts. Books and lore shared by mages and vampires mix demons from every kind of Hell and true angels in with their bestiaries of the *qashmallim*. And none, apart from the Prometheans, know about the *qashmallim*'s connection with Pyros. A mage might recognize a kind of magical energy in the *qashmallim*, but he won't have the faintest idea what it is, where it comes from or what it's supposed to do.

While many books of lore mention the *qashmallim* or attempt to describe them in detail, very few actually have any accurate information. Most are full of information that's at best misleading, at worst potentially lethal. There are, however, a few books that have more truths than untruths. Still, no written source is 100% reliable, and the student who would know more about the *qashmallim* had better watch her step.

It's in the *Yann Codex* that the *qashmallim* are first given their name and divided into the Choirs. Few have heard of the book, but mystics, particularly Prometheans, have used its system of classification for nearly two millennia. The book might include much more of practical use than this, but it's difficult to tell. No more than five copies of the book exist in the world today. One, reputedly, lies in the collection of an influential vampire inhabitant of London, another with a powerful mage in Boston. Of the others, there are occasional rumors, but nothing solid.

The *Golden Hours* by de Selby, on the other hand, is relatively recent. Printed by subscription in the 1920s, this cantankerously written, slightly overcooked work was, even in its day, regarded by something as a joke by serious students of magic and science alike. The book's pages, devoid of chapter headings or paragraph breaks, are a headlong rush of idiosyncratic language, expressing deranged, too-strange-to-be-completely-untrue ideas about the relationship between Lucretian atoms and transmigration of souls, and bizarre political theories.

The strangest thing about the *Golden Hours* is that hidden within all this visionary lunacy are quite specific hints for the final success of a Promethean on the Pilgrimage. The book also spends a great deal of time talking of the *qashmallim*, although de Selby never uses the conventional names for them, instead using a multiplicity of wholly new terms (such as "*Lux Mundi*" and "*Golden Choirs*"). Who was de Selby? A lunatic? Of the few Prometheans who have read his book, most think that maybe he was a Promethean who found mortality and remembered his previous life. *Golden Hours* is now quite hard to come by, but surfaces sometimes in dusty secondhand bookshops or in the rare book collections of universities.

The Elpidos: Agents of Order

The *qashmallim* who advance the Bright Pyros wear purity like a gown. Holiness and light surrounds them. Even when they appear to be human, there's something about them that sets them apart, a glint in the eye, the way their hair catches the sun so that it makes a halo appear around their head, the way the clothes they wear are always spotlessly clean. No matter how mundane they appear, they're always healthy, always clear-skinned and clean-cut.

As angels, they're awe-inspiring. Wreathed in fire and light, they sing their bright visions to the heavens, as if the one to whom they give their news is just a spectator in a conversation between the *qashmallim* and the Principle.

These Elpidos are the agents of the Pyros in its aspect as Elpis: hope, growth, true life, the forging of a soul. Elpis is the Pyros as the fire in the human gut, the furnace of courage, the crucible of a hero. Elpis is the innate striving of every living thing toward perfection.

Their Missions vary too much to be easily categorized, but their prerogative is Order, above all. They heal, ending

diseases and aiming to unite mortal with mortal, Promethean with Promethean. They bring justice, raining fire and wrath down on the malefactor. They promote evolution, creating new birth, healthy fertility, growth into new and better forms. Where chaos and degeneration is, there are the Elpidos, redressing the balance in favor of health and the good governance of harmonious nature.

Their intention is order, health, growth. Their methods, however, leave much to be desired. Sent to bring two people together in love or allegiance, an Elpidos kills dozens in the act and thinks nothing of it. An Elpidos sent to destroy a demonic manifestation succeeds only because every mortal there dies in the process. Killing comes just easily to them as it does with the Lilithim. The Elpidos respect life only when it matters to their Missions. The deadlines under which they work often mean that they expend a great deal of effort making sure that the subjects of their Missions stay alive until such time as the Missions end or are ready to be carried out to their ends, but that is all. Human concern and emotion are beyond the *qashmallim*, and if the Elpidos show such feelings, it is only because their Missions demand it. Cars crash, houses burn down, false accusations fly, families split apart as the terrible truth comes back to haunt them, and it's all peripheral, all nothing more than a tool for an Elpidos to complete its Mission.

The Living Creature

UFO buffs across the country go wild when hearing about the lights: vast, bright lights that can be seen for miles around, flying in formation over a dozen different areas in as many days, and sending out what seems to be some sort of audio signal. The UFO flap will last for weeks. Government meteorologists talk about ball lightning and Saint Elmo's fire, and the flap dies down a little, but in the end the believers keep on believing, and the case goes down in UFO lore.

Had the ufologists known about the contact, perhaps they would be even more excited. A lone walker, out on the hills after dark, called out there by voices she can barely hear or understand. The Living Creature that comes to her has four heads (a bull, a man, a lion and an eagle) and three pairs of wings, and stands in the sky alongside a wheel of fire.

In the days between these contacts, she finds people she knows acting strangely, offering her insights she could never have considered, helping her to a mind-shattering revelation.

Who is she? She could be a human, about to become, with the *qashmal's* tutelage, the demiurge of a new Lineage of Prometheans. She could be the creator of the cure for AIDS or the inventor of a biological weapon of terrible, unheard-of power. She could be a Promethean, being told how to create or destroy Pandorans, or being told the final key to Mortality.

The *qashmal* might be lying to her. Maybe she's going to go mad. Maybe it doesn't matter if she does, as long as she acts on what the *qashmal* has told her.

Ruby and Mr. Gold

The building — perhaps it's a train station or a police station, or a department store or mall — is haunted. Ghosts or spirits plague the place. No matter what anyone does, they can't be evicted. Exorcists find themselves at a loss. The supernatural agency grows stronger nightly.

Finally, after days of this, one evening the evil power, whatever it is, whatever it wants, takes over the place. The doors are all closed, locked from the outside. Anyone still in there is trapped, plaything of the force controlling the building.

And then the man and the woman appear. A stern, dour, businesslike man in a suit, a beautiful, charming, dark-haired young woman in a red dress. She introduces herself: she is called Ruby, no, just Ruby, and he's Mr. Gold. They gather together the people in the building and find out what happened, try to ascertain what the force is and what it wants and then they find a means of making it go. They fight a few brief skirmishes with the thing. Maybe they destroy it. Maybe they appease it. Either way, they don't go away until it is destroyed, or they are.

If there are innocent people in the way, too bad. Ruby and Mr. Gold don't care for anything other than the laying of the supernatural force controlling the building. If that means that the other people here who still survive need to be sacrificed or even given up to the thing, so be it. Their lives are meaningless. Only the end of the haunting matters.

Israel's Cave

Here's Israel Hands, honest Israel, worthy Israel, man of sand and salt and clay, sitting in his cave by the sea, trying to concentrate more on his fire than on the night wind blowing into the cave mouth, scraping the flesh out of limpets and making a fine meal from it, thank you, when the fire turns white and cold and here is the angel, standing in the midst of the flames, like a pretty young thing, sweet as you like, her dress brighter than the fire. Only, there is blood on her wings. And blood on her hands, fresh, bright blood that covers her arms up to the elbow, that drips from wings and sodden feathers and sizzles in the icy flames. And Israel's so surprised he scuttles backwards to the wall of the cave, on his ass, because he's scared. And the angel calls out his name. "Israel," she says. "Israel," she says again. And her voice is like tinkling bells. Like she's singing, only she isn't.

"Here I am," says Israel.

And the angel calls Israel's name again, and he gets up and approaches, the back of one salt-encrusted hand shading his eyes from the glare.

The angel puts out a hand, and bids him not to be afraid, and Israel, who has never knelt for anything or anyone, and who has killed some who would have made him, kneels and bows his head.

"Here I am," he says again.

And the angel says, "It is not good for you to be alone, Israel."



He looks up. She steps forward from the fire and places a hand upon his head, and all the loneliness and frustration of Israel's 87 years as a man of rock salt, sand and clay come forth, and for the first time, he weeps.

And he realizes that his Pilgrimage has stalled and that he can never become a man until something changes, and that it is not good for him to be alone. And the angel's arms are soft and warm, and the blood smells sweet and metallic. She draws him to her, and places her hand on his head, and her arm around his shoulders, and her wings around his body, and he feels warm in her embrace, and he feels loved and he feels that there may be hope, and he cries like the child he never was.

The angel whispers to him that there is one like him but not like him, a sister for him, a companion for him, and that he must find her and aid her, for she needs the help of Israel.

And then the angel is gone, and the fire has gone out, and it is some time before Israel composes himself and realizes how cold he is, and swears at length, before trying to rebuild it.

But in the morning, Israel packs up his coil of rope and his old tinderbox and his meager bundle of clothes, and sets off along the coast.

The Lilithim: Catalysts of Entropy

The Elpidos are routinely mistaken for angels. This seldom happens with the Lilithim. These *qashmallim* serve Flux. If their methods and intentions are more transparent than those of the Elpidos, it's only because earthly minds perceive chaos as evil.

If the Elpidos awe, the Lilithim terrify. The forms they take have no rhyme or reason: a murderous doll; an amorphous, many-bodied entity hidden in a fall of red rain; a reanimated corpse; a man with a voice that carries its own contagion of madness and physical mutation; a being made of filthy, diseased rags; a talking rat-king; a moldy, worm-eaten wooden puppet that walks and rattles and claws and clutches; a statue of Venus that incites lust and crushes its lovers in its algae-strewn marble grasp; a vengeful man with bloated sallow flesh like a worm's; a drooling, wrinkled, flaccid pillar of flesh that walks on caterpillar legs and vomits viscous fluid that breaks down a man's body but keeps the man conscious while devouring his liquid remains; a personification of a Promethean's sins; a satyr, his hair matted with the pus from running sores; a small, vicious cloaked creature with a mass of devilish tentacles for a face; a crooked, grinning idiot with small babbling faces where its eyes should be; a black stone Ganesha with limbs that resemble a spider's palps; a slaver fighting dog walking upright and wearing a suit; a raven's head atop a man's legs . . . Even more than the Elpidos, the Lilithim's forms defy easy generalizations. They're the stuff of vivid nightmare.

Their Missions are the stuff of nightmare, too. The mayhem the Elpidos cause is incidental. It's a side effect of their striving for order. The Lilithim, on the other hand, often cause mayhem for its own sake. Their Missions depend upon chaos coming about. If things are too ordered, the Lilithim are there to push the balance the other way. They thrive on perversion and violence, and several stories circulate among the Created of vile creatures from outside of time who aid the Centimani in their terrible purposes.

Just as the Elpidos leak their refined Elpis into the world, the Lilithim leak Flux. Pandorans awaken when the Lilithim are nearby. People feel faintly nauseated when the Lilithim are nearby, not enough for it to affect what they're doing, but enough for the people to register distaste at the creature (see Chapter One for more on the relationship between Lilithim and Flux).

The Screaming Shadow

The nuclear power station stands on a bleak fell. It's been running for 30 years now, and it's caused no accidents. Its safety record is second to none.

In the last year or two, however, the graveyard shift at the secondary reactor has become a really unpopular ticket. The men on the night shift have started to talk about a haunting down there.

It happens past midnight. The man in the security booth is reading a magazine, or filling in a Sudoku puzzle or listening to his iPod, when he feels the need to get up and walk around. There's a shadow down there, on the other side of the coolant pool. Just a shadow. And then it looks up.

It drifts across the water, and although it has no face, the security man knows the shadow has seen him. He's rooted to the spot as it comes closer toward him. It opens a mouth, blacker even than the rest of its substance, and it screams and screams, and the man covers his ears. He faints. He comes to a few minutes later, and the shadow is gone.

But it's back the following night, and the next. And each night it's around a different area of the secondary reactor.

In a few nights' time, there is going to be an accident.

The Dancer in Tatters

William Wilson's parties are exclusive. You can't get in unless Wilson himself has invited you, and then only if you take an AIDS test, a HepA test and a battery of others. William likes his party guests to be clean. He wants no part of the plagues outside. When the party begins, the guests file into Wilson's vast, baroque apartments. The hired help lock the doors. No one leaves until it's over, and even then not everyone leaves.

It's that sort of party, the 120 days of Sodom sort of party, where anyone can do anything to anyone and the furniture needs to be burned and replaced every time and the teenagers they took off the street and tested and drugged and sterilized get tied up and stabbed and raped and whipped and blood and piss and semen and shit and alcohol all flow across the floor in a swirling mixture.

Tonight, Wilson's victims include one who bears the brunt of the violence, and who takes it, without complaint, without it seeming to hurt. Disgust and jealousy and lust well up in the people who see the beautiful boy, and he looks at them and pleads and they hate him all the more. Even when the other prisoners are dead, he remains alive, long after he should have bled to death or died of shock, despite having taken far more punishment than any of the others. It only makes them want to hurt him more.

He's given a brief respite as a floor show begins. A hand lifts up his bowed head gently, lifting his chin in long fingers. A voice says, "This is not your place. You should go."

The figure in the red and gray tatters unties Wilson's unhuman prisoner and leads him to a door that opens for the figure, despite being locked.

As the party guests return to their diversions, the figure, tall and gaunt, stalks through the place, and as it walks by, all tatters and pallid, dying-man mask, they stop, something in the figure's bearing sending an unnamable fear through them. Gradually the party draws to a standstill. Finally, the figure comes to stand before William Wilson, and he lifts a carving knife from one of the play-tables. He slashes at the figure, and his knife cuts through rags and air; the figure lifts an arm, the tatters brush over his face and then there is only a small heap of red and gray rags on the filth-spattered floor.

Wilson stands stock-still. He coughs.

The party is over now. Wilson recognizes that, and he sends the guests home within an hour.

A few months later, when it is time for his next party and the next round of medical tests begins, Wilson and every other survivor of the party discover exactly what it was that the red and gray tatters signified.

Marion

Marion was killed a year ago, hit by a car. Her husband, Tony, never handled his grief well, and so his son Jack comes to stay with him for a few days, leaving the children with his wife. Jack and Tony talk, late, on the anniversary of Marion's death. At about half-past eleven comes a persistent knock on the door, and Marion is there, cold and stiff, but walking, exactly as she was when she died. She stumbles inside and screams, a shrill, persistent screech like jammed machinery. Tony and Jack, shocked, calm her as best they can, take off her muddy clothes, bathe her, try to feed her. When the man from the funeral home calls, shocked and apologetic, to tell them that someone has been rummaging in Marion's grave and that the body has been stolen, they know it's her, as surely as the wedding ring on her finger is the one that Tony placed on her finger 40 years before.

And she stays there for a time, screaming sometimes, standing, sitting, allowing food to dribble out of her mouth. Her husband and son try to get through to her, but she's not really there, and the being inhabiting her body isn't done.

The street is beginning to grow sick. There is something in the air, in the asphalt on the road outside. Things find their

way here, things not human or not yet human, curious to see what it is that has caused this, perhaps looking to pursue an enemy that leaves the same miasma behind himself, perhaps seeking monsters to destroy. They watch the house from outside. Something terrible is happening in this house, they decide. There's a screaming corpse, walking in there. They decide to do something about it. Things soon get out of hand. Terrible things do come to pass, more terrible even than a dead, sad woman coming back to life and doubling her family's grief.

And when it is done, the *qashmal* will leave the body behind, leaving it swiftly to rot as horror and misunderstanding unfold.

The Arch-Qashmallim

The argument of whether Arch-*qashmallim* exist or not has never been settled. Prometheans who have studied the *Yann Codex* and the *Golden Hours* have suggested that perhaps it is better for everyone that way. The kind of Mission that would require an Arch-*qashmal* to manifest would have to be of awesome, terrible import. Perhaps it would be a Mission with a deadline measured in years or centuries rather than days or weeks. Maybe the Mission would involve the instant death of thousands, perhaps millions of people.

People assume that the extinction event that destroyed the dinosaurs and the Tunguska Event were caused by asteroid impacts. But what if they're wrong? An Arch-*qashmal* could have the power to cause awesome blasts, holding in its heart the atomic power of the sun itself.

None of the few sources that speak of these beings give any mention of them being attached to Choirs. Maybe the Arch-*qashmallim* are beyond that.

Using the Arch-Qashmallim

Obviously, the Arch-*qashmallim* are plot devices on a global scale. It's up to the Storyteller whether they exist at all, and what it means when one makes its apocalyptic play.

An Arch-*qashmal* is not going to be defeated by Transmutations or combat. If the Arch-*qashmal* can be bothered, it can squash any character, even one of the most powerful characters, like an ant. Defeating a being like this takes resourcefulness and cunning.

The key to defeating this being is to remember that, similar to other *qashmallim*, the Arch-*qashmallim* exist under restrictions. They may not be constricted by deadlines, but they're still constricted by their Missions, and they're subject to all sorts of conditions. An ingenious Promethean could all too easily use an Arch-*qashmal*'s restrictions against it, perhaps even managing to defeat it by invalidating its Mission, forcing the being to return to the Pýros.



Der Schacht von Babel

A vast, faceless specter rises from the earth above a major Western seaboard city and raises a taloned hand. The mortals in the city leave their homes, their jobs. Men, women and children, fit people, sick people, old people, young people, blank-eyed, converge in the park and across the tame grassy fields begin to build a vast, endlessly recursive structure, with anything they can (doors pulled from houses, cars, bricks from their own homes, park benches, gravestones, turf torn from lawns with bare hands, telephone poles, anything). They'll build it high and they'll build it wide.

It has to be perfect, however. Although its materials appear haphazard, every component, every bicycle, every saucepan, is exactly in place. It just needs a brick out of place, and the three-dimensional incantation the building represents will fail. Not that altering the design will be easy. For every unaffected individual trying to screw up the building, 100 are building it and checking it as they do.

When it's finished, they'll stand outside this towering, baroque, mismatched building for a time, and they'll sing, and they'll pray to the faceless specter and the creature will point to the building. Then they'll climb to the top and leap into the gaping maw at the peak of the building, and when, weeks later, the army arrives to find out what happened to the people, they'll find no bodies, just the building.

The Showman of Secrets

A traveling show, a latter-day circus of a kind people didn't think was on anymore. An ebullient showman, a magic lantern. A blast from the past, a circus that's been running for hundreds of years. Fun for all the family.

But oh, what's in the theater? Why are the actors in the play so stiff, so skinny, so pale? Why is the script so frightening? Why should a show billed as a comedy be so grim and sad, with its talk of endless snows and a black sun in the sky?

And now that you're outside, what happened to the sky? What screams through the air? Where are the people of the world? Why did it start snowing in August?

This is your world, but it's not. You've been tricked. You've been led here. Is this the future? Is this an illusion? Is this a parallel dimension? Is there a way out?

The Principle: The Everything Fire

What is the Principle? Why does it drive the *qashmallim*? Why does it choose these strange, small Missions? Why should individual lives matter to it? What is the secret of the Principle?

The chances are, no one will ever know.

But . . . imagine that there *was* a way to find out. Say that there was a means of knowing the mind of the Principle. There have been prophets of many religions who have

claimed to have gained insights into the mind of God. If the Principle *were* God, or at the very least the force that humans have mistaken for God, might not some of these insights be true?

There's a theory that a Promethean, at the point of completing his Magnum Opus, sees into the Principle, into the Pyros, just briefly, in the moments before becoming human. In that split second, he knows all, understand all. And in the split second that follows, he forgets that he ever knew it. But what does he know? What does he find out? What does he see there, there in the center of the Transforming Fire? What of a mage, who somehow ascends to the Lone Watchtower? What would he know in the moment before ecstasy and Supernal force consume him? What do the most ancient vampires dream of in their eternal sleep? What do the great elders of the werewolves find when they retreat once and for all into the realm of the spirits?

The ideas that follow are possible explanations for the Principle. It could be one of these. It could be more than one of these. It could be all of them, embracing all contradictions in a synthesis of the systems that manage reality.

Litany

Who are you?

I am no one.

What is your name?

I have no name.

Where do you come from?

The Principle.

Where is the Principle?

The Principle is not a place.

What is the Principle, then?

It is the Principle.

What do you want?

What the Principle wants.

Who is the Principle?

The Principle is not a person.

What is the Principle, then?

It is the Principle.

What does the Principle want?

What the Principle wants.

Why?

It is the Principle.

Destiny

The Principle is the unconscious Principle of Destiny. All things are ordained. But the system is not closed; it's not perfect. The ancient vampires, the Forsaken children of Father Wolf and the mages are all flaws in the system. That they exist at all is a result of a fall from a perfect system. And then there are Prometheans, who exist through stolen Azoth, the channeled substance of the Pyros.

So we have the *qashmallim*. They enter into time to rectify damage done to time. It is not the business of the *qashmallim* to restore normality. Normality is of no consequence to them. The problem is time. Time must remain cyclical, and the shape of the world at the beginning must remain the same at its end. That which develops and succeeds must develop and succeed; that which fails and decays must fail and decay.

A meddling mage might save too many lives. A vampire might drink to the death someone whose lifeline would have tangled many others. It's not a zero-sum game. It's not a matter of simply appearing and reversing something done by a supernatural entity. To do that creates other ripples in the timeline, other complexities. No, in order to fix damage done to the timeline by unnecessarily positive or negative acts, the *qashmallim* must intersect with the timeline somewhere else. They make an adjustment elsewhere. At some point in the future, the ripples of this new adjustment intersect with the ripples created by the original transgression and put them right. It's not for the *qashmallim* to know when and where the final result will happen, or when and where it will be fixed. It's their lot simply to finish their jobs and vanish back into the Pyros.

This, incidentally, is why they only ever try any one adjustment once. To try twice is to create even more ripples, and even more problems. If they fail, they fail, and the Principle dispatches new *qashmallim* to a different time-space location, where the anomaly can be fixed from another direction. Besides, time works in such a way that an event created at a given instant in time will have different repercussions from the same event created moments earlier and moments later. Consider a young man, delayed a few seconds by a woman who accidentally walks into him on a London street, who arrives at the platform at Victoria a split second after the train doors close. He stands on the platform cursing as the train leaves without him. When, three minutes later, five carriages on the train (including the one he failed to get inside) are destroyed by a terrorist bomb, the man counts his blessings. Imagine how many people are affected by that woman's clumsiness. Relatives, friends, lovers, children the man is yet to father. All of these lives are changed by a woman on a street who, for a moment, wasn't looking where she was going.

Incisions in Time

Those students of *qashmallim* lore who favor the Destiny theory posit that the Lilithim and the Elpidos are entirely the same in every respect, namely the extrusions of sentient

Destiny into an apparently linear timeline. The reason they appear so completely different in form and function is because they cut into the timeline from opposite directions. They only appear different, because the breaches they create in the fabric of time manifest as oppositional effects of Pyros. But it's all Pyros and hence, all Destiny. This also explains why the two Choirs can't conceive of each other's existence.

In the end, it doesn't change how they behave or what they're able to do.

The Evolutionary Principle

The Principle is not an intelligence, it's a Darwinian force. The Principle is the cosmic blueprint, a kind of fundamental, ultra-terrestrial DNA chain that governs the single organism of Gaea, the world organism. The Pyros is the spark of Gaea's life. It exists in a morphic field that joins and enlivens all the biomass of the planet. At some point, humans created flaws in the systems that govern Gaea. Some Awakened. Some bred with spirits, creating beings straddling two realms that should by rights be separate. Some died and remained living, becoming parasitic tumors, lesions on the planet's biomass. And some somehow managed to harness the morphic field itself, draining it into Created beings that perpetuate themselves endlessly.

The *qashmallim* exist to rectify this. If the human condition begins in any one place to evolve or degenerate, the *qashmallim* appear somewhere else to rectify the balance, so that nature continues. The mage, the vampire and the werewolf all cheat the natural order; the Promethean doubly so, since he comes into being without being born, channels the life energy of Gaea for his own benefit and then attempts to rejoin the system. Of all the unnatural beings of the world, the Prometheans are those who most gain the attention of the Principle, since they bring about degeneration or evolution in powerfully concentrated ways. A Promethean who gains humanity hastens human evolution, for he has created a soul, even as he has perpetuated the bleeding off of the Pyros. Those who create Pandorans create a powerful degenerative effect in the planet's morphic field. Centimani are frighteningly efficient agents of this.

It's not as simple as tracking down and destroying Prometheans (and, to a lesser extent, other supernatural beings). If that were all it took to return the Pyros back into the morphic field, the Prometheans would all have been destroyed at a stroke, millennia ago. The fact is that a destroyed Promethean's Pyros doesn't return to the morphic field. The Promethean's Pyros remains discrete. It stagnates. Hence, in order for the irregularities created by the Prometheans (and the less severe but still obvious irregularities caused by the other supernatural beings), it becomes necessary for the *qashmallim* to engineer equal, opposite irregularities across the human experience. Hence the strange, small Missions of the *qashmallim*, which cannot be repeated, no matter

how badly the *qashmallim* fail. A second intervention in the morphic field is impossible. The *qashmallim* are connected intimately to the field. Two interfering for the same purpose could cause the whole planetary field to collapse, an event beyond catastrophic, causing every life, spirit, magical effect and intelligence on Earth to be snuffed out in an instant.

The System of Thermodynamic Balance

The Principle is a quasi-intelligent agency, a God-Machine that maintains universal balance. Without the existence of Prometheans and other supernatural creatures, the Principle would constantly, invisibly tweak reality, tuning it like a complex, near-perpetual machine. Prometheans by their nature sap the Pyros of which the Principle is composed. Azoth, concentrated, creates anomalies that demand extreme fixes. Therefore, in order to maintain balance, the *qashmallim* must be created. They adjust the system, sometimes for the sake of order, sometime for the sake of entropy, to balance the deeds of the Prometheans. Everything a Promethean does alters the fate of the world, and every time that happens, a *qashmal* creates, somewhere on Earth, an equal opposite reaction. Time is part of the machine, however. The Principle, whose raw form is Pyros energy, exists without time, but depends upon the machine of reality for existence. Two invasions in time for the same purpose would mean that a second adjustment would be needed to rectify the imbalance caused by a second intervention, and then a third to rectify that, *ad infinitum*. In the end, the entire machine would collapse.

The By-Product of Theft

The Principle is not an agency at all. It's the fact of the theft of Pyros. The Prometheans exist because humans once tapped into the Pyretic Source, the origin of all life energy. The *qashmallim* are the leakage from this. At any given time, there is a *qashmal* for every Promethean and every Pandoran. Each reflects the Azoth of the Promethean the Pandoran mirrors — a truly powerful Promethean produces a Greater *qashmal*. The Lilithim are the products of the Pandorans and the Centimani, the Elpidos of those Prometheans who embark on the Pilgrimage. The existence of the Lilithim is apparently random. The *qashmallim* have no consciousness to speak of, and no memory, and so form and re-form whether or not they succeed in their random, arbitrary Missions, with no knowledge of what they were before.

God

The Principle is the Creator God, and the *qashmallim* are His angels. Still, the God of the *qashmallim* bears little resemblance to YHWH, Allah, Brahman or any of the other portrayals of the Creator. He — It? — may be all-knowing,

all-powerful and all-present, but this God is neither loving or caring. This is a God who plays games with His Creation, poking at it like a small child with an ant farm, helping some of the insects, randomly crushing others. The *qashmallim* are formed from *ousia*, God's substance. *Ousia*, when manifest in the material realm, is Pyros. The *qashmallim* are Pyros personified, and more than that: they're the thoughts of God. They have no minds of their own because they are fragments of a much larger mind, a mind that in its caprice and brief span of attention seems not unlike the mind of an autistic child.

The Manichaeon Dyad

The Principle is in fact two equal, opposite beings incarnate in the Pyros. One, the *Flux*, exists in order to waste Pyros, to use it as a force of mutation, of chaos. The other, the *Elpis*, exists to extend the Pyros into harmonious evolution. The two Choirs of *qashmallim* are the temporary extrusions of these two beings into the material realm. The Promethean Lineages are the result of millennia of unconscious contention between the two; all have been influenced by both forces, over time. The Lilithim and the Elpidos cannot even conceive of the other's existence. They cannot see or hear each other. They ignore or react with confusion to the idea that an opposite force exists. The Principle they serve is the only force, and there is no other Principle. Although Prometheans, who share in the Pyros, are central to the Plans of these two entities, their recognition of the butterfly effect means that adjustments made by the *qashmallim* to the lives of ordinary people or other supernatural beings *will* affect the Created, at some point in the future.

The *qashmallim* can only attempt their Missions once. To try twice is to create an inversion in time, creating an advantage for the other force that increases as both forces attempt, tit for tat, to rectify an imbalance, which can only escalate into the destruction of everything and the triumph of neither.

The Qashmallim and the Others

No matter how tied the *qashmallim* may be to the Created, the *qashmallim*, by virtue of their Missions, can and do cross the paths of the other supernatural inhabitants of the World of Darkness. The doings of supernatural beings affect the lives of the people around them. Supernatural beings contribute to the butterfly effect. People live, die, are healed and bereaved by these beings, and hence, the *qashmallim* make them subject to their machinations.



Vampires

The purposes of the *qashmallim* are almost always opposed in some way to the vampires. Both of the



qashmallim Choirs personify change in some way. Vampires, on the other hand, are the epitome of stasis. They remain the same, parasites on the world organism, until such time as they sleep. The plots and intrigues maintain the *status quo*, even if they appear to effect change in the short term. Vampires keep themselves extant, they maintain their feeding patterns, they endure as beings.

And they kill and feed. For all the *qashmallim* care, the vampires are of no consequence. Sometimes a vampire proves instrumental to a *qashmal*'s Mission, however. Consider a vampire, led by a disguised *qashmal* to feed on a young man whose parents' grief will prove to be important to the history of his nation, and to the fate of its undead.

Elsewhere, a *qashmal* appears two, three, four times. It effects its strategy in a variety of ways, with messages (from spirits, a "Crone" or even from God), breaches of the jealously guarded convention the vampires observe that hides them from the humans, and even, perhaps, the destruction of a few minor, vital older vampires. The society of blood drinkers collapses into civil war, and the city in which the mortals live becomes safer at night. Lives change. The *qashmal* returns to the Pyros.



Werewolves

The werewolves stand with feet in realms of spirit and flesh. Unlike the hungry dead, the werewolves, and the creatures against whom they battle, bring change and mutation in many ways. The werewolves' territories constantly change. Old grudges develop and manifest themselves in new ways with each generation.

One *qashmal*, over the space of a few years, engineers the success of a pack of human-eating werewolves, keeping them safe, allowing them to control a steadily increasing area. Then the *qashmal* drives a pack of less degenerate werewolves into the other pack's path. Both groups of werewolves are destroyed in the clash. The repercussions on the spirit realm and the material realm alike, especially on the bereaved families and friends of those who died, last for decades.

Another *qashmal* causes a mortal and a werewolf to fall in love. The relationship is painful. The child who's born is strange in many ways. Throughout her childhood, an imaginary friend, who whispers things to her at night, accompanies the werewolf's daughter. When the daughter is a woman, she will achieve something, perhaps something terrible. When she's done, the imaginary friend vanishes, its job complete.



Mages

The workers of magic are still human, and are, consequently, the ones in whom the *qashmallim* invest the most interest (after the Created, of course). Mages' magic is a dynamic means of change, for good and ill,

and can cause massive imbalances in the fabric of the world. *Qashmallim* aid or hinder mages of all kinds. An altruistic mage who works to end a plague could gain the aid of a *qashmal* in his efforts. He can just as easily fall foul of one whose purpose is to ensure that the human biomass doesn't become *too* healthy. Likewise, visions given by the *qashmallim* can seem all too easily to be visions from the highest or lowest realms.

A *qashmal*, with a few well-placed dreams, a voice in the night or an anonymous voice through a disconnected telephone, brings about the discovery of a relic from Atlantis or Mu. Three or more factions, all brought here by the *qashmal*, demand the Artifact. The winners find themselves riven by internal strife. People die. A building catches on fire. The inferno covers several blocks of the city. The Dominion returns to the Pyros.

Another *qashmal*, guiding an archaeological excavation, shows an unwitting human how to awaken an ancient, terrible creature, bound here by a long-dead wizard-king from a lost kingdom. The *qashmal* is there to show a cabal of mages how to destroy the ancient horror, but before its costly defeat, many die, and much is lost, which was the *qashmal*'s purpose.

A cabal of mages becomes influenced by a being they believe to be an "Ascended Master." It appears to them at night, sometimes in dreams, sometimes in rituals. The "master" shows them where to find a being of power, a being they could dissect to steal its power. The "master" directs them to a Promethean. They observe the creature for a while, and then attempt to take it down, so that they can examine it. The creature has friends.

The Realm of Aether, the Abyss and the Dominions

Readers of *Mage: The Awakening* are aware that there *are* already angels in the World of Darkness, the elusive, rarely seen inhabitants of the Realm of Aether, the realm surrounding the Watchtower of the Golden Key. Because they don't appear outside of that Realm, some mages consider the angels to be entirely conceptual, thought-forms useful in the visualization of magic, but not by any means real beings.

On the other hand, many mages believe in these angels utterly and claim to have dealings with them. In the end, they may be angels, but they're as close to the angels of Judeo-Christian legend as the *qashmallim* are. Because, similar to the *qashmallim*, these angels' existence doesn't depend upon the existence of a God, and they don't settle the question of God's existence at all (let alone the question of which version or versions of God — or gods — is the right one). That one's a mystery.

Although Mage Sight reveals that the *qashmallim* are made of fire, the Awakened quickly discover that the gross Arcanum of Forces has no effect. Only Prime and Mind magic can harm a *qashmal*.

Storytelling the Qashmallim

As is probably obvious by now, the *qashmallim* aren't easy beings to classify or stereotype. Each particular *qashmal* exists for a certain purpose. When that purpose is complete, or proves impossible, that *qashmal* disappears forever. So how do you, as Storyteller, best use the *qashmallim* in your chronicles? Why even include sample *qashmallim*?

Answering the second question first, we've included sample Dominions (in Chapter Four) for two reasons. First, you can very easily use those *qashmallim* as story hooks, inserting their stories into your own chronicles. Perhaps the troupe's throng is camping out near the power plant where the Screaming Shadow manifests. Maybe one of the characters saw the car accident that killed Marion. Second, the sample *qashmallim* are included, along with their unique stories and Missions, so that the Storyteller has some concrete idea of how to use these beings, game traits and all.

Which brings us back to the original question: how best to use the *qashmallim*. The Dominions have the potential to be misused very easily. They can appear and change things to an alarming degree — they can raise the dead, they can effectively destroy any supernatural being (by making it mortal for a crucial few seconds), they can even bring dawn in the dead of night. Obviously, then, these aren't beings that show up spoiling for a random brawl with a troupe's throng. The *qashmallim* are beings of a greater purpose, hints that the universe has some ineffable plan and that the Prometheans (and anyone else that the *qashmallim* deign to interact with) are part of that.

But then, the *qashmallim* are flawed, aren't they? Sometimes they lie, and they're very often under-informed about the natures of their Missions. What kind of God would send messengers without telling them the whole message? But then, what kind of God would create humanity with the capacity and desire for inhuman cruelty and then demand compassion and temperance? These are the questions that dog humankind to this day — there's no reason that the Prometheans should be free of these questions, either. After all, questioning the unknown, never knowing the answers but making decisions (hopefully the right ones) anyway, despite the fear, is part of being human.

Milestones

Thus, one way to use *qashmallim* in a chronicle is to trigger milestones. "Encounter a *qashmal*" is an appropriate, if low-level, milestone for a character, but "Come to understand a *qashmal*'s Mission" is probably better, because it requires interaction on the part of the Promethean. And milestones involving the *qashmallim* don't even have to be that direct. Going back to the example of Marion, a Promethean might break into the house and forcibly remove the zombie, ful-



filling the milestone “Protect humans from supernatural danger.” He might lay the creature to rest (“Grant peace to suffering people,” meaning the family) or might fight off other curious creatures come to use Marion and the *qashmal* for their own ends.

Inherent in this use of the Dominions is the question of whether the *qashmal*'s Mission is geared toward helping the Promethean reach a milestone, or if this occurrence is incidental. It might be helpful to consider this question, because the answer will help the Storyteller portray the *qashmal*, but from the Promethean's perspective (and the player's), it doesn't make much difference.

Inspiration

As the wraparound story involving Sister Stitch and Israel Hands shows, the *qashmallim* can be used to pull a throng of Prometheans together. Given the rarity of the Created in the world, this might actually be how most throngs find their members (and given how subtle the *qashmallim* can be when necessary, the Prometheans in question would never know it). *Qashmallim* can also be used to springboard new stories, simply by beckoning Prometheans to a given area or driving them out of a given city.

One thing to avoid, however, is using *qashmallim* to start off every story. Remember that *qashmallim* get only one try at a Mission, and if it fails, they don't repeat themselves. Therefore, a *qashmal* probably isn't going to appear at the beginning of each story, dropping yet another cryptic hint and leading the characters on their next mission. This approach strips a great deal of control from the players, anyway, and is probably best avoided.

All of that in mind, though, a powerful enough *qashmal* might have a Mission that involves a particular throng and has a deadline measured in months or years (that is, the whole chronicle). What if a Greater Lilith's Mission is to bring a throng to the Isla del Aguila so that their accumulated Vitriol can nourish the Ethoni (see p. 49 for more on this cult)? The Lilith guides them on their Pilgrimages, helping them meet milestones but never quite allowing them to complete their goals, with the ultimate aim of sacrificing them all. The characters stand to feel horribly betrayed (and murdered, in the bargain), but they stand to learn much, as well.

Deus Ex Machina

The term *deus ex machina* refers to ancient Greek theater, in which an actor playing a god was lowered onto the stage



on a machine. The god would then proceed to resolve the conflict of the play. The term has come to mean any literary device that wraps up a story without input from the protagonists; using such tricks in Storytelling games is generally a bad idea. After all, the story is *about* the players' characters, and if a more powerful being steps in and fixes everything, the players are rightly going to feel irrelevant and frustrated.

That said, it is possible to use the *qashmallim* to resolve an immediate but ultimately unimportant conflict without invalidating the troupe's actions. If the characters get into a fight with a Centimanus and his Pandoran minions and wind up on the losing end, you need to offer a way out of the situation for the throng (that or kill all the characters, which doesn't tend to be a popular option). If a *qashmal* appears and scatters the Pandorans with the brilliance of its light, crippling the Centimanus and healing the characters, the players might well wonder what they've done to deserve this boon. But what if the *qashmal* then turns to them and instructs them to perform the lacuna on the Hundred Handed? What if the *qashmal* tells them not to harm him, but to guide him back onto his original Refinement? Do the characters go against the *qashmal*, or grudgingly do as it asks? In any case, the *qashmal*'s interference and orders should put the battle and the characters' Pilgrimages into new perspective.

Phenomenal Power

As you'll see when reading about the *qashmallim* Numina presented in this chapter, the Dominions are capable of some truly miraculous feats. Raising the dead is not beyond their power, or making a supernatural being mortal, even for a short time. Needless to say, these are not powers that a *qashmal* in your chronicle should possess "just because." The most impressive of the *qashmal* Numina should be used sparingly and their use should probably be the entire reason for that particular *qashmal*'s existence on Earth. A *qashmal* with the power to resurrect the dead doesn't come into the world and start bringing people back randomly. More likely, the *qashmal* is here to resurrect one particular person, it has a very short amount of time in which to find that person, and the *qashmal* has no interest in being delayed. But what if the person the *qashmal* intends to resurrect is a dire enemy of the troupe's throng, one whom the throng recently succeeded in killing? What if the intended beneficiary is buried, and the *qashmal* doesn't realize that she needs to be exhumed or she will very quickly rejoin the ranks of the deceased?

Don't look at these Numina as simple powers. Look at them as story hooks.

