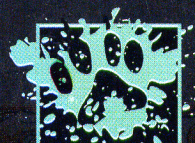


DARK REFLECTIONS  
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# Spectres



BLACK DOG  
GAME FACTORY

FOR ADULTS  
18 AND OVER






DARK REFLECTIONS

# Spectres

By Richard Watts and Ben Chessell









Watching echoes reflect off  
Scraped, shaven walls  
Seeing Death pits and Jesus  
And no-one at all  
Seeing no-one at all.  
—The Mark of Cain, "Cold Grey Season"





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Apologies to Mike Danza for leaving his name out of Hierarchy. We thank him for his beautiful full page illustrations.

**Dark Reflections: Spectres** is the initial offering of **Wraith: the Oblivion** sourcebooks under the Black Dog aegis. This book is to be sold to individuals 18 or older only.

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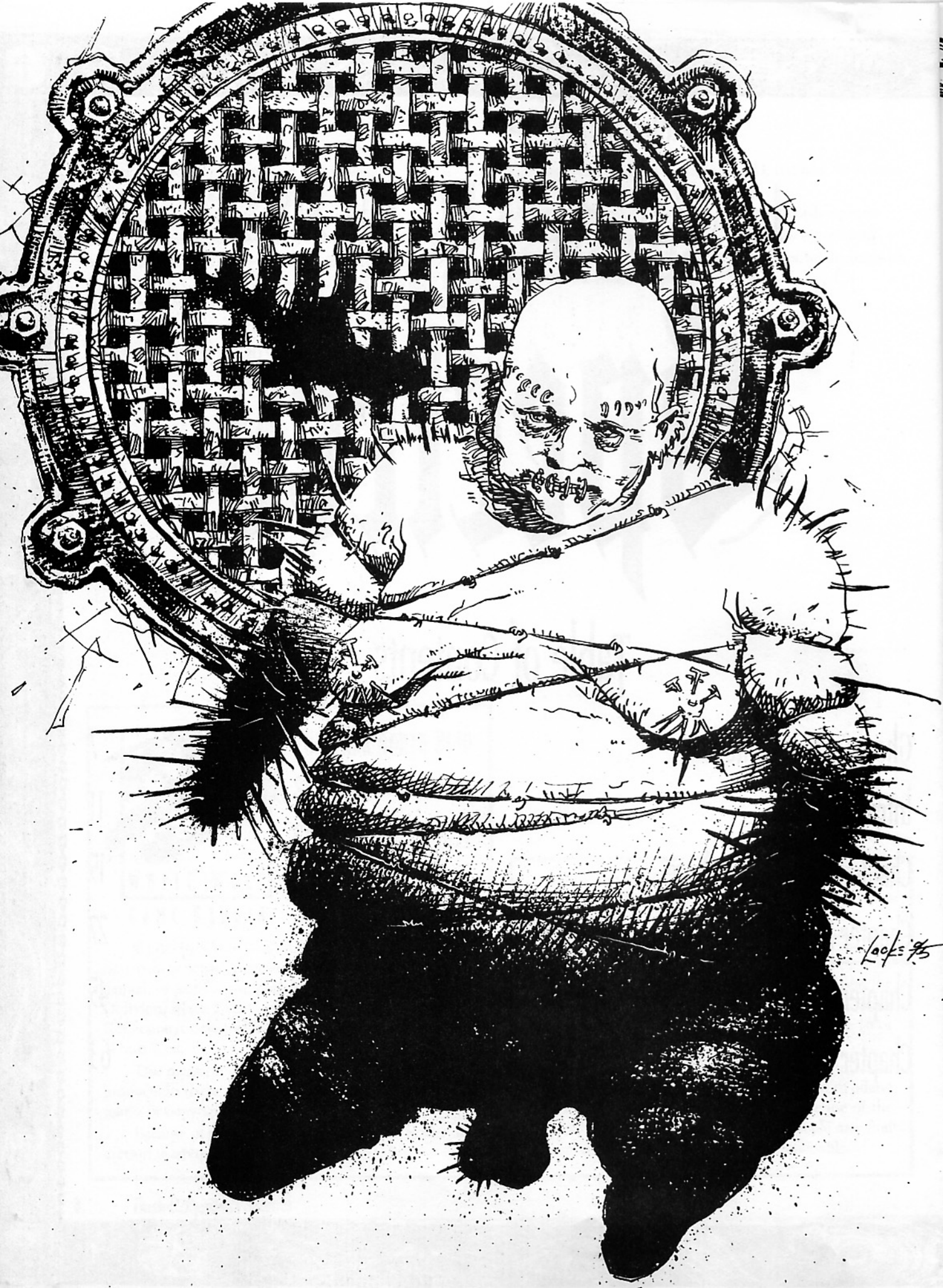
DARK REFLECTIONS

# Spectres

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# Ghost Story: Haunted



I sit, and I watch, and I listen. Outside the rain is falling like tears. In the world where the children sit it is warm and bright. I sit in the same room as they do. We are separated by the distance between heartbeats. I am so cold.

The wallpaper is blotched with damp. Up near the ceiling it is peeling, hanging in lank strips towards us, yearning to touch bright hair and warm skin. Armchairs sag, stuffing oozing. Dust carpets the floor, thick and unbroken. It long since ceased to concern me that I leave no footprints behind me, that I drift intangible through this dead and empty world. Beyond the Shroud which separates me from the world of the Quick, the room is full of children. I know this, even though I can barely see them. I hear them from time to time, faint sighs and whispers, and I catch glimpses of their insubstantial forms flickering at the edges of my vision. I cannot see them clearly, save those in which the embers of Oblivion smolder, waiting to flare into dark flame. Even they are faint, blanketed by the Shroud.

For a moment a memory from the past torments me, a time of color and cheer, when I was as they are, a child, a traveler, backpacking my way around the world. As I did then, I am sure these children see themselves as adults, young, yes, but oh, so wise, so deathless, so infallible. A room of travelers, scattered by supersonic winds. German, English, Austra-

lian, American. They sit in this space, watching flickering television images, sharing joints, bottles, lives. They have traveled far. I have traveled further than any of them, disdaining now their slow and clumsy struggles. Now I travel faster than a scream.

The past fades. I watch, strain my senses to listen to the banter, to see the children's bright eyes and flickering hands as they talk amongst themselves. I wonder how they will die. Her in the corner, the quiet one. Her death is plain. It is written in the gaunt lines of her face, in her starved and frightened eyes, lit darkly from within. Oblivion burns strong in her. It will not be long before it claims her. Tonight she will lock herself in the shared bathroom of this guest house before going to bed, fingers repeatedly coaxing every last trace of her Spartan meal up from her tortured entrails until the toilet's enamel bowl is slick with vomit and blood. I can already see the skeleton she will become in less than a year. Him, blond-haired, handsome; I can see the encrusting lesions waiting to begin the journey across his skin. Gunshots, traffic accidents, murder, disease. Deathmark-mottled faces, lividity waiting for the post. A room full of laughing corpses that do not know they are dead.

I stand unnoticed in the corner, unengaged in any conversation. It is almost time. Every year on this night I return to this place, this shelter, and until I am claimed by the Void I shall always do so. The faces are different tonight, as they






always are, but they are also always the same. Travelers. Students. Children. Seeing the world before they become fossilized in their careers like flies in amber. How desperately they struggle, how tenaciously they cling to empty lives. Unwittingly they lie to themselves, claiming that what they do is different, individual, purposeful, lasting. Each and every one of them forces himself to believe that their life matters, that their life is the one that will make the difference. I used to think that too, before I died.

It had all become too much. The parties, the bands, the brief affairs. It became more of an effort to keep up the charade than it was worth. I gradually came to realize that I was not enjoying my life. More so, I came to see how shallow, how empty and meaningless it all was. Like everyone else I had deluded myself into thinking that my existence was ordered. I had believed in destiny. Then, that fateful autumn night when the fogs hung pale over the stinking canals and the city seemed to waver like a dream before dawn, I saw the hollowness of it all, the transparency of all the lies I had always accepted as true. Love was just a ploy I used in order to stop feeling lonely. Life was a series of days, no more important or valid or meaningful than those ever lived by anyone else. Nothing I could control would ever be exceptional, or important. Except, perhaps, my death.

I committed suicide in one of the rooms upstairs, in this very hostel, for it had been here that the final, fatal revelation had appeared. I was 21. I cut my own throat with the pocket-knife my father had given me before I left home. It hurt. After I had finished, the white sheets on my narrow rented bed were no longer clean.

I awoke from my dreams of Heaven to discover myself trapped in the Shadowlands. Somehow I managed to escape slavers, Ferryman, Hierarchs and Heretics all. I was lucky enough to be left alone with my Shadow. My Shadow told me I was weak. My Shadow told me I had never amounted to anything. My Shadow told me many things. I listened. And as I listened, I learned, and soon my Shadow and I were one. The last thing my Shadow told me before his voice became ours, was that I could still die. When Oblivion snuffed out the last flickering life in the cosmos, I could finally know peace. I vowed then to sacrifice all to end my pain, if I could. I am not being cruel, nor selfish, in this desire. If I could end all pain, the pain of the world, of every being in existence, then should I not be called a saint? But those to whom I whisper my plan look at me as if I were mad. It is they who are insane, those wraiths clinging to lost dreams of the flesh. But I forgive them, I even try to save them, even when they re-





sist. I am as forgiving as I am sharing. I work for Oblivion, for the end of all life, all hope, all torment and fear. Life is a burden. I would set us free.

But even saints must have their pleasures. This is mine. It is more than a pleasure. It is a vocation. One boy leaves the room, turning his back upon card games and conversation. My straining eyes see him clothed in black; darker than his rags is the aura that flickers and dances around him. Oblivion is strong in this one. It calls to me, begging me to set it free.

He is tall, his shoulders broad, his movement supple and casual. He is European, black-haired. Stubble darkens his cheeks. I follow him as he departs, slipping past him as he opens the door. If he notices me, it as a cold breeze, no more.

I listen to the healthy beating of his heart as he jogs up the stairs, counting the minutes until it stops. His thoughts belie the passion of his body. His body wants to live; his mind wants to die. I sift through the ashes of his bitter memories of charred love letters and broken hearts, until I am left with the coals, memories of fists and blood and broken teeth, sound of torn cloth, thrusting and screams, of humiliation, hate, mockery and bile. I have chosen well. There is happiness in this boy, true, but the guilt and the fear and the despair are a sticky sea in which his higher self is trapped and slowly drowning.

The boy opens the door of his single room and courteously leaves it ajar. I wait, sitting so lightly on the foot of his bed that no impression of my weight dents the moldy coverlet. Down the hallway, I hear him splashing, pissing, brushing teeth and spitting, intricate ablutions of mortality marking out the days and nights of human existence in a liquid calendar. The toilet's growl as he flushes it is echoed by his footsteps returning down the hall.

Into his room now he comes, locking and bolting the rotating door behind him. As I have watched others over the years, I watch this one, dispassionately. He strips off threadbare clothes to reveal flesh without shyness, imagining he is alone. Muscles flex as he plants his feet firmly on the floor, arms raised, pulling a tight T-shirt over his head. He has more hair than I would have imagined. Dark curls insulate his skin. As he unzips his jeans, I exhale. His nipples harden in the suddenly cold air. As he shivers, I lie back on the bed. When he climbs naked beneath the sheets after turning off the light, I am beside him.

Moonlight streams through the broken window fringed by ragged curtains pale with dust. The man tosses and turns in his narrow bed. His mind wanders. He cannot sleep. Re-

membering the heavy bodies and the bored stares of the women of this city behind their windows, he grows aroused. He begins to pleasure himself, fingers engaged in an erotic tour of his body they have taken many times but never tire of. I lower myself into the red heat of his mind, watching as he shapes a phantom partner from past lusts. He imagines himself as being irresistible, his fantasy lover desire incarnate.

As his ministrations grow faster, as blood flushes through his cheeks and his heart races, as he reaches the verge of climax and is thus most vulnerable, I strike, reshaping his dreamed partner, replacing her with myself. The handsome face of his erotic fantasy suddenly flows, liquid flesh sloughing off beneath his urgent touch. His fantasy thus invaded and disturbed, the boy opens his eyes. It is now, as his toes curl and muscles tighten in the throes of orgasm and revulsion, that I force myself across the Shroud. Pushing against straining reality to register an impression of my face that he can feel with lips gone suddenly dry, I kiss him.

He sees me, my deathly skin, the jagged flaps of tissue, skin and larynx gaping at my throat, my eyes, leaden, despairing, empty, looking deep into his; feels my skull where my lips have rotted away, tastes my tongue, beaded with bitter liquid, probing the warm cavity of his mouth. He tries to wake, but he is not dreaming. This is not his fantasy. It is mine. I clutch at him with bony fingers, pull his body to mine as he comes. I smile broadly as he tries to scream, but he cannot vocalize his fear around my invading tongue. Blood flows in clots like crimson pearls from my throat, spatters against the sheets where his fingers scrabble in terror, where his body bucks and jerks and sprays and tries to tear free from my grasp.

Even as he goes mad, his mind snapping under the strain I have forced upon him, I offer him the knife that is as much part of me as my lolling head or emaciated arms. The stained and rusted blade promises an end to his torment. It does not take long for the boy to saw through his throat, although perhaps it takes longer than he had anticipated. The wound is not neat. It has been many years since my blade was sharpened. He gurgles once, then his soul is consumed by Oblivion. I sit with his slowly cooling body, waiting for dawn and discovery. The look on the face of the woman who unlocks the door, come to change the sheets, is always priceless. I have only seen the expression seven times since I died. I doubt I will ever tire of it.









# Introduction

*We belong dead!*

—The Creature (Boris Karloff), "The Bride of Frankenstein"



Spectres are the servants of Oblivion. From nihil they creep out of the Tempest and lurk in the darkest recesses of Necropoli, launching attacks on Hierarchy, Heretics and Renegades without distinction. They serve Oblivion directly by carrying out the commands of their unspeakable Malfean masters, and indirectly by destroying souls. As the bastions of faith and knowledge are weakened, Oblivion grows ever stronger. Soon the last great Maelstrom will spill out across the Underworld, and the history of the Shadowlands and the Dark Kingdoms will end. Until that time, spectres will harry the Restless, taking advantage of the squabbles and disunity which exist in wraith society and leading wraiths away from Transcendence towards Oblivion.

Although some spectres see themselves as servants of Oblivion, others see themselves as entirely self-serving. Spectres are creatures of unbridled emotion, of dark rage and com-

plex melancholy. They are cold, cruel, twisted and malefic. They exist to inflict their own pain upon others, as well as to end their pain through the extinction of all reality. Their brutal and deranged existences are as wild as they are short.