Breaking the Rules

Speaking of story hooks, let's say a player in your troupe wants to play a Tammuz created as a slave to the ancient Egyptians, used to break stone for the pyramids and finally

imprisoned in a tomb of sand and rock until archeologists unearthed him in modern times. This character doesn't work under normal **Promethean** rules, because the Created don't live for millennia normally. But suppose the Principle decides that there is a problem in the modern era that this particular Promethean needs to solve (or cause). Perhaps the last thing that Golem sees as his tomb is sealed shut is the Scintillating Flame, telling him to sleep.

The *qashmallim* are capable of anything you need them to be capable of in order to make your story work. If that means they tell a scientist how to make a Nepri, even though the original formula has been lost for thousands of years, then they can do that in your chronicle. The game has its rules and the setting has its assumptions, and one of those very assumptions is that the *qashmallim* can sidestep the rules.

Numina

The *qashmallim* exhibit a frightening array of powers. Each one is dedicated to a single purpose, and as such, has powers that often relate directly to the job at hand. Some *qashmallim* powers, in fact, *are* the job at hand. A *qashmal* may appear solely to create a *rebis*, bring about a virgin birth or grant a vision and impart a Numen to a single human; such is the *qashmallim*'s way.

When designing *qashmal* Numina, bear in mind the purpose of the *qashmal*. It's here for a reason. It's on a Mission from the Principle, and everything the *qashmal* does is driven by that single unstoppable rationale. While this means that the powers you grant to the *qashmallim* can be ridiculously specialized (maybe they only work on one specific human, for example), this also means that the *qashmallim* are not going to have powers that aren't directly relevant to their purpose for being.

For example, consider the Messenger of the Principle (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 252). Its job is to grant a vision to some lucky stiff in a week's time, and the Messenger will keep to that. It is quite capable of combat, but only because the Messenger needs to make sure that the person to whom it has to give the vision is going to still be alive in a week. The being is not going to go out of its way to attack someone, but it will not be stopped from making sure its Mission is complete.

Imported Numina

As noted in **Promethean: The Created** (p. 252), *qashmallim* can use Promethean Transmutations as Numina. Readers of **Mage: The Awakening** and **Werewolf: The Forsaken** should likewise feel free to import spirit Numina, spells and even Gifts as *qashmal* Numina, where appropriate. When determining game systems, assume that the Numina require a roll of two of the *qashmal*'s Attributes (as appropriate to the Numen) and that any Willpower, Essence or Mana expenditure requires a like amount of Pyros.

Numina

All *qashmallim*:

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 Ghastly Crew, p. 76
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 Imitation, p. 77
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Elpidos:

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Greater Lilithim:

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Common Numina

• **Aggressive Meme:** The *qashmal* speaks to a person, and an idea takes root in the person's mind. Maybe the idea is a religious experience, or a scientific idea or a political idea. It can be anything from "the nun who lives in the boathouse has been abusing children, and the police aren't doing anything about it, so we'd better take it into our own hands" to "Muslims are terrorists" to "we're the people, and if we join together, we could have the power to topple this corrupt government" to something as frivolous as "cereal bars are really good to eat and you need to buy one." Whatever the idea is, it takes hold in the person's mind. The person's mind is changed. And then, when the person tells someone else, the idea takes hold in that person's mind. And so on. The idea spreads, until hundreds, perhaps thousands of people know. The player spends seven points of Pyros and rolls Power + Finesse, which the subject contests with Resolve + Composure + Azoth. If the roll succeeds, the idea takes hold over the person, and he feels the need to tell others.

The idea spreads. Promethean characters are unlikely to take direct part in this, but they are more than likely to be on the receiving end, as mobs begin to form.

• **Awe:** The *qashmal*'s presence paralyzes those who view it with holy (or unholy) terror. Spend three points of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. All those who can see the *qashmal* contest the roll with Presence + Composure + Azoth. Anyone who gains fewer successes than the *qashmal* is unable to move or speak for one turn, either from awe (as, unwilling, they prostrate themselves before the angelic figure) or all-consuming fear (as their legs turn to jelly, their throats dry up and their backs turn to ice). If the *qashmal*

achieves an exceptional success against a target, the effect lasts for three turns.

• **Emotional Aura:** The *qashmal* can extend its Pyros over a wide area. Those who enter the invisible radiance of the Transforming Fire feel strong emotions, as the Pyros temporarily alters the lizard brain. Spend two points of Pyros. The player of anyone who comes within 10 yards of the *qashmal* must roll Resolve + Composure + Azoth in a contested roll against the *qashmal*'s Power + Finesse. If the *qashmal* wins, the emotional urge the *qashmal* has created overcomes the subject, who suffers a -3 penalty to all dice pools, unless she is acting directly to fulfill the dictates of the emotion she now feels. For example, if a Lilith exudes an aura of violent rage, anyone overcome by it has to fight the urge to attack someone. On the other hand, someone overcome by an Elpidos creating an aura of calm would find it very hard to entertain violent thoughts. The effect lasts for the rest of the scene, or until the *qashmal* chooses to turn the power off, whichever comes first.

• **Ghastly Crew:** The *qashmal* can inhabit a corpse, working the body like a puppet. This Numen is sometimes used to complete a task that the corpse's original owner left unfinished. For example, a group of Elpidos once inhabited the bodies of a crew of dead men on a becalmed sailing vessel, in order to bring the ship (and its sole survivor, an ancient mariner) safely back to port, before leaving the men's bodies behind. Spend a point of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. The body uses the *qashmal*'s Attributes, and the *qashmal*'s presence mostly reverses the body's decay — it's apparent that the body is dead, but even if the corpse has been dead for years, it looks as if he or she died only a few days ago. A

qashmal inhabiting a corpse in this way does not lose Pyros over time. The *qashmal* must leave the body when the task is completed. When the *qashmal* departs, the body reverts to a state of decay reflecting the amount of time the corpse has been dead.

- **Grant Vision:** *Qashmallim* can invade the dreams of humans and Prometheans alike, granting vivid revelations in which the *qashmallim* can impart valuable information, reveal truths or show apocalyptic visions of things that might come to pass. Spend one Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, contested against the victim's Resolve + Composure. A *qashmal* with this Numen can impart visions to people who are awake, but suffers a -2 penalty. If the victim, waking or sleeping, is under the influence of drugs, the *qashmal* gains a +2 bonus to its dice pool. If the drugs are hallucinogens, the bonus is +3.

- **Imitation:** A Materialized *qashmal* with this Numen can take on the semblance of a human the *qashmal* has met. Spend one point of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. Those who know the imitated person might see through the deception. Players of such characters make contested Wits + Empathy rolls. The number of successes is compared to the roll for this Numen. If the *qashmal* wins, the deception holds. If not, the viewer realizes that something is wrong with his acquaintance, though he probably won't be able to put his finger on what.

- **Immolate:** The *qashmal*'s hands (or claws, or mouth, or tentacles or wings) can, in an instant, be wreathed in cold Transforming Fire, which sears flesh and boils blood. Spend three points of Pyros. All of the *qashmal*'s Brawl attacks cause aggravated damage for the rest of the scene.

- **Impart:** The *qashmal* can infuse a mortal's being with the Pyros and grant the mortal the use of one of the *qashmal*'s Numina. Roll Power + Finesse. If the mortal is unwilling, or doesn't know what's happening, he can resist with Resolve + Stamina. If the *qashmal* succeeds, it burns itself out and returns to the Pyros, effectively ceasing to exist, while the mortal now gains the use of whatever Numen the *qashmal* wanted to pass on. The human's dice pool when using the Numen is composed of appropriate Attributes. For example, if the *qashmal* bestows a human with the Awe Numen, that human's player rolls Presence + Manipulation to use the Numen (the Power Attribute + the Finesse Attribute). If the Numen requires Pyros to be activated, the mortal's player must spend Willpower instead, on a one-for-one basis. Any *qashmal* with the Impart Numen has almost always been sent to Earth for the purpose of using that Numen. The Numen only works for the mortal until such time as the *qashmal*'s purpose in granting it has been fulfilled, and it's quite likely the *qashmal* will tell its mortal beneficiary exactly what this circumstance is ("you shall bear the cold flame in your hands, until such time as the creature under the bridge is dead," for example). This power does not work on supernatural beings, including mages (whose Awakened

souls will not allow the interference of the Pyros) and ghouls (whom the Vitae keeps in a state of spiritual stasis that the *qashmal* cannot alter). This power does work on mortals with supernatural qualities, such as the wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers, however.

- **Implant Delusion:** The *qashmal* can make someone believe something that isn't true, or implant a false memory in a subject. Spend two Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, contested by the subject's Composure + Azoth. If the roll is successful, the subject believes whatever the *qashmal* has just told him to believe. If this belief is something that can easily be proven false (for instance, "lead turns to gold when anointed with this oil"), demonstration of the delusion's untruth ends the Numen's effects. *Qashmallim* usually implant delusions of a spiritual and therefore unassailable nature, however.

- **Materialize:** This Numen allows the *qashmal* to take on a solid form. This form is usually fixed (that is, a given *qashmal* only assumes one form), but some *qashmallim* have the power to take on multiple shapes. As with all else concerning the Dominions, the power depends upon the Mission. Until the *qashmal* uses this Numen, the *qashmal* cannot be physically attacked, or make any physical action. Spend three Pyros, and roll Power + Finesse. If the *qashmal* succeeds, it can remain Materialized indefinitely, until it chooses to cease being material.

- **Parthenogenesis:** The *qashmal* has the power to conceive a child with a human woman without any sexual contact ever having taken place. Spend a point of Pyros, and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll succeeds, the woman enters into normal pregnancy. The woman can be of any age, and does not have to be physically able to bear a child — she can be too young or too old to bear a child, or be without the necessary generative organs (because of disease, for example). If the pregnancy is carried to term, the child who is born probably has some high expectations upon her. Perhaps the child grows up to have supernatural powers, but she doesn't need to. The weight of expectations can be enough to make the child of such a miraculous pregnancy remarkable in many ways.

- **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. Roll Power + Finesse in a contested roll against the victim's Resolve + Composure. If the *qashmal* wins, it steals one Pyros point per success, which the *qashmal* can use to fuel its powers.

- **Recharge Pyros:** The *qashmal*, when Materialized, can recharge its Pyros from electricity. The Dominion attaches itself to a source of electrical power. Spend one point of Pyros, and roll Power + Resistance. On a success, the *qashmal* gets the point of Pyros back, and gets another point of Pyros for every success rolled. However, every success also reduces the Structure of the electrical outlet or cable the *qashmal* has connected itself to by one. If the object's Structure is reduced to zero or less, the *qashmal* is destroyed.

• **Seek:** Not all *qashmallim* have to rely on intelligence or happenstance to find the objects of their Missions. Some have the ability to find their quarry instinctively. Perhaps they're *all* supposed to have this ability, but are kept from using it because they manifest in an imperfect manner. The player rolls Finesse. On a success, the Dominion gets a general idea of the direction and distance of its target, as long as the target is within a radius of about a mile. If the target isn't less than a mile away, the *qashmal* gets nothing. If the player spends a point of Pyros, the radius extends to two miles. Two points of Pyros extend the radius to four miles, three points to eight miles, four to 16 miles and so on. If the *qashmal* has more than one target, and more than one is within the radius of this power, the *qashmal* knows the distance and direction of all of the targets, and can choose which to follow.

• **Teiresian Metamorphosis:** A *qashmal* with this Numen can change the gender of a living being (including a mage, but not a Promethean, vampire or werewolf). Spend 10 Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. If the mortal wishes to resist, his player can roll Resolve + Stamina. If the *qashmal* succeeds, the mortal changes sex, becoming as if he or she had been born belonging to the other gender. A *qashmal* could use this Numen to "heal" a transsexual, supplying those generative organs and making the changes that surgery could not fully perform. A *qashmal* can also use this Numen to join two humans together in one hermaphrodite being, a true *rebis*, wholly male and wholly female. In this case, roll once. Either individual or both get the option of contesting the *qashmal*'s roll. If either gets more successes than the *qashmal*, the Numen fails to work.

This is a rare Numen, and, as with many others, its use might well be a *qashmal*'s only purpose on Earth. The *qashmal* might be the granting of a dearly held wish, a punishment or some strange means of altering history.

Creating a *Rebis*

A *rebis* is a single being with a single mind, an harmonious synthesis of both bodies and souls. He/she remembers both lives equally, without conflict. *Rebis*es are smarter, better looking and healthier than their component parts.

The *rebis* takes both sets of Attributes and Skills, using the higher every time. If one of the components of the *rebis* is a mage, the *rebis* still has all his or her Gnosis and Arcana. If both components are mages, the *rebis* uses the higher of the partners' Gnosis and Arcana dots. If two mages joined as a *rebis* are of different Paths, the *rebis* keeps both Paths (meaning that the mage might now have as many as four Ruling Arcana and no Inferior Arcana). Whether either or both of the

component beings were Awakened, a *rebis* cannot belong to a Legacy. The *rebis* loses any Legacy Attainments either of his/her parts may have had.

The *rebis* is a very different person to either being. The *rebis*' player can choose to take either Virtue and Vice, or pick entirely new ones.

• **Telekinesis:** As the Ghost Numen (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 212).

Numina of the Elpidos

• **Burning Coal:** Sometimes the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. A *qashmal* grants a vision to an individual, and the mortal is too scared to act upon what he has seen. With this Numen, the *qashmal* grants a mortal to whom it has imparted a vision the courage to do something about it. Spend two points of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. On a success, the mortal is no longer afraid of the consequences of following the vision's lead. Although the mortal isn't suicidal, he is prepared to die for what he considers to be the truth. If the roll is an exceptional success, the mortal regains Willpower from doing things that directly follow the dictates of the vision, in the same way as he would from fulfilling his Virtue.

• **Chariot of Fire:** With this Numen, a *qashmal* can whisk a character away, gathering her up in a circle of fire, and depositing her anywhere else in a matter of seconds. Spend four Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. If the *qashmal*'s passenger doesn't want to be carried away, she can resist with a roll of Resolve + Stamina + Azoth. If the *qashmal* succeeds, it lifts its subject up in a spectacular display of screaming wind and lashing fire. The wind and fire stop as suddenly as they began, and the passenger is gone. The Elpidos drops its passenger anywhere on Earth, in the material world or in Twilight, seconds later. The passenger has no say in where she is left.

• **End Disease:** The *qashmal* can use this Numen to remove all disease from a living being. Spend one point of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll is successful, the *qashmal* heals any disease the subject may have, no matter how trivial or serious, treatable or incurable. If the disease is of supernatural origin, such as the result of a supernatural being's machinations, the *qashmal* must spend three Pyros to cure the disease.

• **Heal the Land:** The *qashmal* can lessen the Wasteland effect around a Promethean. Spend three points of Pyros, and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll is successful, the *qashmal* lessens the Wasteland effect caused by one Promethean by one stage per success.

• **Pray for Rain:** Rain comes, cool and refreshing, brought by the *qashmal*. Spend three points of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll is successful, it begins to rain in an area of about a half-mile radius around the *qashmal*, no matter how improbable that might be. The rain is at a comfortable temperature for humans, no matter how hot or cold the surrounding area.

• **Pyretic Chorale:** Occasionally, the *qashmallim* must make their information openly available and difficult to ignore. With this Numen, a single Elpidos can appear to divide into several figures, all of whom sing in unison. Spend three points of Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. If the roll is successful, the *qashmal* appears to be literally dozens of individuals, who sing or speak in unison at tremendous volume. When the *qashmal*'s message is over, the extra figures vanish.

• **Soothe Disquiet:** The *qashmal* can lessen the level of Disquiet in an individual. Spend a point of Pyros, and roll Power + Finesse, reflexively contested against the subject's Resolve + Composure. If the roll is successful, the level of Disquiet the subject feels toward one Promethean is reduced by one stage. This Numen doesn't stop the human suffering from Disquiet again, should he spend more time in the presence of the Promethean.

Numina of the Greater Elpidos

• **Ersatz Mortality:** With this Numen, a Greater *qashmal* can cause a supernatural being with a human element — a vampire, werewolf, mage or Promethean — to become a normal mortal. Spend 10 Pyros and roll Power + Finesse — the subject's Stamina + Azoth (or Gnosis, Primal Urge or Blood Potency). If the *qashmal* succeeds against a Promethean, the Promethean becomes mortal for one scene. When he regains his Promethean nature, he must immediately roll to resist Torment — the taste of humanity, no matter how inconvenient it may have been, was sweet and losing it is a bitter blow.

If the *qashmal* is using this power against a vampire, werewolf or mage, each success cancels out one dot of Blood Potency, Primal Urge or Gnosis for a scene. If all the character's dots are canceled out, the character becomes an ordinary human, losing access to all powers and weaknesses until the scene is over.

• **Manipulate Time:** The *qashmal* can rewind time a few seconds, so that an event never happened to an individual. Spend 10 points of Pyros and rolls Power + Finesse. If the roll succeeds, the subject of the Numen feels time rewind and everything that happened to her — even injuries — reverse. Although the subject remembers what happened, no one else realizes, as the Elpidos fractures time and remakes it.

• **The Rising of the Light:** The *qashmal* can create light that is equivalent in every way to sunlight rise over an area the size of a city block. Spend 10 Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. On a success, the area is bathed in daylight. Creatures adversely affected by sunlight suffer effects as if the sun really had risen. This lasts for a scene.

• **Resurrection:** The *qashmal* can raise the dead. The Dominion stands by the corpse and commands the subject to awaken. Spend 10 Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, with a –1 penalty to the dice pool for every full day the subject has been dead. On a dramatic failure, the body animates, but it is a murderous, undead creature, possessed by an unclean spirit



from a place that even the *qashmallim* fear to tread. On a success, the dead person lives again. All wounds and diseases are fully healed, and the subject is free to live out the span of her life. The *qashmal* can raise werewolves and mages from the dead as well, but they lose their supernatural powers, becoming ordinary humans, albeit wolf-blooded or Sleepwalkers, respectively. The *qashmallim* cannot raise vampires from the dead, because, even if their bodies are not piles of dust, they have died twice, an obstacle even a Greater *qashmal* cannot surmount. No *qashmal* can raise a person who has died from natural causes. They have lived out their destined lives, and in their case, the rule of Destiny cannot be gainsaid.

Numina of the Lilithim

- **Blight:** The Lilith can destroy a year's crop of food within a radius of a mile. Spend two Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. On a success, the crop fails, afflicted with a sudden, crippling blight that kills the plants overnight, leaving not a single grain or piece of fruit edible.

- **Clasp:** This Numen allows a Materialized *qashmal* to wrap a target in a crushing embrace. The Numen works like any brawling attack. The Lilith uses Power + Finesse, rather than Power alone (which takes the place of Strength + Brawl; see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 157). If the *qashmal*'s player spends a point of Pyros, the Lilith's Brawl attacks cause lethal damage instead of bashing damage for the rest of the scene.

- **Command Pandoran:** Lilithim cause Pandorans to awaken, simply by being present, and with this Numen, the Lilith can directly control an awakened Pandoran. Spend two Pyros and make a roll of Power + Finesse. For every success the Lilith gains, it can control one Pandoran, body and mind, for one scene. The player can spend one Pyros to extend the duration of this power to 24 hours.

- **Final Strike:** Sometimes, a Lilith — particularly one whose Mission is to destroy or kill — is granted the power to fight even to the point of destruction. A Lilith whose Corpus has fallen to 4 or below can make one last attack against its opponent. Spend a point of Pyros. The Lilith makes an immediate attack against its opponent as a reflexive action, with a +2 bonus to its dice pool. This Numen can only be used once, and can only be directed against a person or object that the *qashmal* is purposed to destroy.

- **Invoke Disquiet:** The *qashmal*'s words can worsen Disquiet in an individual. Spend one Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, contested by the subject's Resolve + Composure. If the *qashmal* succeeds, the subject suffers the first stage of Disquiet, directed at a Promethean of the *qashmal*'s choice. If the subject is already suffering from Disquiet, the *qashmal* causes it to increase in severity by one stage.

- **Mutagenic Blast:** With a searing blast of cold Transforming Fire, the *qashmal* can cause a Promethean, Pandoran, mortal or animal to suffer a mutation of some kind. Spend two Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, contested by the subject's Resolve + Stamina + Azoth. On a success, the subject mu-

tates. For a scene, the *qashmal*'s victim gets either the two-dot Pandoran Transmutation "Tentacles" (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 241) or the three-dot Pandoran Transmutation "Hundred Hands" (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 244). The victim can't hide the mutation and suffers a -1 to all dice pools for the rest of the scene as she struggles to control the way that her body has changed. If she is a Promethean, her disfigurements also become visible to all.

- **Plague Crow:** Disease is the Lilithim's plaything. A *qashmal* with this Numen can inflict disease upon an unwitting mortal (including mages) with a touch, a kiss or sometimes just a breath. Spend three Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, opposed by the victim's Resolve + Stamina. On a success, the victim suffers from a potentially fatal disease. What the disease is, and whether it's infectious is up to the Storyteller, but it's always potentially fatal (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 176). If the disease is not terminal and incurable, it should take at least 20 successes on an extended Stamina + Resolve roll to beat, with one roll allowed per week.

- **Rain of Frogs:** Chaotic and Fortean events create circumstances favorable to the propagation of Flux. With this Numen, a Lilith can cause frogs, fish, blood or some other organic material to rain from the sky. Spends four Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. The frogs, fish, blood or whatever are spontaneously generated, and may cause, at the Storyteller's discretion, some danger to people caught outdoors in the rain. Naturally, science has no explanation for what happens and can find no origin for the animals or blood. If blood rains from the sky, on analysis the blood matches the blood of no known animal.

For a day after the unnatural rain, all rolls made to activate Pandoran Transmutations or Numina used by Lilithim in the area of the storm receive a +1 modifier.

- **Raise Flux:** With this Numen, a Lilith can infect the surrounding area with Flux. Spend five Pyros and roll Power + Finesse. On a success, the Flux Rating in the immediate area rises by 1.

Numina of the Greater Lilithim

- **Invoke Firestorm:** Some of the most potent of the Lilithim can bring Firestorms into being. The *qashmal* spends seven points of Pyros, and rolls Power + Resistance. If the *qashmal* succeeds, a Firestorm brews up in the space of about an hour. Each success the *qashmal* gains is equal to one success on an Azoth roll, as if a Centimanus or *Sublimatus* had called the Firestorm into being (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 254). This Firestorm's trigger is Potniae (see Chapter Three for more information).

- **Pillar of Salt:** The Lilithim can end a mortal's life at a stroke, transforming his flesh with a word into nothing but salt and dust. Spend five Pyros and roll Power + Finesse, contested by the subject's Resolve + Stamina + Azoth. On a success, the victim becomes a rough pillar of rock salt. A Promethean (or other supernatural being) remains this

way for a number of hours equal to the *qashmal*'s Power. A mortal remains this way indefinitely, although there may be supernatural means of returning him to life.

The Lilith can only use this Numen on a mortal if the mortal ignores a warning. A Lilith doesn't have to say what the consequences of the warning are, but must inform the victim of something he *must not do* — don't look back, don't open the red door, don't speak while in this room, don't touch the altar. Here, for once, ignorance is an excuse. If the person who broke the rules didn't know that there was an instruction, the *qashmal* cannot use this Numen.

The Measure

It's stopped raining now. The Sister's habit is soaked through, mud caked all around to knee height, soaked into the threadbare cloth. There's a green algae stain along her sleeve.

The trees stop a little before the steep incline to the beach. The narrow valley, folded in along the path, flattens slightly before hardening into cliffs and rocks along the edge of the shore. This is the only way down. She takes the red nylon rucksack off her shoulder and rummages inside, takes out a small leather tool roll, unties it and selects a scalpel. And then she waits at the edge of wood, leaning against a sycamore, cradling the scalpel's blade between thumb and forefinger.

When the man with the rock salt skin steps out from behind the trees, holding on to a branch as he navigates a patch of mud and moss, Sister Stitch flicks her wrist, the blade spins through the air and embeds itself with a little thud in the bark of a tree, not far from his face. He looks down at her.

"Why did you do that?" His voice is hoarse, but carries over the roaring tide.

"What?" She already has a second scalpel at shoulder height, wrist cocked.

"Why did you do that, Sister? I'll not harm you." He steadies himself, rubs the heel of a free hand against a chin, uneven, gray and angular, like a sea-battered crag.

"You've been following me."

"Aye. That I have. For two days now."

"What do you want?" The Sister lowers the blade. She runs her other hand along one of the twin scars that run across her cheeks from mouth to ear, picking absent-mindedly at one of the staples with a rusty fingernail.

"Can I come down?" he asks. She nods.

He yanks the scalpel from the tree, and tucks it into his belt, then clammers down the bank. They stand face-to-face, and assess each other. There is no haze for them, no lie. They are alike. The man wears a rough shirt, sleeves rolled up, tucked into ripped-out jeans over army surplus boots so battered they're barely holding on to their soles. His skin is sandstone and rock salt and seashore clay, his hair stone-gray and brutally cut, heavy brows, eyes so deeply set they're permanently in shadow. Sister Stitch looks him over with dry white eyes and tightens her mouth. They say nothing for a while. The Sister closes her eyes, looks away. She opens them again. The man — not a man, a thing like her — relaxes, and hands her the scalpel.

They exchange names and tales of trouble. Neither feels the bloody-winged angel, invisible, ephemeral, vanish as they finish her work.



CHAPTER THREE

THE DIVINE FIRE

Fierrot had seen the fires in the night too many times, and he knew that when they arrived, he was in trouble.

He had long since resigned himself to hiding in the background. It was his best bet for survival, as melodramatic as that always sounded when he told it to himself. But then he remembered the time that convinced him to lie low, and he knew in his heart that he was right.

Sixty years ago, Fierrot had seen one of the night-fires. He had been in his usual spot, in the brothel, playing his sad balalaika and singing his songs. He felt this longing cry of his own fire — not the night fire, but the one inside him — that told him another one of the false men was nearby.

Something was wrong with this man, Fierrot could tell even before he heard the screams outside. The fire inside him reacted as a mouse before an owl, and he sought to flee, flee, flee, but he could not. Then the others heard the screams, the whores and their men and the madam and someone knocked over a bottle of vodka and they all went running to the door to see what horrible thing might be happening in the street.

The man ran down the street, clawing at his face, engulfed in the hellish flame that sometimes bursts through the seam between worlds. This false man fell, consumed by the raging fire —

— which then leapt to surround Fierrot, wreathing him in a fiery nimbus that hurt him not a whit. Why? What did this flame want? Why did it not consume him as it scintillated across the fallen Created's body? The fire burned his balalaika, so why not him?

"Witch!" the whores screamed. "Sorcerer! Demon!"

One of the men ran to the fireplace and grabbed the poker, beating Fierrot across the face and arms. Another man stabbed Fierrot with his pocketknife. One of the whores shot her tiny pistol into Fierrot's stomach.

Of course, he didn't fall.

And so they screamed again of his witchcraft.

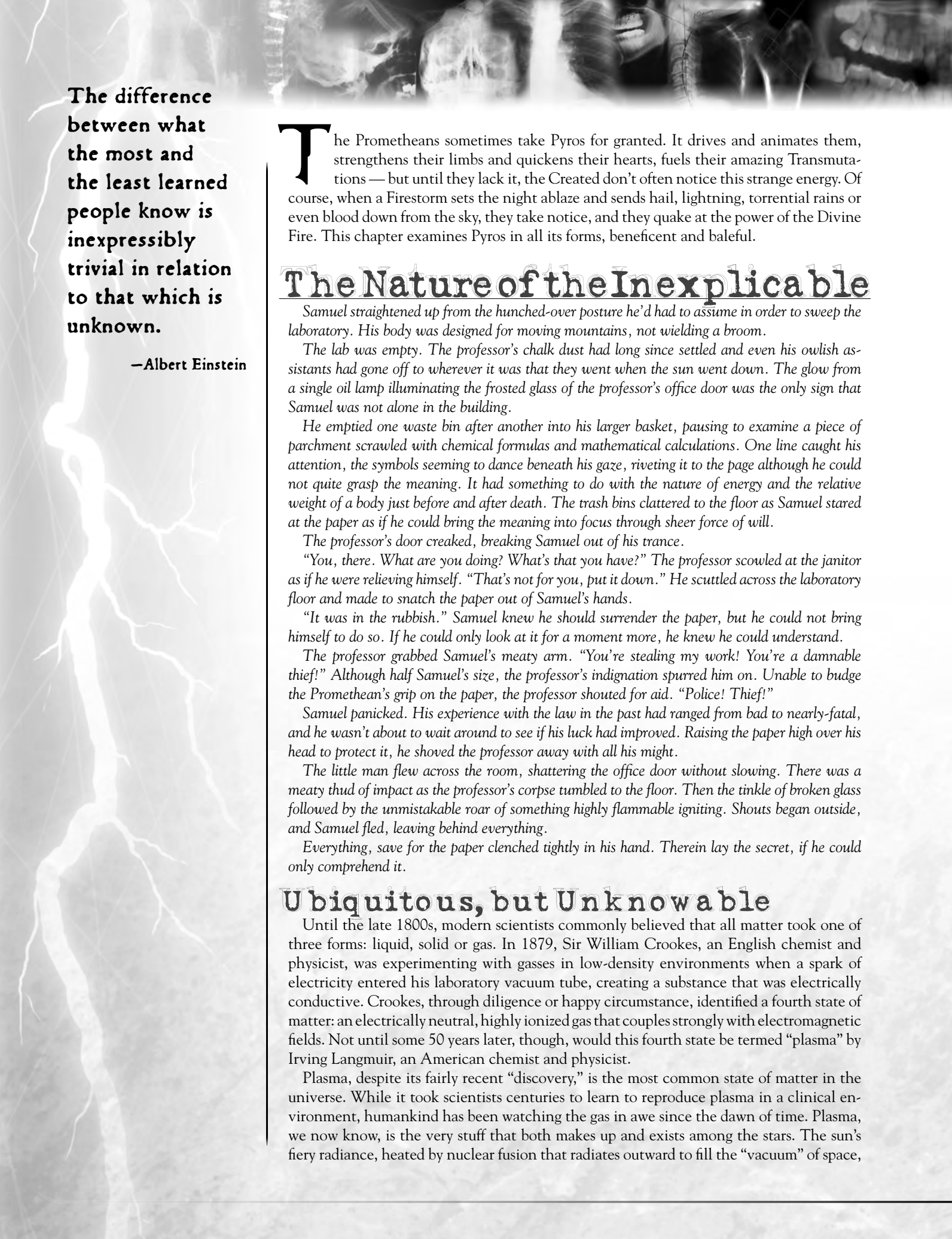
Eventually, they beat him to death. They dragged Fierrot into the alley behind the brothel and left his body for the rats. The madam called the police and told them he had tried to accost one of her girls.

Some people in the crowd said it was this other man, but they didn't find another body. The only strange thing that turned up where they said he had seen this other man was a handful of bone needles and a candle that wasn't made of wax or tallow. A scrap of old paper with foreign writing on it had blown into the gutter two streets away, but that was probably unrelated.

Fierrot didn't know any of this. He got up when he was through being dead, and moved on. Since that night, Fierrot has known to flee the fires.



MEVION



The difference between what the most and the least learned people know is inexpressibly trivial in relation to that which is unknown.

—Albert Einstein

The Prometheans sometimes take Pyros for granted. It drives and animates them, strengthens their limbs and quickens their hearts, fuels their amazing Transmutations — but until they lack it, the Created don't often notice this strange energy. Of course, when a Firestorm sets the night ablaze and sends hail, lightning, torrential rains or even blood down from the sky, they take notice, and they quake at the power of the Divine Fire. This chapter examines Pyros in all its forms, beneficent and baleful.

The Nature of the Inexplicable

Samuel straightened up from the hunched-over posture he'd had to assume in order to sweep the laboratory. His body was designed for moving mountains, not wielding a broom.

The lab was empty. The professor's chalk dust had long since settled and even his owlish assistants had gone off to wherever it was that they went when the sun went down. The glow from a single oil lamp illuminating the frosted glass of the professor's office door was the only sign that Samuel was not alone in the building.

He emptied one waste bin after another into his larger basket, pausing to examine a piece of parchment scrawled with chemical formulas and mathematical calculations. One line caught his attention, the symbols seeming to dance beneath his gaze, riveting it to the page although he could not quite grasp the meaning. It had something to do with the nature of energy and the relative weight of a body just before and after death. The trash bins clattered to the floor as Samuel stared at the paper as if he could bring the meaning into focus through sheer force of will.

The professor's door creaked, breaking Samuel out of his trance.

"You, there. What are you doing? What's that you have?" The professor scowled at the janitor as if he were relieving himself. "That's not for you, put it down." He scuttled across the laboratory floor and made to snatch the paper out of Samuel's hands.

"It was in the rubbish." Samuel knew he should surrender the paper, but he could not bring himself to do so. If he could only look at it for a moment more, he knew he could understand.

The professor grabbed Samuel's meaty arm. "You're stealing my work! You're a damnable thief!" Although half Samuel's size, the professor's indignation spurred him on. Unable to budge the Promethean's grip on the paper, the professor shouted for aid. "Police! Thief!"

Samuel panicked. His experience with the law in the past had ranged from bad to nearly-fatal, and he wasn't about to wait around to see if his luck had improved. Raising the paper high over his head to protect it, he shoved the professor away with all his might.

The little man flew across the room, shattering the office door without slowing. There was a meaty thud of impact as the professor's corpse tumbled to the floor. Then the tinkle of broken glass followed by the unmistakable roar of something highly flammable igniting. Shouts began outside, and Samuel fled, leaving behind everything.

Everything, save for the paper clenched tightly in his hand. Therein lay the secret, if he could only comprehend it.

Ubiquitous, but Unknowable

Until the late 1800s, modern scientists commonly believed that all matter took one of three forms: liquid, solid or gas. In 1879, Sir William Crookes, an English chemist and physicist, was experimenting with gasses in low-density environments when a spark of electricity entered his laboratory vacuum tube, creating a substance that was electrically conductive. Crookes, through diligence or happy circumstance, identified a fourth state of matter: an electrically neutral, highly ionized gas that couples strongly with electromagnetic fields. Not until some 50 years later, though, would this fourth state be termed "plasma" by Irving Langmuir, an American chemist and physicist.

Plasma, despite its fairly recent "discovery," is the most common state of matter in the universe. While it took scientists centuries to learn to reproduce plasma in a clinical environment, humankind has been watching the gas in awe since the dawn of time. Plasma, we now know, is the very stuff that both makes up and exists among the stars. The sun's fiery radiance, heated by nuclear fusion that radiates outward to fill the "vacuum" of space,



is plasma, as is every one of the stars that grace the night sky. Closer to home, plasma illuminates the *aurora borealis*, gives the ionosphere its ethereal glow, blazes in every bolt of lightning and is at least to a small degree present in every flame. And yet, this state of matter, which exists everywhere, is observable by the naked eye, and can be created through scientific means was unknown to humankind in any practical sense until 150 years ago.

In light of this, it is hardly surprising that Pyros is all but unknown to humanity. Each of the human demiurges who have successfully breached the curtain of mystery surrounding this elusive yet ubiquitous material have done so either through decades of intense study or in a moment of unparalleled kismet — frequently both. Those who have stumbled across Pyros' secrets are changed for the rest of their lives, a time period that is decidedly short for many who dabble in the Divine Fire's unique power.

Matter, Energy or Idea?

One of the problems inherent in understanding the Divine Fire is that it does not fit neatly into any of the basic "boxes" commonly used by humanity to categorize things. Pyros is

not, strictly speaking, a thing at all. While in some manners Pyros behaves as a substance, transferable from one entity to the next as one might transplant an organ or vital fluid, in others Pyros is entirely ephemeral and cannot be measured in any tangible form. One cannot have, for example, a pound of Pyros or a liter of Elpis.

In other manners, Pyros acts as energy, radiating out in a measurable aura with tangible effects on those it encounters within that field and none on those beyond it. Pyros sparks like lightning, gleams like light and burns like fire. And yet Pyros is none of these, and is not subject to the scientific laws that define energies. Pyros is not, strictly speaking, light or chemical, kinetic or electric. The Transforming Fire shares some qualities with each of these, and yet is not wholly any of them.

A philosophical element to Pyros exists, an aspect that allows it to be labeled most accurately in terms of alchemy rather than science. Pyros is a catalyst, scientifically defined as a substance that accelerates change without itself being consumed, but, unlike iron, platinum or other chemical catalysts, the changes that Pyros hastens along are not only physical but emotional, metaphoric and spiritual.

Something "Other"

Unlike plasma, Pyros is not, strictly speaking, natural, for all that it does sometimes occurs in nature. Pyros isn't entirely supernatural or spiritual. It exists, unlike any other known substance, somewhere between the hard-and-fast walls of these definitions. Those human, or more often Promethean, scholars who have learned enough about Pyros to attempt to define it have coined the term "alchemical plasma" to describe it. While not entirely accurate, this term suffices for most purposes, lending clues about the characteristics of Pyros while still reflecting its unique nature.

Similar to naturally occurring plasma, Pyros is strongly associated with electricity, fire and other forms of natural illumination, although Pyros is conducted by electricity where plasma is conductive of Pyros. Because of this close association, insufficiently vigilant observers have sometimes attributed electricity, fire or even the sun with some of Pyros' divine gifts. No mundane power, however, is capable of duplicating the entire spectrum of Pyros' effects, either positive or negative.

Even spiritual and supernatural magical forces are hard-pressed to replicate the more unique effects of the Divine Fire on the natural and supernatural world. Few werewolves could witness a Promethean creating a seemingly sentient servant from his own flesh without feeling a mixture of confusion and awe, and even the most jaded vampire might think twice about dealing with gibbering horde of Flux-driven Pandorans.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Pyros is not something it can do, but something it doesn't do. Unlike lightning, mundane fire or even the solar stuff between the stars, Pyros is not governed by the physical "laws" of nature. Pyros also isn't bound to the rules that seem to control the magical realm or spiritual world. Pyros is, for all that it shares some qualities with all three of these paradigms, its own class of matter, and is accountable only to its own, ineffable laws.

Coin or Scale?

While Prometheans acknowledge that the Pyros that brings them into existence has both a creative side and a destructive side, most prefer to think of Pyros less as a two-sided coin with Elpis and Flux inherent and more as something with greater or lesser degrees, in every bit. It is much neater, much tidier to see Pyros as a scale with "good" Elpis on one side and "bad" Flux on the other, allowing those who do not dabble in the study of Flux to retain moral separation and superiority over those who do. The reality, however, is likely less black-and-white than either of these philosophies. Certainly, some manifestations of Pyros are more heavily Flux- or Elpis-based than others, perhaps to the extent that there seems to be no

room for one or the other. But other indicators, for example, the onslaught of seemingly Flux-driven firestorms when Elpis-inspired revelations occur, would seem to indicate that the relation of one type of Pyros to the other is less simple than it first appears to be.

Fonts of the Divine Fire

Unlike mundane plasma, which once "discovered" was found to exist almost everywhere, Pyros appears to be a rare substance, and a Promethean cannot rely upon plentiful outside sources to renew his internal furnaces. Indeed, unlike Pandorans who can process new Pyros by consuming Azoth-infused flesh and organs, Prometheans seem unable to process Pyros from anywhere but within. Instead, certain actions and situations stir within the Promethean the spontaneous creation of additional quantities of Pyros once they have expended it, a process that seemingly stands in stark opposition to science's First Law of Thermodynamics. If Pyros is regained, logically minded scholars would put forth, it must come from somewhere.

The possibility exists that, as a substance outside of the laws of nature, the process of creating Pyros simply defies the known rules of science. Certainly some Promethean scholars subscribe to this theory. Others, of a more philosophical bent, claim that it is also possible that Pyros does exist outside of the Promethean form, but that in most places where Pyros exists, it does so in sufficiently diluted quantities as to be useless for the purposes of studying or utilizing it. Such scholars would claim that certain energies and all living creatures contain at least some element of the Divine Fire, but that in all but a few beings (Prometheans, Pandorans and the like) it is such a small quantity, or perhaps more accurately, of such a weak quality, as to be immeasurable. It is this minutia, the philosophers claim, which a Promethean's Azoth condenses from his experiences with sunlight, lightning and thunderstorms, or certain elements and individuals. The new Pyros is not created, per se, as much as distilled from the minutia into a more condensed and thus recognizable form. Just as with many theories of a philosophical nature, the presence of this immeasurable small quantity is inherently improvable, thus rendering the hypothesis predominantly moot. A Promethean cannot rely on outside sources for his Pyros refueling, but must instead look internally for recharging energies.

Finding the Divine Fire

Those who are driven to seek the Divine Fire, either for survival or scholarly pursuits, are likely to begin their quest by searching for a discernable source. Philosophical rumors aside, measurable quantities and qualities of Pyros are known to exist in only a small number of locations. Among these

are some that are mutable enough to prove impractical, as well as some so dangerous as to discourage their pursuit.

While Pyros may exist in other places, it is found within the Promethean body in a more concentrated form than anywhere else. Azoth, the refined Pyros that gives the Created their spark of life and fuels their very existences, is found only within the Promethean form. As such, perhaps even more so than beings such as the *qashmallim*, Prometheans can be said to be the primary repository for the Divine Fire manifest in the mundane world, making them the target of any who are aware of Pyros and wish to study it. This is inherently convenient for the vast majority of these scholars, as most are Promethean themselves, and many throngs have been formed in part to allow inquisitive Prometheans to build sufficient trust with each other to allow experimentation and analysis of this elusive energy. It is, unfortunately, not as auspicious a circumstance when the questing scholar is not Promethean. Whether human or supernatural, many who become aware of the Divine Fire consider the Prometheans to be little more than mystically animated corpses, zombies with no rights, and despite the Promethean resilience, more than one Pilgrimage has ended on an experimental slab under the inquisitive scalpel of one who seeks to understand the unknowable.

Although Prometheans may contain within themselves the most concentrated and stable source of Pyros manifest in the material world, this energy is not solely contained within their form. Azoth not only infuses their entire beings, but also emanates from them in an aura of Azothic Radiance that, in a powerful Promethean, can stretch well beyond their local areas. This energy swells forth constantly, unless intentionally tamped down, and its effects reach far beyond the direct location of the individual Promethean. This wave of Pyros, while weak in comparison to the heart of the Promethean's Azoth, is enough to act as a beacon for those who can seek the more concentrated form, those who seek to study the Divine Fire or those who must consume it to survive.

Among these Pyros-feeders are the Pandorans. While a Promethean's guiding intellect allows her to temper, if not completely control, the refined Azoth that gives her life, Pandorans are victims of their hungers. Dormant until they are exposed to the animating energy of Azoth, Pandorans' existences are almost entirely driven by their need to consume Pyros. This hunger, in most cases, vastly outstrips their rudimentary ability to control and process the fickle flow of Pyros, leaving Pandorans vastly susceptible to a sort of "feast or famine" surge of the Divine Fire. Unlike Prometheans, who can distill additional Pyros internally through their experiences with their surroundings, Pandorans must fuel their need for Pyros from external sources — most frequently Azoth-infused Promethean flesh. Thus, while Prometheans not only hold within their form the most concentrated form of Pyros in existence in the mundane world but also are

continually regenerating it, Pandorans are little more than a leaky battery for Pyros, brought to their pseudo-life by its presence, but only able to retain their animated mobility temporarily before being sent back into Dormancy by a lack of the Divine Fire's energy.

Unlike the Pandorans who are but imperfect creatures of Flux constantly starving for Pyros, the *qashmallim* are direct manifestations of the Divine Fire. If Pyros can be seen as a figurative wall separating the knowable from the unknowable, the Divine from the mundane, then the *qashmallim* are the embodiment of the Will of the Principle, thrust through that fiery wall and out into the world that contains everything comprehensible. Thus, *qashmallim* do not generate Pyros as much as they are constructs of it. Their presence in the mundane world lasts only as long as their Pyros stores are not completely depleted. Because of this, they are, inherently, a source of Pyros, and thus are understandably protective of the substance from which they are constructed. While a Pandoran, when bereft of Pyros, goes Dormant until once more awakened by some Promethean's Azothic Radiance, when a *qashmal* is denuded of its Pyros, the *qashmal* returns immediately to the Divine Fire. While this does not appear to be an unpleasant experience for the *qashmallim*, it is something that they seek to avoid, at least until they have completed their Missions.

For Every Predator, His Prey

Just as ingesting blood or being immersed in spiritual energy would serve no supernatural good for a Promethean, neither are most other supernatural creatures capable of utilizing the alchemical plasma that fuels the Created. That is, however, not to say that vampires, mages and werewolves are impervious to something as powerful as Pyros, even if they do not realize what exactly is affecting them.



Although vampires are no longer human, they are not immune to the effects of Azoth and Pyros. While they do not bear the full burden of growing Disquiet, the intense concentration of a Promethean's Azoth triggers a confrontational reaction in vampires not unlike the one they experience when interacting with each other. Most cannot tell upon meeting a Promethean that there is something "other" about the Created, although those with the ability to read the Promethean's fiery aura may be surprised and confused by it. Fortunately for the Created, the Azoth-infused connective fluid that mimics blood within their bodies is both less satisfying and less appetizing to vampires than human blood. Perhaps this speaks of the kinship between Pyros and other, more natural plasmas, such as the sun, which vampires fear. Or perhaps some indescrib-



able “flavor” inherent in Azoth-infused “blood” speaks on a deep and primal level to the vampires’ systems, reminding them of the Promethean’s quest for the humanity that the undead will never again possess. Regardless of the reason, most vampires would eschew feeding from a Promethean, given the choice. That is not to say that it is unheard of. A sufficiently hungry predator will attempt to prey upon almost anything, even if it is distasteful to them.

Unfortunately, while Prometheans’ vital fluids may make them less-than-ideal prey for vampires, Prometheans are not immune to blood addiction. A Promethean who consumes vampire blood is vulnerable to the same blood addiction that other individuals may fall prey to, although no amount of vampire Vitae will make a Promethean a ghoul or forge a Vinculum.

Pandorans are immune to vampiric blood bonds, and Pandorans’ “blood” gives no benefit to a vampire who consumes it. Any vampire who consumes Pandoran “blood” must make an immediate roll to resist frenzy, accumulating three successes.



Pyros and Werewolves

A werewolf who encounters a Promethean is most likely to mistake him for

a human who has been Ridden by spirits. This can, depending on the werewolf and the situation, lead the werewolf and the Promethean into conflict. For the most part, however, as long as the Promethean is not trespassing in the spirit realm, these conflicts are kept to a minimum. This means, of course, that the Ulgan are much more likely to find themselves in confrontational situations with werewolves than other Prometheans are.

While Promethean “blood” differs from human blood enough to serve as less-than-ideal vampire sustenance, Pyros is close enough to allow werewolves to gain their customary +4 to later track the subject upon tasting Pyros. Pandorans may be likewise tracked, although the Flux-taint inherent in their physiology is enough to require any werewolf tasting their “blood” to immediately attempt to resist Death Rage.

Pyros and Mages

While a Promethean may draw the curiosity of inquisitive individuals and sects among vampires or werewolves, the Awakened most often pose the greatest threat to a Promethean’s privacy, and thus to his welfare. A Promethean is an anomaly to the mage, a creature that seems to exist outside the laws of reality as the Awakened understand them, and

thus likely to earn the mage's prying attention, often to the Promethean's detriment.

Prometheans can be affected by the Life Arcanum, but all attempts at altering them with this type of magic (as opposed to scrutinizing them) suffer a -1 penalty. A Promethean's flesh is alive, true, but it lacks some of the vital components that enable Life magic, both helpful and harmful, to have its full effect. Mages cannot use magic to siphon or otherwise alter Pyros, whether in a Promethean's body or "loose" in the world. A mage who knows what to look for, perhaps through conversation with a Promethean, or who has magically scrutinized one previously, can detect large quantities of Pyros with a combined Mind/Prime "Unveiling" spell. Altering Pyros, however, is beyond all except perhaps the archmages.

Rumors: Pyros

* "Promethean blood is like garlic to vampires. They can't stand the stuff. I know a guy once who fought off a whole herd of bloodsuckers just by cutting himself open and splattering them with his blood. Now, werewolves? That's something different. They'll go after one of us like a bear after honey. Crack your bones open and suck the fire out, preferably while you're still kicking."

* "I heard of this place, out past where the road ends up in Alaska, out on the Kenai Ford. You have to hike a couple days out to find it, but Pyros just bubbles up out of the ground, pure as can be. That's what makes the northern lights, I guess . . . runoff from the Azoth Spring."

* "The qashmallim can make you human. I talked to a gal once who used to be part of a throng. They jumped one of those angel-things when it showed up one night - beat the hell out of it, and forced it to turn one of them human. It would have worked, too, except it got loose and killed all of them except her. Even the new human. Damn shame, getting Redeemed and then killed, all in the same night, huh? But the important thing is, it worked."

Firestorms

A Promethean's Pilgrimage is always fraught with danger. As if the hostility born of Disquiet, the inherent hazard of Wastelands emergent around them and the antagonistic presence of Pandorans were not sufficient threat, there are times when even the very Divine Fire that lends them the spark of life turns malevolently against them, lashing out with an elemental force and ferocity that their sentient en-

emies only wish they could muster. When, due to a myriad of triggers, the Divine Fire manifests in the mundane world and ignites into a tempest, the resulting storm is capable of destroying Pandorans and wreaking significant damage against anything in the storm's path. This phenomenon is known as a Firestorm.

Similar to mundane storms, Firestorms are capable of merciless destruction. They spring forth, strike down and, thankfully, are gone once again, normally in a matter of moments. Unlike mundane storms, however, there is no sure way to predict when or where the savage onslaught of a Firestorm will descend. While certain factors are known to sometimes act as triggers, even these are mercurial at best.

The Divine Fire is a potent force, and not one that is entirely understood, even by those who owe their existence to it. Even less is truly known about the Firestorms that spring forth from Pyros. While Pyros may be studied by diligent scholars within the Promethean form, few who know of Firestorms and are near enough to witness their destructive might are capable of maintaining their wits sufficiently to take an academic view of the proceedings.

Eumenideans

Most of those who are aware of the existence of Firestorms are content to limit their knowledge of the phenomena to how to avoid, or at least survive, the fury of these tempests. Some foolhardy individuals, predominantly Ophidians and Centimani, pursue Firestorms and knowledge of them with a passion that would put human hurricane chasers to shame. These "Eumenideans" seek to understand more about the nature of Pyros, or of Flux, in the case of the Centimani, through their studies of these tempestuous manifestations of the Divine Fire. Some see Firestorms as an analogy to the Promethean state of existence. Within the storms, they see their own Torment, power and destructive potential mirrored. Others believe that were any Promethean to learn to control the storms, to summon them or banish them at will, that this, perhaps more than the quest to become human, would truly be a Great Work. Unsurprisingly, these Eumenideans, even those who begin their studies on the Refinement of Quicksilver, are often tempted over to the Refinement of Flux. Open admission of such views is generally enough to cause a Promethean to be shunned by others who do not share his beliefs, or at least to make others consider him mad.

Into the Fire

Few Prometheans are fortunate enough to live their entire lives without encountering a Firestorm. While many are lucky enough to survive their first encounter with one (Prometheans being inherently resilient individuals), these Eumenidean Vortices have a way of etching their mark on everything around them. Only a rare individual encounters one and remains entirely unscathed.



While it would be impossible to detail every facet of every Firestorm, certain qualities are frequent enough to be thought of as “normal” for a Firestorm. This is not to say that every storm contains these qualities. Some storms skip stages or progress in a more chaotic pattern. Thus is the nature of things, especially when dealing with inherently chaotic energy. But, enough patterns have been seen to exist, especially within Lilithian storms, to draw some general guidelines.

Fuel

Mundane fires require three elements to come into being: fuel, oxygen and heat. Firestorms require only one: sufficiently concentrated quantities of Pyros. Pyros, if it exists at all manifest in nature outside of a few select sources, is normally present in far too diluted quantities and qualities to serve as sufficient fuel for a Firestorm. In order for a Eumenidean Vortex to have the potential to spring into being, something must concentrate Pyros into a form rich enough to allow it to self-spark into a storm.

Prometheans, by virtue of their Azoth, are inherently the richest sources of Pyros in the mundane world. As such, they are walking fuel sources for Firestorms, leaving little wonder that a Promethean’s even most insignificant action may be sufficient to spark a Firestorm into being. Pandorans and *qashmallim*, while lacking Azoth, are still sufficiently connected to Pyros to trigger a storm.

Rumors exist of natural, non-sentient sources of Pyros welling up on occasion, seemingly from the elements themselves. These stories are given little credence by most Prometheans. Certain Eumenideans, however, believe that there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to give at least some merit to the concept that nature is capable, under certain unusual circumstances related to extreme elemental conditions, of concentrating sufficient quantities of Pyros to fuel a “naturally occurring” Firestorm.

Spark

While there may be very little similarity between any two given Firestorms, they are usually triggered in one of five basic manners. These broad categories of storm-spawning triggers, and the storms they cause, are sometimes categorized by names given to the Furies of Greek mythology: Semnai (Holy Ones), Maniae (Madnesses), Praxidikae (Vengeful Ones), Dirae (The Terrible) and Potniae (Awful Ones).

Semnai

Of these Firestorms, two — Semnai and Maniae — seem to be triggered directly or indirectly by Promethean behavior. Semnai Firestorms come about when a Promethean nears the end of his Pilgrimage. As a Promethean progresses along his Pilgrimage, his Azoth grows in strength and intensity and the Elpis surges. This build-up of unifying energy, while positive, metaphorically “thickens” the Divine Fire surrounding the Promethean, making it increasingly more likely that any action or expenditure of Pyros will trigger a Firestorm. The

same energy that eventually brings a Promethean to his Great Work triggers Semnai Firestorms, which often prove to be among the pilgrim’s greatest obstacles to achieving that end. This paradox — greater likelihood of calling down a dangerous storm as one nears the end of one’s journey — is not lost on the Prometheans, some of whom consider weathering Semnai storms to be a badge of accomplishment (hopefully not a posthumous badge).

Semnai build slower by far than any other type of Firestorm. The sense of foreboding that heralds the advent of a Semnai is almost palpable, beginning with a feeling of pressure that settles over an area, increasing the temperature and/or humidity to uncomfortable levels. Dark clouds gather, hanging pendulous and heavy over head. Driving winds, laden with moisture, pick up speed, followed quickly by sheets of precipitation that are driven horizontal with the brute force of the gale behind them. Pressures in Semnai storms fluctuate strongly, building and then lifting with sufficient force to shatter windows and eardrums. Winds gust to Category 5 hurricane levels, ripping apart anything in their path and turning the shattered remains into missile weapons capable of devastating damage.

Maniae

While the triggering of a Semnai can be seen as somewhat positive, at least insofar as it serves as an indication that a Promethean is nearing the end of his Pilgrimage, no such thing can be said of the Maniae. These storms are spawned not by the gradual build-up of Elpis, but by a sudden influx of Pyros, either Elpis or Flux. This can come about through something as simple as an overwhelming revelation uncovered through the study of a Refinement, literally a flash of inspiration. Maniae can also be triggered by a significant error in using Pyros, a metaphysical stumble along the path. Whether Elpis- or Flux-triggered, Maniae storms are extremely devastating. Unlike the Semnai, which build slowly, Maniae strike like the proverbial bolt from the blue. One moment a Promethean is contemplating a particularly weighty Refinement concept or focusing on using one of his Transmutations, and the next he is surrounded by blazing walls of electricity as sheets of lightning explode all around him. Although Maniae storms may be accompanied by longer-lasting swells of strange weather, their actual duration is devastatingly fast. They strike and are gone in seconds, leaving only destruction in their wake.

Praxidikae

Prometheans are not the only creatures whose presence can trigger Firestorms, however. Pandorans are inherently creatures of the chaotic energy of Flux, and as such, their actions, including coming into being, frequently may serve to set off Pyros storms. That is not to say that any one individual Pandoran has the power within it to summon, much less control, a Firestorm. To the contrary, these storms are as damaging to the Pandorans who trigger them as they are to any other individuals caught in them. Even the most power-

ful Pandoran would do well to avoid a Firestorm, if for no other reason than self-preservation, as Firestorms frequently result in Dormancy or destruction of any Pandorans caught in the storms' savage fury.

A typical Praxidikae Firestorm builds quickly from nothing to a devastating event. These storms, named for the cruel nature of the creatures that spark them, are triggered by the creation or animation of a Pandoran, as if the tainted Pyros that brings Pandorans to life blazes into a wildfire of Flux capable of igniting the potential Firestorm into savage reality. If anything, Praxidikae are more devastating than other sorts of Firestorms, seemingly echoing the malevolent nature of those that spawned them.

The creation of other Flux-born creatures, such as the *kryptae* (see p. 44) could also spawn Praxidikae Firestorms. While the creation of Pandorans is not exactly a common event, the "birth" of other Flux-creatures is so infrequent as to be the stuff of myth and legend. Praxidikae spawned by creatures other than Pandorans are just as rare.

Firestorms called down deliberately by *Sublimati* or *Cenitmani* (see p. 254 of **Promethean: The Created**) are also considered Praxidikae.

Potniae

Less malevolent than the Praxidikae, but far more impressive visually are the Potniae: Firestorms triggered by the arrival or activity of one of the *qashmallim*. While Potniae is most often translated as "the Awful Ones," there is also an element of "awe-inspiring" within the original term. Those who have encountered the *qashmallim*, or survived the Firestorms their presence can spawn, would certainly testify to both meanings being valid. When one of the *qashmallim* is separated from the Divine Fire enough to temporarily become its own being, this shift in Pyros is enough to bring on one of the Potniae storms. Likewise, when a *qashmal* uses Pyros to fuel one of the creature's Numina or uses its Pyros Drain Numina to harvest it, this flow of energy is enough, when in proximity to the inherently alchemical nature of the *qashmallim*, to bring one of the awful and awesome storms to life.

Dirae

While there are no known non-Promethean Eumenideans to report firsthand on the matter (and while the presence of a Promethean Eumenidean would inherently taint the observation to the point of invalidation), rumors exist of a fifth type of Firestorm, which springs into being completely unrelated to the presence or activities of Prometheans or their erstwhile associates. These storms, dubbed Dirae (the Terrible Ones) for the wholesale destruction left behind, are triggered by something unrelated to Prometheans or Pandorans.

Pyros does occur in nature, albeit not in any easily predicted or measured manifestation. Many Prometheans believe that Pyros exists in diluted quantities, as a trace element, metaphysically speaking, in all life forms as well as certain elemental aspects. This would explain why, seemingly separate from known sources of Pyros, Dirae storms sometimes spring forth.

While mundane observers simply scratch their heads in wonder at the unseasonable cold snap, torrential gale or inexplicable locust swarm, Prometheans who make it their business to study such things recognize the signs of a manifested Dirae Firestorm even if they are not certain what triggered it.

Creating Custom Firestorms

Basic rules for Firestorms including duration, area of effect and basic damage and effect are detailed in Chapter Four of **Promethean: The Created**. The following additional information — custom Firestorm aspects and hints for utilizing location to customize Firestorms — is provided for Storytellers who would like to modify Firestorms to emphasize their chaotic and unique nature, and can be used as an alternate to the basic information.

Custom Firestorm Aspects

While some aspects of Firestorms are more common in certain situations than others, each Firestorm is its own manifestation, and, therefore, each is unique. In order to simplify the custom creation of individual Firestorms, the following options for aspects have been provided. Storytellers are encouraged to combine them. For example, an Elpidian storm might animate corpses through hellish lightning activity or a Lilithian storm might induce madness and flesh-warping throughout the area. These options are just a starting place. Storytellers can use them as a base, adding in whatever unique situational factors may be appropriate to their particular chronicles.

Triggers listed are only the most common triggers for a particular aspect. Firestorms are chaotic occurrences and "most common" should not be interpreted as "only." Likewise, while some storms feature several aspects of a single element, some Firestorms manifest aspects of many different elements. Some aspects reflect combinations of different elements within the same aspect. Storytellers should feel confident in mixing and matching traits from similar or different elements as suits their tastes. All Firestorms, however, have at least one of the varieties of the Pyros elemental aspects.

Firestorm Ratings are equal to the number of aspects (including the elemental or Pyros aspect) that contribute to it. Thus, a Blinding Lilithian Firestorm would have a Firestorm Rating of 2, while an Elpidian Caustic Lightning-Lashed Icy Thunderous Firestorm would have a Firestorm Rating of 5.

AZOTHIC (PYROS)

Azothic storms are most frequently caused by the sudden spark or extinguishing of Azoth. They can come about when a Promethean is brought into existence or when one is killed suddenly. Because of the refined nature of the Pyros involved, all effects are doubled in intensity, duration and area of effect for Azothic Firestorms.

Triggers: Semnai

Element: Pyros

ANIMATING

While many aspects of Firestorms are merely exponentially more dangerous or intense versions of mundane weather patterns, Animating storms would never be mistaken for anything ordinary. The intensity of Pyros in the area temporarily animates any recently dead bodies (less than a month) within the storm's area of effect, lending them a semblance of life, but no sentience, for the duration of the storm. During their brief period of animation, these stormshades might attack passersby, destroy anything they can clutch, or perform mindless, repetitive tasks (stacking stones, gathering sticks) for reasons no one can explain.

Stormshades

Each stormshade has the following base traits:

Attributes: Power 1, finesse 1, Resistance 2

Size: 5 (or less if the corpse is small)

Speed: 0*

Initiative: 0*

Defense: 0*

* These traits begin at 0, regardless of Attribute scores; the traits are raised by one for each level of the firestorm.

Stormshades do not suffer wound penalties and cannot heal damage naturally. Bashing, lethal and aggravated wounds are marked normally, but stormshades never suffer incapacitation — they just keep going until their last health point is lost to aggravated damage. When a stormshade's final (rightmost) health box is marked with bashing damage, no roll is required to remain conscious. When the stormshade's final health box is marked with lethal damage, the corpse does not collapse and begin bleeding to death — the corpse keeps going. Any damage suffered after that is upgraded to aggravated. Once this happens, the corpse loses body parts with each new upgraded wound until the corpse is completely pulverized or disintegrated (the Storyteller decides which parts fall off with each wound).

A stormshade exists only as long as the firestorm that created it. When the storm wanes, so does the supernatural energy fueling the corpse and it falls inanimate once the firestorm has dissipated.



Triggers: Semnai, Praxidikae
Element: Spirit

BLINDING

While many storms may impair visibility, Blinding Firestorms actually strike their victims blind. Blindness may be resisted with a successful Stamina roll with a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. Failure results in the target being unable to see for twice the duration of the storm in turns. The Blinding effect need only be resisted once per Firestorm.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae
Element: Spirit

BURNING

Burning Firestorms do not contain actual flames. Instead, the overwhelming Pyros super-heats any living beings (including Prometheans) to the point of spontaneous combustion. Roll Stamina with a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. Dramatic failure or simple failure results in the target spontaneously catching fire, taking one point of fire damage (lethal to most targets, aggravated to vampires and Prometheans) per turn until devoting an entire turn to making certain they are extinguished. Burning effects must be resisted each turn they remain within the storm's area of effect, unless the target is already on fire.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae
Element: Fire

CAUSTIC

Caustic Firestorms cover an area with a layer of acidic material that is capable of not only causing chemical burns but even blindness. Individuals within the Caustic Firestorm's area of effect take one point of lethal damage per turn from the acidic atmosphere. These effects may be resisted with Stamina + Resolve at a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating, and must be resisted each turn spent in the storm's area of effect. Also, the first turn the characters spend within the storm's area of effect, players of all sighted individuals must roll Wits + Dexterity with a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. Failure results in blindness that lasts for twice the duration of the storm.

Triggers: Semnai, Praxidikae
Element: Fire

ELPIDIAN (PYROS)

Elpidian storms are caused by a sudden influx or expenditure of Elpis. They can be triggered by the arrival of an Elpidos *qashmal*, or even through a sudden and important revelation upon a sufficiently advanced Promethean's Pilgrimage. For Elpidian Firestorms, the effects of Blinding, Icy and Thunderous are doubled in duration.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae
Element: Pyros

EMP

The electric power of this Firestorm is so great that it shorts out all electrical devices within the storm's area of effect. All such devices within the area are rendered non-functional as the electromagnetic shockwave fries their circuits. Items rendered non-functional in this way can be repaired using a standard Repair Item roll (see p. 39 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). A Promethean may use this electricity to heal himself, an unexpected blessing in an otherwise detrimental situation. Each Promethean present in the storm heals a number of bashing Health points equal to the Firestorm Rating, allocated as usual.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae
Element: Fire

FLESH-WARPING

Flesh-Warping Firestorms inflict temporary random physical transformations on anyone within the area of effect. The first turn spent in a Flesh-Warping storm requires a roll of Stamina + Composure. Failure results in a physical mutation. Storytellers are encouraged to utilize the Pandoran Transmutations as the basis for the warping. Transmutations such as Bizarre Weaponry, Small Stature, Balsam Flesh, Beastly Assimilation, Frog Tongue, Tarflesh, Tentacles and Hundred Hands are particularly appropriate for this type of Firestorm. Although these mutations are potentially useful, the impact of being suddenly afflicted with them can be devastating. Players of any characters who failed to resist the mutation must roll Wits + Composure. Failure nullifies any bonuses normally granted by the Transmutation and renders the body part unusable for any directed action until the mutation dissipates. Pandorans are immune to this effect; they can mutate, but instinctively know how to use their new traits. Centimani are not immune, but receive a +2 on the roll to control the mutations. Physical transformations, once acquired, last a number of turns equal to the Firestorm Rating after the end of the storm.

Triggers: Semnai, Praxidikae
Element: Spirit

FLOODING

Water can be devastating, especially when its onslaught is so fast and hard that the ground has no time to absorb it. While this aspect of Firestorm is most often accompanied by Torrential aspects, sometimes it is not. Rural Flooding Firestorms can be caused by the Pyros diverting an existing underwater spring, creek, river or other body of water, while urban ones might come from broken water mains, flooding sewer systems or breeched dams, levees or dikes. Sometimes a Flooding Firestorm simply happens on its own with vast, and frequently quickly moving, quantities of water seemingly manifesting from nowhere. While delivering no direct damage itself, the flooding can exacerbate other effects. Flooding

storms double the effects, both duration and damage, of Lightning-Laced, Icy or Torrential Firestorms.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae

Element: Water

HAIL-STUCK

While a normal hailstorm is of little concern to most, when Flux influences hail the results are devastating. Hailstones the size of golf balls or softballs or even bowling balls pummel an area, inflicting half the Firestorm Rating in bashing damage (rounded up) each turn. In Lilithian Hail-Struck Firestorms, these icy missiles can be even more alarming. Some have been known to manifest in strange colors or containing frozen objects or animals inside of them.

Triggers: Maniae, Praxidikae

Element: Water

HURRICANE-BLOWN

Hurricane-Blown Firestorms strike with little to no warning and leave an area decimated in their wake. These storms are capable of knocking individuals within the storm's area of effect off their feet or sending them flying. These storms also turn any loose objects — stones, small items, shards of broken glass — into projectile weapons, dealing one point of lethal damage per turn to any target in the area. This damage can be resisted with a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll each turn with a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating.

Triggers: Semnai, Potniae

Element: Water and Air

ICY

Icy Firestorms can snap the temperature in an area to subzero in seconds. Not only does this deal one point of bashing (frostbite) damage per turn to anyone in the area of effect, but the sudden cold coats everything with a thin layer of ice, levying a -4 to all rolls involving Dexterity or Physical Skills. The ice requires double the storm's duration to melt, depending on the weather — if the temperature is naturally below freezing, the ice remains until the temperature rises. Armor offers no protection against the frostbite damage, and vampires are not subject to it.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae

Element: Water

INFESTED

Some of the strangest mundane storms ever reported included eye witness accounts of bizarre precipitation: not ice, snow or rain, but insects, toads or serpents falling from the sky. Likewise, manifestations of insect or small animal swarms are not unheard of in Firestorms. This sudden onslaught of falling creatures is disturbing, especially if the Firestorm manifests within a human-made structure such as a building or airplane. The creatures descend upon the target area, delivering bashing damage to all present. Information on handling damage by and to swarms can be

found under the Pandoran Transformation “Demon’s Call” on p. 238 of **Promethean: The Created**.

Swarms of animals such as snakes, scorpions and spiders attack with venomous bites or stings that doubles the damage inflicted.

Triggers: Praxidikae, Potniae

Element: Spirit

LIGHTNING-LACED

Lightning-Laced Firestorms unleash bolts of Pyros-driven lightning capable of devastating damage. The storm delivers 10 points of lethal damage to a random target within the storm's area of effect during each turn of the storm's duration. Targeted individuals roll to resist with Stamina. A Promethean may instead use this lightning to heal herself as with natural lightning (see p. 165 of **Promethean: The Created**).

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae

Element: Fire

LILITHIAN (PYROS)

Lilithian Firestorms are a result of a saturation of Flux. They can be triggered by the sudden release of a slow build-up of chaotic Pyros or by a single chaotic event such as the creation of a Pandoran or the appearance of a Lilith. For Lilithian Firestorms, the effects of Animating, Flesh-Warping, Madness-Inducing and Malingering are doubled in duration.

Triggers: Maniae, Praxidikae, Potniae, Dirae

Element: Pyros

MADNESS-INDUCING

Not all of the Flux's influences are physical. Its warping powers are as effective on thoughts as they are on flesh. Any sentient being within the storm for more than a single turn risks full-blown insanity. Roll Resolve + Composure every turn after the first spent in the storm's area of effect. Failure results in the target being stricken with a minor derangement. A second failure within the same storm escalates the madness to a severe derangement. Only one minor or one severe derangement per target may be gained by this effect per storm. This effect slowly dissipates over the course of the next month.

Triggers: Maniae, Praxidikae

Element: Spirit

MALINGERING

Just as physical wounds take time to heal, so do the emotional scars left in the passing of this chaotic assault. All individuals who spend more than a single turn in the area of effect of a Malingering Firestorm are afflicted with the derangement: Depression (see p. 97 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Players of afflicted characters may resist with Resolve + Composure at a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. This ailment begins to fade after a day, and the effects are gone by the end of one week.

Triggers: Semnai, Potniae
Element: Spirit

SEISMIC

Even the earth itself is not immune to the effects of this Firestorm. Jolts of seismic energy shake the area, knocking over anything not securely fastened down. Players of any characters caught in the storm's area of effect must roll Dexterity + Athletics. Failure means that the character is knocked to the ground, stunned and unable to take any Physical action for that turn.

Triggers: Maniae, Potniae
Element: Earth

STONE-STRUCK

Mundane accounts of stones of granite or river pebbles falling like hail are among the more puzzling aspects of reported weather patterns. In the case of a Stone-Struck Firestorm, this bizarre phenomenon manifests in a destructive manner as stones ranging from the size of marbles to baseballs pummel the area, delivering two points of lethal damage each turn to everyone within the area of the storm.

Triggers: Potniae, Potniae
Element: Earth

THUNDEROUS

While lightning and thunder are often thought of as part and parcel to one another, booming Thunderous Firestorms sometimes happen quite separately from Lightning-Laced ones. While mundane thunder rarely does more than rattle windows, Thunderous Firestorms are capable of shattering glass and sundering eardrums. Any items with less than one point of Durability (i.e., anything more fragile than thick glass) within the storm's area of effect are shattered. Roll Stamina + Strength with a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. Failure results in temporary deafness, which gradually wears off over the next hour.

Triggers: Semnai, Maniae
Element: Air

TORNADO

Tornado Firestorms are capable of sucking people and objects dozens of feet into the air and dropping them suddenly when the storm dissipates. Every turn, players of any characters in the storm's area of effect roll Strength + Athletics at a penalty equal to the Firestorm Rating. Failure means that character is swept upwards. Once upswept, characters continue to be pulled 20 feet higher per turn until the storm dissipates, at which point they are dropped. Falling damage is figured as normal (see p. 179 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*.)

Triggers: Semnai, Potniae
Element: Air

TORRENTIAL

While a gentle rain can be beneficial, Torrential Firestorms are anything but. Water driven with sufficient force is capable of delivering painful assault to bare skin. At the very least, a Torrential Firestorm is enough to distract from any task at hand — anyone within a Torrential Firestorm's area of effect finds themselves soaked to the skin and at an additional -2 penalty (in addition to any other penalties they may be experiencing) to perform any actions for the duration of the storm.

Triggers: Semnai, Potniae
Element: Water

Example firestorm: Chaos Rains

A throng of Prometheans corners a *Sublimatus* who recently cornered and slew one of their members, taking his Vitriol and feeding his P̄gros-rich flesh to its obscene servants. The battle rages behind a burned-out apartment building, and none of the participants notice an ominous rumbling from the clouds. Finally, the *Sublimatus*, knowing that it cannot win this fight, frees the flux within itself, calling down a firestorm and taking its chances.

Obviously, the trigger for this storm is Praxidika. The Storyteller decides to make the firestorm Rating equal to the *Sublimatus*' Rank (4). The first aspect of the firestorm needs to be one of the expressions of P̄gros, and, given the circumstances, the obvious choice is Lilithian. That leaves three more aspects. The Storyteller reasons that because this area was devastated by fire not long ago, Burning is a logical choice. To reflect the *Sublimatus*' mad hunger and desire to survive, he also chooses Madness-Inducing. Finally, just to underscore the surreal nature of the fight, he chooses Torrential.

The *Sublimatus* stretches its hands heavenward as the Prometheans move in for the kill. Suddenly, their clothes and hair begin to smoke, and everyone present bursts into flames (the *Sublimatus* included). The Prometheans' players make the appropriate Stamina rolls and mark the results accordingly. Some of them devote their attentions to putting out the fires, but others are lost in the grip of madness — they see their dead friend lurching at them through the smoke, his chest still split open from the *Sublimatus*' claws. The *Sublimatus*, also struggling with the fire and dire images in its mind, tries to flee, but an instant later everyone present is drenched in a torrential downpour. This douses the flames, but does nothing to soothe the madness. The *Sublimatus* might escape the frag or



perish in the firestorm, but the throng must tend to the wounds on their bodies and souls before pursuing the matter.

Setting and Firestorms

Another characteristic that should be considered when customizing Firestorms is the location where the storm takes place. A storm striking a busy city street may cause a great deal more concern for the characters than one that takes place in an abandoned field far outside of town. Objects and bystanders vary from location to location, and the impact on the characters both during and after the storm varies as well. The immediate damage inflicted by the storm may be of little import to the throng when compared to the after effects caused by witnesses.

Likewise, certain effects have much more severe implications depending on the specific location of the storm. Lightning generated by a storm outside causes little concern past the immediate damage taken by those nearby. The same storm happening in a hospital, prison or elevator may cause peripheral concerns of a far different nature. Consider the ramifications of a Firestorm that strikes while the characters

are in a moving vehicle. Does the automobile contain the effects, concentrating them to an exponential degree on the interior of the vehicle? Or does the storm follow the vehicle, wreaking havoc on it and all nearby cars until the distraction and injury finally force the driver to lose control? Now imagine the same storm — but the vehicle is an airplane midway through a cross-country flight!

Rumors: firestorms

* “I’ve been thinking about this a lot, and I think I’ve got it. My teacher, your teacher, they’ve got it all wrong. It’s not really acting human or weird epiphanies that make you closer to Mortality. It’s the storms. No, no, listen, hear me out. The things we do, the things we learn, they just trigger the firestorms. They are what re-ignite the spark of humanity inside us, the flame that went out when we died. It’s all completely logical if you think about it. It’s like a car battery that died. We just have to find a way to trigger enough storms to “jumpstart” us back to human again. So, I’m thinking that if we can hunt down some of those Pandoran things . . . hey . . . wait, where are you going?”



* “Fly? In an airplane? Are you insane? I was on a plane once. A firestorm hit as we were taking off. The plane filled up with snakes, slid off the runway and broke in two. Then it caught on fire. Black fire. Half the passengers died, the rest went nuts. I grew an extra arm and saw things that weren’t there for weeks. No way I’m getting on another plane. I’ll walk to Denver.”

* “I met this patchwork preacher once. He said the storms were a sign of the Devil. That God

wanted us to become human again, and Lucifer wanted to stop us. He said that when we are on the right path — God’s path — the Devil starts throwing more storms at us. When we are getting close, he starts getting worried, and the storms get worse. Least that’s what the preacher said. Of course, he also claimed his right arm used to belong to Sir Alec Guinness, so I guess you have to take it with a grain of salt.”



CHAPTER FOUR

STORYTELLING

CHILD SNATCHER AT LARGE

The bayou hid a clapboard shack, and the clapboard shack hid a child-snatcher. He was the worst sort of fiend: the kind who commits his crimes because he genuinely believes the purpose his mind has concocted. He wasn't mean or malicious. He was earnest.

The swamp preserved the bodies perfectly, those 20-plus kids who had been pulled off the street, stolen from their beds or tricked into following Yellow Fever away from the places where they were supposed to meet their parents.

Yellow Fever — that's what he called himself. He liked the idea of it, the fact that the words had a historical meaning here and the fact that Yellow Fever was a force of nature, something bigger than the men who claimed dominion. The fact that Yellow Fever was a potentially fatal hemorrhagic virus never really occurred to him.