Corrupted as they are, spectres have further to fall. Many spectres leap willingly into the Void, embracing their ultimate doom with an irrational glee. Insanity is never very far away from a spectre's eyes, at least from the point of view of a wraith. In a spectre's own mind, his gaze shines with the light of Oblivion, for spectres are prophets and purveyors of entropy, destruction and doom. Their goal is to destroy the world, all the worlds, those of the spirit and those of the flesh. Only their brief lifespans have prevented them from reaching their goal, for the advance of Oblivion has proved slow. Today spectres are closer than they have ever been to realizing their dream, and the universe is that much closer to destruction.



# What is in This Book?



**Dark Reflections: Spectres** is an exploration of the dark world of spectres. Although the world of **Wraith** is a bleak one, it is not without light. The Shadowlands of spectres are infinitely more grim. This book primarily provides players with information on creating and playing spectre characters. The ranks of Doppelgangers, Nephwracks, Mortwights and Striplings are opened up and explored for your education and enjoyment, with a look at the Malfeans, their immortal and inhuman leaders. We also examine the spectres' world, with its unsettling complexities and quirks.

There is information concerning the Tempest, the Labyrinth which lies beneath it, and details of Oblivion, which all spectres serve. Additionally, **Dark Reflections: Spectres** provides Storytellers with detailed information for chronicles in which players take on the role of spectres, and the unique stories that such chronicles might tell. Alternatively, the details provided in this book will be useful for the Storyteller who prefers to keep spectres as opponents in her campaign.

**Dark Reflections: Spectres** is arranged as follows:

## Chapter One: Spectral Culture

An overview of spectres and their society. This chapter includes information about spectre castes and their beliefs and practices, as well as outlining the major differences between spectres and wraiths. A summary of beliefs about spectres as held by wraiths and other supernaturals rounds off this chapter.

## Chapter Two: Spectres as Characters

This chapter contains guidelines detailing the creation of spectre characters, including Dark Passions and Dark Arcanoi.

## Chapter Three: Spectres and the Storyteller

Information for the Storyteller about incorporating spectres as player characters in your chronicle is given in this chapter, which also provides material for the more traditional portrayal of spectres as a chronicle's villains. In addition, this chapter contains supplementary rules pertinent to a spectre chronicle and details the creation of every spectre's nemesis, its Psyche.

## Chapter Four: Templates

Spectres outlined, perfect for off-the-cuff villains when the Storyteller is rushed, or to inspire players who are stuck for ideas concerning spectre characters.



# Lexicon



**Being:** The emotional essence and will-power of a spectre.

**Composure:** The force that powers the Psyche.

**Devoured:** Swallowed by Oblivion.

**Devouring, The:** The moment when a Shadow becomes dominant and Devours the Psyche, producing a spectre.

**Fronds:** The unique abilities possessed by the spectre's Psyche, akin to Thorns.

**Labyrinth, The:** Twining maze-like beneath the Tempest and the Shadowlands are the tunnels, caverns and galleries of the Labyrinth, wherein spectres make their homes.

**Primordial:** A common spectre term for one of the primal, nonhuman Malfeans.

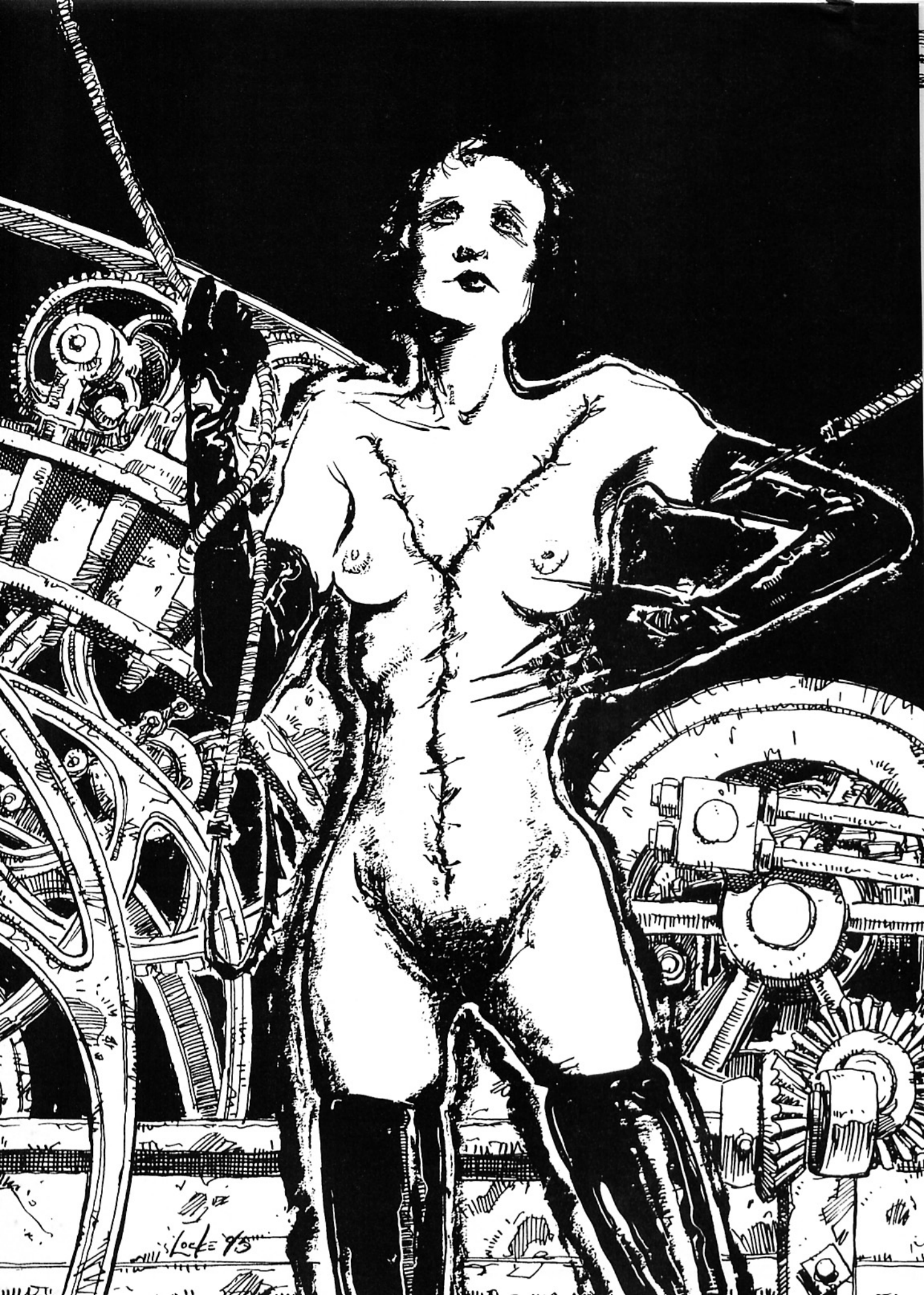
**Psyche:** All that remains of a spectre's higher self and nobler passions after being Devoured.

**Rapaciousness:** When a spectre is overwhelmed by a Dark Passion and seeks to devour whatever has enflamed that aspect of their personality.

**Redemption:** That rare moment when a spectre's Psyche is completely victorious, when spectre and Psyche are recombined. May be akin to Transcendence.

**Sinkholes:** The point of a nihil between the Shadowlands and the Labyrinth where it passes through the Tempest.







# Chapter One: Spectral Culture

*Ask me why I write so many poems about the dead  
And I tell you it is because there are so many of them.  
—Stephen J. Williams, "Flowers for the Dead"*



Although wraiths shun spectres and disdain lore concerning them, it is generally known that the ranks of spectres that regularly burst forth from the Tempest to harry the Shadowlands consist of several different types of allied creatures. Spectres are more than faceless, mindless thralls of Oblivion. They can be intelligent, inhuman or insane, and are often all at once. Spectres may set out upon a plan of action bewildering to wraiths, but one which conforms to their own dark dreams. Even spectres sometimes have hopes and goals, despite having been Devoured by Oblivion.

## Outsiders' Opinions Concerning Spectres

### Hierarchy

It is lucky for us that spectres exist. If there were not a foe against which we could have united Stygia, we would have had to invent one. All empires need external threats to provide cohesion, otherwise enemies rise up from within. As long as there exist spectres to battle, Stygia will remain strong.

—The Smiling Lord, General of the Grim Legion, victims of violence

### Renegades

The shackles spectres would place on us are those of madness and despair, which are even stronger than Stygian steel. Were ever the spectres to triumph, I fear even the Skinlands would fall before them.

— Myrmidia, agent of the Shattered Chain

### Heretics

Spectres are the Shadow of Stygia's empire. They have grown stronger since Charon closed the Temples of the Shining Ones and banned all religions from the Isle of Sorrow. Only by letting light into Stygia can spectres ever be vanquished.

— Pastor Veritas, First Church of Harmonic Accord

### Vampires

Many spirits would appear to be dominated by their bestial nature, just as some Kindred are. These wraiths are often of tortured appearance, and what powers they have are primal, reflecting their turbulent natures. Even so, if proper care is taken, the aspiring necromancer should be no more concerned if the spirit she converses with is Restless or wild. All are helpless before our art.

— Ramona Giovanni, of Clan Giovanni



### Werewolves

*The Wyrn has agents among the dead, just as among the living. It has long been our task to cull such spirits, just as our wolf cousins cull the sick beasts from a herd.*

— Long-Time-Running, Silent Strider

### Mages

*We bring the Good Death to those who are ready to die, even if they do not yet know it. Sadly, some spirits die before their time. Those wraiths called spectres are such spirits, mortals who have died badly. Thus are they tormented and angry after death. Bring them solace, my brothers. Bring them peace.*

—Mortimer, Euthanatos Mage

## Spectre Characteristics



All spectres possess certain abilities and weaknesses in common, although the strength of these abilities may vary among individual spectres.

### Brief Lives

Oblivion is a greedy master. A spectre's Corpus deteriorates rapidly in Oblivion's service, and spectres are constantly wracked by pain because of this, until their ultimate collapse into the Void ends their misery along with their existence. Few spectres last more than a dozen years in the Labyrinth before their Corpus disintegrates completely.

### Deathsense

The black light of Oblivion is the beacon which lights a spectre's world. Spectres radiate Oblivion; the flickering radiance can also be seen by them in other creatures. The stronger a wraith's Shadow, the more Oblivion light he radiates in a spectre's eyes. Humans close to death, and those in whom Dark Passions are strong, radiate Oblivion's black light too. Vampires burn strongly with Oblivion, and so are distinctly visible to spectres. Such beacons are often all a spectre can see of the world beyond the Shroud, and are the lanterns by which they hunt.

### Deathsight

Like wraiths, spectres perceive the world as tainted by decay. Because Oblivion is greater in spectres than in wraiths, the world they see is even more decayed than that through which wraiths move. The world of the spectre is dim and dreary, an apocalyptic landscape ravaged by Oblivion. Colors



are faded, sounds muffled, windows are cracked, and paint blistered and peeling. It is always overcast, dark and raining. Buildings appear scorched by fire or partially collapsed, slick puddles glisten unhealthily in the dim light of flooded cellars and gaping cesspits, while wraiths and other spectres appear skeletal, diseased or decayed.

## Dimmed Senses

Spectres lack the heightened senses of wraiths. Were they as hypersensitive, they would be deafened and blinded by the tumult of the Tempest through which they routinely travel (Indeed, powerful spectres dwell in the Tempest permanently, having gained the ability to manipulate its substance, providing them with everything they need). Spectres' senses are weaker than those of wraiths, making them slightly less perceptive than the average human (increase difficulty on all Perception-based rolls by 1). Sounds are muffled, touch is numbed, and eyesight is dimmed. Outside of the sensory overload of the Tempest, this is strictly a handicap.

## Distance

Spectres' distancing from life has some negative consequences. The Shroud is always harder for them to penetrate than it is for wraiths (difficulty is 1 higher than normal). Events in the Skinlands are even harder for a spectre to perceive. To most spectres, the Shadowlands are empty of mortals; they move through a wasteland populated by wraiths, with only faint shadows of the mortal world visible. Only with the greatest difficulty (difficulty on all rolls relating to Mental Traits is increased by 2) can spectres perceive and influence the Skinlands and its inhabitants.

## Hive-Mind

Spectres share a mass-mind, although not all are able to access it actively. Serving Oblivion's wishes before their own, much as ants might serve their queen, they are often linked telepathically to all other spectres. In this way they can communicate in the turbulent Tempest and access information they have not learned themselves, but which is stored in the great shared consciousness. This is easiest in the Tempest, which is saturated with the memories and experiences of every being ever to have succumbed to Oblivion.

## Rapacity

Spectres are souls pared down to raw emotion by the winds of the Tempest. Whenever they encounter a strong Passion akin to their Being which is equal to or greater than their Being Trait, a spectre becomes Rapacious. A Rapacious spectre must make a Being roll or Emote, attacking the Willpower of whatever creature sparked off the episode.

## The Psyche

Just as wraiths are tortured by their Shadow, so too are spectres tormented by a Psyche. The Psyche is all that remains of a spectre's higher self, and its ultimate goal is to guide the spectre away from Oblivion toward Redemption. The Psyche is weaker than the Shadow, for spectres are much closer to Oblivion than wraiths are to Transcendence. Every spectre hears the voice of its Psyche, although many resist the Psyche's urgings.

## A History of Spectres

*No time for heartache*

*No time to run and hide*

*No time for breaking down*

*No time to cry.*


—Sisters of Mercy, "No Time to Cry"



he first spectres were dragged screaming out of the Utter Darkness at the moment of the Sundering, born from the pain of Life's separation from Death. These spectres were the first Malfeans, Oblivion made incarnate. Birthed in agony, born aching and hating, they desired only an end to their pain even at the cost of all existence. Their tunneling beneath the Shadowlands has produced the Labyrinth, their home and hunting grounds, through which shriek endless soul-storms. A cacophony of howling winds and screaming souls roars and wails through the Labyrinth even today.

Just as Charon declared sovereignty over the masses of the dead who congregated on the shores of the Sunless Sea in the Shadowlands above, so too the Malfeans found their subjects ready and waiting for them below the Tempest. These dead souls Devoured by Oblivion were forged into armies by the Primals, who led them out into battle against the Ferrymen in order to capture their cargoes of souls. Captured souls, and sometimes even Ferrymen, were carried to the Void and sacrificed to Oblivion, making It ever stronger.

Charon countered the attacks, going alone down the Veinous Stair, deep into the Labyrinth. It is claimed by some spectres that during this time Charon swore a secret alliance with the Malfeans, who showed him the Void and foretold that his fate was to be devoured by it unless he joined forces with them. These same spectres claim that when Charon was lost in the battle with Gorool millennia later, he had in fact betrayed Stygia, and that he is even now sequestered in some distant stretch of the Labyrinth, preparing to lead the spectral armies in one final assault. Other spectres claim the Grand Artificer Nhudri, who walked with Charon when he eventu-



ally emerged from his first visit to the Labyrinth, was freed on the condition that Charon swore to eventually return to the Labyrinth to take his place.

Whether or not such claims are truth, what is true is that Charon's realm, designed to stave off Oblivion, only encouraged it. His authoritarian rule encouraged rebellion and disrespect, which strengthened the Shadows of Stygia's citizens. When his agents followed Rome, aiding its legions and encouraging the deaths of masses of mortals in battle, many such souls were swallowed by Oblivion. When mortals died *en masse*, the Tempest was sometimes ripped open by their passage, and it was through such tears that the Maelstroms escaped. Each Maelstrom was caused by the deaths of thousands, but also claimed thousands more souls for Oblivion.

The Third Great Maelstrom saw the darkness which surrounded Stygia become the Tempest as it is known today. This was a great triumph for spectres, and was partially due to the strategies and battle-plans of the Nephwrack Coldheart, once Cleitus the Black, a Macedonian general whom Alexander the Great betrayed. Coldheart had stolen many powerful Artifacts from the Renegades, who had in turn stolen them from Stygia. With these, and other, darker Artifacts forged from the walls of the Labyrinth, spectres managed to infect the darkness, causing it to rise up against Charon's legions while at the same time inflaming the lesser darkness within each wraith, the Shadow. The darkness was forever turbulent after the battle, infused with the Passions and memories of all the souls that succumbed to Oblivion during the fighting.

Spectres next triumphed during the Great War of the Skinlands, when the tactics of Stygia of encouraging death among mortals in order to harvest the flood of released souls were turned against them. The carnage in the trenches, at Ypres and Gallipoli, on land and at sea, unleashed the Fourth Maelstrom. Riding the shrieking winds came an army of spectres who were carried by the Maelstrom throughout the Shadowlands and the Dark Kingdoms. Many lesser Necropoli fell; many more were infiltrated by spectres in unprecedented numbers. Nor were the Skinlands safe from spectres, who guided more souls towards despair and disbelief over the coming years. Oblivion grew ever stronger, and the Shadowlands became more and more decayed, reflecting the spreading corruption.

When humans developed nuclear capability, the discovery advanced Oblivion's cause more than any other single scientific discovery. Shock waves from the atomic bombs triggered over Hiroshima and Nagasaki tore open the Tempest to an unprecedented degree. Ferrymen who witnessed the sight testify that the twinkling lights of the nihils overhead suddenly glared blindingly before the sky was torn open, and all sense and substance were gone. The Labyrinth's depths were exposed, and the Void spat out the most fearsome Maelstrom of all. In the silence after the winds died down, the oldest

Malfean of all, Gorool, woke from an eternity of sleep, bursting up out of the Tempest to do battle with Charon. The result of that battle is already well-known. Stygia has been weakened by the loss of its Emperor; its Deathlords bicker among themselves, and the Isle of Sorrows stands ripe and ready to fall.

Today, spectres populate the Tempest more thoroughly than they ever have. Many of them are a new breed called Mortwights, whose ever-increasing numbers place considerable strain upon spectral culture. Nihils open in every Necropolis, and in the dark tunnels of the Labyrinth Doppelgangers, Shades and other horrors stir. Soon, it is foretold, in words carved deep into the Labyrinth's walls in a chamber overlooking the Void, the last Great Maelstrom will arise, and Oblivion shall claim all. Spectres work feverishly towards that great day, undermining existence in Stygia and its enclaves to ensure they fall before Oblivion all the sooner.

## Spectral Society

*Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar.*  
— T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"



Despite their deranged appearance, spectres have a detailed and complex social order, rivaling that of the Hierarchy. Unlike their wraith foes, spectral society is not based on slavery or domination, although fear still plays a major part in their order.

Spectres have a social order based on caste. Strict segregation limits interaction between castes, and the Labyrinth constantly echoes with reverential greetings between Nephwracks and Mortwights, Striplings and Shades.

In this orchestrated society, spectres obey a system not upheld by violence and coercion, but by intensity of emotion. The stronger the Dark Passions a spectre has, the more respected it is among members of its own caste. Of course, no matter how Passionate a Doppelganger is, in the strict caste system, it would still be considered inferior to a Shade or a Nephwrack. Shades, although largely unintelligent, are bowed to by Nephwracks and Doppelgangers alike, for their physical might and insane demeanor make their reactions impossible to predict. Shades burn with violent passions; their hates and lusts dominate them utterly. Being such creatures of passion, they are correspondingly closer to Oblivion, and thus are to be looked up to (and feared).



Spectral society is strained at present, as a new kind of spectre has begun to appear with increasing regularity. These newcomers died such violent or traumatic deaths that they become spectres immediately upon dying. As these beings, called Mortwights, are a recent arrival on the spectral scene, the other castes have not yet decided where such creatures fit in their social order. These casteless spectres are currently considered inferior to Doppelgangers, but their sheer mass of numbers may soon force the issue. They have already proved themselves fierce fighters and skilled tacticians during assaults and infiltrations of Stygia. It will not be long before some leader steps out from among their ranks and demands recognition for their kind. Even the Malfeans, the priest-kings of Oblivion, seem puzzled by the appearance of these new spectres, and there is a sense that the Mortwight presence has upset many carefully laid Malfean plans.

## What Spectres Do

The death-light of Oblivion is the light by which spectres hunt their prey: human souls. As agents of Oblivion, spectres harvest the souls of those mortals in whom Dark Passions are strong. Although spectres may not even be able to see the mortals upon whom they prey, the black glow of Oblivion is often enough to tell them that mortals are present

beyond the Shroud. As spectres grow more powerful, they learn certain skills which aid them in harvesting Oblivion-tainted mortal spirits. They believe this frees the Oblivion that individual souls contain, strengthening their Master and bringing the world ever closer to its end.

Soul-hunting is not always an active process. Although some spectres seek to bring a swift and violent death to their prey, others make the hunt a drawn-out and terrifying process, feeding on repeated bursts of fear and anguish their targets release before disincorporating them. Such assaults by spectres are often the basis for stories of hungry and vengeful ghosts, wherein the victims eventually die of fright. Other, more patient spectres adopt strategies which encourage the souls to come to them.

Spectres practice varied tactics, which range from the cunning to the brutal. Some haunt the scene of their death, dispatching a progression of mortals in an identical way. Others simply wander the Shadowlands, attacking whomever they come across. Spectres have been known to materialize in a car, forcing the driver to swerve off the road or into an oncoming vehicle. They might drive a mortal to the brink of despair and suicide, or whisper into the ears of the already unstable until that mortal snaps, embarking on a killing spree.

Wraiths are also subject to attack by spectres. Packs of spectres frequently attack wraiths who dare the byways of the Tempest. Other spectres seek to subvert the Shadowlands' Necropoli,





posing as wraiths and worming their way into the Hierarchy to the point where they can do the most damage. Renegades and Heretics are also infiltrated by spectres in a similar manner.

All spectres know they have a limited existence, and many celebrate the fact. Some spectres seek to end their existence as swiftly as possible, and throw themselves suicidally against Stygia's Legions. They exist on the edge, hard and fast and without fear. Other spectres are content to wait for Oblivion to claim them in Its own time, and are more methodical in their ways. All are evil, implacable, relentless and menacing. No other supernatural culture can rival spectres for their sheer malice; all are entropy incarnate, and are as malevolent as they come.

## Oblivion

*Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion.*

— T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"



Spectres perceive Oblivion as a force to be encouraged, not feared. Only through the triumph of Oblivion can the entire world be destroyed and spectres gain the peace they crave. Spectres actively seek to promote Oblivion in order that all may be annihilated. Whether rebirth will follow this

destruction, or whether all will be a peaceful emptiness, few spectres know or care. All that matters is that their torment will be at an end.

Faith, knowledge and identity stave off Oblivion, or so the Hierarchy claims. Spectres know this to be true, and so seek to destroy faith, erase knowledge and submerge individual identity in order to bring Oblivion ever closer. By encouraging the spread of cynicism, hopelessness and lack of faith in gods and governments, spectres advance Oblivion's cause. The banner of despair is flown by spectres, even though many sustain a hope of their own, that of peace through annihilation.

Oblivion is both a god and a way of life for spectres. Some Malfians have perpetrated the concept of Oblivion as a sentient, incarnate deity, and claim to be Its priests. Other Malfians promote themselves as gods, sometimes to spectres, more often to misguided mortal cultists and deluded supernatural disciples. Regardless of their creed, all spectres serve Oblivion. It is to free the Oblivion inside all living and dying creatures, from wraiths and other supernaturals to the tiniest mortal lives, that spectres spread entropy and destruction. Every particle of Oblivion freed increases the strength of the Void, and it is the devout spectral hope that one day soon the Void will grow so vast that it devours everything.





## The Tempest

*The night sky is only a sort of carbon paper,  
Blue-black, with the much poked periods of stars  
Letting in the light, peephole after peephole  
A bonewhite light, like death, behind all things.*

— Sylvia Plath, "Insomniac"

To spectres, the Tempest is a place of comfort and familiarity; to wraiths, it is a shifting, shapeless nightmare. The Tempest is the surface of Oblivion, the interface between substance and nothingness. It is a sea of souls and madness. The dreams and memories of those lost within it sometimes drift like flotsam near its surface. It is from such fading memories that spectres can draw forth the props they employ during a wraith's Harrowing.

Below the surface of the Tempest lie the nightmare warrens of the Labyrinth, while above it nihils allow pinpricks of light from the Shadowlands through. Particularly deep nihils plunge through the Tempest and continue down into the Labyrinth. The Tempest drains through such nihils, known as sinkholes. Sometimes spectres will open sinkholes in the midst of well-traveled byways and wait patiently for unsuspecting wraiths to be drawn to their doom. It is by sinkholes that spectres sometimes cluster in the Labyrinth, listening to echoes from where the nihil opens in the Shadowlands.

The Tempest usually manifests as an ocean, sometimes consisting of water, sometimes of blood or souls. Byways, whether roads, train tracks or placid canals, cut across its surface. Their form is changeable, as is their direction. It is rare to see the Tempest calm, unless traveling in the presence of a Ferryman. Often it is a storm-tossed sea of towering waves and shrieking winds. Fog, foam and spray obscures vision and rips words away from one's mouth. It is usually impossible to see or hear anything of detail while gripped by a Tempest-storm.

If one can travel far enough across the Tempest, the Far Shores await, Heavens and Hells populated by a variety of souls. Few are the final destination they claim to be, which waits only in Transcendence, if at all. The Void also waits for travelers, and can be considered akin to the fictitious "Edge of the World" once believed in by mortals. Unwary travelers in the Tempest may fall over the edge of the Void and be consumed. Like the oceans of the mortal world, the depths of the Tempest are mysterious and inhabited by many strange and monstrous creatures, Plasmics, Demonics and others. These are described in detail in *Sea of Shadows*, as is the Tempest itself.

## The Labyrinth

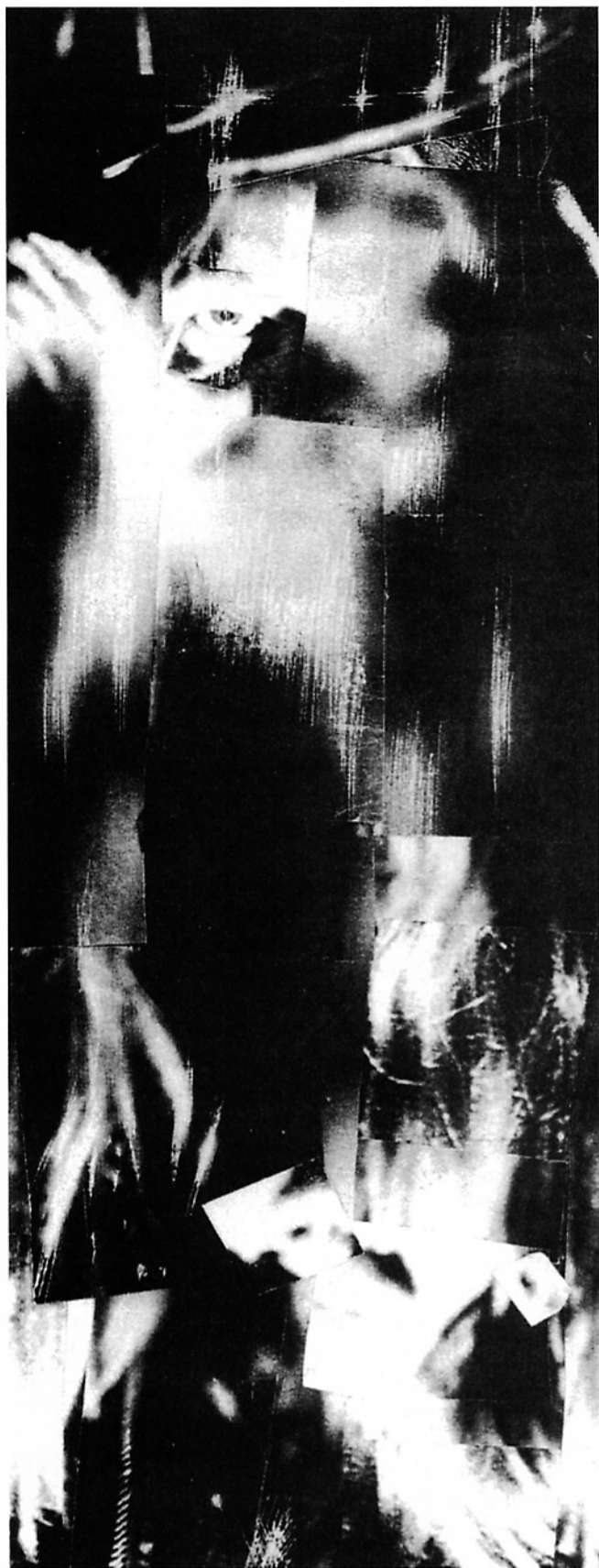
It is in the Labyrinth that most wraiths find themselves should they be subjected to a Harrowing. Other wraiths stumble across the Labyrinth while navigating the Tempest, often mistaking the gloomy tunnels they discover for byways. Woe unto those wraiths who tread such paths, for while spectres may occasionally be found lurking on byways, the twisting halls of the Labyrinth swarm with their numbers.