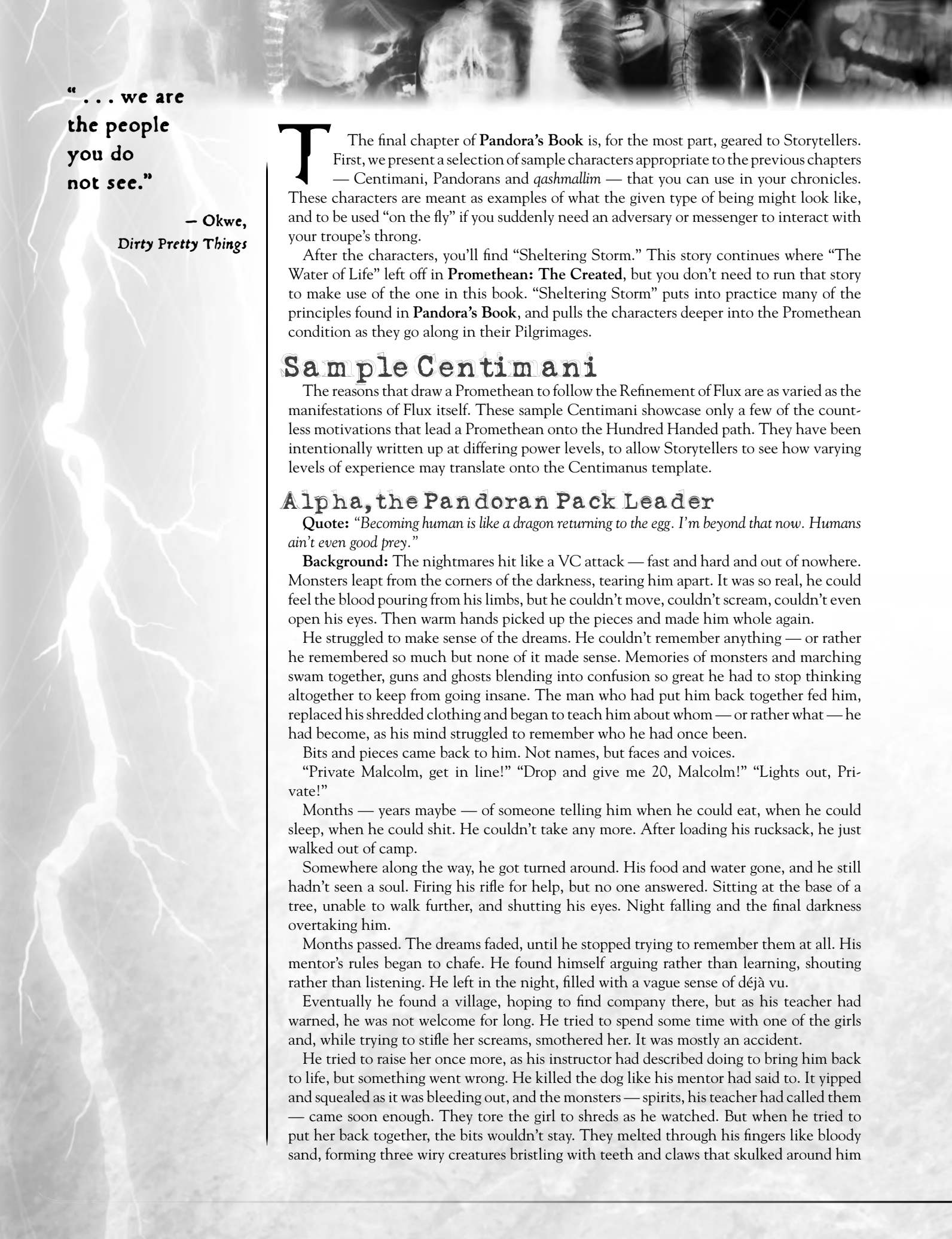
PARENTS MOURN LOST CHILDREN

He took from those victims what he needed and saved the rest beneath the surface of the water. He took only what he needed, or what he thought he needed or what his mind convinced him was important. One of his constructions was a wheel of arms. It didn't quite turn right because the arms came from different donors, and each was a different length. He also constructed a flesh sac about the size of an eight-year-old child, which was filled with "sweetbreads" and blood. The blood had long since turned into a black jelly. Yellow Fever couldn't remember exactly what the sac was supposed to do, but he deemed it a success nonetheless.

CHILDREN'S VIGIL HOSTED BY OUR LADY OF LOVRDES

Sometimes, when the winds across the bayou die down, you can hear Yellow Fever whistling to himself as he stitches those grisly pieces together in his shack. You can look and see the lights in his rude little house winking long into the night. Sometimes, if you find yourself walking through the swamp and you feel something snag at your pants leg or your shoe, you might be too close to Yellow Fever's lair. You know what's down there in the water, grabbing you. It's someone who just wants to go home.





“ . . . we are
the people
you do
not see.”

— Okwe,
Dirty Pretty Things

The final chapter of **Pandora’s Book** is, for the most part, geared to Storytellers. First, we present a selection of sample characters appropriate to the previous chapters — Centimani, Pandorans and *qashmallim* — that you can use in your chronicles. These characters are meant as examples of what the given type of being might look like, and to be used “on the fly” if you suddenly need an adversary or messenger to interact with your troupe’s throng.

After the characters, you’ll find “Sheltering Storm.” This story continues where “The Water of Life” left off in **Promethean: The Created**, but you don’t need to run that story to make use of the one in this book. “Sheltering Storm” puts into practice many of the principles found in **Pandora’s Book**, and pulls the characters deeper into the Promethean condition as they go along in their Pilgrimages.

Sample Centimani

The reasons that draw a Promethean to follow the Refinement of Flux are as varied as the manifestations of Flux itself. These sample Centimani showcase only a few of the countless motivations that lead a Promethean onto the Hundred Handed path. They have been intentionally written up at differing power levels, to allow Storytellers to see how varying levels of experience may translate onto the Centimanus template.

Alpha, the Pandoran Pack Leader

Quote: “*Becoming human is like a dragon returning to the egg. I’m beyond that now. Humans ain’t even good prey.*”

Background: The nightmares hit like a VC attack — fast and hard and out of nowhere. Monsters leapt from the corners of the darkness, tearing him apart. It was so real, he could feel the blood pouring from his limbs, but he couldn’t move, couldn’t scream, couldn’t even open his eyes. Then warm hands picked up the pieces and made him whole again.

He struggled to make sense of the dreams. He couldn’t remember anything — or rather he remembered so much but none of it made sense. Memories of monsters and marching swam together, guns and ghosts blending into confusion so great he had to stop thinking altogether to keep from going insane. The man who had put him back together fed him, replaced his shredded clothing and began to teach him about whom — or rather what — he had become, as his mind struggled to remember who he had once been.

Bits and pieces came back to him. Not names, but faces and voices.

“Private Malcolm, get in line!” “Drop and give me 20, Malcolm!” “Lights out, Private!”

Months — years maybe — of someone telling him when he could eat, when he could sleep, when he could shit. He couldn’t take any more. After loading his rucksack, he just walked out of camp.

Somewhere along the way, he got turned around. His food and water gone, and he still hadn’t seen a soul. Firing his rifle for help, but no one answered. Sitting at the base of a tree, unable to walk further, and shutting his eyes. Night falling and the final darkness overtaking him.

Months passed. The dreams faded, until he stopped trying to remember them at all. His mentor’s rules began to chafe. He found himself arguing rather than learning, shouting rather than listening. He left in the night, filled with a vague sense of déjà vu.

Eventually he found a village, hoping to find company there, but as his teacher had warned, he was not welcome for long. He tried to spend some time with one of the girls and, while trying to stifle her screams, smothered her. It was mostly an accident.

He tried to raise her once more, as his instructor had described doing to bring him back to life, but something went wrong. He killed the dog like his mentor had said to. It yipped and squealed as it was bleeding out, and the monsters — spirits, his teacher had called them — came soon enough. They tore the girl to shreds as he watched. But when he tried to put her back together, the bits wouldn’t stay. They melted through his fingers like bloody sand, forming three wiry creatures bristling with teeth and claws that skulked around him



like feral dogs. They were ugly, nasty things, all muzzle and mangy fur. But they were company, of a sort. He tried to feed them, first dog meat, and then bits left from the village girl, but they shunned his offerings and attacked him instead. They tried to overpower him, all three at once, but he was too strong. He knocked the spirit hounds away, but not before the largest of the three took a nasty bite out of his arm. It grew, as he watched, and the thing that had once been Private Malcolm had an idea.

It wasn't hard to backtrack his trail. His teacher's Azoth called out to his, and he only had to follow the beacon of its beckoning. It wasn't difficult to regain his mentor's trust. He had followed a vision, gotten lost — that was an explanation his mentor was more than willing to accept. And it was even easier to incapacitate the old man, especially with the aid of his new Flux hound pack. They fell on the older Promethean and ate their fill, rending strips of the Ulgan's flesh while the creature that was now Alpha held him immobilized.

His pack had no convention, save for the hunt, no law save for survival of the strongest. And that, he knew, was a rule he could follow.

Description: The Pack Leader is a feral Promethean who shares many physical traits with the ever-growing pack of Pandorans he leads. He reflexively has developed Transmutations that aid him in his hunt, becoming faster, sneakier and stronger as his pack takes down one Promethean after

another. He cares nothing for hygiene or fashion, wearing only what clothing he needs to protect himself from the worst of whatever environment his path leads him into. With his thick pelt, claws and fangs, those with no experience with Prometheans might mistake him for a werewolf.

When Alpha's disfigurements show, his fur appears coated with a slimy, black tar, and large swaths of skin hang loose from his muscles.

Storytelling Hints: The Pack Leader no longer thinks of himself as the same being who was once Private Malcolm; now he is simply Alpha. He needs no company but that of his snarling pack of half-mad Pandorans. He has left his search for humanity somewhere far back on his path. The only quest for him now is the hunt for Vitriol. Other Prometheans are now nothing more than prey to him.

The normally spiritual Ulgan probably have the most to learn in confronting Alpha. He is a combat monster, pure and simple, the kind of Centimanus who will track other Prometheans for days before finally letting his dogs slip their leads and attacking.

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult (Pandorans) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Claws) 5, Stealth (Ambush) 4, Survival (Tracking) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 3

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Residual Memory 1, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 1

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Azoth: 4

Bestowment: Ephemeral Flesh

Transmutations: *Corporeum* — Swift Feet (•); *Pandoran* — Armor (•), Bizarre Weaponry (Claws •••, Fangs ••), Mantle of Leadership (••••); *Vitality* — Might (••)

Pyros/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	0(B)	—	8	—
Claws	2(L)	—	11	—
Fangs	1(L)	—	9	—

Armor: 1

Charles Bowde, the Flux Aficionado

Quote: “There is no joy for me in perfection, save for the perfect chaos. Only in entropy are a thing’s true strength and beauty revealed.”

Background: For years Charles Bowde followed his creator’s lead, trying to see the beauty that she pointed out to him, struggling desperately to see the perfection she saw in the humans she strived to be like. She told him they were whole, that they were complete, and her every action was an effort to understand that flawlessness and leave her own half-life imperfection behind forever.

He finally saw it on the day she fell. While the crowd kicked her to death in the street amidst the chaos and riots that their presence in Los Angeles had sparked, he was struck with a grand epiphany. As the light faded from her eyes and the mob turned its angry attention upon him, he saw where his creator had been wrong — humanity’s beauty was not in their flawlessness, but in their flaws. It was not their perfection that made spectacular, but the chaotic fire within them.



From that day forward, Charles has sought out all that is darkest and most twisted among humanity. In his quest for beauty, he courts deviants and freaks, seeking out the perverse and twisted and doing all within his power to foster what he sees as the ultimate form of beauty — chaos.

Description: In the past, his face had been called angelic, his skin compared to marble, his lips to rose petals. No more. No form of body modification is too extreme for this deviant to embrace, no Transmutation too severe for him to find the beauty within its twisted form. Nothing remains of the angelic man who saw his mentor killed that day.

His once flawless mahogany skin has been mottled, scarred and branded until the modifications are now the predominance and the few patches of unmarred skin serve only to counterpoint the damage inflicted elsewhere. Although he can hide it when necessary, Charles has shunned even the basic bilateral symmetry of his original form. His left arm has split into two limbs, one a skeletally thin (but surprisingly strong) human arm with pale skin and female characteristics and the other an ichorous green-black tentacle tipped with a single bone-claw hook. Charles swathes the arm in bulky gloves when he desires to hide it, and coils the tentacle on his chest beneath his shirt where it can easily be deployed as a weapon if necessary.

When Charles’ disfigurements become visible, his skin takes on the texture and sheen of rubber, as though he is nothing more than a false monster, a failure even at being a Freak.

Storytelling Hints: Charles Bowde was once beauty incarnate, and yet he knew intrinsically that he was inherently flawed. He could not see his own face without knowing the brokenness that was his existence, so he has turned his back on perfection, seeking to find the beauty in the flawed chaos of Flux. Things of traditional beauty give him no joy now. Instead, he revels in the mutations and perverse manifestations of the dark side of Pyros. Using Malleate, he creates himself anew constantly, each new manifestation more imperfect than the last.

Charles has some potential as a combat opponent. He is disturbed and malevolent enough to join with other Centimani or to work with Pandorans, should he learn the “Mantle of Lordship” Transmutation. His real value as a supporting character, though, might be in teaching the Created (especially other Galateids) that beauty is ultimately something to aspire to, not something one can simply choose to exhibit.

Lineage: Galateid

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Art) 2, Crafts (Body Modification) 3, Investigation 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Expression (Critique) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Fighting Finesse — Knife, Fighting Style: Multi-Limbed Combat 4, Lair (Size 2, Security 1), Quick Draw (Melee), Resources 2

Willpower: 3

Humanity: 2

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Azoth: 5

Bestowment: Mesmerizing Appearance

Transmutations: *Alchemicus* — Identification (•); *Mesmerism* — Firebringer (••), Suggestion (••); *Pandoran* — Hundred Hands [Tentacle] (•••), Malleate (••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 14/5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	0(B)	-	3	-
Knife	1(L)	-	8	-

Elijah Stillwater, the Erisian Scholar

Quote: “When one has studied all that is knowable, all that is logical, all that is order . . . there is only one place further to seek knowledge.”

Background: For more than 180 years, Elijah Stillwater has dedicated himself to each of the five Refinements in turn, memorizing every tome, every story, every scrap of information pertaining to the Promethean existence. He might possess within the meticulously organized recesses of his mind more data about Promethean Pilgrimages, from the generative act to the Great Work, than any other individual currently in existence. Throughout it all, however, he has remained academically detached from his studies, preferring to record and analyze the progress of others on their Pilgrimages without ever becoming emotionally or personally involved.

After decades devoted to each of the Refinements, Stillwater has turned to studying Flux, observing and collecting information about it with the same meticulous care to which he devoted his previous studies. Other Prometheans are quite frequently surprised to discover that this quiet, rather unassuming man is one of the Hundred Handed, but Stillwater is quick to point out that impartial understanding of a topic inherently requires that one maintain a certain distance from it. He shows nothing but disdain for those Prometheans who have fallen to the chaos, becoming a victim of Flux rather than a student.



Although the scholar himself does not realize it, the same detached distance that Stillwater values so highly in his studies is the single stumbling block that has stood between him and true enlightenment for decades. Whether from fear, pride or simple stubbornness, the man holds the key to his own Magnum Opus, and refuses to involve himself enough in the process of transformation to turn it.

Description: Elijah Stillwater is an unassuming man of modest stature and slight build. His swarthy skin is the only testament remaining to his former life in pre-English colonial India. He eschews Transmutations that lend inhuman physical traits, preferring to focus on those that allow him to manipulate others so that he may observe and record their reactions.

When his disfigurements show, Elijah's skin pulled tight across his body, showing the play of muscles beneath. Unlike most Osirans, the odor he exudes is not the faintly pleasant smell of roses but the fetid stink of mildew and stagnant water.

Storytelling Hints: While Stillwater's knowledge is vast, his detachment from the experiences he has observed has

served him poorly in terms of progress upon his own Pilgrimage. He observes, he records, he evaluates, but he does not invest of himself and thus, although he has bore witness to the Redemption of other Prometheans, if he continues the path he has walked for almost 200 years, he is likely never to complete his own Great Work.

Stillwater is learned enough to teach characters a great deal about the Pilgrimage, human behavior, alchemy and a host of other topics. The greatest lesson he can impart, though, is probably that if a Promethean is not invested in the Pilgrimage — that is, willing to risk everything for the *chance* of Humanity — then there really is no point in even trying.

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 5, Investigation (Historic Research) 5, Occult (Prometheans) 4, Science (Alchemy) 3

Physical Skills: Larceny 3, Athletics 2, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Lair (Size 1, Security 2), Language: Latin, Meditative Mind

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Revivification

Transmutations: *Alchemicus* — Identification(•), Transformation(•••); *Corporeum* — Autonomic Control(•); *Deception* — Leave No Trace(••); *Disquietism* — Alembic(••••), Scapegoat(•), Soothe Disquiet(•); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare(•); *Sensorium* — Translator's Eye(•); *Pandoran* — Perfected Bezoar (Blunt Weapons ••), Inertia(••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Eve, the Jealous Mother

Quote: “At least I’m not alone anymore.”

Background: Eve doesn’t know the story of her creation. Her creator, a brusque, bitter Wretched, stitched her together and told her quite bluntly that she was just a stepping stone to Mortality for him. When he was torn to shreds by a Pandoran pack three months later, she watched with a mixture of rueful pleasure and fear for her future — was she now completely superfluous?

In time, Eve fell in with two other Prometheans, a Galateid and a Golem. These two Created taught her the Aurum



Refinement and showed her that she *wasn't* superfluous, that she could even be a mother, of sorts, and treat her child better than she was treated. Over time, the throng drifted apart, and Eve attempted to create her own children. The first time, she failed, and the resulting monsters skittered away into the night. The second time, she succeeded, but she lost interest in her “son” after only a few short weeks. Where he is now, she has no idea.

At a loss for purpose, she wandered until she found a place of Flux, a place where no one could conceive or bear children. In this place, she finally realized what it was that hurt her most about the world and her lot in it — it wasn't that she *couldn't* create life or find companionship, but that she *wasn't meant to*. The world rebelled against her attempts to be fulfilled and happy. In that moment, Eve took her first step along the Flux path.

Some months later, her new Pandoran pack at her side, she came calling on each of her former throng-mates, one at a time. She incapacitated them and consumed their flesh, taking their Azoth and their memories along with her. She had hoped that

she would hear their comforting words in her dreams if they were literally part of her, but that hasn't happened, and so Eve wanders the world, her own terrifying Garden of Eden, looking for a child, a lover, a teacher, *anyone* to complete her.

Description: Eve is a Caucasian woman in her late 20s, with long, blonde hair and a sad and often fearful expression. She wears an ivory cameo and a silver ring around her neck, both taken from her former throng-mates. She favors long dresses because they hide the fact that her left leg is slightly longer than her right.

When Eve's disfigurements show, the shoddy, uneven stitching that her creator used becomes visible. The hair on the left half of her head becomes noticeably darker than on the right, as her creator spliced her scalp together from two different donors. Since consuming her throng-mates, she has noticed that their faces sometimes surface under her skin when she uses her Transmutations.

Storytelling Hints: Eve studies everyone she meets very carefully, looking for some sign of compatibility. She asks deeply personal and probing questions, trying to ascertain quickly whether or not a given person could make her happy. With Prometheans, she is even more direct and intrusive, probably leading her audience to believe that she is much younger than she actually is.

Eve is best used to showcase the tragedy of the Promethean condition. She had a chance to pull herself out of Saturnine Night and to find a purpose, but she didn't like any of the options presented and so slid into indecision and depravity. Eve does not deserve mercy — she is a murderer, plain and simple. She might, however, deserve pity. A throng might fulfill milestones by killing her or, just maybe, by helping her to find her way on to a new Refinement. It's also possible that a Wretched character is her surviving creation.

Lineage: Frankenstein

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Sewing) 2, Occult 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Choking) 2, Stealth (Lurking) 3, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation (Creepy) 3, Persuasion 1

Merits: Elpis 1, Fleet of Foot 2, Residual Memory (Medicine, Larceny, Weaponry, Expression, Subterfuge) 5

Willpower: 3

Humanity: 2

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Unholy Strength

Transmutations: *Deception* — Chameleon Skin (•), Body Double (•••); *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (•), Rabid Rage (••); *Electrification* — Feel the Spark (•); *Pandoran* — Flux Within the Shade (••), Ceration of Form (•••), Unholy Repast (•••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	0(B)	-	5	

Armor: none

The Watcher, Student of Humanity

Quote: "Ssh." (*gesture to look*)

Background: The Watcher doesn't know why or by whom he was created. His first memory is of walking down a hill and witnessing two men beat an old woman to death. He stood and watched because he had no context for the scene, no compass to tell him what to do. When he recounted this story to the throng he fell in with more than a year later, they turned him out and called him a monster. The Watcher, never very quick on his feet, couldn't think of a way to defend himself or the words to frame his protests.

The Golem didn't come to be a Centimani through temptation by one of the Hundred Handed or bitterness at the world. It was a natural progression — he simply found himself seeking out the worst in humanity, and his outlook changed to mesh with what he saw. As an Adamist, for instance, he'd feel honor-bound to get involved when he saw a man rape his daughter or a child torturing a cat. As a Centimani, he can watch it all, detached, looking for some clue, some vital piece of context that will show him how to be human.

The Watcher isn't violent by nature, but he doesn't take kindly to being judged. He has already torn apart other Prometheans while in Torment, and once those Created resurrected themselves, stories of the Watcher began to spread. The tales always change with the telling; some Created think he is a Ferrum vigilante, intervening in the most heinous of crimes. Others say he is an Ophidian, studying Flux and how humans might generate or control it (further rumors say he is a Fury with much the same reasoning). The Watcher, characteristically, takes no action to quell these rumors. He merely watches and remembers.

Description: Thin for a Golem, the Watcher stands more than six feet tall. He is lanky and muscular, and a constant layer of grit and clay clings to his skin. When he spits, the fluid is grainy and dirty. He favors comfortable clothes in dark colors and always carries a pistol and a set of lock picks. He usually wears gloves so that the input from his extra eye (in the palm of his left hand) doesn't make him dizzy.



When his disfigurements show, the layer of dirt gets even thicker, to the point that he leaves grimy, brown steaks on whatever his hands touch. His teeth and even the whites of his eyes seem to turn a muddy color at these times.

Storytelling Hints: The Watcher is quiet and polite, happy to talk philosophy with other Prometheans. He doesn't deny his Refinement if asked, but doesn't know the word "Centimani" (he thinks of himself as an "Epimethean," the result of the one conversation he had with another Freak). The Watcher's motives are actually fairly harmless — he is searching for a moral map or context in which to frame his behavior. The problem is that he has a great deal of trouble framing this in words that others can understand, and he tends to get flummoxed if put on the spot. The things he sees, too, ensure that he's never far from Torment, and this tends to bias other Prometheans against him from the outset.

The Watcher is a useful character if you want to explore the darker side of human nature, perhaps to give practitioners of Aurum a look at what "being human" really entails. It's possible for a throng to talk the Watcher on to a different Refinement (possibly Mercurius), but he's not really a threat.

Lineage: Tammuz

Refinement: Centimani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 1, Larceny (Picking Locks) 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Dogs) 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2

Merits: Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory, Lair (Size 1), Repute 1, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Unholy Stamina

Transmutations: *Metamorphosis* — Mask of Medusa (•), Blessing of Tethys (••); *Pandoran* — Hundred Hands (••• Extra Eye); *Sensorium* — Bloodhound's Nose (•), Discriminating Tongue (•), Sensitive Ears (•)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	0(B)	-	5	-
Lt. Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	6	-

Armor: None

Sample Pandorans

Pandorans are Flux-born creatures, tainted results of a flawed attempt to create a new Promethean. As creatures of chaos, they vary vastly, and any individual Pandoran may, given time and sufficient Pyros or Vitriol to fuel their Transmutations, change drastically as the creature grows in power. Most have, thankfully, barely more than animal intellect, their thought processes entirely focused on survival and the accompanying acquisition of Pyros. Some, however, gain sufficient strength and cunning to prove themselves devastating opponents to the unwary Promethean. The templates offered below showcase a sampling of the varied power levels that may be encountered, from lower ranks with animal level intellect to the cunning *Sublimati*.

Bog Stalkers

Background: Easily mistaken for a scattering of moss-covered boulders on either side of the bridge, the pack of Bog Stalkers waits patiently for a traveler bearing a strong



enough Azothic Radiance to wake them from their stony slumber. When one passes near, the group, numbering from six to a dozen, leaps from the water on webbed feet and attempts to entangle the Promethean passerby with their adhesive tongues. If one or more are successful, they retreat back into the water of the bog, hoping to subdue their prey — and avoid garnering outside attention that might interrupt their meal.

Description: Bog Stalkers are twisted, glistening amalgams vaguely reminiscent of a hybrid of a frog and a canine, with broad, gaping mouths full of tiny, razor-sharp teeth. They have powerful limbs that allow them to scurry quickly on land or leap out of the water for a surprise attack. They can chase, but will not follow their prey far from their watery home.

Mockery: Sebek

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0, Wits 3, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 0, Composure 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth (Submerged) 4, Survival 1

Willpower: 4

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 8

Defense: 5

Speed: 15

Size: 3

Health: 4

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Frog Tongue (••), Scurry (••)

Bestowment: Armor (•), Fangs (••) and Sebek's Gift

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	1(L)	-	8	-
Tongue	0(B)	-	6	-

• **Special Attack — Submerged Pounce:** Bog Stalkers can, for their first attack on a target in any given combat scene, surprise the target by leaping from a submerged position. This is a technique the Stalkers have perfected, and thus they are granted +1 to Initiative for all attacks made in this fashion.

Napalmist

Background: While fire is often thought of as a fickle element, the Napalmist has discovered the joy of persistence. This Pandoran has found a weapon against others in the Napalmist's own immunity to fire.

Description: Napalmist Pandorans resemble small balls of stinking, oily tar — they have no heads or torsos, only tentacles and mouths lined with sharp teeth. They are nearly immune to flame and delight in catching themselves alight

and launching themselves as animate weapons against others, clinging to their victims as they burn and reveling in the complete sensory experience of their victim's immolation.

Mockery: Torch-Born

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Physical Skills: Brawl (Grapple) 5, Survival 3

Willpower: 5

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 16

Size: 4

Health: 6

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Perfected Bezoar — Fire (•••••), Tarflesh (••)

Bestowment: Crucible of Flesh (••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brawl	-	-	11	-
Grapple	-	-	16	*

*(see p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**)

• **Special Ability — Spark:** Napalmists have developed their Crucible of Flesh Bestowment to the point where they can utilize it to actually set themselves aflame, similar to the Vulcanus Transmutation "Fire Grasp." As a reflexive action at the cost of one Pyros per turn, the Pandoran activates Spark, which surrounds the Pandoran's entire body in flame. Successfully touching a target (see p. 119 of **Promethean: The Created**) automatically inflicts two points of lethal damage (aggravated for Prometheans). The Napalmist does not take any damage from fire during turns that the Napalmist has spent Pyros to generate the flame, although the Napalmist can be damaged (to the extent that flames can harm it after taking the Perfected Bezoar into consideration) on rounds when the Pyros is not spent. Either Crucible of Flesh or Spark can be in effect each round, but not both.

Chaos Swarm

Background: When the spirits tore apart the corpse that would become this Pandoran, they did an altogether thorough job. Rather than the half-dozen or so pieces that normally are left in the wake of the spirit's assault, this corpse was shredded into a plethora of tiny bits. When the Pandoran rose from the remains, it did so as a single being whose animal cunning and spark of Flux-life is shared among a legion of tiny host-bodies.

Description: A Chaos Swarm resembles a mass of strange



hard-shelled insects about the size of carpenter ants but with wickedly sharp, clawed forelegs. If examined closely, the insects of the Swarm appear to be exact duplicates of each other. The Swarm attacks by flowing over its victims, inflicting countless tiny wounds with its claws, each of which removes a small piece of flesh. The Chaos Swarm is also capable of calling other insects to its aid, often conscripting wasps or bees to add an airborne facet to the attack.

While this Pandoran looks like many creatures, it is actually a single entity split among a multitude of physical forms. All parts of the Swarm share traits (see “Demon’s Call” on p. 238 of *Promethean: The Created*), attack a single target and fall into Dormancy as a single unit. Sharing one’s essence among many bodies has its advantages. As long as one “member” of the Swarm survives, the entire creature can, given sufficient exposure to Pyros or electricity, regenerate itself.

Mockery: Render

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Claw) 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2

Willpower: 7

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Size: 3

Health: 7

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Armor (••), Demon’s Call (••), Wings (••••)

Bestowment: Claws (••), Scurry (••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claws	1(L)	-	7	-

• **Special Defense: Swarm** — A Chaos Swarm, similar to any swarm of animals, cannot be attacked with fists, clubs, swords or guns. Only area-affect attacks, such as a torch, affect a Swarm. When it has been reduced to less than half of its Health, a Chaos Swarm attempts to flee to seek healing. When a Chaos Swarm has a single Health point left, the Swarm disperses to aid its escape. Only settings that somehow are able to contain every member of the swarm (a sealed room, a water-tight container, etc.) prevent the Chaos Swarm from escaping.

The Impalpable

Background: Scurrying at the edges of peripheral vision, the Impalpable Pandoran relies on its ability to remain hidden to enable it to sneak up on its target. So strong are the Impalpable’s powers of obfuscation that its victims are

rarely aware of more than a growing sense of paranoid dread and an impending odor of rotting carrion as the creature flickers in and out of animated movement just out of their prey's clear line of sight. This Pandoran's hatred of all things beautiful is such that it will sometimes put aside its hunger-motivated hunt for a non-Galateid Promethean for a time in order to destroy or deface a human of exceptional beauty or a singularly stunning *object d'art*.

Description: The Impalpable are the monsters lurking just beyond one's vision. They prefer that their prey do not catch sight of them until it is too late for the prey to escape. The Impalpable are skeletally thin creatures with near-transparent skin and strangely twisted bone structure festooned with trailing bits of ragged flesh that give them the appearance of being swathed in unkempt, flowing robes. This strange mutation slightly deflects blows from the vital portions of their bodies, serving as a form of armor. They use their wings, tattered leathery appendages reminiscent of fluttering draperies, to blur their appearance, as well as to grant them the ability to attack from unexpected heights.

Mockery: The Silent

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 6, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Flight) 2, Brawl (Claws) 4, Stealth (Hiding in Plain Sight) 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3

Willpower: 6

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 9

Defense: 6

Speed: 16

Size: 4

Health: 7

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Armor (••), Balsam Flesh (••), Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Ceration of Form (•••)

Bestowment: Wings (••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 14/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claws	1(L)	—	10	—

Malevolent Haze

Background: Not all dangers near the waterways are tangible in form. More than one Promethean has made the fatal mistake of thinking that just because he could not see anything around him nothing was there. The Malevolent Haze lurks along a river, hiding in the fog or mist, and strikes whenever prey approaches. Prometheans are hardier than mortals, but Prometheans do need to breathe, and the Haze

can pull one of the Created below the surface in seconds, sucking the Pyros from her lungs as she struggles with an opponent she can barely perceive.

Description: While the Malevolent Haze is not the only Pandoran to utilize the “Vaporous Form” Transmutation, the Haze has perfected this Transmutation. Similar to many Sebek, the Haze haunts waterways, preferring those that are naturally prone to fog and mist. When the Haze is awakened from its Dormancy, this Pandoran needs only a moment target its prey, take Vaporous Form and attack. Once the Haze has reached its target, the Pandoran returns to its physical form, that of a gelatinous amorphous mass. Although the Haze lacks the Transmutation's ability to pass through barriers and the like, the Malevolent Haze is still quite capable of enveloping its prey in its suffocating — and toxic — embrace.

Mockery: Sebek

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 8, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 8

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Grapple) 5, Stealth (Hiding in Plain Sight) 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3

Willpower: 12

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 14

Defense: 6

Speed: 19

Size: 4

Health: 8

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Lithargous Body (••), Tarflesh (••), Perfected Bezoar (Sharp Weapons •••), Sanguine Victory (•••••), Vaporous Form (•••••)

Bestowment: Armor (•), Fangs (••) and Sebek's Gift

Pyros/per Turn: 17/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Fangs	1(L)	—	13	—
Grapple	—	—	17	*

*(see p. 157 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*)

The Angel of Coggeshall Abbey

Quote: “They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up . . . Deuteronomy 32:17 . . . Do you know who Moses was speaking of in that passage? I do . . . I know the devils . . . and I know where they live.”

Background: Near the beginning of the 13th century, Coggeshall Abbey in Essex, England, was the sight of a monstrous thunderstorm that shook the very foundation





of the great stone church. On the day of the Great Storm, the Abbot had spent many hours counseling several of his monks who, distraught over the recent death of one of the Order, had somehow taken up the idea that one of the other monks was to blame. Although Brother Martine had arrived on pilgrimage only shortly before Brother Piter's unfortunate death, the two had become close friends — surprisingly, as the other monks wanted nothing to do with the traveler. When Martine had found Piter dead in his cot, Martine offered to tend to Piter's burial, a proposal the busy Abbot had gratefully accepted. This, the accusing priests claimed, was all according to Martine's clever plan. He had strangled Piter in his sleep, they charged, and offered to handle the burial only to hide the evidence of his wrongdoing. While the Abbot had, himself, found something about Martine to be disquieting, the Abbot was deeply disturbed by the men's accusations. There was, after all, a huge distinction between the solemn monk shaving his head and insisting on sleeping outside and the men's outlandish allegations. But the monks were insistent, and so sharp was their fervor that the Abbot feared they would take matters into their own hands.

Before they could set out to intercept Martine at the tomb where fallen brothers were interred, the storm struck the Abbey. Hungry winds pried at the church's shuttered windows and cast rain and hail against the walls like sling stones. The Abbot spent the night in prayer, seeking guidance on how to deal with the animosity that threatened to tear the Abbey apart. Illuminated only by flash after flash of blazing lightning, his prayers were stifled by the crack of bolts striking trees and buildings all around the church and the ground shaking rumbles of accompanying thunder.

Just before dawn, the onslaught eased and the exhausted Abbot fell onto his hard cot, where he slept fitfully, haunted by dreams of half-seen imps and devils led by the fallen monk. By nightfall the next day, the storm had passed entirely. Brother Martine had not returned.

Around the Abbey, the tension that had seemed to arrive with Brother Martine did not, unfortunately, subside with his disappearance. The monks' accusations against the traveling priest were just the first in an unending series of allegations leveled from neighbor to neighbor and beyond. Everything from the hostile weather patterns and poor crops that season to soured milk and broken pottery was blamed on someone, bringing the village to the brink of self-destruction. People went missing, some were beaten or stoned and, even within the Abbey walls, monk turned on monk in hitherto unheard-of hostilities.

The Abbot, spurred on by the monks' earlier accusations, finally mustered the strength to travel to Piter's tomb. As he climbed the knoll, he was filled with a growing sense of foreboding that swelled as he entered the rocky cave and found the grave disturbed. Steeling himself, he searched further and found, to his horror, Brother Martine's body

pinned beneath heavy stones in the otherwise-empty grave. The Abbot's hands shook as he struggled to free Martine's corpse, for it was clear from the great chunks of flesh missing and the thick layering of clay silt and dust on the body that Martine no longer lived. Even his mouth had been stoppered with clots of rock and soil and his eyes replaced by smooth round stones. As the Abbot labored, revealing more of the tortures that had been afflicted upon Martine, the Abbot's heart grew colder and more fearful, until even the shadows of the cave seemed to draw nearer, threatening him.

It was there amidst the scattered cairn stones of the monk's open grave that the Angel fell upon him. It spoke Latin, chiding him for interfering in the Lord's punishment of this fallen sinner. The Angel's visage was horrible, and the Abbot fell on his knees before the Angel's righteous tirade, promising never to speak of Martine's fate or return to the tomb. The immobile Martine wept a single muddy tear as the Angel-Mockery the monk had created fell upon the Abbot, spilling his blood across the floor of the tomb.

Decades passed, the Wasteland evoked by Martine's unmoving and yet still suffering presence spread, poisoning the land around the Abbey and driving the villages around it into



ruin. Eventually, even the Angel-Mockery's ministrations were insufficient to keep the Tammuz's Promethean form alive. When he finally passed into whatever oblivion awaits those who do not complete their Great Work, the Wasteland that had been building in the area began to wane. The Angel went Dormant still on vigil over his departed "father," smiling sinisterly over the Promethean's permanently etched visage of pain and suffering. Centuries later, long after the Abbey had ceased to exist, archeologists discovered the immobile pair in the tomb and moved them to a museum, where they are currently on display. Thousands of visitors file past the display each day, gazing in wonder at the terra cotta priest watched over by the stone devil. It is only a matter of time before a Promethean is among the crowd, and the wonder turns to terror as the long-Dormant Pandoran awakens once more into ravenous being.

Description: The Angel of Coggeshall Abbey looks like an exquisitely carved grotesquery, a man-sized stone statue of a hideous horned demon, complete down to the forked tail. The Angel also sports an angel's fully formed feathered wings, leading some unsuspecting art analysts to suppose that the unknown artist meant the statuary as a juxtaposition of good and evil, devil and angel. Although the Angel currently stands Dormant as part of a museum display of medieval works of art, should a Promethean draw near enough for long enough to rouse the Angel from its Dormancy, the Angel's treacherous nature would not be easily hidden.

Storytelling Hints: Martine thought to create a companion for himself, a student to teach, someone to share his knowledge with. Driven by despair and loneliness, he chose to take the life of the one friend he had made, hoping that the friendship would endure through his victim's death and Resurrection. Martine's selfishness tainted Promethean's Gift, however, and as the Angel broke out of Piter's still-shuddering corpse, Martine quickly learned how mistaken he was. Perhaps because of the similarity in knowledge between the corpse it sprang forth from and the one who brought it into being, the Angel retains some twisted knowledge of scripture; thus the being's "native" tongue is church Latin. However, the Angel has no real memory of its former "life" and doesn't retain any of Piter's devout and gentle personality. Instead, the Angel used its knowledge only to bring torment to the one who dared to create it. Should the Angel waken again, its new "liberator" will become the target of its agonizing attentions.

Mockery: Ishtari (*Sublimatus*)

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 6, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 8, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 8, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Bible Passages, Sermons) 4, Investigation 2, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Horns) 4, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge (The Devil May Quote Scripture) 3

Willpower: 8

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 11

Defense: 6

Speed: 20

Size: 5

Health: 9

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Bizarre Weaponry (Forked Tail •••, Horns ••), Flux Within the Shade (••), Unwholesome Visitation (•••), Wings (•••), Malleate (••••)

Bestowment: Inertia (•••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 17/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Forked Tail	2(L)	-	12	-
Horns	1(L)	-	12	-

Sample Qashmallim

These *qashmallim* were introduced in Chapter Two, and are presented here with full traits and expanded descriptions of their Missions and motivations.

The Screaming Shadow

Quote: <no words, just a scream>

Background: The Screaming Shadow haunts the secondary reactor of a nuclear power station situated about 50 miles from a mid-size city. In one week, if not stopped, the *qashmal* will cause a nuclear accident worse than the explosion of the Chernobyl-4 reactor in 1986. The accident will devastate a vast area of land and kill or harm, directly or indirectly, hundreds of thousands of people.

Description: A three-dimensional faceless being made of shadow, the *qashmal*'s only visible features are its hands and its mouth, which gapes wide open. Even without eyes, the Lilith *stares*. Its head turns, its mouth gapes open and it screams, as it gradually approaches, floating a few inches above the ground, at a steady walking pace.

Storytelling Hints: This *qashmal* does not need to materialize in order to do its work. The Screaming Shadow exists in Twilight, although the *qashmal* can become visible — and must do so — at least once every night. The times the *qashmal* becomes visible are necessary. It's a warning of what's going to happen. When the *qashmal*'s moment comes, it will bring a Firestorm into being inside the reactor building. Then the Screaming Shadow will cease to be.

Choir: Lilithim

Order: Greater

Attributes: Power 6, Finesse 7, Resistance 6

Willpower: 12

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride**Pyros:** 24**Initiative:** 13**Defense:** 7**Speed:** 18 (species factor 5)**Size:** 5**Corpus:** 11**Numina:** Awe, Emotional Aura, Invoke Firestorm, Pyros Drain, Raise Flux, Telekinesis

The Dancer in Tatters

Quote: “This is not your place. You should leave here, before I begin my work.”**Background:** This Lilith punishes the arrogant by inflicting disease on the *qashmal*’s victims, degrading physically those who would degrade their souls.**Description:** The Dancer is a tall, skinny figure in a costume that looks for all the world like a costume for a post-modern grim Reaper. The Dancer’s face is a mask, carved to look like a man dying of some terrible disease. Under the mask and the tattered gray-and-red costume the Dancer wears, there is only tattered cloth; when the *qashmal* vanishes, only a heap of rags remains.**Storytelling Hints:** The figure stalks through a crowd of guilty victims, ready to punish them with a terminal illness at the precise moment the *qashmal*’s presence is made known. First, the Dancer must make sure that no one innocent is here. The *qashmal* will punish those who are to be punished, and will not punish the innocent (“the innocent” being defined in the Dancer’s limited thinking as those whom the *qashmal* has notbeen charged to kill). The *qashmal* indulges itself, inflicting the worst punishment it can inflict. If the *qashmal* could feel emotion, one might almost think it enjoyed the suffering it causes.**Choir:** Lilithim**Order:** Lesser**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 5, Resistance 2**Willpower:** 5**Virtue:** Justice**Vice:** Gluttony**Pyros:** 10**Initiative:** 7**Defense:** 5**Speed:** 13 (species factor 5)**Size:** 5**Corpus:** 7**Numina:** Clasp, Materialize, Plague Crow

Marion

Quote: <a hiss, a rattle, a small, sad sound like a sob, and a shriek>**Background:** Marion’s corpse has been revived by a Lilith and returned to her grieving husband, who can see nothing to do but look after the wan, cold, walking corpse. In a few days, the *qashmal* will place a thought in the mind of a complete stranger, and then the horror will begin as the existence of a walking corpse and the two men who keep it will be blown wide open. The accusations of grave robbery and darker things that might result will have repercussions in the community for years to come, and potentially dozens of lives will be affected.