The terrain of the Labyrinth varies greatly; one passage may resemble a drafty, dripping dungeon, all flagstones and chains; another might appear as an subway access tunnel, whitewashed walls and buzzing fluorescent lights flicking on and off overhead, while a third may be a rough-hewn tunnel of sickly pink marble shot through with black veins. The Labyrinth's appearance is ever-changing, although its nature remains the same. The Labyrinth underlies the entire Underworld, and spectres use its secret routes to traverse the Shadowlands, Skinlands and Tempest. It is said that Charon once walked every passageway of the Labyrinth, but no other wraith has done so. Regardless of where the Labyrinth is entered, all its twisting, maze-like tunnels lead in the same direction: toward the dark heart of Oblivion.

## The Void

The leaden core of the Underworld is called the Void. It is here that all Maelstroms have their genesis. Created from utter nothingness, these raging storms of pure Oblivion roar through the Labyrinth, bursting out through the surface of the Tempest to shriek across the unsuspecting Shadowlands. It is often events in the Skinlands which trigger the release of Maelstroms, although in this day and age lesser Maelstroms sometimes howl across the Shadowlands with no apparent cause.

The Void lies at the center of the Tempest. Its mouth is said to resemble a gargantuan whirlpool, a rushing, roaring vortex leading down into nothingness. The pit at the bottom of this vortex is the Void proper, the endless darkness that is the birthplace of Oblivion. Numerous openings, caves, pits and passageways, the trap-door exits of the Labyrinth, open out into the vortex overlooking the Void. This terrible sight is often the last thing witnessed by any wraith drawn here. Once plunged down into this primal manifestation of Oblivion, none emerge. So great are the powers of Oblivion in this place that not even spectres return from the Void; any being that enters it is consumed wholly.



It is one of the paradoxes of Oblivion that its birthplace is a deathtrap for everything else. It is the Void which denies immortality; all things come here eventually, though most pass through unheeding and unknowing.

Nothing lives, or exists, at the mouth of the Void. Not even spectres can stand to be so close to that which they serve and fear, and that which devours them. There is nothing known of the other side, and nothing ever comes through. There are not even any rumors of creatures who exist in the Void. It is nothingness without end, entropy made manifest.

## Spectres and Their Kind

*So sad now.*

*No way out.*

*The bottom of despair.*

— Pansy Division, "Deep Water"

## Doppelgangers: The Shadow-Eaten




Those unhappy wraiths who are overcome by their Shadows initially become the spectres known as Doppelgangers. It is from their ranks that Malfeans enlist agents to spy upon the Shadowlands. Doppelgangers retain Fetters and so are able to venture into the Shadowlands for considerable periods of time. They may, as their name suggests, use their high levels of the Arcanos Moliato to imitate powerful or important wraiths. With their new faces, they discredit the wraith they are imitating and work to estrange her allies. Doppelgangers are also responsible for furthering the taint of Oblivion among the Quick. To this end, they employ the Arcanoi Embody, Keening, Outrage and Pandemonium to spread fear, despair and other negative emotions throughout the Skinlands.

It is in this role that Doppelgangers do the most damage, although wraiths who have suffered from their machinations in the Shadowlands may dispute such claims. Doppelgangers delight in driving mortals mad, edging them ever closer to suicidal despair and homicidal rage. Like the Restless, but alone among the spectres, Doppelgangers frequent Skinland haunts. Often they choose the scene of their death, or a location similarly important to them in life. Here their unseen presence contaminates the surrounding area with negative emotions: fury, melancholy, rage.

As well as causing harm to mortals, Doppelgangers also play havoc with the Skinland Fetters of wraiths. By encouraging reclamation and rebuilding projects, they ensure locations important to wraiths are destroyed or transformed beyond rec-





ognition. They also delight in encouraging mortal firebugs to commit arson with similar effects. Other Doppelgangers skinride unwilling mortals in order to more directly assault wraiths' Fetters — burning books, irreparably vandalizing memorials, and similar activities, as well as spreading chaos by embarking on shooting sprees and other destructive acts.

Doppelgangers are paler, thinner and less substantial than wraiths, although not so obviously as to draw attention to their appearance. Their triumphant Shadow is always visible in their eyes. A Doppelganger's eyes might be hollow and empty, leaden with sorrow or blazing with hate. Deathmarks resembling post-mortem lividity are often blotched across their Corpus like cancerous sarcomas. However, by manipulating their Corpus with Moliat, Doppelgangers can hide all signs of their Oblivion-taint save for their eyes. Alert wraiths can learn to spot a Doppelganger by closely examining her gaze. As noted in *Sea of Shadows*, Doppelgangers are often divided into camps depending on their Arcanoi. Doppelgangers with skill in Keening are known as Banshees, while those especially skilled in Moliat become Actors and Doubles. The intricate sub-cultures that exist among Doppelgangers are usually of no concern to anyone except Doppelgangers, who take a perverse pride in their actions, Arcanoi and position.

## Nephwracks: The Transformed

A Doppelganger whose appearance is so transformed by the decay of Oblivion that he can no longer pass as a wraith is known as a Nephwrack. Retaining their intelligence and identity, they are often found as servants and attendants at Malfean courts. Nephwracks sometimes serve as the priests of spectral society, interpreting the dreams of their sleeping masters. They act as emissaries and heralds too, flitting between the Skinlands, Shadowlands and the Tempest with abandon. Nephwracks are truly hideous creatures by wraith standards, and are usually only encountered by those Restless who travel deep into the Tempest. Occasionally nihils lead directly to a Nephwrack's lair, although this is rare.

Nephwracks, like Doppelgangers, are still capable of employing Arcanoi. The taint of Oblivion is always obvious on a Nephwrack. Its touch warps these Spectres into mocking caricatures of their mortal selves, the evidence of their triumphant Shadow present for all to see. A heroin addict's Corpus might bear ulcerated, gaping puncture marks where she injected the killing drug into her veins. The face of a Nephwrack who was a heavy drinker in life is bulbous, pock-marked and traced with broken capillaries, his body bloated and swollen. A wife-beater's visage is a twisted mask of rage, eyes white-hot, hands permanently clenched into club-like fists. Nephwracks often possess high levels of the Arcanos Keening, with which they bombard their enemies with dark emotions.

## Shades: Children of Oblivion

Restless who are Devoured by the Tempest, lost to their Shadows during a Harrowing, or swallowed by Oblivion during a Maelstrom become Shades. The violence of such encounters strips away most of the wraith's personality and intellect, leaving the newborn Shade a mindless, howling beast. Shades seek only to destroy, corrupt and annihilate. They radiate the cold black light of Oblivion more strongly than Doppelgangers and Nephwracks; it surrounds them like an aura. The stronger a Shade is, the stronger the flickering cloud of un-light that surrounds them.

Shades are the most monstrous of all commonly encountered spectres. Their Corpus is invariably twisted into hideous and frightening visages. Like barghests, Shades are often bestial and animalistic in appearance. Shades may be emaciated and skeletal, their Corpus stripped back to the bone. Sometimes they appear as demonic, horned and scaled monsters out of human myth, while at other times they are little more than a gaping maw and wicked claws held together by a tangle of sinews and torn skin. Shades are the shock troops of Oblivion, knowing no purpose other than destruction and death. Whenever spectres attack in force, Shades will always be among their numbers. They are at the forefront of every Maelstrom, riding the soul-storms across the Shadowlands and destroying any wraith in their path. They are notorious for running amok, and engage in stampedes and swarmings. Most other spectres avoid Shades as best they can.

## Mortwights: The New-Fallen

Mortwights are spectres who died with such violence that they became spectres instantly, without spending any time in the Shadowlands. Recent arrivals in the Tempest, they have been a political force since the time of the Fifth Maelstrom. They are becoming increasingly common to the point where they may soon have the numbers to challenge the caste system, which places them as socially inferior to Doppelgangers.

Mortwights are remarkably adept at navigating the Tempest in all its guises, from the Sea of Souls to the Sea of Shadows. As warriors against Stygia and the Dark Empires, they are superb. Their command over the Tempest is strong enough that most Mortwights excel at calling matter and memories out of the storm. These can be used for props when Harrowing a wraith, as weapons when the spectre is waylaying a vehicle traveling a distant byway, or however the Mortwright sees fit. Mortwights, of all spectres, maintain their mortal appearance the most closely. Their eyes are not Shadow-darkened, nor are their bodies hideously ravaged by Oblivion. The only obvious mark of Oblivion they bear is their death wound, whatever it may be. In the Tempest, this wound bleeds constantly without harming the wraith, leaking minute amounts



of Corpus that are instantly replaced. If a Mortwight leaves the Tempest for the Shadowlands, he begins to lose Corpus at a rate of 2 points per day. Without this physical limitation restricting their movement beyond the Tempest, Mortwights would no doubt gain more respect from other spectres, who perceive them as flawed because of this debilitating weakness.

## Striplings: The Never-Lived

These are spectres born from children who died before they were 10 years old. The time a Stripling spends in the Shadowlands is usually even briefer than their mortal span, if indeed they are not instantly catapulted into Oblivion. The ranks of the Mortwights are made up predominantly of Striplings, although there exist Stripling Doppelgangers, Nephwracks and Shades. They form a clique among themselves, a separatist group which, to the horror of many spectres, crosses the boundaries of caste.

Unti the last century and the Industrial Revolution, Striplings were rare. Those children who died in previous centuries were usually enslaved by Stygia as raw materials immediately upon entering the Shadowlands. The occasional Stripling born made little impact among spectres until the year 1213 and the aftermath of the Children's Crusade. From among the thousands of children who died and the handful of those who became spectres came the Stripling called Jemima Screech. Led by Screech and her successors (for she herself has long since succumbed to the Void), Striplings have become a united group, although it was not until the Industrial Revolution that the deaths of children under the appalling conditions of the factories birthed their kind in any great number. They have become even more common in the brutal and bloody wars of the 20th century.

Although still fewer in number than their spectre peers, Striplings are now a large and organized group, and a definite threat to the stability of spectral society. Striplings appear as corrupt manifestations of children. Some are skeletal, others drip worms or are bloated and disfigured. All speak with soft, high voices, their sometimes lisped or childish pronouncements belying the venom and malevolence of the meaning of their words.

Striplings exist to bring other children closer to Oblivion. In the Shadowlands they present themselves as playmates to child Enfants, and work to provoke their Shadows. Of all spectres, Striplings excel at the Dark Arcanoi Shroud-Rending, allowing them considerable influence over the Quick. In the Skinlands, Striplings encourage children to play with power sockets and pots of boiling water, to bite electric cables and chase balls into traffic. Their skill at such coercions is reflected in the increasing number of Striplings flooding into the Tempest.



# Malfeans: The God-Kings of Oblivion

Malfeans have been mistakenly identified by many wraiths as simply spectres that have grown great by devouring the essences of lesser spectres and wraiths. Although this is true of some Malfeans, the oldest among them were created at the moment of the Sundering. Others have joined their ranks over the intervening centuries, but are noticeably dwarfed by the elders.

These primal Malfeans are known variously as the Never Dead, Grotesques or sometimes as Primordials, while Malfeans who have climbed from the ranks of spectres, fattened on the Corpus of friend and foe alike, are called Plotters, or more commonly, Cabalists. Regardless of their breed, all Malfeans lair in the Labyrinth, often in cavern dens that were gnawed out of nothingness at the Sundering. Here they can slumber for centuries, awakening to declare invasions of this Dark Kingdom or that Necropolis, to speak of the dreams of Oblivion and of the endless peace that awaits in Nothingness. Nephwracks swarm and fawn around them, and armies of Shades await their commands.

Malfeans are the god-kings of spectral society. Terrible, twisted beings, they almost never leave their lairs within the Tempest. When they do, it is to spread chaos and suffering on an unheard-of scale. The death or disappearance of Charon was at the claws of the Malfean known as Gorool. Other Malfeans of note include Lamachis the Devourer, whose wanderings traverse the Shadowlands of the Americas; Rabark the Inhabited, whose corpulent mass is inhabited by numerous lesser spectres burrowing through her Corpus like so many parasites; and Mulhecturous, a foul putrescence whose Nephwrack servitors are responsible for spreading disease and death among her mortal worshippers.

Mulhecturous the Filth Goddess is not the only Malfean to be worshipped by deluded mortals. Many Malfeans have chosen to spread Oblivion by setting themselves up as deities, worshipped by the Quick and the dead alike. These beings often employ Nephwracks to manifest and possess their mortal cultists in order to provide proof of their supernatural power. Such mortal cults are often innocent of what it is they worship, believing themselves to be servants of Satanic or other spiritual entities. Under the aegis of their divinity, these cults spread degradation and despair throughout the Skinlands.

While many Malfeans are content to be worshipped, others, such as Lamachis, seek more palpable power. Their servants are often skinridden mortals in governments and multinational corporations. Such influence also extends into the Shadowlands. More than one Heretic cult and Renegade gang is secretly under the influence of a Malfean, wittingly or unwittingly advancing the cause of Oblivion even as they claim to be attaining Transcendence or freedom from the Hierarchy.










# Chapter Two: Spectres as Characters

*Nevertheless... my rebirth has taught me the torment of beginnings, while the idea of endings has assumed in my thoughts a tranquil significance.*

— Thomas Ligotti, "The Lost Art of Twilight"



pectre characters are for roleplayers who like to play with passion and intensity. Spectres know that their existence is brief, and they throw themselves into their role of destroyers, seeking to extinguish themselves all the sooner through exhaustion or violent death. They are creatures of utter nihilism, hoping only that they might end their own pain by ending all existence. In all other regards they are uncaring and angry, despairing, hateful, bitter, sadistic and twisted. In playing a spectre, you may find the character functioning as an outlet for your personal frustrations, fears and repressed urges. This can be a frightening realization, the discovery that a fictional character is so deeply rooted in yourself, but it can also be a cathartic one.

**Dark Reflections:** Spectres is hardly psychotherapy, however. It is a game. Spectres are creatures of utmost darkness. By mortal standards they are utterly and completely evil. Everything about them that is good or kind has been scoured away by Oblivion. By choosing to play a spectre, you have chosen to play a character that manifests your every worst trait. Such roleplaying is demanding and intensive, and thus not for everyone. This chapter describes how you can create a spectre character. Players are advised to first refamiliarize themselves with character generation in **Wraith: The Oblivion** before creating a spectre character. This chapter also offers advice on roleplaying technique for spectre characters, concerning motivation and spectre psychology. Details concerning Dark Arcanoi and other skills and backgrounds are also covered in this chapter.



## Playing a Spectre

**I**n a chronicle dealing with spectres, the players take on the roles of evil creatures. Spectres desire no redemption, and seek no understanding. This is no religious sect, only evil when seen from an outsider's point of view; spectres are irredeemably evil. Vampires seek self-understanding through inner peace and contact with their Beast. Wraiths seek completion and finality through resolution of past inadequacies. Spectres seek nothing but destruction. The "a beast I am lest a beast I become" anguish of **Vampire: The Masquerade** is not relevant to spectres, who are not given to such introspection, nor to seeking excuses for their deeds.

When you play a spectre, you should attempt to personalize the destructive urge. A *Dark Reflections* chronicle has the potential to become quite tedious if there is no real distinction between the spectre characters save for their degree of skill in the various Dark Arcanoi. As a spectre player, you should try to choose a particular Dark Passion and embody its destructive aspects and urges, just as your character's Being is the essence of such Passions. Are you destructive be-

cause of rage, jealousy or hatred? It should be possible to say of a spectre character, "she is hate personified," or "he is pure jealousy." All of these motivations, though equally able to produce evil behavior, provide focus for a spectre character, allowing each character to be unique.

Nothing is as final as the instant when a wraith, or indeed a mortal, becomes a spectre. Spectres hunt in packs not for companionship but because the hive-mind of Oblivion infects them all. This herd mentality produces little concern for the well-being of their fellows, as it is useless to make attachments when all existence is transitory, especially one's own. Such concerns as pity, cooperation and comradeship hardly influence a spectre at all. Spectres are motivated by two things: surcease from the pain of Oblivion which wracks them and Dark Passion. Spectres exist to express and spread the various hatreds, lusts, guilts and fears which drive them, and indeed, which give them life.

Spectres are short-lived. Oblivion wracks them constantly and soon claims them. The knowledge of their incipient destruction empowers spectres, giving them the strength to fight on. Because they do not fear destruction, and indeed actively seek it, spectres are usually unconcerned with survival, and will attack again and again, even when the odds are against them.



Because of the brief and brutal nature of a spectre's existence, and the similar nature of spectre chronicles, it is recommended that players do not become too attached to their characters. Character deterioration in the face of Oblivion is likely to be rapid. This is not a game of long developments and infinite detail; it is a fast and brutal exploration of simple ideas. Knowledge of their impending doom and the gnawing agony of their very existence motivate spectres in their suicidally intense deeds. In choosing to play a spectre, you have chosen to play a fanatical, despairing, remorseless monster without conscience or mercy.

## Servants of Oblivion

*Nothing can stay my glance  
Until that glance run in the world's despite  
To where the damned have howled away their hearts.*  
— W.B. Yeats, "All Souls' Night"



o a spectre, Oblivion is lover and queen, general and torturer, history and future. To be a spectre is to exist in Purgatory, between the initial fall to Oblivion and the final one. Spectral existence, instead of being a program of spiritual cleansing, may very well be more punishment than

reward. Oblivion is a demanding master, and spectres live in a reality of pain. How can they not loathe that which waits hungrily to claim them, and that which drives them forward as its minions? For many spectres, the sole reason to serve the hated and feared Oblivion is their greater and more acute hatred of those that live and the Restless who cling pathetically to them.

Some spectres see themselves as soldiers, others as priests. Just as many have no such self-awareness and no consciousness that wraiths can understand. Others seek to find some meaning or advantage in their service of Oblivion. The eldest Malfeans have been self-serving so long that Oblivion is seldom a concern for them. These Malfeans will all eventually be claimed by Oblivion, but defer the end by devouring the lesser spectres around them. Many captured wraiths, after their usefulness has expired, are also sacrificed to the Malfeans, who devour them. In this way, and too through the use of strange and powerful Dark Arcanoi, they manage to stave off Oblivion almost indefinitely. They serve nothing but themselves, motivated by their personal desire to cheat Oblivion, and to hasten it for others.

Many other Malfeans still serve Oblivion and seek universal extinction, but their personal goals and desires become caught up in this aim, and so gargantuan plots and policies are instigated, catching up lesser spectres or grinding them beneath their wheels.

This kind of duplicity is common in spectre thinking. Doppelgangers seek to lure more wraiths into the service of Oblivion, a service which they themselves loathe. They gain temporary relief from their pain by the thought of the wraith's impending agony; thus do the ranks of Oblivion swell. It has been suggested by some wraiths that Doppelgangers merely seek companions in their torment, but most believe that the hollow ache of Oblivion has driven any such desires from all but the youngest of spectres. For other spectres it is hard to make generalizations about the role in their lives which Oblivion claims. While some serve it willingly, others do their duty grudgingly, and others still embrace the madness and learn to love Oblivion.

## Character Creation

*Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow*  
— T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"



he creation of spectre characters proceeds as for wraiths for the large part. Please refer to **Wraith: The Oblivion** for further information where detailed character creations notes are not given here. As when creating a wraith, your character begins the game as a relatively inexperienced spectre,

only recently claimed by Oblivion. Your Storyteller may allow you to play a character from some distant historical period, for your spectre may have existed as a wraith in the Shadowlands for many hundreds of years before being Devoured.

## Step One: Concept



our character begins with a concept, a general description of what kind of spectre you want to play. Your character will become more clearly defined as the character creation proceeds. First, determine how your character lived, and how he or she died. As spectres have no regrets to bind them to the Skinlands, you should instead determine how your character was Devoured. Did Oblivion claim you instantly as you died? Was it a slow and torturous battle against your Shadow? Were you lost in the Tempest, captured by a Malfean or swallowed by a Maelstrom? Write down your decision next to Birth, Death and Devoured on the spectre character sheet.



## Nature and Demeanor

Choose your character's Nature and Demeanor from the archetypes given for Shadows in **Wraith: The Oblivion**.

## Caste

What kind of a spectre are you? This is primarily determined by the manner in which you were claimed by Oblivion. Each spectre caste has unique weaknesses and abilities, outlined below.

## Doppelgangers

Having been devoured by their Shadow, an all too common occurrence, Doppelgangers are the lowest caste of spectres, save for Mortwights. They are rank and file troops of Oblivion.

Doppelgangers are the closest of any spectres to wraiths; they retain Fetters, which allow them to remain in the Shadowlands. By the same token, though, they are uniquely suited to the infiltration of wraith society. Doppelgangers may possess any Arcanos normally available to wraiths. They also have access to Dark Arcanoi. Doppelgangers have the same number of points to spend during character creation as do wraiths, except that they receive six points to distribute among their Arcanoi.

## Nephwracks

These spectres are Doppelgangers on whom Oblivion Itself has worked Its art. Their Corpus is so transformed that Moliarte can no longer conceal the extent that Oblivion has affected them. Nephwracks consider these transformations a sign of Oblivion's blessing.

They are the caste above Doppelgangers, and are the artists, priests and public servants of the Labyrinth. Other than their appearance, Nephwracks scarcely differ from Doppelgangers (a point of some contention among certain of that caste). Nephwracks have eight points to distribute among their Arcanoi, and may possess both wraith and Dark Arcanoi. However, they have no Fetters.

## Shades

Shades personify Dark Passion, and are the shock troops of spectral society. Even Nephwracks bow before Shades, at least publicly. The highest caste among spectres save the Malfeans, Shades were originally Devoured by Oblivion during a Harrowing, a Maelstrom or in the Tempest. Shades only have access to the Dark Arcanos, and have five dots to distribute among them. Shades gain 12 points to divide among their Dark Emotions. They also have access to unique Shade

powers. Some of these, such as Shark's Teeth, Pathos Drain and Rend the Lifeweb, are described in **Wraith: The Oblivion**. New Shade powers are listed below. Shade characters begin the game with only one Shade power, although more can be purchased with freebie points (5 freebie points each).

## Mortwights

Mortals who were claimed by Oblivion at the instant of their death join the caste known as Mortwights. They are largely confined to the Labyrinth and the Tempest. Though excelling as troops in direct assaults against Stygia, Mortwights are the lowest caste of spectral society. They have begun to chafe against their bonds as their numbers swell. Like Shades, Mortwights are limited to Dark Arcanoi; however, they have six points to distribute among them as they choose. One point must be automatically invested in the Dark Arcanos Tempest-Weaving, at which Mortwights are especially skilled.

## Striplings

The spectres of children, Striplings are not a caste, but a unique group among spectres who disdain the caste system's restrictions. Not all spectre children are Striplings, but all

## New Shade Powers


**Talons:** The Shade can do aggravated damage with its claws, Strength +1

**Miasmal Breath:** This power allows the Shade to exhale a noxious vapor, akin in nature to the black winds of Oblivion that whirl through the Labyrinth. Victims caught in the noxious exhalation lose one point each from their Corpus (Health Levels if mortal) per Angst point the spectre sacrifices. Such damage cannot be soaked or resisted.

**Tempest Wrack:** At the cost of two points of Angst and one point of Being, the Shade can infect the Tempest around her with her own inner turmoil. This results in the Tempest becoming wracked by storms, creates whirlpools where there were once placid byways, etc.

**Siphon Emotion:** The Shade can directly attack the Passions of an opponent, and convert drained Passion points to Dark Passions. Each point so drained increases the Shade's dominant Dark Passion and its Being by one. The Shade must successfully grapple its opponent in combat, and then attempt to overcome the target's Pathos with its Being in an opposed roll.





Striplings are children. Like children, they are limited by all those restrictions placed upon playing a child, such as certain maximum Strength, etc. Striplings have only 6/4/2 points to distribute among their Attributes. They have only have eight points to distribute among their Dark Passions. Striplings may or may not have Fetters, depending on what other caste they are associated with.

They have access to standard wraith Arcanoi, as well as Dark Arcanoi, and have eight points to distribute among them. Striplings begin play with a dot in the Dark Arcanos Shroud-Rending.

## Malfeans

It is generally suggested that players do not take Malfeans as their characters, unless in particularly unusual circumstances. Malfeans are beings of enormous capabilities. They cycle through periods of long sleep, alternating with fierce outbreaks. Immense, ancient and unknowable, their dreams and visions guide spectres toward the end of the world.

## Step Two: Attributes

Prioritize the three categories of Attributes as in Wraith, modified by any restrictions due to your caste, as above.

## Step Three: Abilities

Prioritize the three categories of Abilities as in Wraith, modified by any restrictions due to your caste, as above.

## Step Four: Advantages

### Arcanoi and Dark Arcanoi



Each caste has a variable number of dots to assign among the various Arcanoi, as described in your spectre's caste notes. Not all spectres have access to standard wraith Arcanoi, but Dark Arcanoi are unrestricted. All spectres, regardless of caste, begin the game with one dot in the Dark

Arcanos Hive-Mind.

Spectres who botch on a roll to use a regular Arcanos gain Composure insted of Angst where applicable.

## Backgrounds

All spectres, regardless of caste, receive only five dots to distribute among their chosen Backgrounds. Of those Background Traits available to wraiths, spectres may not possess Eidolon, Notoriety or Wealth. The Storyteller may choose to restrict or deny certain other Backgrounds depending on the nature of his chronicle.

### New Background: Shadowlands

• You have heard rumors of the Shadowlands, but have never seen them; you have only just learned of its existence.

•• You have visited the Shadowlands a few times. You know no more about the Shadowlands than would a wraithly Enfant.

••• You have considerable experience in the Shadowlands, equal to that of a Lemure.

•••• Your knowledge of the Shadowlands is legendary, but there are still secrets even you have not yet fathomed. You know as much as a Domem.

••••• None know more about the Shadowlands than you, its backwaters, secrets and mysteries. Your knowledge is akin to a powerful Gaunt, and doubtless rivals most Malfeans'.

## Dark Passions

As previously noted, spectres are primarily motivated by their Dark Passions. The highest individual Dark Passion possessed by a spectre determines the character's Being. The more total points the spectre has in Dark Passions also determines its place within its own caste.

Like wraiths, spectres receive 10 dots to distribute among their Dark Passions, modified by their caste. These may later be adjusted with freebie points.

Dark Passions are generally expressed as a sentence detailing the meaning of the passion, followed by a one word summation of the particular passion involved; for example, Destroy the Hierarchy (Hate), or Advance the Decay of the Shadowlands (Envy). Other Dark Passions include Lust, Greed, Malice, Bitterness and Jealousy. Think about your Nature and Demeanor when determining your Dark Passions; your Nature especially might suggest certain passions to you. Dark Passions are also often directed at former Fetters the spectre may have held as a wraith. The highest of your Dark Passions determines your Being. If two or more Dark Passions are of equal level, choose which passion determines your Being.



## Fetters

Only Doppelgangers and Mortwights have Fetters. These should be chosen by the player as described in **Wraith**. The Fetters of a spectre generally relate to painful moments in the character's life, such as the hospital delivery room where a character's wife died in childbirth, or the liquor store where he purchased the alcohol he thereafter used to drink himself to death.

The site of the character's death is a common Fetter among Doppelgangers. Fetters possessed by spectres cannot be resolved, but they can be destroyed.

## Step Five: Finishing Touches

### Angst



pectres use Angst to power their Arcanoi. All spectres start off with 5 Angst, although they may gain more with freebie points before beginning play. The Angst Pool cannot exceed 10 points.

Spectres regain Angst through their Dark Passions the same way wraiths gain Pathos from their Passions.

### Being

Instead of Willpower, spectres have a trait called Being, which determines their emotional essence and spiritual strength, as well as their self-control. Like Willpower, spectres have both permanent and temporary Being. Temporary Being is used to power certain Dark Arcanoi, while permanent Being is used in situations where Willpower would otherwise be. Being also determines how likely a spectre is to become Rapacious. Temporary Being can be spent to increase a character's chance of completing an action.

A spectre's Being is determined by the highest of its Dark Passions, and so usually begins at a rating somewhere between three and five dots. Sample Beings include Hate, Envy, Lust, Fear, Despair, Frustration or Cynicism. When a mortal or wraith with a Passion or Dark Passion akin to the spectre's Being is in its vicinity, the spectre must make a Being roll (difficulty 8) or become Rapacious. Rapaciousness is a spiritual hunger, an overpowering need to attack a creature and free the Oblivion contained by it. A spectre can spend a point

of temporary Being to stave off Rapacity, although in certain situations the Storyteller may impose the loss of further Being points, should she decree such sacrifice necessary.