Worse, “Marion” is causing the Flux Rating to rise in the area around the house, attracting any number of supernatural beings that probably do not understand the simple tragedy at play here.

Description: A small, gray-haired woman in her 60s, Marion has milky eyes and an empty and placid face. She sometimes tries to communicate, it seems, making small hisses or rattles with her useless tongue. Outside of Marion’s body, the creature is a shapeless Twilight being, an amorphous mass of cold, lightless fire.**Storytelling Hints:** “Marion” stumbles around, led by her concerned, shell-shocked husband and son. The little signs she gives them that she might still be in there are just ploys to keep the two men hopeful that they might have Marion back, and to keep them from despairing — until the time is right.

The creature inside Marion’s corpse does its work as efficiently as it can, timing everything perfectly, so that the effect of the final revelation the Lilith creates before it leaves the body will be truly terrible.

Choir: Lilithim**Order:** Lesser**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 2, Resistance 2

Willpower: 4
Virtue: Hope
Vice: Gluttony
Pyros: 15
Initiative: 4
Defense: 2
Speed: 6 (species factor 2)
Size: 5
Corpus: 7

Numina: Ghastly Crew, Grant Vision

The Bloody-Handed Angel

Quote: “Listen to me. You must tell someone what she did to you.”

Background: The Bloody-Handed Angel’s job is to bring together a small number of Prometheans, creating the conditions in which they will be glad to join together and form a throng. She’s smart and resourceful, and she will do whatever it takes to get the subjects of her Mission together, only leaving the world behind when she knows for sure that the pact will be made.

Description: When Materialized, she appears as a fresh-faced teenage girl with a serene smile, gleaming white hair and a shift dress the color of the sun. Her eyes are bright and wide; you can look into their beauty for hours and still not be sure what color they are. She has large white wings, which drip with fresh blood, just like the blood that covers her small, graceful hands from fingertip to elbow. Her voice sounds like song, or like bells or like a harp. She never changes her tone. She never gets angry.

Storytelling Hints: The Bloody-Handed Angel always appears to be serene and loving, even when lying, or being attacked. She is an angel. She knows her place and will not be treated with disrespect.

She’ll incite people to hate someone or hold someone tight and tell him that he is valuable and deserves to be loved, if either will get him moving. One Promethean might only find a way to get moving through direct pursuit, another through being forced to leave her home. Another might find all of her current companions destroyed at the Angel’s hands, and needs to find a new throng.

If asked directly, the Angel may explain why she is doing what she is doing (if she considers that it might impel her interrogator to find the others), but may just as easily lie, or even attempt to thrust a delusion upon her subject. Whatever she does, no matter how heinous, she behaves as if she considers it to be for a greater good.

Choir: Elpidos
Order: Lesser
Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 5
Willpower: 10
Virtue: Charity
Vice: Pride

Pyros: 12
Initiative: 10
Defense: 6
Speed: 18 (species factor 8)
Size: 6 (because of her large wings)
Corpus: 11
Numina: Awe, Grant Vision, Implant Delusion, Materialize, Seek

Ruby and Mr. Gold

Quote: “This is an anomaly. It needs to be rectified. Don’t you think so, Mr. Gold?”

Background: Whatever it was that did this, the people are trapped, and it’s picking them off, one by one. They think they’re going to die, and then they appear out of nowhere, these two people, smartly dressed and prepared for business. They’re agents, they say, although they evade questions about who sent them. If pressed, they might make some vague allusion to their “principal” or to some “principle” they follow. It’s difficult to say.

They say they’re here to help, and they set to work on the terror that traps everything here. The innocent people the duo meet feel as if they might be in safe hands. When they realize that they’re not as important to the duo as the destruction of the thing, it’s likely too late. When the ordeal began, the innocents thought they might die. They never thought it might be at the hands of this strange man and woman, whoever they are.

Description: Ruby is a willowy, sensuously beautiful woman who wears a revealing red dress and high heels. Dark, wavy hair falls over a heart-shaped face. Her eyes are long-lashed and a striking shade of green; she wears scarlet lip gloss on her full lips. She talks a lot, unlike Mr. Gold, who hardly says anything at all. Mr. Gold is of average height, and gives an impression of solidity. His shoulders are broad, and his hair is perfectly parted. He wears a dark brown suit with a gold-colored tie. The creases on his suit never seem to be out of place. He never takes his jacket off, no matter how hot it is. He looks like he’s about 35 years old.

Storytelling Hints: They’re here to lay a ghost, or to destroy a manifestation of the supernatural that threatens to grow and cause a great deal of damage. This work is all that matters to them. Ruby is charming. She smiles a lot, and flaunts her femininity. She’s good at making people feel at ease. Although Ruby will make some chitchat, she’ll always bring conversations around to the subject of what’s going on and how it can be stopped. Mr. Gold, when he says anything, is blunt to the point of brutality. He tells the truth. To him, that’s all that matters.

Ruby and Mr. Gold will not stop until their objective is complete. They will not lose sight of their goal. Their goal is all that matters in their world, a personal desire that overrides anything, even the lives of humans.

Choir: Elpidos
Order: Lesser

Attributes: (Ruby) Power 3, Finesse 5, Resistance 5; (Mr. Gold) Power 5, Finesse 3, Resistance 5

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Lust

Pyros: 15

Initiative: (Ruby) 10; (Mr. Gold) 8

Defense: 5

Speed: 13 (species factor 5)

Size: 5

Corpus: 10

Numina: Immolate, Materialize, Pyros Drain, Telekinesis

The Living Creature

Quote: “I bring you good news.”

Background: It comes to bring news. It hounds its subject over and over again, dogging her every step until she has no choice but to listen and accept the vision it has vouchsafed to her. It has 12 days to pass on its message. On some nights, it leads out into the wilds and reduplicates itself, forming a chorus in the sky. In her days, people talk to her, sometimes people she knows who later deny ever having said these things, sometimes complete strangers who come up to her and tell her things, truths rather than facts, which suddenly expand her mind.

She thinks she’s going mad.

Its subject may be a scientist. She may be a demiurge, being given the instructions that will create a new Promethean, or possibly even a Promethean Lineage. The subject might be a Promethean, being told how to reach the Magnum Opus, or being taught how *not* to reach it by a more duplicitous angel. The Living Creature might be driving its subject mad because the contactee has the means of doing something truly terrible. Maybe she has access to a nuclear bomb. The Living Creature might give the contactee some idea of how to refine the Pyros so as to be able to drain the souls from Prometheans.

Description: In the creature’s “natural” form, it’s an angel from the Book of Revelation, with four animal heads and six wings, wreathed in fire and song. The angel flies in the air alongside a spinning wheel of fire, and when the creature reduplicates itself, the sound and fury of its song is overwhelming, although its words are only apparent to those who it wants to hear it.

Sometimes it takes the form of humans. It could be anyone, but there’s a fire in its eyes and urgency in its speech that could give it away.

Storytelling Hints: The Living Creature’s job is to pass on a vision of surpassing importance, and this is what it will do. The angel passes on the revelation, piece by piece, gradually bringing its subject to the point where she has no choice but to believe what she is being told and act upon it. It’s single-minded in its pursuit of the one individual. It’ll pursue her to the bitter end. Although it is everywhere in its subject’s life, it will not go out of its way. It won’t make indirect changes to its subject’s life, or bring others into its Mission.

But when its time is up, it has to go back.

Choir: Elpidos

Order: Greater

Attributes: Power 8, Finesse 8, Resistance 8

Willpower: 16

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Sloth

Pyros: 50

Initiative: 16

Defense: 8

Speed: 26 (species factor 10)

Size: 9

Corpus: 17

Numina: Awe, Chariot of Fire, Grant Vision, Imitation, Impart, Materialize, Pyretic Chorale, Pyros Drain, The Rising of the Light



A SHELTERING STORM

The following story makes use of many of the antagonists and plot devices discussed in this book: Pandorans, the *qashmallim*, Firestorms. “A Sheltering Storm” continues where the Appendix of **Promethean: The Created**, “The Water of Life,” left off. You don’t have to use that introductory story to begin a chronicle set in New Orleans, however — the city is such a cosmopolitan and troubled stronghold of Prometheans that many kinds of stories may have their origins here.

Furthermore, the events of “A Sheltering Storm” will lead to the third installment of the published story, which will appear in the **Strange Alchemies** supplement. In kind, you don’t have to use that story arc to follow this one, but if you choose to, it will be available.

Ata Glance: New Orleans

Founded in 1718, La Nouvelle-Orléans quickly became a symbol of everything America stood for over the centuries between the city’s establishment and the modern day. New Orleans’ numerous distinct ethnicities hearken to the notion of America as a melting pot. The city’s transition from French territory to Spanish holding (and then back to French territory) and finally to American port of call echoes the United States’ own journey toward independence. New Orleans’ hosting of the bacchanalian revel known as Mardi Gras represents American excess, and the city’s dual commitment to both its Catholic roots and ethnic religious denominations symbolizes the American origin as an outpost of religious freedom.

With such significant symbolic gravity come inevitable problems, however. “The Big Easy” has long been a symbol of both mortal corruption and supernatural strangeness. The city has a murder rate eight or more times the national average. The New Orleans police force is widely reputed to be the most corrupt in the nation, with 50 of its 1,400 cops arrested for felonies since 1993 alone. The city’s gay-friendly attitude leads it to be labeled a modern Sodom by lifestyle conservatives, and its Mardi Gras revels are legendary for the ready availability of every conceivable vice from booze to sex to drugs and other licentiousness. The city is also renowned for its reputation for “voodoo,” vampires and ghostly activity. In the World of Darkness, of course, not only are these statistics and characteristics true, they increase in frequency and intensity.

New Orleans is more than a list of extremes, however — though those extremes certainly characterize the city. It is a bastion of Old World sensibility in hyper-modern America. New Orleans clings to its history, with neighborhood names remaining the same since the 18th century and historical landmarks everywhere one looks. Local Native Americans mingled with the colonial French, who begat the Creole French (who were absorbed by the Cajuns), who mixed with the Spanish, who intermingled with Haitians and Africans and African Americans — who combine to present a powerful ethnic history that remains vibrant and distinct to this day.

In late August of 2005, the city was all but demolished by the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, a storm of almost Biblical proportion — and then a month later was hit by Hurricane Rita, another epic storm. As much as four-fifths of the city’s surface lay beneath water as these storms took their toll in human life and property damage.

Timing

Astute readers will note that most World of Darkness books avoid dating themselves by making reference to recent events. We’re breaking this rule a bit here in order to take advantage of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as a backdrop for “A Sheltering Storm,” which might require a bit of judicious rewriting of history depending on when your chronicle is set. These particular hurricanes don’t need to provide the destruction that allows the setup of this story, however; the region suffers damage from hurricanes frequently, and so a storm of the storyteller’s own design might be responsible.



In any event, although the default assumption in “A Sheltering Storm” is that the story takes place after Hurricane Katrina, that assumption is made *only* to make the Storyteller’s job a little easier, since news, statistics and even photos from the devastation are readily available. The continuing story in other **Promethean** sourcebooks won’t follow a particular timeline.

New Orleans has become a sympathetic American icon after suffering the lion’s share of the ravages of the hurricane. Some have criticized the government’s reconstruction efforts, and even preliminary disaster-prevention efforts, and the truth of the matter is that the “New Orleans situation” is a new and characteristically controversial hotbed of racial politics, corruption allegations, economic disparity and resentment over mismanagement.

Flooding damage has left much of New Orleans’ geography abandoned or ruined. Despite local and federal programs designed to reinvigorate the city’s functionality, the city exists in such a state of chaos that many of those monies never make it to the people they’re supposed to help. Much time and money is wasted in redundant rebuilding efforts, with different groups assigned to the same repair tasks or even set to contradictory ones. Volunteer duties overlap and impede government agencies, which themselves obstruct the efforts of private contractors. It’s entirely possible that the most devastated parts of the city will remain that way forevermore. The Big Easy will never be so Big or Easy again.

As is so often the case in the World of Darkness, tragedy among the mortal community means opportunity for the savvy among the supernatural denizens. The Promethean Papillon has established a post-disaster nexus for the Created, setting the city up as sort of a refugee camp. She hopes to draw a community of great Promethean thinkers and philosophers who can gather and discuss the highs and lows of the Pilgrimage. Such a high concentration of Created, however, guarantees a density and severity of Wasteland previously unknown in the World of Darkness. Likewise, the presence of so much Azothic fire and Pyros draws Pandorans like moths to the proverbial flame, to say nothing of the failed attempts at creating new Prometheans that result in their own Pandoran tragedies. This same state all but ensures that Firestorms are regular occurrences in New Orleans, and where that fire burns, so do the sentient flames of the *qashmallim*. As if these threats weren’t enough, heresy breeds amid the dense cluster of Promethean life in the form of the Centimani enamored of Flux and the *Sublimati* who have such a broad cross-section of the Created from whom to learn. With opportunity comes crisis, and all of the varied antagonisms New Orleans’ Promethean community faces surely attest to its great potential.

While information flows freely among Prometheans, so, too, do factions and allegiances form. Papillon sits as a

somewhat benevolent dictator to it all, a final authority to whom Prometheans can appeal, but a last resort, in that her influence suggests a social hierarchy that few of the Created truly want to acknowledge exist. Groups that resent this *de facto* leader flout her authority while others want her to formally unite Created society to better let it stand against their enemies. Secret societies thrive as well, such as the embittered Botherúd, who seek to destroy those whom they see as a threat to resources they perceive to be finite.

This is the situation the characters face as they enter New Orleans.

Getting There

Storytellers may face a bit of difficulty convincing their players to take their characters to New Orleans without seeming as if they're railroading the story. We propose a few ideas and options to help in this transition.

Start the Story There: If the Storyteller plans to use "A Sheltering Storm" to begin a story arc, defining New Orleans as the "home city" is a fine option. With a bit of reconstruction, "The Water of Life" can be retooled to take place in New Orleans instead of Chicago, thus making the events of this story native instead of the destination of a different leg of the story. That assumes Storytellers want to use "The Water of Life" at all; it's perfectly plausible to begin the story arc using this chapter only. Storytellers should still be sure to carefully explore each character's Prelude, however, to make sure all the characters have some investment in the story's events.

Word of Mouth: If the characters met any other Prometheans of significant power, promise or influence, those Created might themselves be on their way to New Orleans and suggest the characters visit as well. Likewise, characters might be enticed to follow a rival or enemy to New Orleans. If characters are sociable with other Prometheans or groups of Prometheans in their home city, rumors might be passing through that local society that speak of a "Promethean Mecca" or growing convocation of Promethean philosophers and scientists.

A Patron's Guidance: Characters who have patrons or other "leads" to follow to New Orleans can certainly take advantage of those. For example, the alchemist Calogero from "The Water of Life" might well know Papillon (perhaps having exchanged correspondence with her earlier, or maybe having helped her along her own Pilgrimage) and recommend that the characters visit her to find out if she can help them. A patron might be interested in the growing Promethean refugee camp-type community growing in New Orleans and ask characters to investigate or bring some valuable artifact to a colleague in that city. Characters might be convinced or recruited to serve the efforts of something more malign, such as the Botherúd, and travel to New Orleans to expand their patron's influence or fulfill their patron's goals. This last serves as a good "Devil's Deal" that can cause moral

quandaries — since the characters are likely fledglings themselves, if the Botherúd can send them to New Orleans, it's likely that either the characters or some other whelps will be destroyed in the impending conflict, thus satisfying their goals even if their nominal operatives fail.

Azoth Calls to Azoth: Much as Calogero drew the characters to the abandoned garage in "The Water of Life," a similar principle can work to entice characters to New Orleans. Despite the geographical distance between New Orleans and Chicago (or wherever you decided the previous story, if any, took place), characters might feel a gossamer tug of their Inner Fires toward the large Promethean community. Sensitive characters or spiritually disposed characters might experience dreams drawing them to a cryptic "site of a great flood" or other such mysterious beacon.

Timeline

The events of "The Water of Life" began to take place on the first of November. Those events probably concluded within a few days. Giving several more days for the characters to follow up on personal interests afterward and then make the trip to New Orleans likely sees "A Sheltering Storm" beginning somewhere around the middle to the latter half of November.

Storytellers who run "A Sheltering Storm" without having run "The Water of Life," or who began that previous story at a different time period are, of course, under no compunction to run "A Sheltering Storm" in mid-November. Some of the events might need to be adjusted (the football game, the stormy season, the pagan holiday), but these shouldn't present too much of an obstacle.

Whither the Vampires?

City of the Damned: New Orleans presents the Big Easy from the perspective of this Kindred. While that sourcebook can provide valuable additional information for a Promethean chronicle involving "A Sheltering Storm," that book is by no means necessary. In fact, **City of the Damned: New Orleans** is "set" before the catastrophe wrought by hurricane Katrina, although, as mentioned in the previous sidebar, this isn't something that should cause a great deal of trouble for the Storyteller.

Storytellers who do want to involve vampires in this portion of the ongoing Promethean story arc have a variety of opportunities.

* **Cheat:** The simplest option might be the best. If you don't have access to **Vampire: The Requiem** or don't want to complicate matters with additional bookkeeping, that's fine. Simply create the characters you wish to use as vampires, define them in Pro-



methean terms (such as defining the function of their powers as Transmutations), have them drink blood and off you go. The players won't see the mechanics anyway, so they'll never know the difference.

*** Use the Vampire core book, but not the supplement:** If you do want to use *Requiem* vampires but don't have or don't care about the New Orleans supplement, that's fine, too. You can create your own Kindred characters and local power structures from scratch. Groups to keep in mind include Kindred of Clan Mekhet, who often have occult predispositions and are spies and information gatherers nonpareil, the Ordo Dracul, which will no doubt take a keen interest in the alchemical and mystical activity occurring, and the Lancea Sanctum, whose religious hierarchy fits exceptionally well with Louisiana's religious division into parishes instead of counties and whose deeply, ethnically Catholic history likely places members in positions of power or knowledge.

*** Using the Supplement:** As mentioned before, *City of the Damned: New Orleans* is set prior to the onslaught of hurricane Katrina. In the aftermath of that storm, Kindred society is probably in a shambles, with Prince Vidal struggling to maintain his influence while Lord Savoy and Baron Cimitiere seek any weakness of Vidal's to expose while shoring up their own minor fiefs. Any of these Kindred might seek allies among the Promethean refugees once the Kindred hear about them — or the Kindred might scheme to divert their rivals' attentions with the presence of the Created and make a play for power while those other Kindred's attentions focus on Papillon and her camp. On the other hand, introducing vampires to the story need not involve the high politics of Kindred society at all. Any of the Kindred might prove to be a valuable ally of unknown potential, or a hapless throng might wander into a domain claimed by a vampire who wants to protect and expand her domain in the wake of the hurricane. A simple tale of cross-species survival might be more appropriate to certain tellings of "A Sheltering Storm" than ambassadorial forays into the Damned's highest halls of power.

*** Other Supernatural Betings:** We're not excluding the possibility of other supernatural creature types slinking through the long shadows of New Orleans; we simply suggest vampires first because New Orleans is their signature city and they already have a supplement devoted to the city. If you prefer to create a Creole lineage of werewolves or a local sect of voodoo- or Santeria-practicing mages, the locale is certainly able to support it.

Act One: Delta Greeting

However the characters arrive in New Orleans, they will become aware of the Promethean community eventually. Of course, whether the characters choose to enter this community or hide from it for as long as possible is up to them. We assume the characters will actually want to involve themselves with the activities of the other Prometheans. If such isn't the case, Storytellers will have to make a few adjustments to accommodate the sneaking and skulking of more secretive characters.

Below we present a few options by which Storytellers can tailor the characters' first exposure to New Orleans to the throng's idiom. Of course, the Storyteller can use these as a foundation upon which to build an even more suitable first encounter — individual Storytellers know their troupes better than this supplement can pretend to.

Physical Encounter: Territoriality

If the characters are inclined toward physical pursuits and combat, this encounter serves well to introduce them to Papillon's Promethean community in New Orleans.

Over the course of their travels and explorations in the city, the throng comes across a scene of repellent violence: one Promethean overpowering another in an unknown dispute. The Storyteller can locate this scene wherever she wishes, to tailor the event to the characters' activities. Remember, however, to account for things such as Disquiet if mortals are in the vicinity (if the beating takes place at a nightclub or shopping center, for example).

The characters, of course, recognize the other Prometheans for what they are due to Azothic sympathy, once the characters are within the other Created's proximity. The scene unfolding before them is brutal. The obviously dominant Promethean is physically mauling a seemingly less capable Created. If the attack takes place away from human eyes, the attacker readily uses the flashier of his Transmutations. If the attack occurs in the presence of mortals, the attacker is more subtle, relying on his greater strength rather than supernatural powers to overwhelm his victim.

As the characters approach, the attacker falters for a moment, responding to the Azothic recognition of these new interlopers. "Get the fuck out of here," he snarls. "Cassius'll do you lot up later." Characters will eventually learn that this is Cassius, a notorious bully around the Promethean community and a prospective jackbooted thug for the Botherud. The victim is demeaningly known as Sickly among New Orleans' other Prometheans.

If the characters intercede on Sickly's behalf, they'll probably be able to overcome the threat Cassius poses. Although he's willing to beat Sickly to death, Cassius has no interest



in having *himself* beaten to that point, so he'll attempt to escape once the fight turns incontrovertibly against him.

Social Encounter: Favors

If the characters are inclined more toward diplomacy and social acumen, they can likewise make Sick's acquaintance. This encounter should be easier for socially adept characters, since it won't actually come to blows. If the characters are too efficient, though, they won't meet Cassius, which means they'll have someone predisposed against them without knowing who he is.

To run the social encounter, have Sick come across the characters before the events of the physical encounter transpire. That is, Sick feels the characters' Azothic resonance and they feel his before Cassius has his chance to jump the frail Promethean.

As the characters feel their Inner Fires flare with Sick's proximity, he approaches them with a pose and demeanor suggesting acquiescence. "I don't have a lot of time, but somebody's on my ass. I know what you are and you know

what I am and I need you to get me out of here. In return, I'll do you a favor. I'll bring you where you need to go." Sick's not being cryptic; he doesn't know anything about the characters. He's just being pragmatic, in that he figures all unfamiliar Prometheans should meet Papillon to better understand how things work in New Orleans.

If the characters agree immediately, Sick seems visibly relieved and leads them out of the location. The characters aren't really doing anything other than offering Sick safety in numbers, but he's fine with that. If the characters delay a bit, whether they're unsure or they want to assess the threat or they question Sick as to why the other person is after him ("He just hates me. Trust me, you don't want to meet this guy.") they'll feel another, different Azothic resonance as they become aware of Cassius' presence. In this case, the outcome depends on the characters' actions. Cassius naturally feels their presence as well, and the characters see him slinking around the periphery of whatever location the Storyteller chooses (see below). Like a nervous, agitated animal, he prowls around a circumference of safety, watching the characters and snarling at Sick, all the while calculating what kind of threat he thinks they'll pose. Unless

the characters rush him, he'll quickly give up and vanish into the night, not wanting to test his mettle against the characters' obviously superior numbers.

If the characters do rush Cassius, well, handle the combat as normal. Cassius will probably attempt to flee in the face of the characters' advantage, but if he thinks he can pick them off one at a time and make the fight more manageable, he's not above giving that a try.

Stealthy Encounter: Flight Response

This encounter can work in either of two ways. The players might try to sneak Sicky out of the location, or they might just put the pedal to the metal (as it were) and hope to leave Cassius behind.

In this scenario, the introduction to Sicky begins as it did in the social scenario above. Instead of facing down Cassius or negotiating with him, however, the characters simply leave the premises with their new friend/victim. Storytellers might wish to describe Cassius as a bit more imposing or even increase his traits if they wish to make him a more severe threat from whom the characters should sensibly run away.

The excitement in this scenario stems from the tension of the chase mechanics in action. If the characters simply want to outrun Cassius, use the normal foot chase rules as described on p. 65 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. If the characters have an obvious edge that Cassius doesn't, such as a waiting getaway car, feel free to depict Cassius as utterly relentless and driven, not unlike the scene in *Terminator 2* in which the liquid-metal Terminator runs down the fleeing car to the best of his ability. Such devotion to purpose is sure to leave an impression in the players' minds.

If the players choose to sneak away to evade Cassius, use a combination of the foot chase rules and the Stealth rules on p. 75 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. In effect, adjudicate the sneaking as an extended, contested action, governed by a character's Dexterity + Stealth versus Cassius' Wits + Composure. (If the characters are trying to sneak Sicky out while hiding in a crowd of people, change the dice pool to Wits + Stealth.) The players may choose which character leads the Stealth effort. Each roll represents 10 to 30 seconds of careful sneaking and tense breath-holding as the characters and their charge hope to evade their pursuer's attention. Once the characters and Sicky accumulate 12 successes, they manage to evade Cassius. If Cassius accumulates 12 successes first, he catches up to them (see below). A few circumstances can modify the dice pools of these rolls.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	If the Stealth pursuit occurs in an area with loud noise or other major distractions (on Bourbon Street, during a thunderstorm, in a crowded bus station, etc.)

Modifier	Situation
+1	For each character who splits off from the group with Sicky for a diversion
+1	If the Stealth pursuit occurs in or moves through an area with minor distractions (across the path of a congregation leaving church, while the light changes at a busy intersection, etc.)
-1	For each character, in addition to the character making the roll and Sicky, who stays with the group
-1	If the Stealth pursuit occurs in an area where the fleeing parties' movements can be heard or seen easily (moving through water that splashes with their footsteps, across muddy ground that holds footprints, etc.)
-2	If the presence of the Prometheans causes Disquiet in the human crowd (Cassius is familiar with Disquiet and looks around for who's causing it or otherwise not panicking)

If Cassius catches up to the fleeing characters and Sicky, Cassius will attempt to take Sicky by force. If the characters attempt to prevent this, run the combat normally (inflicting suitable dice-pool penalties for any circumstances of the geography or environments used in the chase, of course). As in the purely combative scenario, Cassius isn't so stupid as to wait around and be clobbered by Prometheans who obviously outmatch him. He will negotiate in his strained way, however, speaking of himself in the third person and encouraging the players' characters to stay out of what doesn't involve them.

Location

Choosing a location for this initial encounter is in the hands of the Storyteller, to best accommodate the actions of the players' throng and their own personal tastes. We make a few suggestions below, but the intent of the conflict remains the same whether Storytellers use one of the suggested locations or create their own: characters should make the acquaintance of Sicky or (less likely but still possible) Cassius, either of whom can thereafter bring the characters to the refugee community.

Bear in mind that this is the characters' first story introduction to New Orleans. As such, the experience should be iconic and evocative. It's okay if you cheat a bit and have a certain setting in a different location than it is in the real New Orleans. Remember, you're telling a story here, not swearing fealty to a map. A distinct New Orleans feel is more important than real-world veracity. Give the characters something to remember about their stay in the Big Easy by introducing it with panache.

The Superdome

A seasonally appropriate location for the confrontation between Cassius and Sicky is the Superdome, either a day before or a day after Sunday (when football games are

played). The Superdome itself is a symbol of New Orleans, having served as both a temporary shelter for people left homeless by Katrina's destruction and as an icon of repair and community solidarity after the hurricane.

As a fight setting, the Superdome is a great choice, because it's large and has plenty of exposed support work. As such, strong characters can tear down girders and use them as weapons, nimble characters can climb exposed scaffolding to gain a height advantage and tough characters can go crashing through press boxes' or luxury suites' windows overlooking the field, to land on the stadium seats below.

It's a big place, making for plenty of opportunities for stealthy characters to sneak Sicky out of trouble. As well, press boxes, concession stands, luxury suites and exposed architecture all make for excellent locations to climb through or hide inside.

If the conflict seems to turn against Cassius or foil him too quickly for the players' or Storyteller's satisfaction, security guards can investigate the ruckus, making for a diplomatic challenge or potentially forcing another fight-or-flight situation on the characters who might suddenly find the odds stacked against them.

The French Quarter

The archetypal image of New Orleans, the French Quarter is no stranger to violence and skullduggery, whether of the drunken-tourist variety or desperate local ilk. This is also a place where people visit by the millions every year, which might be a reason for characters to head there in hopes of finding clues or overhearing talk about the refugee camp they seek.

The French Quarter offers opportunities to see aspects of the Promethean condition in action. So many people will be faced with the vagaries of Disquiet that the visiting Created will be almost guaranteed to face their shortcomings, and possibly Torment. That selfsame mob of people also provides an impetus for characters to play it cool, not using any of their more overt Promethean powers and Social Skills, if the Storyteller is interested in seeing how creatively the players can think around the conflict. In a more bloody-knuckled chronicle, the French Quarter is always well populated by police, who will certainly do their best to see that any acts of violence conclude quickly — which may make for their own complications or other introductions.

If the characters end up in jail, they'll have the opportunity to meet Paul DeVries (see p. 149), who bails them out and can then serve as a disapproving but influential liaison to Papillon once he hears about the "freaks" the police have arrested. He'll also probably give them an earful about their irresponsibility and recklessness, and relegate them to the status of worthless unless they can somehow convince him otherwise.

Hurricane Ruins

A strong choice for either the physical confrontation or the stealthy scenario is at a site where the hurricane devastation has yet to be completely repaired, or even cleared

away. Exposed structural supports and dangerously dilapidated surfaces can make for excellent non-combat physical challenges to overcome, and can add a significant sense of risk to fights occurring on them. A precarious run across a fallen-beam "bridge" can add thrilling tension to a chase, as can an escape that requires navigating a collapsed floor suspended over the river or gulf waters.

Best of all, this option offers maximum versatility to the Storyteller. Hurricane ruins can be almost anything: a devastated house, a washed-out bridge, a perilous wharf dock, a flooded convenience store in an abandoned neighborhood. Simply take the idea that presents you with the most compelling visual and run with it.

Additional physical threats can heighten the danger even more, as if the environmental threats weren't enough. Imagine a desperate gang of squatters who have nothing left to lose fighting to preserve their territory — or a rogue vampire or werewolf who has made the ruin his own private hunting ground.

Complications

If the Storyteller wishes, he can replace Sicky with Carla Two, from "The Water of Life," if the characters have a decent relationship with her and assuming she survived the events of that story. If the characters killed Carla Two, this obviously isn't an appropriate substitution. Likewise, if the characters have a hostile relationship with Carla Two, they won't necessarily intervene on her behalf and the scene might not result in the intended introduction to the Promethean camp (since Cassius hates these weak-Flamed fledglings who are obviously here to put an even greater drain on the Pyros, and certainly won't help them out or lead them to the camp). On the other hand, if things with Carla Two never truly achieved closure in the previous story, this might be the chance for characters to grant her the benefit of the doubt, do a good deed (if they're so inclined) and learn about the refugee camp all in one action.

If the characters throw Sicky to the wolves — or Cassius, in this case — then the Storyteller's going to have to think on her feet. Although he's brutish and direct, Cassius knows when someone's choosing not to impede his course of action. If this is the case, Cassius resolves his business with Sicky (be sure to have the latter show up bruised and battered when the characters finally make it to Papillon's camp) and then seek the characters out. Depending on how the exchange went, he may seek to introduce them to DeVries and the local Botherud faction, small though it is. He may simply offer to bring the characters to the camp in genuine appreciation, though his suspicious nature will cause him to describe most of the local Prometheans in less than favorable terms. Whatever the case, he can serve to both help the characters find the camp and make the introduction for them if the characters are so callous as to leave Sicky's fate in the hands of his tormentor.

Act Two: The Hidden, The Forgotten

Local Prometheans call the refugee camp by a variety of names, some as simple as “refugee camp,” others as complex or poetical as “Papillon’s farm” or “the Ascetic’s Retreat for the Study of the Great Work.” Each group or individual has his own name for this ersatz home, but some are bandied about more than others.

The territory itself is little to look at. Located half a mile off the Ruddock exit of Highway 55 six miles outside of New Orleans, cobbled together in the remains of a ruined trailer park, Papillon’s farm is little more than a blasted lot parcel ruined by destructive weather and further twisted by the Wasteland effect (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 174). A handful of inhabitable trailers remain, and have been roughly patched to keep the elements out. A double circumference of tall, chain-link fence circles the whole half-mile area, topped by spirals of barbed wire. A circle of rusted car hulks brings memories of circled pioneer wagons to mind. Bundles of weather-shielded electrical cables, bound thick as a man’s thigh, crisscross the area, splitting off into smaller snakes that connect the trailers, cars and generators. Inexplicable portions of interior space have been blocked off with salvaged fence sections, some bounding what appear to be small gardens, others containing stills or tiny refining devices. A large water tank stands at the back of the lot, streaked by rust and mineral deposits.

Missing frenier and the Ruddock Exit

Hurricane Katrina isn’t the only weather disaster to strike New Orleans. In September of 1915, another hurricane blew through the region, destroying much of the area west of New Orleans proper. This hurricane washed away the once-prosperous community of frenier that was located geographically near the same place where the resettled trailer park now stands. frenier was on the shores of Lake Ponchartrain; the trailer park lies just a few miles off this beach.

What does this mean? Well, in grand World of Darkness fashion, the area might have some haunting supernatural resonance, possibly causing the trailer park to have been abandoned long before Katrina caused all hell to break loose again. Storytellers who wish to use other mystical supernatural elements of the World of Darkness might

choose to introduce a few ghosts leftover from the frenier community. Alternatively, Storytellers who want to employ a bit of naturalistic horror might make the region home to some now-dormant spirits who might be awoken by the burgeoning supernatural activity at the camp. Indeed, the Prometheans might run across the depredations of werewolves or mages in this context, who seek to keep the spirits from inflicting themselves on the mortal world or suborn them for their own purposes. Information on ghosts may be found on pp. 208-214 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, while rules for spirits may be found on pp. 273-279 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken** and pp. 317-322 of **Mage: The Awakening**.

Camp Overview

Within the boundaries of the camp, several individual areas deserve their own mention.

Guardhouse

The front of the camp is protected by a guardhouse rudely fashioned from a stolen and repurposed freestanding photo development kiosk, like one might find in a suburban shopping center. At least one Promethean is always on duty here (use a specific character, if you wish, or create one for this purpose — see p. 127).

The guardhouse provides the only point of ingress to the camp. If the characters choose to go in by climbing the fence, they have to contend with that athletic challenge as well as the barbed wire stretched across the top of the barrier. See p. 136 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for details on the durability of fences (if the characters attempt to pull it down) or p. 64 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for rules on climbing. Characters attempting to do anything untoward with the fence (such as tearing it down or climbing it) suffer three points of lethal damage from the barbed wire for each turn they persist in their course of action.

Trailers

Seventeen trailers make up the residence areas of the camp, of which perhaps a dozen are useful and livable. One of these belongs to Papillon. Each major faction (see below) claims one for itself, where its members dwell and conduct their business. Some of the less- or non-influential throngs also communally dwell in some of the trailers, laying claim by squatters’ rights more than social acumen. One or two trailers may be available for the characters’ throng to occupy, at the Storyteller’s discretion.

Library

One of the trailers has been converted into a library of sorts. Outside, someone has driven a hand-painted sign

into the trailer's meager lawn that proclaims the trailer "Tha Billet." Books, magazines, newspapers and a variety of other resources lie strewn about the library trailer, some in piles, others in overturned stacks. There's obviously no cataloguing system, but at least the books are there to be perused, in case anyone feels the need. The library provides a +1 equipment bonus to research dice pools involving the Academics, Science or Occult Skills, but due to the haphazard arrangement of books, the time necessary to do any such research is doubled.

The library trailer also has a ramshackle old computer that nonetheless has Internet access, should anyone require that as well.

The Power Plant

Providing electricity to the Promethean camp is no mean feat, despite the small size of the community. The Prometheans themselves require a constant "diet" of electricity in addition to the regular power needs of the "neighborhood."

To solve this problem, a few of the more mechanically minded Created have kit-bashed and jury-rigged an ugly but functional power plant that provides electricity to the camp. Made up of a hodgepodge of solar panels, gas generators, windmill-like devices and manual engines, the power plant is a noisy, ugly thing constantly churning away in the foreground. Batteries store extra energy, and the whole camp is connected by a makeshift electrical grid of phone wires, power lines and shielded couplings. The plant provides what electricity the camp and its members need, and perhaps a little more (in case someone introduces some new addition to the camp, like a bank of lights or an electrified-fence project).

It's remarkably easy to sabotage the power plant, should one wish to attempt it. Such an act is an extended action, requiring seven cumulative successes on an Intelligence + Crafts roll. Each roll represents 15 minutes of monkey-wrench work. Achieving the seven successes renders the power plant inoperative. Repairing the plant afterward requires 11 successes on an Intelligence + Science roll, with each roll representing 15 minutes of repairing the previous hindrances. The power plant isn't secured or guarded at all — why should it be, since its continued operation is to the benefit of all the Prometheans who stay at the camp?

The power plant is also fairly volatile, and acts of violence or industrial treachery in its vicinity may cause the power plant to explode. There's no hard and fast system for this — it's up to the Storyteller whether she wants the power plant to explode during some dramatic moment, or whether she wishes to allow the players to turn the power plant into a tactical explosive device. The power plant has a Size of 6, a Blast radius of 10 yards and a Damage rating of 4 if configured to explode. See pp. 178–179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for more information on explosives.

The Apothecary's Garden

A small portion of the camp has been fenced off to serve as a garden. An apothecary affiliated with Mutus Liber grows a selection of curious vegetables and rare herbs. (This can be Ogilvy or another character of the Storyteller's own creation.) No system governs this, but should a character require a strange alchemical ingredient, this would be a fine place to cultivate it. As well, the garden provides an eerie, pastoral setting that's grotesquely incongruous with the rest of the abandoned trailer park, and thus a prime choice of places to have mystical or horrific events or secret liaisons occur.

The Chassis Ring

Toward the rear of the camp, the Prometheans have pushed a number of burned-out or otherwise ruined car hulks. They have arranged the wrecks in a circle, with gaps between the chassis at the cardinal compass points to allow entry to the ring. The assembled car wrecks have been piled atop each other or even driven hood- or trunk-first into the ground, effectively making a walled arena 10 feet high. All manner of dented protrusions and extending surfaces make for *de facto* seats and standing platforms, upon which the Created can climb or hide under to witness events occurring within the circle.

The Prometheans of Papillon's camp use this ring for a variety of purposes. When camp meetings happen, or when one of the Created has something he wishes to say in front of everyone, the ring serves as a sort of public forum. Followers of the Iron Refinement occasionally use the ring as a training area or staging place for various physical activities. When Papillon hears a complaint involving two or more Prometheans, she sometimes does so in the ring, so that all the assembled Prometheans might be able to hear the issue, make statements and witness the judgment that occurs. The ring has also served as a gladiatorial arena, when the hostilities between certain Prometheans have risen to the point at which physical violence between them was inevitable. Papillon understands that sometimes this just can't be avoided among such passionate, driven creatures as Prometheans, and it's better to let it all play out amid the comparatively safe backdrop of the circle in the camp, rather than somewhere else in the city that might pose a greater risk.