### Corpus

Corpus is the ectoplasm surrounding a spectre's soul, and many spectres take pleasure in altering the appearance of their Corpus, usually in dramatic fashion. Most spectres' Corpus reveal the transforming powers of Oblivion, often through visible marks of decay. All spectre characters begin with 10 Corpus.

Each time a spectre character rolls a botch while attempting any task, a permanent point of Corpus is lost per botch. When Oblivion claims the spectre utterly, (i.e., if a character has only five total Corpus points and receives six levels of aggravated damage from the Stygian gladius of a Legionnaire, or when a spectre with one Corpus makes a botch) a small nihil forms around the lost soul and drags it down into the Void. Wraiths and other spectres in the vicinity of this event must make Dexterity + Athletics rolls to escape the nihil's pull. Use of the Argos Arcanos, or the Dark Arcanos Tempest-Weaving, or an Outrage: Leap of Rage, will serve the same effect. Characters who fail to escape are pulled down into the Labyrinth, usually in the vicinity of the Void, into which the last particles of the destroyed spectre's soul have been drawn.

### Freebie Points

You may now spend freebie points to round out those aspects of your character you feel are lacking. Unlike wraiths, Spectres cannot spend freebie points to offset the powers of their Psyches. All spectres have 20 freebie points to spend, which can be used according to the following chart:

Abilities	2 points per dot
Angst	2 points per dot
Arcanoi	4 points per dot
Attributes	5 points per dot
Backgrounds	2 points per dot
Being	2 points per dot
Fetters	1 point per dot
Shade Powers	5 points per power





# Spark of Death

## Appearance



Many spectres go naked. Many more Moliate their appearance, or are twisted and transformed by Oblivion in unique ways. Decide what is unique and eye-catching about your spectre's appearance. Has she Moliated her hair into thorns or grown new eyes? Is he mottled with death-marks and wearing a business suit, or does he flaunt the wounds of his suicide?

## Idiosyncrasies

Pause a moment to consider what it is about your spectre that makes her unique. Is it the way she claws at the Corpus of her face when stressed, leaving oozing gouges and hanging flaps which expose what looks like bone? Perhaps there is a quirk about the way he chooses his prey, only killing wraiths who remind him of his father. These notes are what makes your character memorable and special, and are a part of character generation reliant entirely upon your own facility for imagination.

## The Psyche

The final part of your spectre is the character's Psyche, the last element of its soul that defies Oblivion. The Psyche is powered by a trait called Composure, and should be designed in conjunction with the Storyteller. More details about the Psyche and Composure can be found in the next chapter.

## Merits and Flaws



Many of the Merits and Flaws in the *Wraith Players Guide* can be taken by spectre characters. New, uniquely spectral Merits and Flaws are described below.

### Penetrating Glare (3 point Merit)

It is easier for you to see past the Shroud than for most spectres. All rolls relating to viewing mortals and interacting with them are 1 level less difficult for you because of this.

## Secret Fetter (4 point Merit)

Unknown to your fellow spectres, you have a secret Fetter somewhere in the Skinlands, a last attachment to your mortal life. This allows you to manifest in the Shadowlands and also means you have access to traditional Arcanos. You may begin play with one point in an Arcanos of your choice (this may be increased by spending freebie points). You may gain other Arcanoi as play progresses. If other spectres discover your secret, you may be ostracized or killed.

## Speeding (5 point Merit)

Your perception of time is more accelerated than other spectres. You think, speak and react faster than most of your compatriots. You always react first in any combat or similar situation, and also gain an extra action every round. Note that if you take this Merit, you must take the accompanying Flaw Blurred (see below).

## Strong Psyche (1-3 point Flaw)

Unlike most Psyches, yours is no wounded, whimpering thing, but strong and forceful. Your Storyteller will choose an extra Frond for your Psyche for each point of this Flaw that you choose. Its cursed, seductive voice is always in your mind, whispering sweet memories of blissful days to torment you.

## Blurred (2 point Flaw)

The rapid nature of spectre existence has a distorting effect upon you. Your speech is a rushed blur that other spectres have difficulty understanding. Conversely, you perceive other creatures as speaking frustratingly slowly, and become impatient with them. This Flaw must be taken automatically if you take the Merit Speeding, but you do not have to take Speeding if you chose Blurred.

## Foul Presence (3 point Flaw)

A spectre with this flaw can cause plants in the Skinlands to wither at his approach. If the spectre successfully touches the plant using any Arcanos or Dark Arcanos, the plant will die. Additionally, animals will sense the spectre's presence and react fearfully; dogs bark, horses rear, and cats hiss and flee the room. Animals are not physically affected by the corruptive taint of this Flaw. Psychically sensitive mortals and those with True Faith may also be able to sense the spectre's presence, so overpowering is the impression of doom that accompanies even their non-manifest presence.

## Hunted (4-5 point Flaw)

Some other being pursues you beyond the Shroud, even to the edge of the Void. If this is a mortal hunter, pursuing you with spiritual or scientific means, this is only a 4 point Flaw. Should the hunter be some other supernatural entity, such as a wrathful Garou or mage, then this is a 5 point Flaw. You and your Storyteller should cooperatively design this hunter and decide why he is hunting you. Naturally the Storyteller may wish to conceal certain details from you.

## Decayed Corpus (variable)

The process of your inevitable plunge toward Oblivion has already begun. For each point less of permanent Corpus the spectre has lost, this is a one point Flaw. The character's Appearance should be adjusted accordingly.

# Dark Arcanoi



Those Arcanoi possessed by wraiths are used by some spectres. There exist also, unique to spectres, certain Dark Arcanoi. Some Storytellers might allow a Dark Arcanos to be learned by wraith characters under exceptional circumstances, but these are generally the province of spectres alone.

## Tempest-Weaving

*I can call up your worst nightmare from the Sea of Shadows, and retrieve the finest flotsam of forgotten dreams, the lost memories of the dead, from where they lie Tempest-tossed upon distant shores.*

This Dark Arcanos is concerned with the Tempest, manipulating its substance and learning how to use its unique nature to one's own advantage. Mortwrights excel at this Arcanos. Spectres well-versed in Tempest-Weaving can travel from the Sea of Shadows to the Sea of Souls in the blink of an eye; overhear the conspiracies of Anacreons while eavesdropping at a nihil; and shape the raw stuff of the Tempest into nightmare. It was with this Dark Arcanos that the Malfeans carved much of the Labyrinth out of the Darkness when they first crawled forth from the Void.



## Basic Abilities

**Eavesdrop:** This art allows the spectre to eavesdrop through a nihil, either overhearing what is said in the nihil's vicinity in the Shadowlands while the spectre is still in the Tempest, or vice versa. The character must be at the side of a nihil, leaning over it or otherwise crouched close to the opening in order to hear whatever sounds float up (or down).

**System:** The player must roll Perception + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 6). Only one success is needed to hear the sounds emanating from the nihil, giving the spectre a vague idea of conditions where the nihil exits. If a botch is rolled, the spectre mistakes one sound for another, for example thinking that the heavy tread of Legionnaires is the crash of the Tempest on the strand of the Isle of Sorrows.

**Find Nihil:** This ability allows the spectre to sense the location and distance of the nearest nihil, regardless of whether the character is in the Tempest or the Shadowlands.

**System:** The player rolls Perception + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 7). The number of successes rolled conveys increasingly detailed information about the nihil. One success allows the spectre to know the vague direction of the nihil. Two means the spectre knows the precise direction. With three successes, the spectre has a rough idea of how far away the nihil is, and four or more indicates that the spectre knows all there is to know about the nihil, including where it comes out.

**Navigate:** Spectres possessing this art can travel through the Tempest at the standard movement rate without recourse to the Arcanos Argos.

**System:** The player rolls Intelligence + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 7) in order to understand how best to exploit the eddies and tides of the Tempest.

## Wormhole

With this art, the spectre can employ any nihil as a shortcut between the Shadowlands and the Tempest. All the spectre has to do is stretch the nihil open and clamber in. Moments later she will burst out the other end, wherever that may be.

**System:** The player rolls Stamina + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 8). Success indicates she has opened the nihil and arrived at her destination.

## Ride the Soul-Storm

This level of Tempest-Weaving allows the spectre to ride the winds of the Maelstrom, traveling aimlessly across the Tempest or the Shadowlands. The character has no control over his direction, and is carried willy-nilly through the Underworld. Phenomenal distances can be traveled in a short time employing this art.





**System:** The character must roll Dexterity + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 7) in order to launch himself correctly. It costs one Angst point to initiate the ride, and costs an additional point of Angst per hour that the spectre is carried along by the soul-storm.

### ... Grasp the Passing

When employing this art, the spectre plunges her hand into the Tempest and pulls out the first thing floating by. Such flotsam on the Sea of Souls is not always useful, but is usually entertaining. Objects found with this Arcanos include lost memories from wraiths long since gone; the original mask of the Skeletal Lord, lost during the 16th century; and a pair of odd socks. Items grasped will be either low-level relics or memories.

**System:** A roll of Dexterity + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 6) must be made by the player, and one Angst point spent, in order to successfully find an item in the Tempest. Memories retrieved in this manner may sometimes hold one or two points of a Dark Passion, which the spectre may devour in order to boost her own. Minor relics may also be retrieved in this manner and used to decorate the set of a Har-

rowing, or be used as weapons by the character. This Arcanos costs 1 Angst to use. The spectre's Psyche gains one point of temporary Composure each time this art is employed.

### ... Favored Flotsam

With this Arcanos a spectre can reach into the Tempest and pull out something relevant to a problem at hand. Depending on the nature of what afflicts him, a spectre using Favored Flotsam could pull an artifact weapon out of the Tempest if attacked by the Hierarchy or a relic boat if lost in a soul-storm. He can also retrieve an opponent's memories from the Tempest to confound her, escaping or attacking while she stands dumbfounded.

**System:** With a roll of Wits + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 8), and at the cost of one point of Angst and one point of temporary Being, the spectre can retrieve the desired object from the Tempest. Some spectres use this art to hide their rare and valued Artifacts and relics (such as soul-forged swords and Rage Past Life cards) in the Tempest, retrieving them at their leisure. A point of temporary Composure is gained by the Psyche each time a spectre uses this art.





## •••• Carve the Chaos

This powerful art allows a spectre to force her mind upon the seething chaos of the Tempest from which the Labyrinth is carved, and shape it into whatever she desires. It is with this Arcanos that spectres can create perfect settings for Harrowings, forming complete stages and sets, such as long-forgotten family homes or a company board room, from the raw stuff of Oblivion.

**System:** The player must roll Intelligence + Tempest-Weaving (difficulty 9), and spend 2 points of Angst and a point of Being, in order to successfully imprint her thoughts upon a section of the Labyrinth. The spectre's Psyche gains 2 points of temporary Composure each time this art is employed. The walls, floor, etc., will mold themselves into the shape of whatever the spectre imagines, if successful. Additional flotsam can be pulled from the Tempest to decorate the created set, which is populated with Moliated spectres if a Harrowing is to be performed within its bounds.

## Shroud-Rending



*Beyond the Shroud the mortals dwell. They swarm and multiply just beyond range of our dead eyes. Sometimes you can hear them screaming where the Shroud is thin. Music to my ears. Flickers of Oblivion's dark fire smolder in their souls, and are the only trace that we are not alone. Their realm is not so distant from ours.*

With this Arcanos a spectre can learn to see the Skinlands on the distant side of the Shroud. Unless a spectre knows Shroud-Rending, the Shadowlands will always be empty to her save for wraiths and other spectres. Once this art is hers, the spectre can witness mortals going about their daily lives and see what effect she has upon them. Shroud-Rending allows the spectre to see through the Shroud; the reverse does not hold true. Mortals cannot perceive spectres through the Shroud unless the spectre also knows the Arcanos Embody. All rolls concerning the Shroud are one difficulty higher for spectres than for wraiths. Nihils form in areas where this Arcanos is used frequently.

## Basic Abilities

**Hold Back The Curtain:** This art allows the spectre to extend her activity in the Skinlands past the standard duration of an Arcanos. It grants no other ability.

**System:** The player must roll Stamina + Shroud-Rending (difficulty 8). Each success allows the spectre to remain in contact with the Skinlands for an additional round.

## • Threshold

This art cannot quite cross the threshold of perception between the lands of the Quick and the Dead. The character can see the Skinlands and its inhabitants as if through a thick fog, but cannot hear events, nor interfere with them.

**System:** The player must roll Strength + Shroud-Rending, at a difficulty equal to the local Shroud. The number of successes rolled indicates the number of rounds the spectre can peer through the Shroud at the Skinlands around him. A botch means the character is immediately dragged down into the Labyrinth by backlash. This art costs one Angst point.

## •• Echoes

With this art the spectre can hear faint snatches of sound from the Skinlands. Sound quality is always poor, with distorted, echoing voices and fluctuating volume the norm.

**System:** The player must roll Perception + Shroud-Rending against the difficulty of the local Shroud. If used in the vicinity of a nihil, the difficulty is reduced by one. Each success indicates that the spectre has heard part of a conversation, with one success being only a single word, two successes a phrase, three successes a sentence, and four or more successes an entire conversation. If no one is speaking when the spectre chooses to eavesdrop through the Shroud, she instead hears whatever ambient sound is predominant in the corresponding location in the Skinlands. A botch means the character is deafened for the remainder of the scene. It costs the spectre one point of Angst to use this art.

## ••• Fleeting Glimpses

This art allows a character to see a small area of the Skinlands for a brief time.

**System:** A roll of Shroud-Rending + Alertness must be made by the player against the difficulty of the local Shroud. Success indicates that the character can clearly see the corresponding area of the Skinlands around him, one yard radius per success rolled. A botch blinds the character for the remainder of the scene. It costs one point of Angst to use this power.

## •••• Virtuality

With this art, the spectre can clearly see and hear events in the Skinlands through the Shroud, as if combining the skills contained within the two preceding levels of this Arcanos.

**System:** The roll required for success in this art is Intelligence + Shroud-Rending versus the difficulty of the local Shroud. The spectre must also spend two Angst points for this art to be successful. A botch indicates that the character is deafened and blinded by the white noise and black light of Oblivion for the remainder of the scene, and can only communicate via Hive-Mind.

## •••• Transparent Memories

The culmination of Shroud-Rending is the ability to perceive the Skinlands with razor-edge clarity. All senses can register the Skinlands and its inhabitants, although the spectre is still beyond the Shroud and cannot physically interact with mortals without using additional Arcanoi.