The cars themselves are largely stripped down, meaning that there probably aren't too many freely dangling axles or transmission bells that might be wielded as improvised weapons. Enough of the cars are in poor enough shape that an unfortunate combatant might be impaled on a rusty jag of the scenery at a dramatic moment, however.

Refugee Factions

At any given time, Papillon's camp is home to anywhere from a dozen to 40+ Prometheans. Similar to New Orleans'



tourist population, most of these Prometheans are transient, stopping by only when they're passing through town or when they've deliberately sought out the camp with information to share. Perhaps 15 of the Created call the camp their permanent home, but a great many more are known by sight and reputation.

While these numbers are artificially high, they're also temporarily high, because of the transitory nature of the camp's visitors. Naturally, so many Prometheans tend to seek out those of similar interests and outlooks. As such, the camp has its share of factions and political groups, sects of Prometheans who pursue common agendas or trade information among one another.

Camp Logistics — Overpopulation and Wasteland

The refugee camp is not a typical arrangement. It is ambitious, it is unprecedented and it is doomed. The characters are going to get an object lesson in what happens when a number of Prometheans stay in one place too long. At every opportunity, stress that this situation is remark-

able. Even the characters who have been here the longest, even Papillon herself, should sometimes marvel and perhaps be a little frightened of this gathering.

As for the Wasteland effect, it doesn't receive a detailed treatment in this story because this effect isn't a specific focus. The focus of this story is the refugees and their machinations, rather than the immediate effect that their Azoth has upon the land. A future story in this chronicle takes the Wasteland effect into account much more specifically, but, for now, feel free to mention the mystical marks made by the dozens of Created present; however, the air is still and stagnant, the water thick and the whole place *dirty*.

When the players' characters first encounter the Prometheans of the camp, indulge the characters with as many roleplaying episodes as they seem to enjoy. Expose them to the various factions and ideologies through conversations with Storyteller characters who probe the players' characters to see what their opinions of the Promethean condition are and how they feel the Created can best make a place for

themselves in the world. Don't just have the characters meet Miranda and then listen to a piece of detached exposition on the Mercy Mission's purpose — use the interaction to expose the players to various Created philosophies in New Orleans, and let them see if any of them have any sympathy with the opinions expressed.

The Botherúd

Characters who heard about “the Brotherhood” at the conclusion of “The Water of Life” might be familiar with the Botherúd already. If not, they may be introduced to it here.

The Botherúd is a faction of self-styled elite Prometheans who believe that Pyros is a finite presence in the world. As such, the Botherúd resents the creation of new Prometheans and their intrusion into the affairs of established Created. To the minds of the faction's members, Pyros is a resource solely for the use of those who understand it, or those who have access to a responsible tutor. Their outlook in this regard is positively medieval, but that's understandable, given that they approach understanding of the Pilgrimage with an alchemist's analytical mind.

The Botherúd is occasionally violent in prosecuting its agenda, but such isn't the case in New Orleans. To the contrary, Papillon finds Botherúd philosophy distasteful in the extreme, and doesn't permit the faction's members to spread their propaganda. While one member of the faction dwells in the New Orleans refugee camp, he does so at Papillon's sufferance. This Promethean, DeVries, often finds himself occupying the role of Devil's advocate, providing viewpoints to Papillon that, while contradicting her own, nonetheless carry a degree of fresh perspective and rational sense. On the other hand, Papillon sometimes finds DeVries' position to be needlessly contrary and occasionally reactionary. She takes his input with the proverbial grain of salt, but she's mature enough to realize and acknowledge sensible comments or plans he comes up with.

Given the Botherúd's minor presence in New Orleans, the faction doesn't press much of its agenda actively. DeVries is well aware of his fellow Prometheans' temperaments, however, and sees in Cassius a chance to exploit that Created's conformist tendencies in the Botherúd's interests. DeVries keeps this intention to himself.

Mercy Mission

The primary goal of the Mercy Mission faction is to aid in the reconstruction of New Orleans proper. It's an admirable goal, but it's not entirely altruistic. In fact, Mercy Mission wants to aid in the rebuilding effort specifically so the members can carve out a bit of territory for themselves and for Prometheans as a whole. Examples of Mercy Mission's intentions are rezoning so that certain areas of the city can serve as intentionally blighted areas where the Created can temper their Wasteland effect, go to the Wastes or bleed off periods of Torment. They want New Orleans functional,

but they fear the national attention the reconstruction effort might bring — if the reinvigorated New Orleans is *too* idyllic, there won't be anywhere for the Created to go in the city and all of the things the refugee community has accomplished will be lost.

Several members of Mercy Mission practice the Refinement of Gold, but several more do not. Mercy Mission is less of a philosophy for some than a means to an end. Still, the faction can use all the support it can drum up, and so long as the purpose is met, Mercy Mission doesn't pretend to dictate any spiritual or ethical dogma. The Tammuz Miranda is the nominal leader of the Mercy Mission faction, since she was originally a New Orleans resident and appeared at Papillon's camp shortly after it formed. Although many other Created consider Mercy Mission's purpose soft (likely because they don't look deeply enough into its doctrines to understand them fully), Miranda has the respect of almost every Promethean in the camp.

Mutus Liber

Consistently the largest faction among the New Orleans Prometheans, the Sworn Advocates of the Silent Book — the *Mutus Liber* by academic abbreviation — is at once an ascetic order and an alchemical society.

The origins of the Mutus Liber are a muddled mess. No one remembers who the first member of the faction was, but all remember being active in the group, at least by correspondence, before Hurricane Katrina inflicted itself on the region. Indeed, the Mutus Liber as a society has been present in some form or another in New Orleans since 1975, as a collection of letters between members dating back that far survived the hurricane and is in the group's possession. The group either has no leader or refuses to acknowledge one, depending upon whom one consults. A Promethean named Ogilvy often speaks with the voice of the faction as a whole, but this is out of pragmatism, not leadership.

The group styles itself as a collective of modern monks, brothers whose faith in the transmutational sciences serves to unite them toward a common purpose. Some are philosophers, some are practical alchemists, some are wayward academics, but all revere the mystical processes revealed in the *Mutus Liber*, an oblique booklet of 15 illustrative plates that depict an alchemical process.

Mutus Liber is not actively political, but the faction looks out for its members' interests. As well, it seeks new blood, Prometheans who are able to bring fresh perspectives to the group's discussions and debates. Papillon works closely with Mutus Liber, though she is not a member, to make sure the camp maintains its reputation for progressive-thinking Created who want to answer their own mysteries of existence and move forward in the Pilgrimage.

Mutus Liber serves two roles in relation to visiting characters. As the biggest and most diverse faction in Papillon's camp, these members'll certainly have the most and most

varied viewpoints to share with the characters. While the society members probably won't serve as patrons or mentors or anything like that, Mutus Liber might be where a character finds a contemporary or colleague with whom to share letters or debates. Ultimately, however, Mutus Liber *as a group* will decide to turn its back on the characters and use them as dupes (as the plot progresses). This can provide monumental character development opportunities — will a character who has forged a relationship with one of the Mutus Liber Prometheans forgive her for the actions of her faction? Or is the betrayal too great, turning former compatriots into enemies? Likewise, characters who have betrayal- or forgiveness-related milestones may well see them played out through interaction with the Sworn Advocates of the Silent Book.

Making Their Acquaintance

The players' characters effectively have three ways of coming into contact with Papillon's camp. We deal with the most likely: Sickly makes an introduction for them after they save him in the previous scene. If your players are exceptionally clever (or hardheaded), they may meet another Promethean who can introduce them, or they may stumble blindly across the camp as Azothic resonance from other Prometheans pulls them toward it. In these latter cases, you may have to improvise a bit.

The scene begins as Sickly brings the characters to the general vicinity of the camp, telling them to “hang on a minute” as he leaves them about a mile from the camp, presumably to announce their presence. This may be a bit weird in and of itself — if the throng travels by car, Sickly asks them to stop a mile away and then makes the walk on foot. If they have other transportation, Sickly likewise asks them to stop and makes the remainder of the trip on his own. If the characters oblige Sickly, have them wait until they get truly antsy and threaten to break down the door or pack up and leave. Let Sickly's trustworthiness be the issue here: just as their frustrations reach an apex, Sickly returns and says, “It's all cool. Let's go in.”

If the characters refuse to wait for Sickly to conduct his business beforehand, he'll reluctantly make introductions for them anyway, but the greeting at the guardhouse will be tense. The Created on watch at the gate will feel his Azoth calling to these unknown Prometheans, but he won't know the entire circumstances or whether Sickly's being held hostage. In fact, if any dramatic failures occur on social interactions at the gate, the guard assumes that Sickly's finally fallen in with the wrong crowd (the little scab), and opens fire or attacks in melee while sounding the alarm. This last will naturally rouse the attention if not the ire of the whole camp, and the players' characters will probably have to do some fast talking to defuse the situation before the entire camp beats them to a pulp.

If they choose to let Sickly make the introduction, he's been dutiful and honest. The guard waves them through and is even cordial if the characters are respectful or amicable with him.

Sickly leads the throng through the camp, giving a furtive tour of the place (“That's the boss' trailer. And that's the power plant. Over there's the library.”) as he leads the characters to the ring of chassis toward the rear of the camp. Depending on how populated the Storyteller decides the camp is at this time, other Prometheans may look on in curiosity, enthusiasm, or hostility as they attend to their own affairs.

Most of the camp's residents await the characters at the chassis ring, however. The ring itself appears as described above, with several Prometheans of all Lineages in attendance and looking on with interest. The most noteworthy is the statuesque Galateid at the northern portion of the ring. She stands in front of a rusted black Dodge Challenger that's been buried nose-first in the ground up to its wheel wells.

“Greetings, pilgrims. I am Papillon, and this is our community,” she says, waiting to see how the characters reply. Her manner is open and forthright, and she spreads her hands out in front of her to show that she welcomes them with open arms. Several of the other Prometheans are more leery, but Papillon silences them with stern looks if any of them become too vocal.

The remainder of their reception depends on the characters' demeanor and previous behavior. If they're haughty, Papillon extends to them the hospitality of the camp, but warns that they won't make many meaningful relationships with that attitude. If they don't show any enthusiasm one way or the other, she leaves them to their own devices after wishing them well in a similarly noncommittal fashion. If they're enthusiastic, friendly, open with their knowledge or otherwise react positively, Papillon will ask over Miranda and Ogilvy, making introductions to these other influential Prometheans and discoursing with whatever conversation the characters lead with (alchemy, the Pilgrimage, Sickly's rescue, the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, etc.).

The Peculiar Personality of Papillon's Camp

After their introduction to key Prometheans at the refugee camp, the characters will likely want to speak with several of these other Created, in hopes of learning things near and dear to them, or just finding out how things work around here.

This portion of the scene is largely unscripted and open-ended. We provide a few hooks for players' characters and their possible courses of action below, but don't feel compelled to use any of these.

Only one thing is truly important to the flow of story events here: the characters should hear about the *Mutus*

Liber (the document, not the faction). That said, this is a perfect opportunity to build character, to discuss the Promethean condition with others among the Created and to learn just where the political boundaries have been drawn at the camp. These last three will happen in due course of the characters speaking to the other Prometheans. Your duty as Storyteller is to bring up the *Mutus Liber* without making the players feel as if their characters are forced to undertake another retrieval quest. It shouldn't take much chicanery — the *Mutus Liber* is primarily helpful for them, and only in a few cases will other Prometheans seek to "commission" the characters to return it to them. Indeed, the characters should come away from their various conversations feeling as if they've learned a beneficial secret, and their enthusiasm for pursuing the book will determine whether or not they find it first.

Character Cheat Sheets

This portion of the act will require the creation of a few personalities for the Created with whom the characters will be interacting. We provide a few of the key characters for this story in the *Dramatis Personae* section at the end of this chapter, but six to ten other characters in brief will come in handy.

Storytellers, you don't have to spend a tremendous amount of time doing this. Interactions will be brief, and, in all likelihood, the players' characters may never meet with these Prometheans again, other than in the most limited capacities. Therefore, in the interests of time, you will probably be best served by working with "characters notes" rather than fully fleshed-out and deeply realized characters. Determine the sorts of Prometheans your players will have meaningful interactions with, and start from there.

A quick and functional way of doing this is to take a handful of note cards and quickly define a character concept on each. All you need is a name and a concept for the character — the adjective-and-noun method works just fine here. For example, if the players' throng consists primarily of physically oriented Prometheans, "Crankcase, nervous OPS survivalist" might be a good contact for them, as might "Bounce, jovial security guard" and "David Reynolds, hardened ex-con." In the note card space not occupied by the brief personality sketch, you have room to write notes, record comments or promises or any other pertinent details relating to the character's interactions with the players' characters. You'll be surprised how often having a few scribbled notes to spark your memory about a conversation long past will come in handy. One important facet of the character

to note is his Refinement, as this not only goes a long way toward defining that character's current approach to the Pilgrimage, but gives you an idea of what Transmutations that character might have learned, should this become important.

Another possibility to consider when populating the refugee camp is whether or not the characters' Promethean creators are present. After all, the camp contains a significant percentage of the world's Promethean population, and if a character's creator is still extant, the pull of Azoth to Azoth may well have brought him here. You can use the camp as a staging ground for unfinished business between creator and Created, as well as milestones arising from such conflicts.

Assembling the Truth

The following suggestions offer a few ways in which the Storyteller can convey the information the characters need to know to them. The key to the story is the *Mutus Liber*, the "silent book" described above that has an entire faction of the refugee camp devoted to it. An antiquarian in New Orleans has come into possession of this book in the form of a collection of printer's plates, a true artifact. This antiquarian, Jerry Havelock, recognizes that the plates are extremely valuable, but he doesn't yet know exactly what they are. Of course, that's all information to be discovered later. What matters right now is that Havelock has possession of the book, and the characters should seek to acquire it.

The *Mutus Liber*

The alchemical book known as the *Mutus Liber* is uncommon, but readily available from many occult or rare booksellers. The most readily available of these rare volumes is published by a Milanese publisher named Arche.

The Arche printing, however, is a mundane copy. The plates recently obtained by Mr. Havelock are originals used in the 1677 La Rochelle printing. That is to say, the Arche printing, while interesting, will confer none of the supernatural benefits that the actual La Rochelle plates will (see p. 139).

Piecing the puzzle together should be no huge task for the characters. It's the finding out of all the disparate bits of information, the metaphorical collection of the pieces, that should be the greatest task. That information comes couched in various conversations the characters can have with Prometheans around the camp, so glean these details

comes with as much or as little difficulty as the throng imposes on itself. Dole out portions of this information as you see fit, as rewards for good roleplaying, clever questioning or fulfilling (or attending to) goals and milestones. Don't just dump everything on the players' characters at once. That'll be too obvious, too artificial, and the players will feel as if they were being railroaded toward a directed goal.

Papillon: Although Papillon is the leader of the refugee camp, she's not terribly in touch with the various individual factional concerns around the camp. In many cases, she considers herself to be in a position in which she can't give credence to the gossip and rumors that make it through the camp. In just as many cases, people simply don't tell her what they've heard — she's at the top of the totem pole, as it were, and someone sneaking around New Orleans on a secret agenda is hardly going to tell the only person who passes for an authority figure about his skullduggery. On the other hand, Papillon has heard that the Sworn Advocates of the Silent Book have recently heard tell about some exciting piece of alchemical literature traveling to New Orleans. In addition, Papillon expresses many worries about the camp. She's worried about the Botherú, despite their small presence, which may give the characters something to talk to her about if they followed up on "the Brotherhood" at the end of "The Water of Life." The characters have also had the displeasure of meeting Cassius, who also gives Papillon pause, not because of his own doings, but because he's so impressionable that when he inevitably falls in with a malefactor, he may be turned to a purpose not entirely his own. (If the characters killed Cassius at Sick's rescue, she's willing to turn a deaf ear so long as the conversation doesn't take place in anyone else's company. Formally, if the characters killed Cassius, they'll have to stand judgment for it.) Most discussions with Papillon impart a sense of quiet and dignified responsibility. She does what she does here because she needs to, not because she wants to.

DeVries: As might be expected, DeVries is condescending at best and downright hostile at worst. Characters may make an attempt to improve his demeanor toward them by adopting a pro-Botherú (or similarly judgmental) position toward young Prometheans and those who have little understanding of the value of Pyros. In such a case, allow the player of the character in question to make a Manipulation + Persuasion or Subterfuge (depending on the character's tactics) to sway DeVries to the character's sympathies. On a success, DeVries reveals that he's been grooming Cassius for certain duties "on which it's best not to leave one's fingerprints." With an exceptional success, DeVries reveals this same and a little more — he has plans for Cassius relatively soon. On a failure, DeVries simply wants nothing to do with the characters. On a dramatic failure, he takes an active, nasty interest in the character in question and actively speaks out against him, and potentially even sends Cassius or another sympathetic Promethean to inflict a healthy dose of fear

in the character when he's alone. The plans DeVries has for Cassius come to fruition in the next act. The Botherú leader doesn't know what his hapless servant will come across, but DeVries does know that Cassius undermining the abilities of Mercy Mission.

Miranda: Miranda doesn't have much to say that's germane to the plot (though other members of Mercy Mission do, which is a good opportunity to use one of the minor, support characters keyed directly to the players' characters interests as described in the sidebar on p. 127). She's pleasant enough to characters who engage her in a respectful manner, but she has little time for characters who are abusive or boorish. Miranda is a firm believer in Papillon's work with the camp, but Miranda sees her own efforts with Mercy Mission as eventually eclipsing those of the Galateid when New Orleans is finally rebuilt satisfactorily. That's not to say Miranda covets Papillon's position, just that she sees the camp leader's duties going away once the city becomes more stable. If New Orleans retains its disproportionately large population of Prometheans after this return to normality, some kind of leader will probably be required, but Miranda will cross that bridge when New Orleans comes to it. She doesn't want the position herself. She doesn't keep her vision for a "leader's" duties a secret from Papillon, either, which is an honesty the latter greatly appreciates.

Ogilvy: Conversations with Ogilvy tend to be animated, as he is himself. He's very excited about an artifact of especial interest to his faction coming to New Orleans. It's the very book his fellow society members have named themselves after, and is rumored to be an original press of the *Mutus Liber* itself. Ogilvy can't help but become a bit evangelistic — he's enthused about his faction's philosophies as well as their being so close to acquiring something of great value. He assures all the characters that his fellow Sworn Advocates all have their ears to the ground regarding this copy of the book, and even if the characters aren't interested in joining with the faction, the Advocates would greatly appreciate any information they might hear about it. Ogilvy's excited, but he's not naïve, and he'll promise some sort of compensation if any leads the characters generate turn out to be valuable. He also recommends that the characters speak to other members of the faction (Storytellers, cue those supporting character cards), to better get their perspectives and maybe to hear anything that might jog their memories about the *Mutus Liber*. Aside from this, Ogilvy is knowledgeable and avuncular. He's happy to talk about alchemy, enigmas or the occult in specific, and academics in general. Feel free to pursue any lines of conversation the characters take a particular shine to; Ogilvy's glad to talk, and there's a reason he's the faction's mouthpiece.

Cassius: While normally standoffish, Cassius is sullen should the characters approach him. He's embarrassed that they dealt him a drubbing. As well, he's harboring a secret charge imposed upon him by DeVries. Cassius doesn't want

to speak with the characters too much, as he's afraid that they'll confound him and he'll end up spilling the beans. Then, he fears, DeVries would really be mad at him and he'd never get in the Botherúd. No, it's best not to talk to these nosy intruders.

Supporting Botherúd Members: While this faction doesn't really have any formal members to speak of, that doesn't mean the Storyteller can't introduce some as foils to the players' characters. This is especially appropriate if the characters learned about the Botherúd at the end of "The Water of Life." Alternatively, some Prometheans might resent young Created, or look down upon flashy, wasteful exhibitions of Pyros. Prometheans sympathetic to the Botherúd cause seem to be at odds with Mercy Mission Created. Further investigation of this apparent rivalry discloses that the rivalry is one-sided. Mercy Mission doesn't seem to care what the Botherúd is up to. From the Botherúd perspective, Mercy Mission is coddling weak, young Prometheans who are wasting the extremely valuable resource that they all depend on. The Botherúd respects the Created of *Mutus Liber* because at least they're trying to figure something out — how best to use Pyros and to what ends?

Supporting Mercy Mission Members: The most valuable item to come from Mercy Mission is Jerry Havelock's name. The members don't know him to be the man in possession of the *Mutus Liber* plates, but they do know he's an antiquarian, a historian and on the board of directors for one of the New Orleans restoration projects with which Mercy Mission allies itself. Drop these details into any conversation with Mercy Mission Prometheans when they become convenient, such as, "We're waiting on Jerry Havelock to find room in the museum budget for that" or "This Havelock guy we ran into on the new zoning board really knows his stuff about history. He knows what we can knock down to rebuild and what still counts as historically protected" or "Any time anyone finds anything interesting at one of the recovery sites, it goes through Havelock. He can get the museum to buy certain interesting items, which helps finance the restoration effort." In a nutshell, make Jerry Havelock seem important, and make him have an obvious connection to museums or other repositories of historical or even mystical value. The players should be able to put two and two together from these intimations and from speaking with members of the Sworn Advocates of the Silent Book.

Supporting Mutus Liber Members: To complement the Mercy Mission Prometheans, the Sworn Advocates of the Silent Book should reinforce the value of the *Mutus Liber* plates suspected of being available in New Orleans. Savvy Storytellers can really tantalize the players here, making allusions to the *Mutus Liber* being able to describe how to refine and use *aqua vitae* (if the players participated in the events of "The Water of Life"). Be careful with it, and don't be ham-handed, but the characters should definitely come away from encounters with the Sworn Advocates that the

Mutus Liber is something they should actively be seeking out. Additionally, similar to Ogilvy, *Mutus Liber* Created often like to proselytize or otherwise "talk shop." This is a good place for philosophical discussion, the trading of promises and favors and possibly even completing a milestone or two. Storytellers should be extra vigilant with their note-card duties for *Mutus Liber* members — these Prometheans can easily become allies, correspondents or valuable mentors on the Pilgrimage. It's not all as easy as that, though. A character who reveals that his throng actually possesses an elixir described to them as the water of life will find himself immensely popular among these Prometheans, who will want to perform all manner of research, alchemical tests, efforts to synthesize the elixir and so on. The Sworn Advocates really turn up the heat on their recruitment efforts for such characters as well, almost certainly making the character sorry he ever opened his mouth. On the other hand, they'll make for devoted allies if the *Mutus Liber* believes its new "members" (in whatever sense) have something to protect or will contribute to their effort to find the book.

The Details

By whatever methods the players' characters choose to employ, they should find out where Jerry Havelock lives, and make plans to meet him.

Mercy Mission Prometheans are probably the best and most direct people to consult. They can put the characters in touch with Havelock with an office, cell or home phone number, or make a personal introduction through a charity or academic event. For this reason, we include an abbreviated character write-up for Jerry Havelock in the *Dramatis Personae* section of this chapter. Unless the characters actually meet up with him beforehand, their first introduction to him is going to be with his corpse cooling on his apartment floor, but it's possible that they may make his acquaintance before his untimely demise.

DeVries can do a little surreptitious police inquiry to find the details about Havelock's residence. This serves two purposes. First, since DeVries plans to send Cassius over there to see just what the antiquarian is hiding, DeVries needs the information anyway. Second, the characters asking about Havelock's home address lets DeVries know he has to send Cassius now, striking while the iron is hot, before the characters themselves have a chance to . . . do whatever it is they're doing. Of course, it's not in DeVries' best interest to give the characters Havelock's real address, since DeVries wants his own flunky to get there first. Depending on the Storyteller's choice, DeVries either conveys Havelock's business address (knowing that he's going to send Cassius directly to the man's house), or provides a home address that's *just a little bit* incorrect, to buy himself a little more time while the characters chase down the false address. This won't be overt — it'll be a homophone of the street name such as Bowling Avenue for Bolling Avenue, for example, or perhaps

an address to a previous apartment leased by Havelock, from which the characters can procure a new address — to give DeVries a degree of plausible deniability.

Characters don't have to be dependent on others to find Havelock's whereabouts. Computer-savvy characters might search the last name via the Internet. Characters with Investigation might be able to turn up public records. Subterfuge might work at a museum or charity Havelock affiliates himself with. A Contact or Ally might be able to yield some information. So long as the idea is sensible or creative, the Storyteller should allow some chance of success for the attempt. These methods, though, are slower and less direct than going to the characters in the story who already have the information or easy access to it. The players' characters' own attempts should be only a little more difficult, but significantly more time-consuming. A good rule of thumb in this situation is to make the players' characters' attempt an extended action. Extended actions are (usually) bound to succeed eventually, but the question is, how much time does it take to achieve that success. Whatever dice pool the character ends up using, achieving six successes is a good benchmark for turning up the information in question, with each roll signifying four hours' worth of research, questioning, talking to people who might know, etc. Remember also that these rolls depend on the ready availability of the information or its providers. A phone call to a leasing office in the middle of the night isn't going to net any good results (and might, in fact, have the landlord call the cops in the interests of protecting the person the midnight caller was seeking), and the post office is open only during normal business hours.

Act Three: Lightning Strikes Twice

This scene builds a tremendous amount of tension and sets the stage for future developments. Therefore, handling the pacing is very important. Two separate conflicts occur within very close proximity to one another. The intent is to have the characters feel that they're under siege, that trouble is piling up on top of them. This is a very fine line to walk, however — it's not an excuse to antagonize players, or to overwhelm their characters. Ultimately, the characters should be able to handle what happens in this scene, but only by the skin of their teeth. That desperation is part of the tense feel of the scene. When all is said and done in this scene, the players should breathe a collective sigh of relief, and the characters should count themselves lucky that they've survived both of the weird encounters.

The two critical encounters of the scene are interactions with a pack of Pandorans and a *qashmal*. We detail the scene

below, but the sequence is up to you as Storyteller. In most cases, especially if your players' characters are intellectually or mystically oriented, leading with the *qashmal* is probably the best option, to be followed by the Pandorans' attack as they find themselves drawn to the tantalizing amount of Pyros released in the area. If your players are more martially inclined, indulge them with some cathartic combat with the Pandorans and then have the *qashmal* appear afterward, satisfied by the players' characters proving their mettle against the marauders.

Setting the Scene

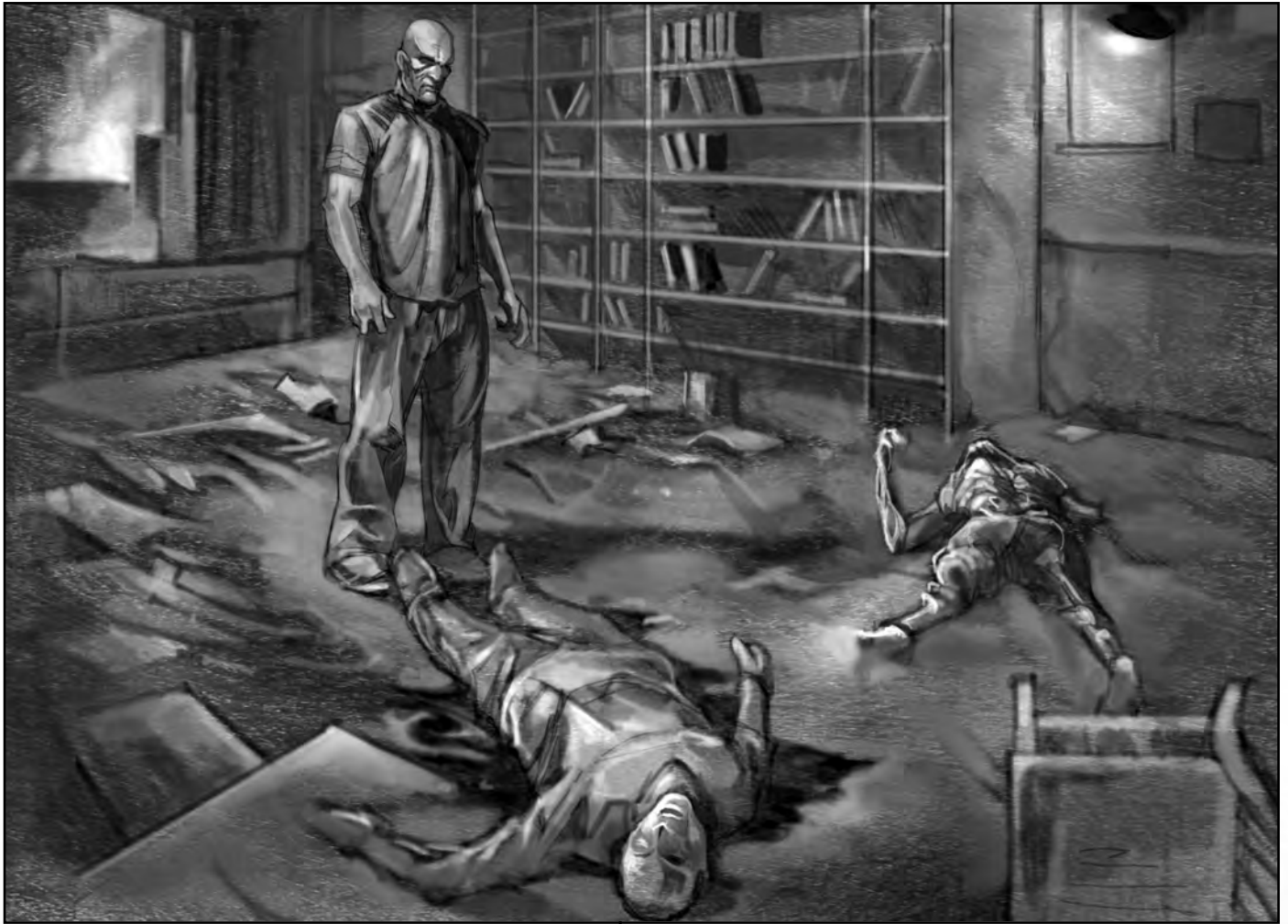
The antiquarian's apartment is in a section of New Orleans that was comparatively unscathed by the storm force of the hurricane. Bywater is on the eastern edge of downtown New Orleans, touching the river and thereby granting the neighborhood its name.

Havelock's apartment is one of several housed in the same building, a plantation-era mansion split into several smaller tenant dwellings. The façade of the building offers a buzzer that rings directly up to Havelock's residence. No one answers the buzz, no matter what time the characters show up at the residence.

Getting inside should be a minor obstacle. Security is relatively slight. The house is protected by a passcode lock (which is 35224 in case the characters manage to pry it out of one of the other residents or otherwise find it out). Using the Larceny Skill in various methods is an option; see p. 74 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for some less than legal possibilities. The characters could break down the door with relative ease, but that would almost certainly draw attention. They may wish to buzz one of the other residents and ask her to let them in to "check on their friends" or some such, in which case the normal difficulties of Disquiet apply (see p. 167 of **Promethean: The Created** for more information on Disquiet). Alternatively, the characters may choose to enter by window if they're able to discern which apartment is Havelock's. It's the one in the back, on the right side. Even if the characters enter the building, they'll have to contend with the front door to Havelock's individual apartment.

Once the characters enter, the reason Havelock's buzzer went unanswered is immediately obvious. Havelock himself lies face-down in a pool of his own blackening blood. His isn't the only corpse present, however. The characters recognize Cassius' body as well, and the Promethean seems to have been done in by some catastrophic amount of fire damage. He's burned over the majority of his body, and he's only barely recognizable, making his death that much more horrific to the characters — whatever did him in knew the weaknesses of the Created.

The apartment itself is in a state of disarray. It appears to have been ransacked, with drawers spilling their contents onto the floor, cabinets opened up and turned out, bookshelves overturned and tables upended. History books lie scattered about the place. Cultural knickknacks lie upon the floor. A tower of academic periodicals has been kicked



over, and a once comfortable-looking leather reading chair had been cracked in twain. Someone was here and looking for something.

Strangely, whatever burned Cassius to death doesn't seem to have left its mark anywhere else. That is, Cassius wasn't trapped in the apartment as it burned, and the fire wasn't used recklessly. Whatever was here and killed Cassius did so *precisely*, with the application of only enough fire to do the job and none to damage the environment around him.



Who Killed Who?

Inquisitive characters may attempt to puzzle out the mystery of exactly what happened in Hlavelock's apartment, even though it's not imperative to resolving the scene. That's a decision you should make as storyteller, to suit the needs of your chronicle and troupe.

In all likelihood, Cassius killed Hlavelock while attempting to discern the location of the *Mutus Liber* plates. When Hlavelock didn't divulge their

location, Cassius lost his temper and went too far in attempting to beat it out of the antiquarian.

Who killed Cassius is the more open-ended mystery. The killer or killers might have been the Pandorans, sensing the presence of Cassius' Azoth and wearing him down as a pack in the effort to devour his Pyros. If such is the case, Cassius' burns are probably savage and painful-looking, the result of murderous Pandorans hungrily seeking sustenance with whatever means were at hand. Equally as probable, however, is the possibility that the *qashmal* killed him once it learned that he was not the characters. The *qashmal* has a message to deliver the characters, and once the being realized that Cassius wasn't the Prometheans it seeks, it destroyed him dispassionately, considering him useless. Note that Cassius will not return to life; he already burned his one "second chance" earlier in his Pilgrimage.

Storytellers are welcome to adjust this sequence of events, especially if they've had to make other adjustments over the course of the story.



As the characters search the apartment, have each player make an Intelligence + Investigation roll. The character who achieves the most successes finds the *Mutus Liber* plates. A player who rolls a dramatic failure finds what he *thinks* are the *Mutus Liber* plates, but are in fact a common reproduction of a Hermetic alchemy palimpsest. It's not dangerous or rare, but if the characters bring that back thinking it's the treasure they seek, their patrons will be sorely disappointed with them, and the characters might have to return . . .

Whatever you do, be sure the characters find *something*, whether it's the actual plates or the mistaken document. The roll here is to determine who finds the document in question, not whether they find it. It'd be pointless to have the characters arrive on the scene and conduct a careful search only to be confounded by a poor dice roll that derails everything from here on outward.

Complications

The scene is about to become plenty complicated by itself, but if you choose to add another point of character-building or interaction, Storyteller, who can blame you?

Perhaps the characters' rummaging is interrupted by a nosy neighbor, the little old lady who lives downstairs and just

spent half an hour climbing up them. Mr. Havelock kept strange hours and didn't often have company, but — Oh! Is that Mr. Havelock on the floor? Who is that other man? What is going on here?

If the characters have been unsubtle, rude with neighbors, creepy (as a result of Disquiet) or destructive, someone may well have called the police. This would be an especially sensitive complication to throw at the players — they're pilfering a double-homicide scene, for God's sake — but if the characters have powers of mental acuity or social superiority, they may be able to mind-trick a single officer into thinking everything's okay. Be careful with this, because if they get out of hand and end up killing cops or being hauled off to jail, they're not going to meet the *qashmal* or the Pandorans and the whole scene's going to need to be rebuilt.

It's also possible that characters arrive at Havelock's apartment before Cassius does his dirty work. This is a good reward for insightful or decisive characters. They'll be able to catch Cassius red-handed (assuming they witness him snooping about) and can turn him over to Papillon's sound judgment. Obviously, Cassius won't attack Havelock if the characters are there. Cassius is a brute, not suicidal, and the characters have already dealt with him in some capacity when they



found him victimizing Sick. This also changes the flow of the scene in a manner that'll require some Storyteller shuffling, but it keeps Havelock alive, and he may well turn out to be a good Contact in the long run.

Visit from the Qashmallim

As the characters occupy Havelock's apartment, discussing whom to see next and what to do with the *Mutus Liber*, the more perceptive among them will notice the air becoming charged. As the characters' conversation continues, interject small bits of situational weirdness: hair stands up at the base of their necks, all of the clocks in the room run backward and read different times, candles spark to life. When you have enough of the players' attention on environmental events, focus their attention on mirrors and other reflective surfaces: windows cease to be transparent and instead become opaque, even reflective. Mirrors appear to emanate their own light. A character's reflection on a letter opener's blade appears upside-down instead of in reverse.

As the tension reaches its highest pitch (optimally just before the characters collectively decide to get the hell out of there), all of the light in the room dies. For the briefest of moments, the room is illuminated only by a sterile gray light. Quick-witted characters who think to look outside will notice that the windows have become mirrors, and a sort of false half-light reflects from the room, and then back into the mirrors and then back into the room, *ad infinitum*. After that flicker of grayness, the room becomes swathed in a coruscating ripple of orange and purple flames.

The flames aren't hot, but they aren't cool, either. The closest word anyone can think of to describe them is "insubstantial." They give off a wan purple and orange light, enough to overcome the gray half-light from just before, and enough to cast dramatic shadows in the room, putting everything in dim relief.

Characters who look out the windows find the mirror effect still present. Those who open the door leading out of the apartment see the same thing, themselves reflected in a shimmering mercurial surface. Those who touch outside the windows or hallway door feel as if they're reaching into a cool pool of liquid, though when they withdraw their hands, no lingering moisture remains. Anyone so bold as to try to climb out of the window or walk out of the door feels a similar sensation, but then becomes completely insensate once he places his whole body outside the boundaries of the apartment. Only by thinking, *I'm going back to the apartment*, or something similar, and then trying that physical action can the character remove himself from the insubstantial nothing-space into which he's placed himself.

The flames continue to ripple until the characters stop experimenting with their environment. At that point, a column of purple-orange flames coalesces in the center of the room and becomes a pillar that reaches to the ceiling.

A voice inundates the room, sounding like a chorus of voices shouted into a canyon and heard only upon the echo. Some voices seem to break from the chorus, some seem to speak backward and others bend in pitch and tempo, finishing their remarks before the rest of the voices. The chorus speaks in consistent phrases, however (it's not saying many things at once, but rather the same thing in many voices).

It asks, "What else would you ask of me?"

This probably confounds the players, at least for the moment. They haven't spoken with anything like this before, and they certainly haven't asked it for anything. It responds to any questions they ask, however. A few potential questions and answers are as follows.

- **What or who are you?** The voice responds that it has already answered that question when it made its introduction.

- **What do you want from us?** It merely wants to convey to them the message that it has already given the throng. Pass the message on to those who would be affected and allow them to choose their course.

- **Why does this fire not burn us?** It is not fire itself, but the appearance of the Transformative Fire. It is no more dangerous than the reflection of a fire is dangerous.

- **Why do the doorway and window reflect?** "They let me speak to you in a way you can understand."

- **Who sent you?** "I heed the Principle."

Once the characters are suitably flummoxed (but before they've lost their patience with such cryptic chicanery), the fire-column-chorus speaks a more direct message.

"It is the will of the Principle that Babylon shall again fall, that Carthage shall once more be razed, that Sodom and Gomorrah shall be stricken from the world. The willful shall meet their end.

"The Principle is one of choice, the transformative will. It is freedom incarnate. Those who would not be dragged into the restorative fires of transformation may choose the flee before the flame.

"Three days hence, the flame scourges. Carthage returns to its salt. Babylon is strangled by its roots. The wickedness is purged from Sodom and Gomorrah. The change overtakes the community when the community has earned the Principle's ire. Three days hence.

"Hearken unto me, for I bear the word of the Principle Manifest."

The voice then becomes silent for a moment. Unless the characters (not the players, who are free to speak among themselves until you find a dramatic moment to conclude the audience) comment, the voice intones, "This is the Word of the Principle as spoken in Elpis, the Transformative Fire."

After this is spoken, the column of flame slowly abates. The shimmering waves of fire vanish from the apartment. The windows and doorways cease to be mirror-pools. Everything returns to normal, down to the congealing slick of blood on the floor.

What the Hell?

Of course it's cryptic and oblique. It's a *qashmal*.

Savvy players might note that the conversation seemed to occur in reverse: the *qashmal* first asked if the throng had any questions, then spoke its message, then introduced itself.

Likewise, mirror surfaces appeared over the windows and door of the room. If the characters don't figure out that the *qashmal* was speaking its message in sequential reverse, allow them a Wits + Investigation roll to parse the enigma. If no one succeeds, that's fine. The bizarre, otherworldly Principle remains obtuse. If they do figure it out, good for them. The fact that they know it won't answer *why* the voice of the Elpis, the Transformative Fire, spoke its sequence in reverse, but at least it should enable them to rearrange the whole experience so that it provides a more logical context.

The crux of the message is that the Principle wishes to destroy the Promethean community. It's okay if no one puzzles this out immediately. Again, it's in the nature of the *qashmallim* to be cryptic. The characters will eventually return to the refugee camp and sort it out with some of the scholars and philosophers there. One thing the *qashmal* was plain about, however, was that the destruction was going to happen in three days' time.

Some players and characters might be confused about the sequence. They may take the reverse-order of the message and the mirrors to mean that something critical happened three days prior to now. As Storyteller, you should actually try to clarify this point and this point only. The *qashmal* certainly wasn't talking about three days before. Give players who are seemingly misled a chance to roll Intelligence or Wits + Investigation or Occult (whatever yields them the greatest dice pool). On a success, suggest to them that words written in reverse but reflected in a mirror actually reveal their intended message. If they remain confused after this and or a few other subtle hints of your contrivance, that's fine for now. Again, they'll be able to discuss the matter with some of the other prominent thinkers back at the camp.

Complications

Somebody might choose to pick a fight with the *qashmal*. Okay . . . if that's how she handles things . . . The Dramatis Personae section has the traits for the *qashmal*. If the characters defeat the *qashmal* (presuming they even have a way to harm it at their disposal), they're effectively "killing" the messenger, even though the *qashmal* isn't really dead and instead returns to the Transformative Fire. Should such a thing happen, you'll need to decide if you want to give the characters another way to hear the message (perhaps through the Elpis Merit), but remember that the *qashmallim* do not repeat their Missions, even if they fail.

Bringers of Woe

While searching the apartment (either before or after the *qashmal*'s visit), the characters are beset by hungry Pandorans.

How the Pandorans knew the characters were there is a mystery for the aftermath, but like as not, the Pandorans weren't even drawn to the characters specifically. The Pandorans may be drawn to the lingering (or impending) Pyros radiated by the *qashmal*'s manifestation. The fight between Cassius and Havelock may have loosed Pyros that attracted the Pandorans. Perhaps Cassius actually died fighting the *qashmal*, and the Pandorans were drawn to the delectable fires emanated by both participants. Whatever the case, the Pandorans are here, they're hungry and they sense more nourishing flame inside the characters.

The intent here is to overwhelm the characters, to force them out of the apartment — hopefully clinging desperately to the *Mutus Liber* plates — and back to the refugee camp. Not every conflict can be resolved by beating the threat unconscious, so we've deliberately stacked the deck against the players' characters. Storytellers, this is a good opportunity to invoke milestones related to humility, learning one's own limits or potentially even the significance of death. Sometimes (and this is one of them), discretion is the better part of valor, and the wise Promethean lives to seek his Pilgrimage for another day.

That's not to say the characters shouldn't be able to achieve some amount of victory, or at least deal some well-deserved harm to their monstrous foes. By manipulating the pacing of this scene, the Storyteller can allow the characters to wring success from seeming defeat. For example, the Storyteller may choose to have the Pandorans attack in two or three waves, presenting a challenge with the first wave or two and then really turning up the trouble for the final wave. The characters will have brought *some* Pandorans low, but the characters will see they have nothing to gain by holding the fort and fighting everything that rampages through the apartment.

If the Storyteller chooses to have the Pandorans attack first (before the *qashmal* appears), that may be a good way of adjusting the pacing to produce a sense of achievement. In such a case, some of the Pandorans attack, only to be defeated by the players' characters. Following this, the *qashmal* scene occurs, after which another wave of Pandorans descends upon the apartment. This gives the characters enough time to find the plates, fight their foes, hear the cryptic warning and then make their escape before all hell breaks loose.

Combat Scene Logistics

The characters will be attacked by no fewer than nine Pandorans in this act. Storytellers who have very physically capable throngs may wish to increase this number, or may wish to increase the capabilities of the Pandorans in question. There probably won't be any need to reduce the nature of the threat, even for less combative throngs, because the characters should eventually yield Havelock's apartment and run away as described above. The Pandorans themselves are described in the Dramatis Personae section.

If you wish, you may have all nine-plus Pandorans simply barge into the apartment and attempt to destroy the characters. That's a bit anticlimactic, though — see “Staging the Fight,” below. Anyway, it's likely that not all nine Pandorans and the players' throng will be able to fit in Havelock's apartment and have enough room to fight.

We recommend at least two waves of Pandoran attacks, and potentially three, the better to build tension and leave the characters wondering about how dire the situation is. The waves can come in a staggered sequence, with the four weakest Pandorans followed shortly (or joined . . .) by the four middle-tier Pandorans. After all this has been resolved, the most powerful Pandoran, Yellow Fever, arrives.

You don't have to do it this way, of course. If you wish, you can divide the Pandorans into two different “hunting parties” of Pandorans, each led by a powerful “alpha” (which might require creating another Rank 3 Pandoran) and its brace of lesser beasts. You may wish to open with the strongest Pandorans and then worry the throng with the lesser monsters that travel in these strong Pandorans' wake.

The decision on how to stagger the Pandorans is a decision best left to the Storyteller, as the nature of the individual throng in her chronicle is more important than an arbitrary designation we might make here.

Staging the Fight

Storytellers, you're going to need to make a decision. If you're running a cerebral chronicle, full of introspection, soul-searching and the exploration of existential themes, your climactic fight scene is going to differ greatly from that of the Storyteller whose chronicle is a high-action, high-concept ballet of violence and how that violence weighs on the soul. Consistency is important — even though this is a fight scene, it should occur in the same context as the rest of the chronicle. Remember that a fight scene can be important and sophisticated. Consider the brutality of the violence in *Frankenstein* — the deaths of William, Clerval and Victor's wife at the hands of the monster — and the violence's concurrent significance. You don't have to just line the Pandorans up for the players' characters to knock their opponents down.

The traits for the Pandorans are included in the Dramatis Personae section. Hereafter, we discuss a few techniques for using these Pandorans to their greatest effect. There is no set and standard method for the Pandoran attack. You must handle their introduction and attack as best suits your chronicle. Don't just have them kick down the door and send the dice clattering across the table. Give the following methods some consideration and think about how you want to stage the fight before the characters face their Pandoran opponents at the game table.

Describe the Fight in Dramatic Terms, Not Systemic Terms

The Pandorans rend flesh. Viscous ichor drips from their fanged maws. They lash out, and sinew snaps from bone,

leaving limbs useless. Prometheans feel unearthly flesh sunder beneath their fists. The smell of scorched flesh permeates the room. Blood and humours saturate the hardwood floors of the apartment. A character grasps a vile creature by what seems to be a clavicle, only to lose his grip as the thing twists behind him in the frenzy of combat.

The dice are there to determine what happens, not dictate it. Nothing strips a moment of drama like describing an effect in numerical terms. “Benjamin feels his abdomen open, and the suddenly cold air shocks his exposed entrails and muscle” is far more evocative than “Jim's character suffers three points of lethal damage.” While it's fair practice to tell players about the amounts of damage or fatigue their characters sustain, that explanation serves the description: the explanation doesn't substitute for the description. Likewise, even a failed attack roll doesn't have to be, “Albertus swings . . . and misses.” An attack may strike its victim but glance off. The would-be victim might wriggle free. The attacker might have misjudged his location relative to his enemy and spun around to find nothing but empty air where he thought his foe stood.

Indulge the scene and describe it to maximize the drama. Don't reduce it to a mere exercise in dice-rolling and box-checking.

Use Dramatic Pacing

The characters are swarmed by Pandorans but manage to overcome them . . . only to hear the sounds of more fiendish forms skittering down the hallway in the seconds the characters thought they had to catch their breaths.

Recall when the climactic conflicts occur in carefully constructed horror stories. The protagonists have a confrontation with the enemy and then, when the protagonists think they've beaten it, *something horrific happens and scares the hell out of them anew*. The monsters in *Aliens* didn't attack en masse and gut the marines from the get go: the monsters came in steadily increasing waves (not to mention not even showing up for the first 45 minutes of the movie) after the initial sight of them was enough to spook the audience at first. Psycho killers go crashing out of second floor windows, and when the protagonist slowly staggers to the shattered glass to look down upon the maniac's broken body, the killer's already gone, hiding God knows where to stage another ambush.

This isn't an encouragement to pull the rug out from under the characters. Cheap shock is fine every now and then, but if it occurs too often, it encourages the players not to trust the Storyteller or his descriptions. Instead, give the players an opportunity to briefly enjoy a small victory — metaphorically killing the first alien or kicking the killer out the window — before revealing to them that *the horror's not over yet*.

Employ the Environment

Combat in roleplaying games often suffers from the “white map syndrome” that recalls the hobby's earliest days as



wargames. Characters in conflict don't simply stand next to each other and trade punches in an empty arena until one of them falls down. Any number of architectural and environmental factors can contribute to the texture of a fight scene.

The fight with the Pandorans occurs in Havelock's sacked apartment. As an antiquarian, Havelock certainly had a variety of strange and archaic implements lying around. In desperation, a character grabs what turns out to be a Civil War-era cavalry saber to attack a slaving Pandoran. A *clang* resounds as a character brings one of the *Mutus Liber* plates down upon a Pandoran's clicking chelicerae. A brawny Frankenstein has to extract herself from beneath the bookcase that her foe upended atop her.

The architecture can play a huge role during the course of the conflict, as well. Havelock's apartment is a small place converted from a much larger one. The rooms of the apartment don't facilitate a grand melee. To the contrary, Pandorans chase characters down narrow hallways, gouging drywall and wooden slats as the rampage. The living room is too cluttered with eccentric academic detritus to allow more than two or three characters to occupy the room in the chaos of combat. A character desperately blocks the bedroom door shut as a Pandoran's evil bulk slams against the door from the other side — hopefully, the Promethean character's two companions can climb out the window before the beast makes it inside.

This is one of the places in which the Storyteller can turn a lot of creative license over to the players and allow them to help him paint the scenery. Allow players to describe little bits of “set dressing” that they use or come across within the context of the fight. While this should remain consistent with the rest of the story (Havelock probably doesn't have a flamethrower in his refrigerator), the extra flourishes players can apply will help make for a more memorable scene.

The key here, as with the discussion of systemic effects, above, is to layer more of the experience with description. A scene vividly described is more thrilling for players, and they'll remember it longer and more favorably than a scene with no description that might as well occur on an unmarked sheet of graph paper.

Escape!

Once the characters have had enough of the Pandoran threat, their thoughts will probably turn to escape. Those who don't have that inclination can be cajoled both by fellow players and by circumstances described by the Storyteller. “You feel a bit like Custer” is a little heavy-handed, but a Storyteller who makes good use of pacing and description can reasonably communicate that it's time to bug out of there.

Making the escape is comparatively easy, but don't let the players feel like their characters have a free pass. Once the characters attempt to flee, only a third to one-half of the surviving Pandorans give chase. The rest of the Pandorans stay and gorge

themselves on the lingering essential Pyros left behind by the *qashmal*. Determining how many of the Pandorans chase the characters is a stylistic question: do you want the characters to feel as if they were going to be the victims of dogged pursuit, or do you wish to impart a degree of Pyrrhic accomplishment by having only a few Pandorans give half-hearted chase?

Conduct the pursuit as a foot chase, for which rules may be found on p. 65 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. To streamline things, have the character with the *lowest* Speed make one roll (based on her Stamina + Athletics) on the throng's behalf. Alternatively, her player may spend a point of Willpower to allow the character with the next-lowest Speed to roll (based on his character's traits) instead. This character may also spend a Willpower point, likewise, and on through the players' characters ranks until either the next person in line doesn't want to spend the Willpower, or until the character with the highest Speed will be rolling the dice. Spending Willpower in this way represents the other characters' relentless dedication to getting the hell out of there as expeditiously as possible.

The Pandorans giving chase do something similar, using the Stamina + Athletics dice pool of the monster with the lowest Speed. They don't have the option of spending Willpower, however — they're used to hunting as a pack and, thus, moving in unison, and they're not wanting to devote themselves so utterly to the chase when the *qashmal* has left perfectly devourable Pyros at the apartment already.

Per the foot chase rules, the characters need to accumulate a certain amount of successes, but, again, these successes are determined by the *slowest* Speed among the Pandorans in pursuit.

If the characters have some alternate, faster, better way to make their escape, they need only to reach that vehicle to get away. This may be a car parked by Havelock's apartment, a motorboat docked at the river or any similar method of egress. Similarly, if the characters have some sort of "safe haven" nearby, such as a truck trailer they can hide in, or a nearby hurricane shelter, they simply have to reach that to be considered safe.

Another method of escaping the Pandorans, of course, is to find a populated area. Disquiet might become an issue, yes, and the characters might have human pursuers as well as the Pandorans (see "Complications," below), but one glance from a mortal and the Pandorans become so much masonry. Don't let this happen unless the players actively try for it. That is, if the characters are running away and suddenly the Pandorans turn to stone, the characters have succeeded without expending any effort, and that feels cheap. If the characters *decide* to seek out a mortal onlooker and "use" that onlooker's Disquiet to save themselves, they're making sound tactical decisions. See p. 223 of **Promethean: The Created** for more on how Disquiet affects Pandorans.

Remember, as well, to offer the parting scene of the Pandorans falling behind while the characters make good their

exit. It's always good to evince the thrill of, "Oh sweet Lord, we got away from 'em!"

Presaging the Ominous

As the characters make their escape, they see a curious and unsettling play of arcane fire across the aftermath. While these tiny wisps of multicolored fire don't blossom into a full-fledged Firestorm, it certainly does appear that some episode of loose Pyros is taking place. Tiny lances of green, purple and gray fire flit about the Pandorans as they greedily devour the remnants of the night's Divine Fire. Some of these tiny plumes seem to burn or shock the Pandorans, who leap aside, chittering at what they think is a rival trying to steal their sustenance out from under them.

Clouds have slowly been gathering the whole time, as anyone who's been paying attention to the world outside observes. When the characters came to the apartment site, the sky was relatively clear, or perhaps spotted by only a few clouds scudding across the sky. Now, however, it seems that some point far above the house is a cloudy locus. It's so far away, too high up in the sky to be reflecting the light from the flames below . . . and yet that seems to be what's happening. Tiny bolts of fiery lightning coruscate through the clouds in the same colors as they do at the apartment below. (The fire is even more visible and curious at night than by day, depending on what time the characters depart, but the clouds themselves are less distinct at night.)

All of this occurs, or at least begins to occur, within the span of the few seconds the characters have to look behind them as they dash madly from Havelock's apartment. If no one thinks to look behind, they miss the foreshadowing flames. If they do look back, describe for them a feeling of foreboding that comes with the parting scene.

Complications

If the Pandorans seem to be mopping up the floor with the characters, you have a few options. First, if you're working with staggered waves of Pandorans in the attack, you can always delete a wave or reduce its numbers and no one will be the wiser. If Yellow Fever does not show up on the scene, the players won't know any different. Two or so fewer of the lesser Pandorans in previous waves may give the characters room to hold their own until the superior Pandoran(s) show up at the conclusion of the fight. Second, the appearance of the *qashmal*, the fallen body of Cassius and whatever Cassius did in the characters' absence has left plenty of residual Pyros for the Pandorans to consume. Should you so choose, the Pandorans can instead fight to incapacitate the characters (seeing them as threats), consume their fill of Pyros from the environment and leave the characters for dead. Savvy characters can "play possum" if they see fellow Prometheans knocked down for the count and just wait until the Pandorans leave, fattened with Inner Fire. The Pandorans themselves aren't sophisticated enough to

know that the *Mutus Liber* plates are there, or what to do with them if they know. The only casualty in riding out the Pandoran attack while seemingly incapacitated is a certain degree of pride.

If only a few Pandorans pursue the characters when they make their escape, the characters may get the impression that they're not really as important as whatever it is the *other* Pandorans have found back at the apartment. An understanding of Pandoran motivations suggests that they're simply holding back to feed on the *qashmal*'s residue, but some characters may get the impression that the Pandorans have found something important or that they've left some vital clue behind. Storytellers should deter this latter course of reasoning. If the characters attempt to sneak back and see what the Pandorans up to, a straightforward description of the feeding frenzy is probably enough to impart that there's nothing going on that the characters want to be any part of.

In the wake of the violence, police or other authorities are going to be an issue. Hopefully, the players' characters will be long gone by the time any official presence arrives to investigate the scene, but characters who dawdle or who have to play dead to evade the Pandorans are going to hear the clock ticking. This is especially true if the characters bullied their way past other apartment residents in order to search Havelock's residence—the other apartment residents would have called the police if a weird bunch of grotesque thugs kicked the door in or hustled past them. Even if the characters entered quietly, the police are definitely going to investigate the crazed stories of nightmare fires that multiple local witnesses have called in as the *qashmal* made its presence known.

Aftermath

Characters will probably want to return to the refugee camp of their own accord after this scene's experiences. They'll have many reasons for doing so: Cassius being present was unexpected, the plates need deciphered or explained and it might be worth discussing the obscure commentary of the *qashmal* with someone more influential or knowledgeable than the characters themselves. On another level, characters may wish to make accusations, share the contents of the plates or warn other Prometheans about the Pandoran threat. If the characters don't think to return to the camp themselves, you can subtly guide them that way by reinforcing their ignorance of the plates' function or by having one of them "put two and two together" about Cassius' activities. As a very last resort, Sickly can show up after everything has calmed down and question them as to how they fared. The camp's been in an uproar since DeVries received a phone call about some strange and decidedly Promethean happenings that the police went to check on, and the characters are the only ones anyone had any reason to believe were in the area.

Act Four: Due Diligence

Upon the characters' return to Papillon's camp, if they let it be known that they recovered the *Mutus Liber* plates, members of the Sword Advocates of the Silent Book will be very enthused at the news. They won't resort to treachery or underhandedness (unless, of course, the Storyteller desires to add that element . . . but haven't the characters already suffered enough to get this artifact?), but members will be very enthusiastic about being able to peruse the plates, run a copy for themselves, compare notes with the characters on the book's significance, etc. In certain cases, this can actually prove fruitful (see below). At one point or another, though, the Sworn Advocates' incessant entreaties to share in the book's wisdom are going to become frustrating.

Ogilvy is a different story. If he learns that the characters are in possession of the *Mutus Liber*, he'll suffer a brief episode of both hubris and avarice. At first, he'll apply a gentle social pressure to the characters in the interests of allowing him to see the book. This will steadily increase until he becomes insistent, and he's not above reminding them of any favors he's done them or information he has given them. If they still won't show him the plates or run him a copy of the book, he'll go to Papillon, claiming that the characters have come into possession of an item of which they have no understanding of the importance. While Papillon won't rule directly in his favor, she will use it as leverage in her demands that the characters go and tie up their loose ends at Havelock's apartment. If the characters are truculent then, she'll let them keep the plates, but if the characters quickly acquiesce to following up on their responsibilities, she'll request that they leave the plates behind, both so the characters don't lose the plates and to ensure that they return. More on that below.

Although Ogilvy admittedly jealous, he isn't a fool and he won't jeopardize his position. He doesn't demand the plates to keep for his own, and if the characters would kindly just print him a copy, he'll be satisfied with that. Granted, he'd love for them to entrust the plates to him (as a member of a group dedicated to the study and preservation of the book in question), but he'll be grateful for any inclusion at all in the book's new availability for research and experimentation. Alternatively, he'll be extremely bitter if he's deliberately excluded. There's no real reason for the characters to be so peevish, but if they do find him untrustworthy, Ogilvy can serve as a well-connected antagonist in later chapters of the chronicle.

The *Mutus Liber* Plates

The function of the recovered *Mutus Liber* plates depends upon the ability of the person reading them to understand them. Before anything else, however, the plates have to be



used to print their material to paper. The plates themselves are engraved printer's plates, suitable for use in a 17th-century printing press. One doesn't have to have a printing press to run off a copy of the book, however. Someone wishing to make a copy of the book can simply wash the faces of the plates with ink (or any staining substance, really) and apply them to the surface to be printed. Printer's plates are designed to be used to mass-print books, but if characters want a particularly expressive or ominous copy of their book, that's fine, too. So long as it's legible, it'll work. If the plates are properly cleaned afterward, they'll be able to make a potentially infinite number of copies, or at least as many as characters might reasonably want access to. Creating a readable copy of the book is an extended action requiring six successes on a Wits + Crafts roll. Each roll represents an hour of press preparation and printing. Obviously, the characters need to obtain ink and paper before undertaking this task, which, depending on their financial situation, might give Ogilvy something to offer them.

Learning from the plates is a modified extended action. It takes 40 hours of study to peruse the knowledge contained in a printing of the book, which consists of 15 illustrated pages. At the end of that 40 hours, the scholar's player makes a *single* Intelligence + Academics roll.

If the roll is successful — if the roll yields at least a single success — the character acquires the Alchemy Specialty for the player's choice of either the Academics or Occult Skill. She does not have to pay experience points for acquiring this Specialty. If the character already has the Alchemy Specialty, she will probably choose to apply it to the Skill for which she doesn't already have it allocated.

If the roll fails, nothing happens. The character simply can't understand the arcane knowledge expressed in the book. She may not study again and make another roll, though (which is why this is a modified extended action — normal extended actions by definition almost always succeed if the character has enough time on hand to keep rolling and keep accumulating successes).

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
−4	Character works from the plates alone and not a printed copy.
−1	The copy made is of poor quality.
+1	Character has a Language Merit in a pictographic language.
+2	Character studies in consultation with Ogilvy or another Mutus Liber member.

Specific to the ongoing *Promethean* chronicle, the *Mutus Liber* also allows a skilled reader (that is, one who succeeded on the roll to acquire the Alchemy Specialty) to concoct his own *aqua vitae*. If the alchemist received the *aqua vitae* from Calogero in “The Water of Life,” the characters can use that as a basis from which to create his own refined elixir. Consider this an equipment bonus that adds two dice to the

pool to create the character's own *aqua vitae*. If the character doesn't have Calogero's potion to use as a working model (or the Storyteller hasn't granted them a similar substance from another source), impart a −1 penalty to the dice pool for not having a comparative specimen on hand.

Reading the *Mutus Liber* doesn't make creating the *aqua vitae* easy; reading just makes creating it possible. All of the hurdles and hoops the characters had to jump through and over in “The Water of Life” to obtain ingredients will have to be done again.

For more information on creating and using the *aqua vitae*, see the Appendix of **Promethean: The Created**.

Setting Things Right

Concurrent with the celebration in reclaiming the *Promethean* artifact, the characters come under scrutiny for any loose ends left at Havelock's apartment. Optimally, the characters will tell everyone at the camp, or at least the prominent Created, about the details of the night's adventure. The strange warning delivered by the *qashmal* should be at the top of the list of things that the characters reveal to their fellow refugees.

If they prove reluctant, certain other characters can apply pressure to extract the details from them. Ogilvy, for example, might really lean on them to hear “the whole story” about recovering the book plates. Although he's genuinely excited about the plates' recovery, he also wisely wants to be aware of any repercussions that might be headed for the camp. DeVries can demand answers for all of the questions his police allies and contacts are sending his way. (Note that he's a bit reticent to do this because of his own involvement in Cassius being sent there, but so long as DeVries thinks he can bluster and keep the attention on the characters, he'll take the risk. Nothing direct links him to Cassius' activities there, anyway.) Miranda can question the characters in a concerned tone, once she discovers that Havelock's gone missing.

Whatever the case, the characters should confess (or boast, depending on their attitudes). If they don't, have supporting characters keep applying pressure or requests to hear about what really happened. When they do come clean, they'll earn the admiration of the camp, but also some concern from the *de facto* “officials” of the community. Papillon claims that she needs to confer with her advisors, but that she'd like to follow up with the characters again soon. They're expressly told that they're not in trouble or under any sort of arrest or anything like that, but would they please stay close by so that when the Galateid and her council are finished talking, they might convene with the characters again as quickly as possible? With that, Papillon, DeVries, Ogilvy and Miranda retire to Papillon's trailer.

The intent here is to make the characters nervous and to give them a few moments to engage in speculation as to what these preminent Created are talking about. The

characters were told they hadn't broken any rules, but what could the leaders be discussing in secret? Are they talking about the *qashmal*'s weird prophecy? Do the characters even owe these people any kind of allegiance? Give the players just enough time to come up with a few fearful or arrogant ideas and, more importantly, give them a few minutes to reflect upon what they've done. This is a good time for the Storyteller to observe characters' attitudes. Certainly, the characters didn't do anything wrong, but does anyone feel remorse for Havelock? Does anyone feel that Cassius got his just deserts? Is anyone piqued by the *qashmal*'s words? What are the characters' positions on things? Has anyone fulfilled a milestone? Is anyone planning on anything that might satisfy a milestone in the near future? This is a chance for everyone to take stock of what he's done and where he wants to go next.

Keep the characters waiting so long as they remain nervous. Deliberations among the camp leaders take several hours, and it's twilight by the time they emerge from Papillon's trailer. Don't keep the *players* waiting too long — just until the conversation shows signs of slowing down.

Charged with Duty

When Papillon and her advisors exit the trailer, they ask the characters to accompany them to the chassis ring. The Created leaders' faces are stoic and impassive. A few members of the various factions quickly consult with their faction heads and then circulate through the camp to gather the other Prometheans for a convocation of the entire camp.

Agitate the characters with the mixed signals the whole situation is sending. Some Prometheans are amiable with the characters as they walk to the chassis ring, and others are downright humorous ("Ooh, what did you do that they're taking you for a public spanking at the ring?"), which the leaders don't bother to quell. On the other hand, the leaders' stern demeanor suggests that something significant is about to happen.

Characters who are socially aware or particularly empathetic might wish to gain a deeper read from the leaders. Any players who want to can make a Wits + Empathy roll for their characters, with success indicating that the leaders seem flummoxed or perplexed, as if they're going forward with a course of action even if they aren't sure of their commitment to it. Supernatural powers that reveal thoughts or emotional states reveal turbulence, wanting one thing but choosing another.

When everyone has convened at the chassis ring, Papillon speaks. "We have grave news. Through the actions of our brave new friends" — at this, she indicates the characters — "we have come to believe that something ill will befall our camp in three days' time. These words come delivered by one of the Dominions of the Scintillating Flame, those enigmatic angels who serve as the voice of something greater than we understand." Papillon pauses, to many grumblings

and new expressions of concern, and probably some of confusion from those Created who have never heard of the *qashmallim*.

If the characters want to add anything or state their own case, run with it. Some of the other Prometheans might have been leery of these new Created, and want to argue with them, charging that they're trying to run everyone off and stage their own coup. Consult your note cards from the information-gathering portion of Act Two — did the characters form rivalries with anyone or have an altercation? Those experiences might lead to accusations. On the other hand, characters may have found other Prometheans with whom the characters had much in common or formed strong initial bonds. These Created might speak up in favor of the characters, claiming that they wouldn't lead the camp astray.

This is also a good place to bring up the characters' treatment of the *Mutus Liber* plates. If they shared them with other Prometheans in the camp, goodwill, at least from certain factions, should prevail. If they were secretive with them or lorded their access over the other Created, such arrogance will not go unremarked upon.

The result should be a bizarre sort of trial-by-peer, in which the characters feel that they're being judged. That is, in fact, what's happening. The camp leaders, for their reasons, have decided to send the characters back to Havelock's apartment (see below). The leaders are merely putting the characters on display to determine how other members of the camp will react to them, and thus, how the leaders frame the request (if indeed it is a request) to return.

If the prevailing sentiment is against the characters: The leaders will take a seemingly neutral stance, but remark that the characters seem to have brought some kind of cosmic judgment down on the camp. The presence of the *qashmal* and the extremely aggressive Pandorans all portend that the characters keep bad company. Since the characters have abused relationships at the camp, or have taken advantage of the other Created (in whatever ways, real or exaggerated, that the leaders want to bring up), the characters must atone for the problems they've brought to the camp. Papillon wants the characters to return to the scene of the Pandoran attack and *qashmal* visit to see if they can glean anything else or see if any important clues were left behind. This is a "good faith" gesture, intended to earn the characters a place among the camp's good graces again. The leaders confess to being worried about the *qashmal*'s prophecy and the Pandorans rampage, so any additional information the characters can bring back will demonstrate that they really don't intend to be the problem they've managed to present thus far.

If the prevailing sentiment is in favor of the characters: The leaders take a grateful position, thanking the characters effusively for their efforts in helping out at camp, sharing their knowledge and becoming valuable members of the local Promethean community. As described above, the leaders are worried about the presence of so many Pandorans and the



baleful remarks of the *qashmal*, and the leaders would like to prevail upon the characters' good nature just a little more to return to the scene of the attack and visitation to see if any more clues are forthcoming or if any more Pandorans lie in waiting. Papillon reasons that the *qashmal* is already predisposed toward the characters, since it already spoke to them, and insofar as such creatures have any discernible motivations, it might speak with them again.

The trick here for Storytellers is to motivate the characters to revisit the scene where they first encountered the *qashmal* and Pandorans. This is the reason the characters had several hours (and the players had several minutes) to reflect upon how they handled things — to give the Storyteller some guidance as to how best handle getting them back there.

Papillon won't decree outright that the characters have to return to the site. She doesn't want to be seen as that kind of tyrant — and it would undermine the truth of what she's about to do. Papillon wants the characters to feel compelled to go of their own volition, whether in atonement or electively. In her mind, it's better if the characters have made a few enemies along the way among the Prometheans at the camp. This would make it easier on her conscience if she didn't like them to begin with. Still, what must be done, must be done.

What's Really Going On?

When Papillon and the camp leaders heard the cryptic warning the *qashmal* gave the characters, it confirmed in their minds something that the leaders have feared all along. The camp is about to be destroyed.

None of the leaders knows exactly how the camp will meet its end, but the signs all point to that being what's coming up next. Miranda has provided numerous data that link natural disasters to the appearance of Firestorms, packs of hunger-maddened Pandorans on the prowl and other collapses of Promethean structures. DeVries has been charting the spikes and flows of Pyros around the camp and larger New Orleans proper, and fears that some great conflagration is due to consume everything. He also points to the every-worsening Wasteland conditions around the camp serving as a beacon to whatever alchemical force is going to come "correct" (in his words) the errors of the camp and its residents. Sadly, Ogilvy must agree with DeVries. The spike in Pyros usage and the concentration of so many Prometheans and their Inner Fires is drawing some sort of equal and opposite force to balance it all. Papillon has heard this all for several weeks now, and the appearance of the *qashmal* has finally decided the matter for her, considering what all of the other factional leaders have to say.

In response, since they've had the *qashmal*'s warning that the correction is going to come in three days, Papillon's plan is to strike the camp, put it all on cars, vans and trucks and relocate it all. With a fresh start, a new camp won't have the regional alchemical imbalance that the New Orleans camp has. The Wasteland effect won't be so pronounced or advanced.

Making matters worse, Papillon doesn't know exactly where she's going to move the camp. She thought she'd have more time to organize the move but the appearance of the *qashmal* and its three-day warning has sent her into high gear.

Regrettably, Papillon's plan is not going to be so easy to carry out. Papillon and DeVries have considered shutting the camp down entirely and sending everyone his own separate way. Ogilvy has argued against this; since his is the largest faction, he feels he owes it to other Sworn Advocates to look out for them. Likewise, Miranda would normally break ties with the camp and keep Mercy Mission tied to its local purposes, but she believes that whatever happens in New Orleans isn't going to stay localized with geography; whatever's going to happen is going to be tied to Pyros or Azoth — in other words, whatever happens is going to come after any local source of Pyros or Azoth that doesn't get as far away as possible.

The ugly truth of the whole situation is that it's speculative. Obviously, something big is going to happen in New Orleans, but none of the wisest of Prometheans can determine exactly what this is going to be. For this reason, they have come to the realization, some less reluctantly than others, that they're going to throw the characters' throng to the wolves. In sending the characters to "investigate" the site where they met the *qashmal*, what the leaders are really doing is buying time to distance themselves from the characters. Nobody knows whether the dread event is tied to people or places, but since the characters have had direct contact with a *qashmal*, the camp leaders are not taking any chances on endangering the rest of the community. While the new Prometheans are scouting around the antiquarian's apartment, everything of value will be on an unmarked panel truck, headed north on Highway 59.

The characters, then, are the bait for whatever horrendous alchemical manifestation threatens the well-being of the New Orleans Promethean refugee camp. They just don't know it.

Complications

Storytellers will almost certainly have their hands full with getting the characters to believe they have to go back to the apartment. Complications would only distract from that important focus. Remember, you don't want the characters to feel railroaded into doing this. They should be made to feel that the onus is on them to return, but that they ultimately go back to the scene of their own volition.

To that end, Storytellers, you would do well to have an-

other distraction lined up for the characters if they don't want to head back to the antiquarian's apartment. The denouement of this chapter of the story hinges upon the characters following a red herring (see below) and coming to the realization that they've been duped. With any luck, you'll already have plenty of hooks as generated by the players when they created their characters and through their portrayal. Be prepared to invoke something that seems like a swerve in order to pull the characters away from the camp, only to have the "something" be part of the plan from the moment they declined to revisit the apartment. Don't make the ruse too grandiose. A little treachery goes a long way, and you don't want the ruse to overshadow the truth of the plot development.

Another consideration is what to do if the players' throng decides to run. After all, New Orleans is getting just a bit strange, there are too many Prometheans around and savvy players might well realize that this request (or order) to return to the crime scene is a set-up. So what if the throng decides to head out of town? You have two simple options: try to keep them in the city or let them run.

One, as mentioned above, is to rig up another distraction. If the characters have lingering business from Chicago (assuming your troupe played through "The Water of Life," the unfinished business might have followed the characters). If you wish to run a side plot involving vampires or any other "local color" from New Orleans, now might be a good time. It isn't necessary for the characters to chase after the camp or even to experience the coming Firestorm firsthand: they simply must witness it and know the potential for disaster when Prometheans gather. The danger here is that the players might feel as though they were being forced into a course of action that their characters wouldn't take.

The other option is to let the players do as they will. The characters leave town, and could be several states away by the time the Firestorm hits. You might consider having a character with the Elpis Merit have horrible fever dreams about the Firestorm, or have one of the characters from the refugee camp find the throng later and relate the disaster, just so the characters know what they missed. Running in this instance is not necessarily a bad idea, by the way — it's perfectly logical. If the characters hear about the Firestorm after the fact and think, *Well, thank goodness we missed that*, that makes sense, too.

Act Five: The Worm Turns

The players' characters have three days before the *qashmal*'s prophecy comes to fruition. In all likelihood, they actually have two days, assuming that at least part of the day following the trip to Jerry Havelock's apartment was spent in the council of Prometheans.

Time is of the essence! At least, that's what the characters should be feeling. They have two days in which to avert the disaster the *qashmal* foretold, or so they think. Of course, they have to find out just what the disaster is before they defuse the situation. In this vein of thought, they should pursue what few leads they have back to what few places of significance they know.

The Prometheans at the refugee camp are working within a much smaller window of opportunity than the players' characters. When the characters leave the camp, the refugees immediately commence striking the campsite. Indeed, when the characters leave the camp and head back along Highway 55 into New Orleans, they'll see a convoy of flatbed tractor-trailers moving opposite their direction. Papillon's going to put the entire camp on these trucks and then head . . . wherever it is she's headed. Don't linger on this detail, but do offer it in some capacity. You may wish to phrase it as a symbol of the reconstruction effort taking place around New Orleans. Storytellers who want to affect a vicious irony here can have construction on the highway and the size of the truck convoy conspire to cause a traffic jam, which will delay the characters in their misguided efforts to make it back to Bywater quickly.

When the characters return to Havelock's neighborhood, they'll probably be on their guard, and rightfully so. A successful Wits + Composure roll reveals a police car parked a block away from Havelock's building, with a direct line of sight to the front of the building. If the characters make it into the building itself, they find Havelock's apartment locked and taped over with police crime-scene tape. (If the characters forced entry or otherwise damaged the door or lock, a new one has been installed or the old one has been repaired.) Any activity that arouses police interest — be it failing a Stealth roll while creeping up to the building or simply matching a description from the other night's events — is going to make life difficult for the characters. Police are going to be *extremely* suspicious of people prowling around the place, especially given the state of New Orleans and the strange nature of the complaints surrounding the apartment. While the two cops watching over the place aren't a couple of mavericks who will shoot first and ask questions later, they won't hesitate to use force should its necessity be even a consideration. As well, they're able to count, and they'll call for backup if they're outnumbered by two-to-one or more.

That's not to say that the players' characters squander their time, however. This should be a tense scene of evading notice, mulling what might be clues and then racing back, empty-handed and frustrated that the imaginary clock is ticking. Play this scene carefully, Storytellers. Watch for both good roleplaying and clever problem solving. Characters might investigate the mirrors, which shows they were paying attention when the *qashmal* showed up. They may look around door frames and windows, again proving that they

paid attention, but potentially drawing police intervention if the on-duty cops think they see someone ransacking the apartment. Let dice rolls add tension in this scene — it's important to use Dexterity + Larceny to avoid moving in front of a window, Intelligence + Academics to determine what significance this artifact has and Wits + Occult to see if anything left lying around might be used to summon the *qashmal* again.

Unfortunately for the characters, the *qashmallim* aren't things that are so easily brought to heel. No amount of mystic activity or occult ingenuity will bring the *qashmal* back to the scene. A truly mischievous Storyteller might cause the *qashmal* to bring curious or hungry Pandorans back to the scene, but only if she thinks her troupe is ready to fight Pandorans and then wisely flee the police. After all, characters gunned down by cops or booked to spend time in jail are going to miss the story's conclusion.

The Storyteller's responsibility with this scene is to both kill (in-game) time but keep the tension high. Papillon and the refugee leaders need at least four hours to stow the campsite, and that's with everyone doing their best. Assuming that the characters take an hour to get back into town (another reason to use the traffic jam), an hour to find their way into the building, an hour of investigation and an hour on the return journey, the camp crew should have just enough time to pull everything onto the trucks and get on the road. Further complications buy the refugees more time. As a Storyteller tip, using repetitive music that builds to a crescendo, only to let the players down with disappointment, might be a good choice here. The most significant piece of advice here is that it's okay for the characters to feel frustrated or disappointed, but make sure to keep the players' spirits high and attention on the matter at hand.

Whenever the players ultimately decide to pack it in, they probably decide to head back to the camp. If they don't, or if you want them to feel more in touch with the series of events, allow characters a Wits + Subterfuge roll. Success indicates that the character in question feels led astray, or that something was amiss. Something's wrong; why would coming back here have changed anything that might happen at the camp? An exceptional success, or multiple characters achieving successes lead characters to believe that this might have been a ruse, that they might have been misled here deliberately. That's because they have, naturally.

Betrayal Revealed

As the characters return to the refugee camp, they know things have changed from several hundred yards before they reach the actual site. Where light should illuminate the camp, only darkness exists. The security gate stands wide open, unattended. The various trailers that made up the residences are gone. All that remains are the chassis ring, a few broken pieces of the power plant and the trampled garden. A huge, muddy tire track cuts diagonally through the unharvested plants.

As the characters ponder the abandoned ruin of the camp, have the players roll Wits + Composure. This is a contested roll. If a player achieves more than three successes, he hears someone moving behind him or sees some motion out of the corner of his eye. Simultaneously, all characters feel the flare of Azoth calling to Azoth. Give those characters who exceeded the three successes a chance to act, unsurprised, before this mysterious interloper.