**System:** The player must make a roll of Strength + Shroud-Rending versus the difficulty of the local Shroud, or the target's Willpower if the character is attempting to read minds, whichever is higher. The Storyteller should describe the target's thoughts in an unstructured style. It is up to the player to pick up upon what is useful and what is not. This art costs 2 points of Angst and a point of Being. Additionally, if the spectre dips directly into the raw passions of a person's mind, the player must make a Being roll or become Rapaacious. It will cost the character another temporary Being point not to Emote if the Being roll fails.

## Hive-Mind



*Would you listen to a sleeping Malfean's dreams, whisper thoughts without speaking, or hear the screams of a tortured wraith's Harrowing echoing in another spectre's mind? I can teach you these things. I can train you to remember skills you have never learned, let alone forgotten.*

This Dark Arcanos is the basis of the mass-mind of spectres. With high levels of this Dark Arcanos, a spectre can know anything and everything any other spectre knows, even from times long past. Knowledge lingers in the Hive-Mind long after the spectre responsible for introducing such knowledge has succumbed to the tide of Oblivion.

## Basic Abilities

**Distress Signal:** This art allows the spectre to send out a non-verbal cry of alarm through the Hive-Mind if threatened. No message, other than the character's fear and alarm, is conveyed by the cry.

**System:** The player must make a roll of Manipulation + Hive-Mind (difficulty 6). For each success rolled, one spectre hears the cry of alarm, arriving shortly thereafter via a nihil or through use of Arcanoi to offer assistance.

## • Silent Whispers

The spectre can send a telepathic message to any other spectre that is in the character's line of sight. The character cannot receive a response to this message unless the receiving spectre also has the Hive-Mind Dark Arcanos.

**System:** The player must roll Charisma + Hive-Mind (difficulty 7). This art costs one point of Angst. One short sentence can be spoken per success gained. A botch causes the character to lose contact with the Hive-Mind for the next turn.

## •• Distant Whispers

The spectre can conduct a two-way telepathic conversation with any spectre personally known to the character, regardless of the distance that separates them.

**System:** The player must roll Perception + Hive-Mind (difficulty 8). One short sentence can be spoken per success gained. A botch causes the character to lose contact with the Hive-Mind for the next turn. This art costs one Angst to use.

## ••• Recall the Known

With this ability, the spectre begins to truly plumb the depths of the Hive-Mind. Recall the Known allows the character to access information with which the spectre is vaguely familiar, but may have forgotten, or may have only learned in passing.

**System:** The player rolls Intelligence + Hive-Mind (difficulty 8). Each success rolled means that one piece of information is recalled. If a botch is rolled, the character cannot employ Hive-Mind for a number of rounds equal to the number of botches. This art costs one Angst.

## •••• Recall the Unknown

This art allows the character almost complete access to the Hive-Mind. Using Recall the Unknown allows a spectre to "remember" the thoughts and memories of other spectres, even those who have long ago been claimed by the Void. The answers to riddles, locations of long-lost hoards and other information can be dredged up from the Hive-Mind using this art.

**System:** A roll of Wits + Hive-Mind must be made by the player (difficulty 8). Each success rolled indicates the number of turns the character "remembers" the desired information. A botch causes the character to forget his knowledge of Hive-Mind for the remainder of the scene. This art costs two Angst to employ. Note that characters cannot draw upon unknown knowledge of the Arcanoi with this level of Hive-Mind.



## ..... Racial Memory

This level of Hive-Mind allows a spectre to draw any information imaginable from the mass consciousness of spectre society, even Arcanoi and Dark Arcanoi.

**System:** The player rolls Perception + Hive-Mind (difficulty 9). Only one Arcanos or Dark Arcanos can be learned with each attempt, to a level equal to the character's Perception. Each success rolled indicates the number of rounds that the character retains possession of the drawn-upon Arcanoi. A botch means that the character forgets all her Arcanoi and Dark Arcanoi for the remainder of the scene. This art costs 2 Angst and 1 temporary Being, and grants the Psyche one point of temporary Composure.

## Contaminate



*All that lives must die, and even the inanimate decays and rusts. If you could look at the world through my eyes, you would see Oblivion as you have never seen it before, everywhere, its stamp on every surface, branded into every soul.*

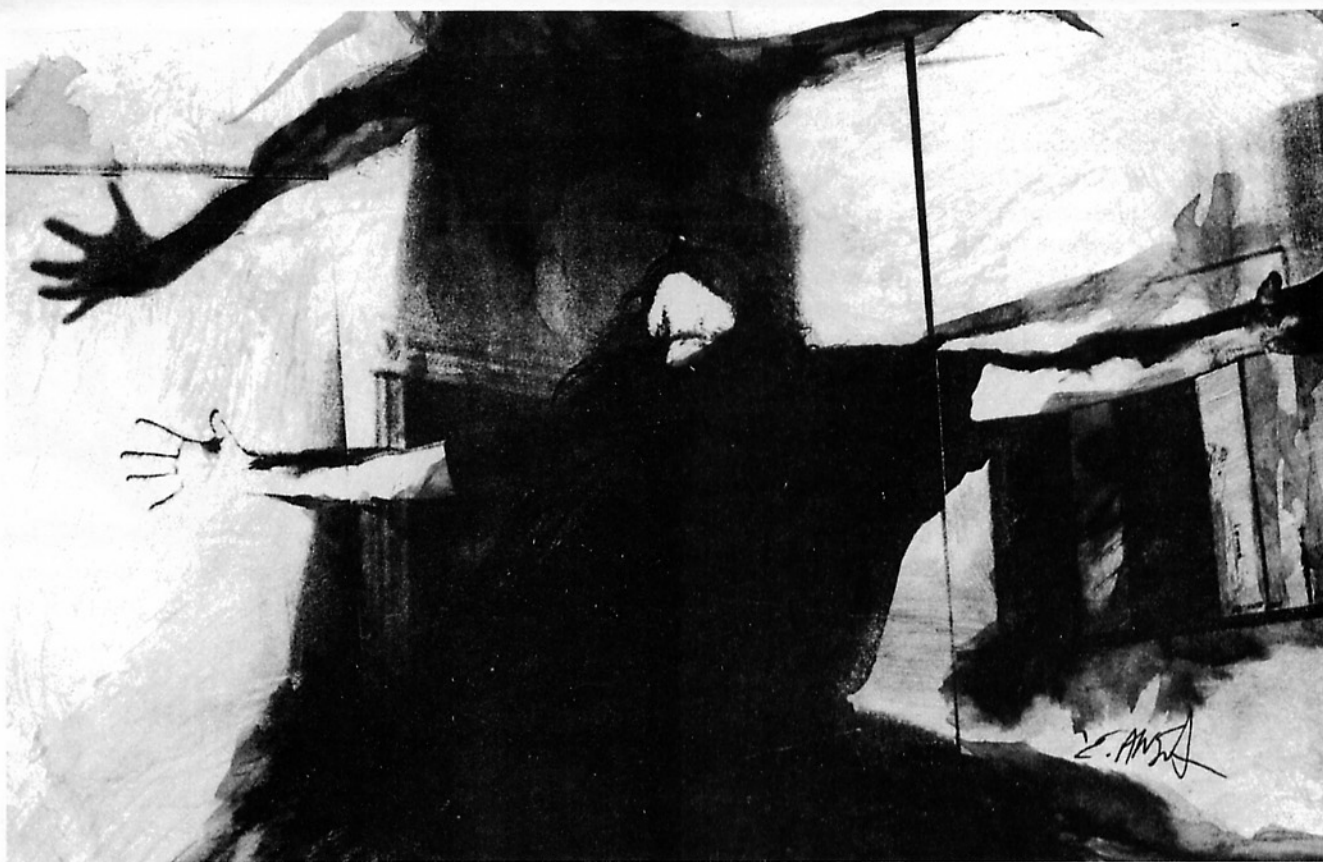
The Dark Arcanos Contaminate is similar to the wraith Arcanos Castigate, in that it allows the user to commune with the Shadow. Similarities end there. Contaminate is used by spectres to commune with the Shadows of wraiths, and to water and harvest the seeds of Oblivion contained within all mortal and immortal souls. This is one of the most feared and admired Dark Arcanoi, as it allows spectres to damn others by infecting them with Oblivion.

## Basic Abilities

**Perceive Contamination:** This ability allows the spectre to perceive the black light which is the evidence of Oblivion in living — and thus dying — creatures. By using this ability, the spectre will be able to perceive mortals in whom Oblivion is strong by the black light escaping from them, even if she cannot actually see the mortal in question through the Shroud.

**System:** The player must roll Perception + Contaminate versus the difficulty of the local Shroud (which is always one level higher for spectres than it is for wraiths) in order to successfully perceive any black light auras which may exist in her locale. If a botch is rolled, the spectre is blinded by Oblivion for the next round.





**Sense the Shadow:** With little effort, a spectre can look at a wraith and see the Shadow lurking within. This ability lets the spectre observe the Shadow and gain some idea of its Archetype. Of course, the wraith must be visible to the character at the time.

**System:** To activate Sense the Shadow, the character must succeed at Perception + Contaminate (difficulty 6). With one success, the spectre can see the faint stain of the Shadow on the wraith's Corpus. Two successes indicates that the Shadow is clearly visible, and that the character has a vague idea of its Angst rating (stronger than the character's own, about the same as the character's own, or weaker than the character's own current Angst rating). With four or more successes, the spectre knows the Shadow's exact Angst rating and also the Shadow's Archetype.

## • Shadownspeech

This art allows a character to speak directly to a wraith's Shadow, even when it is not dominating the wraith. The Shadow speaks with the wraith's own voice, who can attempt to resist the process.

**System:** To successfully speak with the target's Shadow, the spectre must succeed in a resisted action, matching the character's Manipulation + Contaminate versus the oppos-

ing wraith's Manipulation + Castigate. The difficulty is that of the opponent's level in the appropriate Arcanos. Each success allows the character to ask the Shadow one question, or tell it one sentence. This art costs 1 Angst.

## • Sense Nature

The spectre can determine the Nature of a wraith by looking for its dark reflection cast in Shadow. The Shadow does not actively assist the spectre with this process.

**System:** The player must succeed at Intelligence + Contaminate (difficulty 6). This art costs 1 Angst.

## • Transfer Angst

By exerting his will, the character can transfer his own Angst to a visible wraith's Shadow. The wraith must be within line of sight for this transfer to take place.

**System:** If a roll of Stamina + Contaminate versus a difficulty of the target's Willpower succeeds, the spectre may transfer as many points of her own Angst to the wraith's Shadow as successes rolled. If the character botches, the wraith becomes immediately aware of the spectre's presence and its failed intention. This art costs 1 Angst. In addition, a temporary Composure point is gained for each success.



## ••• Awaken Latent Thorns

By psychically watering the ashen soil of a Shadow's mind, the spectre can encourage new Thorns to grow with which to bedevil the wraith's Psyche.

**System:** The player must succeed on a roll of Charisma + Contaminate (difficulty 8). Each success rolled allows the target Shadow to permanently manifest a previously latent Thorn. A Shadow may be considered to have a number of latent Thorns equal to its permanent Angst rating minus the number of Thorns it already possesses. A botch causes the Shadow to lose one already manifested Thorn. It costs the spectre 2 Angst to use this art.

## •••• Call the Shadow

By means of this much-respected art, the spectre can drag a wraith's Shadow to the surface, allowing it to attempt a Catharsis roll and take control, even if the Shadow's temporary Angst score is less than its host's permanent Willpower.

**System:** With a roll of Strength + Contaminate (difficulty 9, or the wraith's Willpower, whichever is higher), and the expenditure of 2 Angst points and 1 point of Being, the spectre can successfully call forth an opponent's Shadow. If the character rolls a botch, both Shadow and spectre lose an additional point of Angst, and the Shadow is stunned into silence for the remainder of the scene.

# Larceny

*You are Oblivion's servant, it is true, but none say you must always serve It faithfully. In Its service you decay; the winds of limbo tear at and savage your Corpus. Surely it is in Oblivion's interests if you last long enough to see Oblivion prosper?*

With this Dark Arcanos, Spectres can stave off their rapid demise. Larceny allows characters to restore their Corpus, and thus slow the descent into the Void. It is a dangerous Arcanos, attracting the condemnation of many Malfeans, as well as strengthening every Spectre's own worst enemy — the Psyche — when used. Larceny also conveys a greater understanding of the nature of Oblivion, and allows the character to manipulate it, using its entropic effects to steal strength from others and infect them with Oblivion in the process.

## Basic Abilities

**Weigh Oblivion:** With this art a spectre can determine how strong Oblivion is in another creature, be they mortal, supernatural or another spectre.

**System:** The player must roll Wits + Larceny. The difficulty is that of the target's Willpower. Success indicates that the spectre knows the level of that creature's highest Passion or Dark Passion in relation to its own Being (stronger than, weaker than or about the same).

## • Steal Corpus

By touching another spectre or a wraith, the character may steal the target's Corpus. The energy transferred manifests as the black light of Oblivion, strengthening and intensifying the spectre's own dark aura.

**System:** The character must roll Manipulation + Larceny against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. The number of successes indicates the number of Corpus points stolen. For every two Corpus points the spectre successfully drains, he recovers one lost dot of Corpus, up to his maximum. Note that this art does not heal Corpus lost directly through Oblivion (botches), only Corpus lost through general wear and tear. This art costs one Angst to use.

## •• Emotional Infection

This art allows the character to implant Dark Passions in the minds of others, be they mortal or supernatural, and increase those Dark Passions already present. The spectre must be able to see the person she wishes to infect, or whose Passions she wishes to increase, in order to use this art. Emotional Infection is the means by which many spectres prey upon mortals, gradually tainting them and furthering the advance of Oblivion. When Emotional Infection causes one or more of the target's Passions to equal the spectre's Being, Rapturousness often follows.

**System:** The player must expend 1 Angst point and roll on Manipulation + Larceny (against a difficulty of the local Shroud, or the target's Willpower, whichever is greater) in order to successfully implant an emotion. It requires 3 successes in an extended contest to create a new Dark Passion, while once the Dark Passion exists each success indicates the number of points by which an existing Passion has been increased.

### ... Savor Agony

This art allows the character to draw Angst from the pain she inflicts on others, mortal or supernatural.

**System:** Whenever the character successfully inflicts an aggravated wound upon another character, she may attempt to roll Strength + Larceny against a difficulty of the target's Being or Willpower. Success allows the character to gain one point of Angst per level of aggravated damage she causes. This art costs no Angst unless the character botches, in which case she loses as many points of Angst as botches rolled.

### .... Withstand Oblivion

This Dark Arcanos allows spectres to heal that damage inflicted by Oblivion (botches), which can be healed in no other way. This art is dangerous, in that it strengthens the character's Psyche every time it is used, and so is employed only in dire need by all but the most insane of spectres.