The interloper, however, is Sický. If the characters act before he does, he calls out, “Wait, wait, wait!” before they get a chance to attack him, give chase or whatever they had planned on doing. If no one acts before he does, he attempts to run away. It seems that it’d be easier for him just to let the characters go about their business without his imposition. If the characters give chase, use the foot chase rules on p. 65 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and Sický’s traits as presented on p. 149.

Sický won’t fight back, even if attacked. (If the characters seem to want to beat him to death, he’ll attempt to flee, but won’t make any aggressive combat actions other than those necessary to get away.) Tearful and almost hysterical, he sobs, “They’re gone. They’re gone.”

If the characters give him a chance, he explains the whole situation, how the leaders used the characters as patsies to draw away the attention of whatever it is that’s coming. Even though they don’t know what it is, they’re hoping it attaches itself to the characters, or singles them out in place of the members of the refugee camp. None of the camp leaders knows whether the coming event is tied to the camp site, New Orleans, the characters — whatever — and they figured that the best course of action was to flee and hopefully survive to see another day.

Sický’s being truthful. If asked why he didn’t go with them, he says that they didn’t seem concerned about him. He was never a part of any single faction, and this seemed to be an action cooked up by the leaders of the various factions proper. He figured he could survive whatever happened, and he wanted to stay to make sure that the characters were okay — and he’s being sincere in this. If the characters ask Sický where the refugees went, he replies that he doesn’t know, and he’s again being honest. What he saw happening disgusted him, and he turned his back on the whole thing.

As this conversation is taking place, rain begins to fall. At first, it’s a slow rainfall, with big, fat, Southern raindrops



that fall straight down from the sky. As the minutes elapse, the rain grows heavier and more voluminous. Within an hour, the rain has become a full-tilt downpour.

Observant characters (or those who succeed on a Wits + Composure roll, if no one mentions that his character is being particularly vigilant) notice that the sky is becoming increasingly cloudy — and strange. In a scene not unlike that which unfolded after the characters fled Havelock's apartment, the sky is dominated by roiling clouds and mysterious arcs of colorful lightning-fire. The storm builds and builds, with the sky finally opening and letting loose a rain of electrical flame, which grows in perspective and descends to the earth just where the refugee camp used to stand.

The Firestorm

As midnight tolls on the third night after the initial visit to Havelock's apartment, the *qashmal*'s warning comes to fruition.

Rain pours relentlessly from the sky this night, coming down in sheets that reduce visibility and make even minor travel difficult. Storytellers, for the duration of the scene, assess dice-pool penalties of -2 to any and all rolls that might be affected by the rain, such as driving, pursuits, perception and combat. On the other hand, certain situations might be helped by the prodigious rain, such as stealth.

With all of this build-up, the imminent Firestorm erupts, with the players' characters as witnesses to the spectacle.

This scene may be run using the Firestorm rules as presented on p. 253 of **Promethean: The Created**. In such a case, this Firestorm is a large one (use the second type described in the "Firestorms" section). The Firestorm doesn't center on any one character, but instead roars through the entirety of the area, burning everything in its path and leaving trapped Prometheans screaming in its wake. With such a storm, Torment, Disquiet or Mutation are almost inevitable.

That's just a general way to handle it, though. In order to keep storytelling at the forefront, and to make this chapter mean as much to the players' characters as possible, we recommend using the rules for "Creating Custom Firestorms" on p. 91 of this book. The storm called down might well be one of the *Maniae*, *Praxidikae* or *Potniae* varieties, as triggered by any of the events of this story or the camp members themselves. (How obnoxious would it be if the visiting *qashmal* was actually the cause of a *Potniae* Firestorm simply by coming to warn the characters of the storm that the *qashmal* was bringing along with it?) It's unlikely that this was a *Semnai* Firestorm, unless someone at camp was tremendously close to the end of his Pilgrimage, but if that were the case, it probably would have followed that character and not the players' characters or the camp itself. Still stranger, this could be one of the enigmatic *Dirae* Firestorms, tied to some event or occurrence that might prove to be the kernel of its own sub-story. Whatever the case, the enterprising Storyteller will take a little time to tailor the events and nature of the Firestorm to his own chronicle.

With the characters at the site of the camp, it remains unknown whether it was their presence or the camp itself that drew down this Eumenidean Vortex. Certainly, it's likely that the camp and the presence of so many Prometheans was enough to provide the fuel and spark that ignited the Firestorm. Something about the Firestorm, though, suggests that the characters themselves were prime catalysts. This is another reason to use the custom Firestorm rules on p. 91, in hopes that thoughtful characters might be sophisticated enough to see key resonance in their presence and the actions of the Firestorm. As well, surviving a Firestorm might be a milestone for a character, or an Osiran or other mystic-type might need to witness one in the attempt to understand and control these storms.

Whatever the case, the Firestorm is the conflagration that draws "A Sheltering Storm" to a close. As the characters witness the scintillating tempest in the night sky, the scene fades to black.

Aftermath

So what happens now? The characters are left in the middle of the ruined camp, alone and probably stranded. The massive Wasteland caused by the Prometheans' presence is gone, scoured away by the Firestorm, which means that if the characters really want to stay here for a while, they can. In any case, though, the Storyteller should consider what happens next. Following are a few suggestions:

- **Revenge:** The characters might well be furious at Papillon for what she did to them, and wish to pursue the matter. Chasing after the refugee camp probably isn't all that difficult. Papillon and DeVries both have powerful Azothic Radiances, and they don't have *too* much of a headstart. But what form will this revenge take? Can the characters really hope to best an entire camp of Prometheans? Do they expect the camp to rally behind them once they expose Papillon's treachery? If so, they're probably in for a rude surprise, since the other Created there, for the most part, knew exactly what Papillon did when she sent the characters back into the city.

- **The Big Easy:** When studying humanity, for whatever reasons the characters' Refinements demand, one could do worse than New Orleans. Maybe the characters want to set up shop here for a while. If they still have the *Mutus Liber* plates, they might set about studying them, perhaps even fashioning more of the *aqua vitae* here. You might consider running a story or two in New Orleans before moving on to the next portion of the chronicle, should you choose to do so in any event.

- **Downtime:** The characters might decide to follow Sick's example, splitting up and joining together again at some later date. They might use this time to go to the Wastes, if they feel it necessary (the betrayal of Papillon might well have engendered some Torment in the characters), or pursue Refinements such as Copper or Mercury that benefit from solitary experimentation. If the players wish to take this

route, you might ask them each to write a letter to someone (a throng-mate, a creator, a friend, etc.) and reward that character with a point or two of Vitriol. “Write a heartfelt letter” could easily be a simple one-point milestone.

• **Moving On:** The throng may decide to leave New Orleans and let the refugees stumble along their Pilgrimages as they wish. There’s a whole wide world out there for the characters, and they never need to see Papillon and her crew again. The characters have had several days (at least) among the Created to soak up rumors and leads on areas that might help them along their own journeys, and perhaps something a character heard intrigued her. If you wish to seed a plot for the story that will appear in **Strange Alchemies**, you might inject rumors of a strange Promethean in Boston called “Lighthouse,” said to possess the final secrets of the Great Work.

The Camp

Storytellers have the option of allowing the camp refugees to simply fade into obscurity as a collection of supporting characters, or use them as a possible bridge to other stories in the future.

The third story in the ongoing **Promethean** chronicle, which will appear in **Strange Alchemies**, takes place in Boston. If the Storyteller wishes, he can have a tense (or understanding) reunion with Papillon and her refugees here. The Storyteller might even consider replacing some of the characters presented in Boston with characters formerly of the refugee camp, which can serve to underline exactly how rare the Created really are, as well as give the characters a point of reference for the next story.

Alternatively, Storytellers may keep the itinerant camp on the road or unseen until a later point in the chronicle of her own creation. The players’ characters might even encounter fragments of the broken camp and factions that have split off from it at various times along their journeys.

Then again, maybe Papillon and her advisors were right. Maybe the Firestorm was tied to the players’ characters and the refugees have done themselves a great service by putting distance between them and the throng by disappearing into the mysterious recesses of the World of Darkness.

As for Sick, he thanks the characters for all they’ve done for him and then goes his own way. He’s seen quite enough of how Prometheans act in factions and when other goals overtake the significance of the Pilgrimage. He bids the characters goodbye, and then walks away as the scene draws to a close.

Dramatis Personae

Following, you will find descriptions of the major players in “A Sheltering Storm.” Game traits have been provided for most of these characters, with the exception of Havelock, who isn’t likely to need even the non-combatant write-up we’ve provided for him (but better safe than sorry).



Papillon

Quote: “I’m sure we’ll find out what’s going on once we know who’s guilty of what.”

Background: Amid a great storm, the Galateid known as Papillon — “butterfly” — rose from the Tartarean depths of a creator’s workshop. She never even waited to meet her maker, which is how she gave herself her name: she flew away like a butterfly after the chrysalis of her creation.

Her first years were awkward and dangerous, as she learned the hard way how the world worked. People looked curiously at a grown woman who seemed to have the faculties of a child, and some people even feared her, not knowing what it was that made her the way she was.

As she grew both mentally and emotionally, Papillon reflected that she’d have liked to have had someone to depend on during that early time as a fledgling Created. While she doubted her creator had any altruistic aims in mind for her, the company of other Prometheans would have given her someone to learn from, someone with whom to compare experiences.

That, then, became a dream for Papillon, a goal. She would create a community in which neophyte Prometheans could learn

at the feet of their more experienced fellow Created. As Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, Papillon saw her chance and traveled there directly. Indeed, she found many Prometheans who had traveled there to either make a new start for themselves or to escape portions of their past better left unspoken. They could stay or go or either at their whim, Papillon explained, but all she wanted was some help in keeping a few more Prometheans from making the same mistakes she had.

In all, the experiment worked well. Over time, though, the camp suffered the inevitable blight of the Promethean condition: Wasteland effect, hungry Pandorans, troublesome Firestorms and the ever-present threat of discovery and Disquiet. Even if the events of “A Sheltering Storm” hadn’t come to pass, she would have had to move the camp sooner rather than later, anyway. She would rather have had the luxury of it being later, however.

Description: While many Galateids conform to a general notion of beauty, Papillon seems to have been from a very specific memory held in her creator’s mind. While she’s undeniably beautiful, her beauty bears unusual features — her eyes are large and her neck is long and her nose is narrow. While the initial impression might seem unappealing, those who view Papillon in person are enthralled by her face and proportions, as is the effect many Galateids produce.

When her disfigurements are noticeable, Papillon’s skin becomes translucent. Her body glows with a soft radiance that indicates she’s something other than normal, and the humours circulating beneath her skin compound the effect.

Storytelling Hints: In most cases, Papillon is convivial and welcoming, always willing to sweeten the bitter draught of Promethean life with pleasant company. The Pilgrimage makes many Prometheans cynical, jaded or even openly hostile, after all, and she doesn’t want to fall into that. If she can, she tries to draw the true personalities out of these wounded Created. If not, well, no one promised every Promethean a free ticket to Rebirth. She is patient and forgiving without being overweening or burdensomely “motherly.”

The affair in which she has to leave this new throng of Created to their fates truly tears her up inside. She wants them to have the same chances she has given everyone else. At the same time, she can’t jeopardize what everyone else has or might in the future for the sake of this handful of Created right now. She hopes to meet them again and that they’ll be able to forgive her. If not, she will nurse whatever wounds they leave her with.

Lineage: Galateid

Refinement: Aurum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts (Secondhand Repair) 3, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 2, Stealth 1, Survival (Scrounging) 4, Weaponry 1

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

Merits: Elpis 3, Lair (Size 2, Security 1), Repute 2

Willpower: 8

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Azoth: 4

Bestowment: Mesmerizing Appearance

Transmutations: *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (•), Flight Instinct (•), Firebringer (••); *Deception* — Leave No Trace (••), False Tracks (••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 13/4

Cassius

Quote: “You’re not supposed to be here, so now Cassius has to teach you the error of your ways.”

Background: Cassius’ creator needed a right-hand man, so he built the hulking minion to serve him. Naming his creation after the Roman general who served Pompey, Cassius’ creator saw himself as Caesar, “pardoning” Cassius by bringing him to artificial life. He deliberately constructed his servant to be strong but docile, a brute who would take orders but never question them.

The plan didn’t work as well as its theory, however. Cassius did occasionally have bouts of self-awareness and purpose, but when he did, they scared and enraged him. In further homage to his namesake, Cassius destroyed his creator just as Cassius Longinus Gaius eventually helped murder Caesar. He died in the resulting fight, but unlike his unfortunate creator, Cassius’ Azoth resurrected him the next night. On his own, he fled, following the undying flames of his Azoth where they demanded he go.

Ultimately, Cassius arrived in New Orleans. Members of the various factions found him dull but willing, strong but simple. As a result, none readily swept him into their ranks. Although he was comparatively young, he was certainly willing to go along with what any faction said if they couched it in terms that sounded like they’d benefit him. In the end, DeVries of the Botherúd found a purpose for Cassius.

For the time being, Cassius remains seemingly unattached, with covert ties to DeVries and the Botherúd. Cassius’ loyalty is to the purpose they give him and the group as a whole, not any of the formal ideology. If Cassius could somehow be made to see the benefits of joining another faction, especially in the sense of belonging that such a relationship would provide, he might turn his back on his vicious current faction. He doesn’t necessarily enjoy being an enforcer; he simply does it because that’s what



he's told to do. Only when in the throes of his choleric humour's imbalance does he truly relish the pain he causes.

Description: Brawny and ugly, Cassius is built to be a bruiser. Clothes fit him poorly, and he often doesn't take good care of them anyway, going about as he does while streaked with blood, muck and whatever other mess he might have had to pull himself through. His forehead is low, and he wears a perpetual scowl, even when he's in what passes for a good mood.

With his disfigurements visible, people see Cassius for what he really is: a hulking brute assembled from various enormous human appendages and slabs of muscular meat.

Storytelling Hints: Cassius almost always speaks in the third person. This isn't out of hauteur, but because he has a problem understanding the idea of the self. He is capable of speaking in first person, but only when he sets his mind to the task. He suspects that other Prometheans take advantage of this portion of his personality, easily convincing him that their goals are common goals. The problem, though, is that he can't keep the idea on his mind long enough to find out if that's really the case. It's served him fine this far, though, as the Created always need someone to help them out, so

at least he'll never be left on his own.

Lineage: Frankenstein

Refinement: Ferrum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation (Interrogation) 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Stealth (Ambushes) 2, Survival (Endurance) 3, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Intimidation 5, Streetwise 2

Merits: Fighting Style: Boxing 1, Mentor 2, Residual Memory (Politics, Stealth) 2, Unpalatable Aura

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 7

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Unholy Strength

Transmutations: *Corporeum* — Regeneration (••); *Vitality* — Shoulders of Atlas (•), Bludgeon (••), Might (•••), Titan's Throw (•••)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Brass	1(B)	-	9	Boxing 1
Knuckles				(Body Blow)
Bicycle Chain	1(B)	-	10	

Sicky

Quote: "Hang on, hang on. I'm sure we can work something out. Just be calm and let's talk about what I can do for you."

Background: Even Prometheans can be orphans, and such is the case with Sicky. Abandoned by his creator before learning the ways of Promethean society, Sicky has very much had to rely on the kindnesses of strangers all his life.

Such kindness is rare and far between, though. Most of the Created have their own concerns to worry about, and added responsibility for wayward monsters doesn't always fit easily into the Pilgrimage. Sicky is very fortunate, then, to have found a place for himself in the Promethean refugee camp of New Orleans. If not for the safety offered by the camp, Sicky surely would have met his end already, whether by other Created or torn to ribbons at the talons of the other horrors that wander the night.

To his credit, Sicky's no sponge. He offers what he can to his fellow Prometheans, whether that's information, mysterious contraband or his meager assistance in some

physical activity. Still, that doesn't stop him from being kicked around. Even among such outcasts as the Created themselves, pariahs exist, and Sickly fills that role in the remains of the Big Easy.

Description: Few Prometheans fit the stereotypical appearance of the heroin junkie, but Sickly's among them. He's small and frail, and his limbs seem to turn in on themselves. His joints are overlarge and creak; his eyes are sunken and his lips are always white and chapped. Snot perpetually runs from his nose, and his eyes seep what looks like pus. He is missing the top half of his left ear.

When his disfigurements become visible, Sickly looks like a *dead* junkie, an emaciated wretch one might find expired in a flophouse doorway, having snatched a precious few minutes away from the rain before dying. It doesn't help that the ruined, seemingly dead thing continues to move and talk.

Storytelling Hints: Sickly doesn't care that other people hate him — rather, he tells himself that. He tells himself that it's not spite over his miserable life or bitterness over always being the omega that led him to the Refinement of Torment. He tells himself, instead, that if he weren't meant

to use the power of a Promethean, he wouldn't have it. To his credit, he believes that by using his power to help others, he might actually earn some respect someday, and he's been patient so far. His patience, however, is running thin.

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation (Dumpster Diving) 3, Politics (Opportunism) 2

Physical Skills: Stealth (Laying Low) 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Direction Sense, Elpis 3, Fast Reflexes 1, Fleet of Foot 2

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 6

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Health: 6

Azoth: 3

Bestowment: Revivification

Transmutations: *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (•), Tension in the Air (••); *Electrification* — Jolt (•), Shock (••)

Pyros/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Linoleum knife	1(L)	—	4	—

Paul DeVries

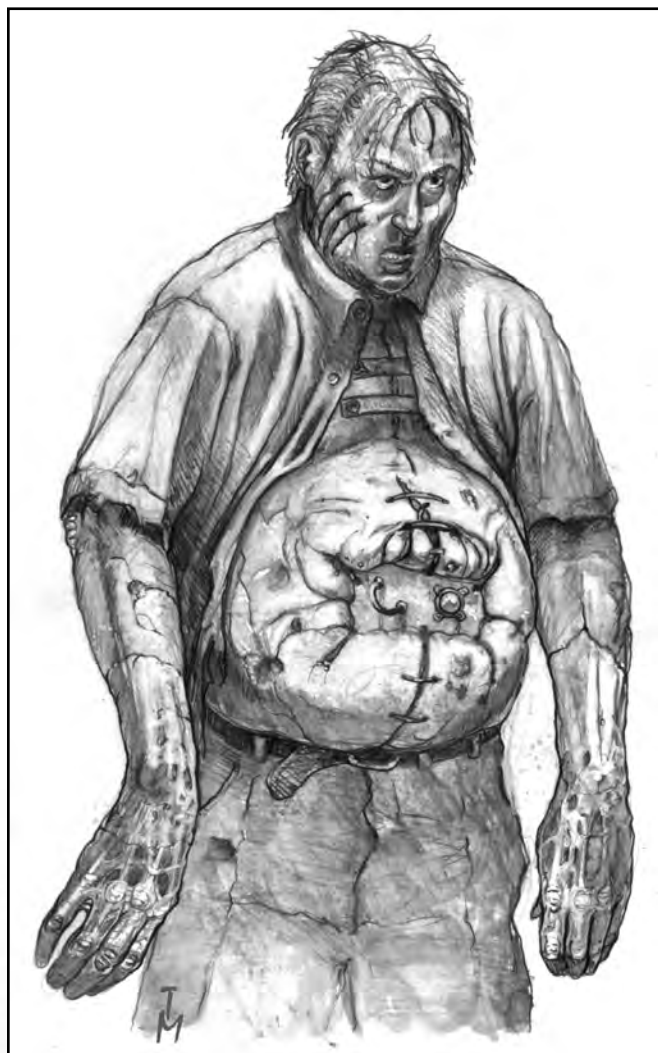
Quote: "I know someone who might be able to handle that, but it's not going to be easy on any of us."

Background: Some Prometheans plainly enjoy being Prometheans. Rather, they don't necessarily enjoy it, but they've amassed so much of the Promethean edge that they're loath to give it up. Paul DeVries is one such Created — if he's even on a Pilgrimage, it's long and complicated and punctuated by various opportunities to exert his influence.

At the same time, DeVries is not a satisfied Promethean. He's never truly happy, and much of his dour outlook originates with his creation. When he rose, spluttering and choking from the water in which his creator birthed him, DeVries knew he was in for an eternity of pain and discomfort. To abate that as much as possible, he has spent much of his life acquiring favors, promises, creature comforts and valuables. As an Osiran, it was his birthright.

Along with that wide and varied life of accumulation, though, came exposure to the group known as the Botherúð. Their philosophy struck a chord with him, in that they positioned





Pyros as a valuable commodity. Each fledgling Promethean who learned about the Pilgrimage by invoking Transmutations spent *a little more* of this finite resource, posing an ever-increasing threat to those creature comforts DeVries revered. He grew to hate new Prometheans on principle, even though he saw them very rarely (until coming to New Orleans).

Paul DeVries is a pragmatic Created, though, an industrialist and venture capitalist in mundane business and a terrible foe in Promethean society. He won't stain his own hands with blood, but he's the type of man who will set others to a course of action that benefits him, no matter how bloody or brutal. Even among the comparatively placid politics of the New Orleans refugee camp, he's known as the Created you don't want to cross — or owe.

Description: DeVries is a hulk of a man, especially for an Osiran. His size suggests excess, even though his metabolism (and other Promethean factors) makes such a thing unlikely. Still, Paul DeVries is large because he lives large, mostly on debts he's owed from other people. His clothing is well made, his grooming is immaculate and his presentation is expensive without being garish or opulent.

With his disfigurement in evidence, DeVries looks very much like his great size and suggested excess might have done him in. His skin becomes livid, patchy, and purple, as if he had suffered a stroke or heart attack and then clawed at himself when in the throes of seemingly fatal discomfort.

DeVries, in homage to Osiris himself, is missing his genitals. DeVries has had enough contact with human society to be embarrassed by this, although if it's revealed to Prometheans he does his best to appear unfazed.

Storytelling Hints: DeVries made a series of wise investments with money his creator gave him, and turned that into a burgeoning fortune. He's well-off, and he enjoys his wealth. That said, he resents being a Promethean because it means a nigh-infinite number of inconveniences that prevent him from truly being able to enjoy his gains as any other accomplished businessman might. DeVries takes his time and thinks things through, rather than going with instinct. Instinct can lead one astray, especially when one is an artificially created approximation of a person, because it lacks the veracity of fact.

Everybody owes DeVries something, and he's always looking for an angle as to how he can bring everyone more and more into his debt. He's not rude, unnecessarily brusque or obnoxious, but he knows what he wants, and he is out to get it. If that means stepping on a few toes, he can cope with that, but he doesn't leave relations so bad that no one will want to work with him again.

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Finance) 3, Computer 2, Investigation (Business Research) 1, Politics 4

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Smooth-Talker) 4, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Bankers) 2, Allies (Investors) 3, Allies (Law Enforcement) 2, Contacts (High Finance, Big Business, Stock Market, Real Estate, Commodities Brokers) 5, Giant, Lair (Size 2, Security 2), Repute 1, Resources 4

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 7

Health: 10

Azoth: 4

Bestowment: Revivification

Transmutations: *Disquietism* — Scapegoat (●), Tension in the Air (●●), Alembic (●●●) lagoon Whisper (●●●); *Electrification* — Jolt (●), Generator (●●●); *Vulcanus* — Sense Pyros (●)

Derangements: Fixation (mild; 6)

Pyros/per Turn: 13/4

Ogilvy

Quote: “No, please, continue speaking! I’m fascinated by your account of gathering alchemical substances. I’m a bit of a student of the Great Work myself, you know.”

Background: A man can be more than his formula says he is. This is the principle that drives Ogilvy, and it’s an optimistic philosophy that other members of the Sworn Advocates of the *Mutus Liber* cleave to when they learn it from him. Just as humble lead can become exalted gold, so, too, can the lowliest Promethean achieve a phenomenal transformation into something greater.

The Promethean known as Ogilvy (he remembers the name “Edward Ogilvy” but doesn’t know if that was necessarily him) looks at the entire world from the perspective of this transmutative outlook. Lead becomes gold. Promethean becomes man. New Orleans, post-Katrina becomes . . . something else. It’s not always easy to determine the next step of the change, but when one has the key, that can help him determine what the future holds. That’s why Ogilvy and his fellow seekers want the *Mutus Liber*. They believe it can show them their way, or at least what they’ll become, to better let them know how to become it. After all, no one sensible undertakes a journey without knowing the destination.

Behind all of this empowering philosophy stands an empty, desperate Promethean. Ogilvy doesn’t know who he was before his Promethean memories began, or what he might be if this condition continues. He’s built his life on an elaborate hope, and only the secrets offered by the book into which he’s placed all his faith can prevent him from collapsing in the face of adversity. On some level, Ogilvy knows this, and he has as much fear of learning from the book as he does seeing it dangled before his grasp and then whisked away.

Description: With a kindly, lined face and white hair, Ogilvy seems every bit the doting uncle, and his demeanor reinforces this. He wears shabby, secondhand clothes, but doesn’t seem to mind, as his focus is on more important matters. Ogilvy always has a smile to offer or a weathered hand extended in greeting.

Ogilvy appears much like a traffic-accident victim when his disfigurements come to the fore. His skin appears ruptured and lacerated, looking as if it might slough off his body at any moment.

Storytelling Hints: Ogilvy makes a great show of thirsting for knowledge, but that’s only half the story. In truth, he seeks “knowledge” that reinforces the belief system he’s erected for himself. He is fortunate in that he does his re-

search well, and he’s not preaching some escapist New Age panacea — he understands that the Promethean condition is hard and that it has its difficulties as well as its promises. Those who know him consider him a bit of a monk. Those who know him *well* see the fragility of his metaphorical asceticism and tread lightly.

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Religious History, Philosophy) 3, Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation (Research) 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Alchemy) 4, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Holistic Awareness, Languages (German, Greek, Latin), Meditative Mind



Willpower: 5**Humanity:** 7**Virtue:** Prudence**Vice:** Envy**Initiative:** 5**Defense:** 2**Speed:** 9**Health:** 7**Azoth:** 3**Bestowment:** Ephemeral Flesh**Transmutations:** *Alchemicus* — Forging the Master's Tools (•), Identification (•), Fortification (••), Transformation (•••), Alteration (••••)**Pyros/per Turn:** 12/3

Miranda

Quote: “You’re talking about something that can potentially help everyone in the long run. I’m interested.”

Background: One of the few genuine New Orleans natives who are a part of the refugee camp, Miranda had done both social work and construction contracting before Hurricane



Katrina destroyed the city. She knew the handful of New Orleans Created personally, if not cordially, and when the hurricane hit, she quickly came to Papillon's attention and offered those Prometheans a place among the refugee camp. None declined the opportunity.

Even after the hurricane, Miranda continued her work, but in a charitable context. With the numerous relief efforts funneling money into New Orleans, and her connections among the construction companies, Miranda saw an opportunity. She had the chance to help rebuild New Orleans — and she was influential enough to set policy and work an agenda through her agency, Mercy Mission. Miranda saw the possibilities available in rebuilding New Orleans specifically with Prometheans in mind, and that's where she began. To this day, programs are underway that give Prometheans a place to go when they feel the ache of Torment, when they need to curtail the Wasteland effect and when they simply need to go to the Wastes or hide their Disquiet. Naturally, these are programs kept away from mortal eyes, and only those among the refugee camp (or future Promethean visitors) will learn about these programs.

Not all is well for Miranda, however. Despite the comparative altruism of her actions, many New Orleans restoration efforts are being audited or otherwise placed under scrutiny. While Miranda has conscientiously used all of the grant money that came her way (and has the records to prove it), the nature of her restorations may come under criticism. Why has a historical site been rebuilt when residential areas have not, for example? Why have these moneys gone toward restoring out-of-the-way civic centers and warehouse facilities when the tourist zones that need to flourish for New Orleans to survive have received no attention from Mercy Mission? These types of questions will haunt Mercy Mission, as well as Miranda, in the days to come, and red tape may unfortunately curtail her efforts.

Description: An African American woman seemingly in her early 30s, Miranda is thin and gaunt. She dresses conservatively, so as to be taken seriously in her often male-dominated business. She has striking hazel eyes that captivate those who look at her. She is missing the big toe of her right foot, and an observant person can notice something “off” about her gait.

When her disfigurements are visible, Miranda looks like little more than a scarecrow pinned up in a field. Her clothes hang off her emaciated body, and her mouth yawns in an unsettling rictus gape. A noticeable odor of onions and cinnamon accompanies Miranda while she's in this state.

Storytelling Hints: Miranda is a rare combination of traits, a person who makes judgments based on her feelings, but looks at the rational way to obtain those goals. She dislikes suffering, whether of the human or Promethean variety, and does all in her power to abate it when it occurs. The aspect of her duties that upsets her the most is knowing that people depend on her. It's one thing when she simply needs to restore a building or rezone a shopping district, but when she sees the personal face these matters take, it sometimes gives her pause.

Similar to Papillon, Miranda isn't entirely happy with hanging the players' characters out to dry. She approaches it from her rational point of view, but she does feel genuine sympathy for the "martyrs to the cause" the refugee camp is making.

Of all the Prometheans in this story, Miranda is the one most likely to stay behind in New Orleans to finish her work. Storytellers, decide in advance if you think Miranda will continue her efforts with the mortal side of Mercy Mission after the Prometheans have gone. If such is the case, the players' characters may well run across her before they leave New Orleans at the beginning of the next chapter of the story. If they do, they may expect her to explain a few things, or they may understand her position, making her a worthwhile Ally or Contact in the area.

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Aurum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Crafts (Construction) 3, Politics (Bureaucracy) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Compromise) 1

Merits: Allies (Contractors) 3, Allies (Zoning Board) 2, Contacts (City Hall, Relief Groups, Construction Companies) 3, Repute 1, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Humanity: 7

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 7

Health: 7

Azoth: 2

Bestowment: Revivification

Transmutations: *Deception* — Color of Man (•); *Mesmerism* — Fixed Stare (•), Firebringer (••), Suggestion (••)

Pyros/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Lt. Revolver	2(L)	20/40/80	5	—

Armor: none

Jerry Havelock, the Historian

Quote: "I think I know what you're looking for. Seventeenth-century. French, right?"

Background: Havelock is a historian who works on a contract basis with many of the museums and historical societies in and around New Orleans. His specialties are the identification of historical items and the procurement



of such items. He has numerous contacts around the world in similar lines of work, and contributes to archaeological and historical publications in order to keep those contacts vital and growing.

(Jerry Havelock is probably dead by the time the characters encounter him, but we include a non-combatant summary for him in case the Storyteller wishes to adjust the timeline of "A Sheltering Storm" to allow Havelock to speak with the characters.)

Description: Jerry is an African American man in his early 40s. He appears as a combination of bookish traits and field traits—weathered skin, but bespectacled; eyes squinted from peering into the horizon, but clothed in tweed.

Storytelling Hints: Jerry is fairly happy-go-lucky, but reserves a sensible degree of suspicion for people who rouse it. He's outgoing and affable, and willing to build relationships in order to keep his passionate work going.

Abilities:

Social Engineering (dice pool 5) — Havelock is skilled at gaining access to dig sites, curators' rooms and museum warehouses where he probably shouldn't be.

Locate/Obtain Artifact (dice pool 5) — When Jerry goes to work every day, his job is to find things and sell them to museums or historical societies. His wide-ranging network of contacts and fellow historians allows him access to rumors of something being turned up somewhere, or “Hey, I saw one of those at the Natural History Museum last week. Let me see if we have it scheduled for exhibit, and if not, I’ll see if we can loan it to your museum.”

Publish or Perish (dice pool 4) — As a regular contributor to various journals and professional periodicals, Jerry writes well and speaks eloquently when discussing his ideas or travels.

Vertigo Halcyon Impending, the *Qashmal*

Quote: “Three days hence; three days.”

Background: This *qashmal* is tasked with the purpose of delivering a message about the impending destruction of the refugee camp in New Orleans. Vertigo Halcyon Impending has knowledge of the Firestorm that’s due to occur in a few days (and perhaps even causes it), but doesn’t have the task of telling those who will be directly affected by it most significantly. Rather, this *qashmal* seems to be setting up a moral task for the characters, discerning whether or not they will tell the potential victims themselves, or if they’ll hide or barter the information. (Storytellers, this *qashmal* may indeed be tied to a character’s milestone, or even milestones of multiple characters, if you so wish.)

Description: In Twilight, this *qashmal* appears as a plume of flame that curls like an autumn leaf, radiating a shifting pattern of color just beyond the boundaries of its being and bleeding a bit into the ambient area. When Materialized, the *qashmal* appears as a pillar of flame, the top and bottom of which might be visible, or they might wick away into some mysterious other-space. A variety of colors flicker through this column of intelligent fire, as well.

Storytelling Hints: This *qashmal* waits until it knows where the characters are going to be and then it manifests to visit them and impart its message. Indeed, the *qashmal* waits in Twilight for the characters to arrive, and then grants them its visitation. If the characters attack, the *qashmal* continues delivering its message, fighting functionally but dispassionately. The *qashmal* will not go for killing blows, but will rather distribute damage among whatever target it chooses in a given turn in order to (hopefully) burn some sense into the numerous foes it faces. Vertigo Halcyon Impending will *not* attack a character who has not attacked it, but it will use its Immolate Numen on characters who have acted aggressively toward the *qashmal*.

Choir: Elpidos

Order: Lesser

Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 5, Resistance 5

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Sloth



Pyros: 15

Initiative: 10

Defense: 5

Speed: 19 (species factor 12)

Size: 6

Corpus: 11

Numina: Immolate, Materialize (dice pool 7), Grant Vision (dice pool 7), Recharge Pyros (dice pool 7)

Kryptae: Bezoar Hounds

Quote: <a hideous howl followed by the spatter of drool on the ground>

Background: A *Sublimatus* died in a junkyard, chased there and ground to screams and bone by a raging Tam-muz. The *Sublimatus*’ poisoned Pyros leached into the soil, though, and over time the mutts that lived there became infected. Yellow Fever eventually wound up conscripting these creatures as shock troops.

Lighter and smaller than the Pandorans in whose company the bezoar hounds travel, these monsters often attack first in hopes of weakening their prey enough that the stronger monsters can finish the job. These bezoar hounds are not suicidal, though, and will pull away to lick their wounds if their foes deal them a drubbing.

Description: These Pandorans look like starving junkyard mutts, with exposed muscle occasionally peering out from beneath festering welts of flesh.

Storytelling Hints: The tactics these Pandorans employ are those of shock troops, whose appearance on the scene terrifies their enemies and distracts them so the bigger Pandorans that follow can wreak a swath of ruin. In the case of evenly matched or savvy enemies, these creatures will often fall back after their initial assault, lending aid if their more powerful comrades need it.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0, Wits 3, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Willpower: 3

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Health: 7

Transmutations: Azothic Furnace (•••)

Pyros/per Turn: 10/1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	0(B)	—	6	—

Armor: none

Rank Two Pandorans: Bors, Glare, Tannad and Eruth

Quote: "Time to die, burning-fires-men. We are hungry."

Background: These Pandorans, although more cogent than their lesser brethren, are still bestial, monstrous tragedies of men, who fight with a low cunning belied by their mongrel appearance. They have more finesse than the *kryptae*, and are also more physically powerful, preferring to bludgeon their foes into submission and then rend their flesh to devour their essence.

Description: These Pandorans are also somewhat canine in appearance. Their mastiff-like bipedal bodies are covered in a coarse, matted fur that serves as a simple armor (see below). Their snarling muzzles make it difficult for them to speak, but they can do so if they wish.

Storytelling Hints: These Mockeries are brutal and direct, engaging their foes in a cascade of whirling claws or a frenzy of whipping tendrils. They fight like bullies, often choosing to overpower a single foe *en masse* and then moving to give the same gang-tactic beatdown to the next poor victim in their path.

Mockery: Sebek

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 1

Physical Skills: Brawl (Claw) 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3



Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Willpower: 7

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 7

Transmutations: Bizarre Weaponry (Claws ••), Visceral Cording (•••••)

Bestowment: Armor (••), Fangs (••) and Sebek's Gift; the Armor Bestowment has been purchased higher than its normal Rating as though it were a Transmutation.

Pyros/per Turn: 12/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claw	1(L)	—	9	*

*Eats while clawing; see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 224.

Armor: 2

Yellow Fever the Swamp-Flayer, Rank Three Pandoran

Quote: "Too big. Y'all too big! I can't use you. Gonna eat you instead."

Background: Yellow Fever is a horrid wretch who lurks in the swamps outside New Orleans and comes to town only to feast on Pyros or to snatch children in the night for his horrid experiments. He doesn't remember who made him or why, but he remembers something about fighting his way across a gray river and seeing a strange, burning figure there and a man talking to it before rising and coughing out gouts of black blood.

Everything else blurs together for Yellow Fever. He has no concept of time or purpose and is content to make his "children," which are the distorted, assembled flesh-masses of combined parts reaped from the children he absconds with from the New Orleans streets. For a while, things were good for him — he could rely on the confusion of the hurricane or lost souls fleeing the aftermath to practically bring children to his door (always children . . . always, inexplicably, children found his swamp shack). Now, though, everything's coming back together in town and he has to find his own . . . what are they? They are so small and fragile.

Plainly, Yellow Fever is insane and vicious. He seems to be making an attempt at creating life himself, but his understanding of what's happening is so distorted that any sensible person looking upon his work sees it for the horror it truly is.

Description: Yellow Fever reeks of the fetid swamp, and of organic matter left to rot. He appears as a mound of putrescent flesh swathed in a cloud of flies, gnat and mosquitoes. His form is mostly man-shaped, but it's difficult to discern individual features underneath his general heap of rot.

Storytelling Hints: In most cases, Yellow Fever is just looking for parts to create his ongoing works of . . . well, he's not sure what he's doing, exactly, but he knows it's important to do it. When

he meets the characters, however, he's both disappointed and excited. He's disappointed because they're not suitable donors to his project, but excited because something about them smells delicious. He figures he'll kill them, eat most of them and share the rest with the pack and figure out the rest later.

Mockery: Ishtari

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, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Spitting Phlegm) 2, Brawl (Skin Flaps) 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3 (Swamp)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 2

Willpower: 4

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Health: 6

Transmutations: *Pandoran* — Demon's Call (••), Tarflesh (••), Acid Phlegm (•••), Bizarre Weaponry (calcified flaps of skin — treat as Bone Spurs, •••), Perfected Bezoar (Acids and Solvents •••)

Bestowment: Inertia (•••••)

Pyros/per Turn: 14/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Calcified	2(L)	—	8	—
Skin Flaps				
Acid Phlegm	(0L)	20	5	Dissolves armor



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DOUBTING, DREAMING DREAMS NO MORTAL EVER DARED TO DREAM BEFORE."

WE KNOW DEEP DOWN THAT THE WORLD
IS A FAR MORE TERRIFYING PLACE THAN WE ALLOW
OUR RATIONAL MINDS TO ACKNOWLEDGE.

BEST TO SHUT OUR EYES, PRETEND IT'S NOT THERE.
IF WE DON'T SEE IT, IT MIGHT NOT SEE US.

PRETENDING SOMETHING IS NOT THERE,
HOWEVER, DOES NOT MAKE IT GO AWAY.

IT ONLY HELPS IT TO HIDE BETTER,
AND PREDATORS LIKE TO HIDE FROM THEIR PREY,
LEST IT BE SCARED AWAY.

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Do we really make that choice?
Does something in a creator’s makeup determine
whether we sunder our flesh and slither away,
or rise up to begin a new pilgrimage?

I don’t know. But I do plan to find out, with your help.

Yes, it might hurt a bit.”

—Dr. Brine, Osiran

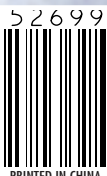
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