**System:** The player rolls Stamina + Larceny (difficulty 8). Each success rolled allows the spectre to heal a corresponding level of Oblivion-inflicted damage. This art costs 2 Angst, and additionally gives the character's Psyche a point of temporary Composure.

### ..... Defy Oblivion

When employed successfully, this art allows a character to transfer the effects of Oblivion onto another character or creature. By defying Oblivion, spectres deny their own nature, and thus strengthen their Psyche. Like the previous level of this Arcanos, Defy Oblivion is only used in times of dire need by the majority of spectres. It is through this art, and others like it, that the Malfears have maintained their kingdoms for countless years.

**System:** Immediately upon rolling a botch, the player must roll Charisma + Larceny (difficulty 9). If this roll is successful, the character may attempt to transfer the destructive effects of Oblivion from himself to another character or creature in line of sight. If the character can succeed in an opposed Being versus Willpower roll (difficulty of the opponent's Willpower), the target loses Corpus (or Health Levels if not a wraith or spectre) equal to the number of botches originally rolled. If the roll fails, the character loses Corpus as normal. An additional botch on any of these two rolls means that the spectre loses twice as many points of Corpus as initially indicated. This art costs 2 points of Angst and 2 temporary Being points to activate, and earns the spectre's Psyche two temporary points of Composure.

## Dramatic Systems

### Becoming a Spectre



When a wraith is claimed by her Shadow she becomes a spectre. This metamorphosis is much more complex than a simple physical transformation. The wraith's (or in the case of Mortwights, mortal's) personality and psychological makeup, as well as their Corpus, are completely dissolved


and rebuilt. The details of this process vary from spectre to spectre. Some spectres emerge as monstrosities, their Corpus scalded and stretched during the transformation. Others seem unharmed, save for the evidence of their death engraved permanently upon their spiritual form. Among the variables that affect the outcome are the wraith's Nature and Demeanor and the Shadow's archetype, but the basics of the transformation remain the same.

When the Shadow's permanent Angst reaches 10, or when the character is claimed by Oblivion in some other way, she loses consciousness and is dragged down into the Tempest. The spectre-to-be lies dormant as a dark cocoon is extruded around her form, precipitated from the very stuff of the Tempest itself. This cocoon, glossy and semi-translucent, gradually hardens and rises slowly to the surface of the Tempest, there to float until it is found by some traveler, be it spectre or wraith. There is no loving parent to lick the newborn spectre clean when it emerges from its cocoon, only the unfeeling, unthinking arms of Oblivion waiting to embrace them after their short time is done.

It is a well-known fact that most spectres cannot break out of their own cocoons. Those who do are always figures of great import and destiny, such as General Coldheart. For a character to break out of his own cocoon requires the spectre to succeed at an extended action, requiring 5 successes on a roll of Strength + Enigmas (Difficulty 9) as he punches and kicks at the cocoon's substance, always looking for the weakest point at which to strike. Any botch indicates that the cocoon has reformed itself, and the character must start again from scratch. Even botches rolled in the cocoon cause the character to lose permanent Corpus. It has been known for spectres to be destroyed even before they can hatch. Such are the vagaries of cruel Oblivion.

Most spectres are freed from the confines of their cocoon by another of their kind. Those unsuspecting wraiths opening the cocoon of a spectre usually receive an unpleasant surprise. Occasionally unopened cocoons find their way into the hands of the Hierarchy or the guilds. They can be sold for many oboli, although their eventual fate remains a mystery.





The Dark Arcanos Hive-Mind often manifests for the first time as the character struggles to free himself from his cocoon. Distress signals flood the Tempest if the character can succeed on a roll of Manipulation + Hive-Mind (Difficulty 6), although at such an early stage of the spectre's existence these signals are liable to be weak and intermittent. Other spectres close to the cocoon perceive such calls for help as a constant nagging signal. It is usually from a desire to stop what is perceived as an irritation, not from any parental instinct, that spectres arrive to act as midwives and assist the new spectre's birth.

Sometimes an individual spectre will simply tear the cocoon open upon discovering it. Cocoons are easily ruptured from without, sustaining only 5 levels of damage before splitting open. At other times, if several spectres have answered the birth-cries of the cocooned spectre, they will play violent games with the cocoon until it cracks. The new spectre emerges weak, disoriented and drenched in a viscous, jelly-like plasm, its mind affected drastically by the experience. None can remember precisely what occurs in the cocoon of Oblivion, but all spectres emerge screaming. It is supposed by many that Oblivion whispers to the new recruit, driving them mad and fanning their hate, jealousy or whatever Dark Passion seethes closest to the surface. Others decry such talk as puerile, claiming that Oblivion is not a sentient being, but is instead a force, akin to entropy or radiation, which mutates and distorts the plasm of the spectre. These spectres argue that it is the pain of the process, the pain of birth, that caused them to be born giving cry to their agony.

## Byway Robbery

Byways are the only stable path through the Tempest, and are traveled by many wraiths. Emissaries of all factions make their way from Hierarch Necropolis to Dark Kingdom outpost, Renegade fortress to Heretic shrine via the byways. These passages offer spectres an ideal way of attacking their enemies when they are most vulnerable. Although some spectres carry the fight into the Citadels, it is far easier to assault wraiths when they venture into spectre territory. All byways cross the Tempest, and for this reason offer spectres their best chances for successful assault and byway robbery. The Dark Arcanos Tempest-Weaving provides a means of opening nihilis even in the most well-traveled byway. Any number of spectres can swarm forth from a nihil in moments by employing the art Wormhole.

Other spectres might wish to lurk off the byway in the Tempest itself and pounce out upon travelers. Spectres attacking in this manner gain 5 extra dice on their Initiative roll of Wits + Alertness (Difficulty 4), as their chance of surprising an opponent is considerably higher than normal. Where the Tempest resembles a turbulent sea, spectres can burst from the waves to drag wraiths from their vessels, provided that they can overcome their target in a contested roll of Strength + Brawl, or even, steering relic ships of their own, ram a vessel, sink it and send all aboard to the deeps.

Doppelgangers excel at byway ambushes by virtue of their proficiency in the Arcanos Moliare. Transforming their visages to resemble wraiths offers these spectres an excellent way of slipping in among traveling groups and attacking them when they are unprepared. Sometimes a spectre desires to remain incognito for a time, perhaps for the duration of the entire journey. If the spectre intends to infiltrate the citadel that is the group's destination, she could creep up on the stragglers, drag them silently away and take their place beside their unsuspecting companions.

## Haunting a Mortal

Spectres most often employ the Larceny art Emotional Infection to implant and nurture those Dark Passions existing within mortals. These mortals generally draw the attention of a spectre employing Perceive Contamination. As levels of Dark Passion grow, the mortal victims become correspondingly aggressive, cruel, fearful or homicidal, until finally they go berserk. Often spectres Emote during this time. Those spectres with access to traditional Arcanoi, such as Embody and Pandemonium, delight in presenting every standard haunting trick and more besides. Translucent figures, cold spots, bad dreams, bleeding paintings, poltergeist activity and blood-curdling screams in the night are all standard spectre devices for terrorizing mortals.

Many spectres, particularly Doppelgangers and Striplings, delight in competing among themselves to determine who is the most deadly trickster. In a similar manner, spectres also increase the level of Oblivion present in a given area, such as their Haunt, by means of Shroud-Rending. The nihilis which form where this Dark Arcanos is practiced taint the physical area with decay. This becomes evident even in the Skinlands, where areas haunted by spectres become desolate and shunned, slowly rotting away.

## Infiltrating a Necropolis

Generally it is Doppelgangers who lead covert spectre incursions into Necropoli. Doppelgangers can pass as wraiths and are skilled in Arcanoi. A common ploy of Doppelganger agents is to arrive at a Necropolis offering services in a rare Arcanos, such as Usury or Mnemosynis. The spectre establishes himself as a provider of this commodity in return for information from his clients. In such a way a spectre can learn a great deal about the wraiths of the Necropolis, their strengths, prejudices and weaknesses. Small numbers of undercover Doppelgangers are present in almost every Necropolis, sowing dissent and gathering information so that when a large group of marauding spectres arrives, their talents can be directed to greatest effect. These agents often contact wraiths who are close to Oblivion, attempting to recruit them (and their Shadows) to the cause.





# Chapter Three: Spectres and the Storyteller


*Reflection in someone's eye  
Is all I see  
I sometimes hate myself  
I sometimes hate myself  
I look into the future  
Darkness lies ahead  
A shadow of a man that once was  
A shadow of a man that was  
— Ikon, "Condemnation"*

Mood and atmosphere are of paramount importance when running a chronicle in which spectres are the main characters. The sense of decay which permeates the Shadowlands needs to be drastically emphasized, as does the unique nature of spectral existence. Spectres are doomed, decaying in the service of Oblivion, but if they try to resist their fate, they risk strengthening their repressed Psyche and thus weakening themselves. The atmosphere of rot is integral to spectre chronicles, but good chronicles are composed of many elements, of which decay is only one.

## Elements of Spectre Chronicles



Oblivion taints everything; not even the characters are free from its ravages. Spectres are short-lived; so too should be a spectre chronicle. It is the role of the Storyteller to imbue her chronicle with a sense of passionate urgency in order to display this central motif. The true challenge for the Storyteller comes in balancing the two central aspects of spectres, contrasting the despairing taint of Oblivion with the frenetic nature of a spectre's existence. As well as



the central theme and mood of **Dark Reflections: Spectres**, several other elements should be considered when running a spectre chronicle. These are discussed briefly below.

## Decay

Spectres' perceptions are clouded by Oblivion. Everything they see is rotten, decayed, bereft of life. The Shadowlands are always dark; the sun is never seen. The only light spectres see is the black light of Oblivion, and in its glow the Shadowlands and the Tempest are revealed as decayed hells. When running a spectre campaign, the Storyteller should ensure that his descriptions of the drear and desolate world of spectres are fully realized. The Storyteller is the eyes and ears of the characters; for the players to feel completely at ease with their characters, the world those characters move through must be consistent, believable and above all, grim.

Your descriptions should make full use of the shadows, cobwebs, broken glass and burned-out buildings, fog, rain and deathly dryness which abound in the spectral perception of the Shadowlands. There are few other signs of life; the only other inhabitants are wraiths, for spectres are so removed from the world that people and animals are mostly invisible to them. Plant life can be glimpsed here and there, but the gnarled trees that spectres see are always devoid of greenery, their limbs and trunks blackened and scabrous, and the only grass to be seen is dead and dry, coarse strands rustling and whispering in the dank breeze between cracks in the pavement. Unpaved earth is invariably bare, blasted by frost or scorched by fire. Ashes and sleet drift past whenever it is not raining. The Tempest contrasts to this bleak nightmare as a storm-wracked sea of slick, towering waves, shrieking winds and ragged banks of clouds the color of static.

## Horror

In **Wraith**, horror comes from being alienated and separated from the world of the living, and from the knowledge that one's Shadow is waiting to take control the moment you relax your guard. Spectres are unconcerned by such fears. Where then is the horror in a spectre chronicle?

Part of the horror present in **Dark Reflections** comes from the knowledge that you are playing a monster. That in itself should give any player reason to pause. Spectres are truly malevolent beings and should not be taken lightly. The point of playing a spectre is not to become over-exposed to brutality and evil to the point where it no longer disturbs you. Becoming blasé about mindless brutality, carnage and slaughter is not the purpose of this book. Should your players reach such a point, then that is horrible indeed and may signal that it is time for them to take a break from roleplaying.

A more enjoyable form of horror comes from the transient nature of a spectre's existence. Spectres rarely get any-

where before Oblivion claims them. Day by day decay chips away at their Corpus; even as they serve Oblivion it devours them. Reminding your players of this facet of their existence should open up new avenues of horror in your campaign. Spectres are truly doomed, struggle as they may, and spectres can even become caught up in one another's death, as nihilists open to drag them down to the Void. It is in this central flaw of spectral existence that horror can be found, as well as the more generalized fear generated by the decayed world spectres inhabit.

## Themes

A theme draws the many background elements of a story into a coherent whole. Without a theme a chronicle lacks cohesion, depth and direction. A chronicle with theme takes on a status equivalent to a Hollywood epic or a best-selling novel. Chronicles where spectres are the protagonists need themes as much as any **Wraith** games. The following themes are suggestions only, provided to prompt your own mind into creating the central premise which binds your game. You may wish to consider one of them as the theme for your chronicle. Alternatively the themes given might suggest new themes, not listed here, as alternatives.

## Destruction

This is a common theme for spectres. As agents of entropy, spectres are responsible for tearing down individuals, their beliefs and the world they dwell in. A chronicle with destruction as its theme may focus on the devastation of a particular Necropolis, with the separate stories making up the chronicle concerned with infiltrating the city and determining the weaknesses of its wraiths, humiliating a Hierarchy agent, highjacking a Stygian transport before it arrives at the Citadel, and an outright attack on the Necropolis culminating in a Maelstrom which tears down the Citadel walls. The theme may relate to personal destruction, as in the case of a chronicle where the characters are engaged in a campaign of spreading disbelief and disillusionment, in which case stories will concern mortals and the Skinlands, perhaps including scenes set at a Skinlands university or involving deluded cultists and pawns. Destruction has wide-ranging aspects, and the inventive Storyteller should have little problem determining the direction of a chronicle with this as its theme.

## Despair

A potent theme, but one fitting for exploration employing the short, sharp framework of spectre chronicles. What could drive spectres, already creatures of wild passion, to despair? Failure to destroy the world has not caused spectres to stop trying thus far, so how might such creatures become de-



spairing of their task, perhaps even their entire existence? Might it be the mass suicide of every spectre in the Void that is needed to bring about the end of the world? No matter what the characters do they are doomed. Oblivion will eat away at them, or their Psyche will hound them. Even if they just sit back and watch, entropy will devour the universe, sending Skinlands, Shadowlands, Tempest, Umbra, all plummeting into the Void. How do spectres, especially the characters, react in the face of such hopelessness? Do they riot? Seek to amuse themselves by playing games with mortals, or by warring among the dead? Such a theme raises many questions, and may lend itself to the Storyteller with a philosophical bent. A chronicle with despair as its theme might include many personal set-backs for the characters, and perhaps even consist entirely of stories in which their every action causes them to spiral further downward toward the Void. Oblivion would usually be the climax of such a chronicle, but must it always be? The inventive Storyteller is invited to peruse this and other such questions derived from a chronicle of despair.

## Chronicles

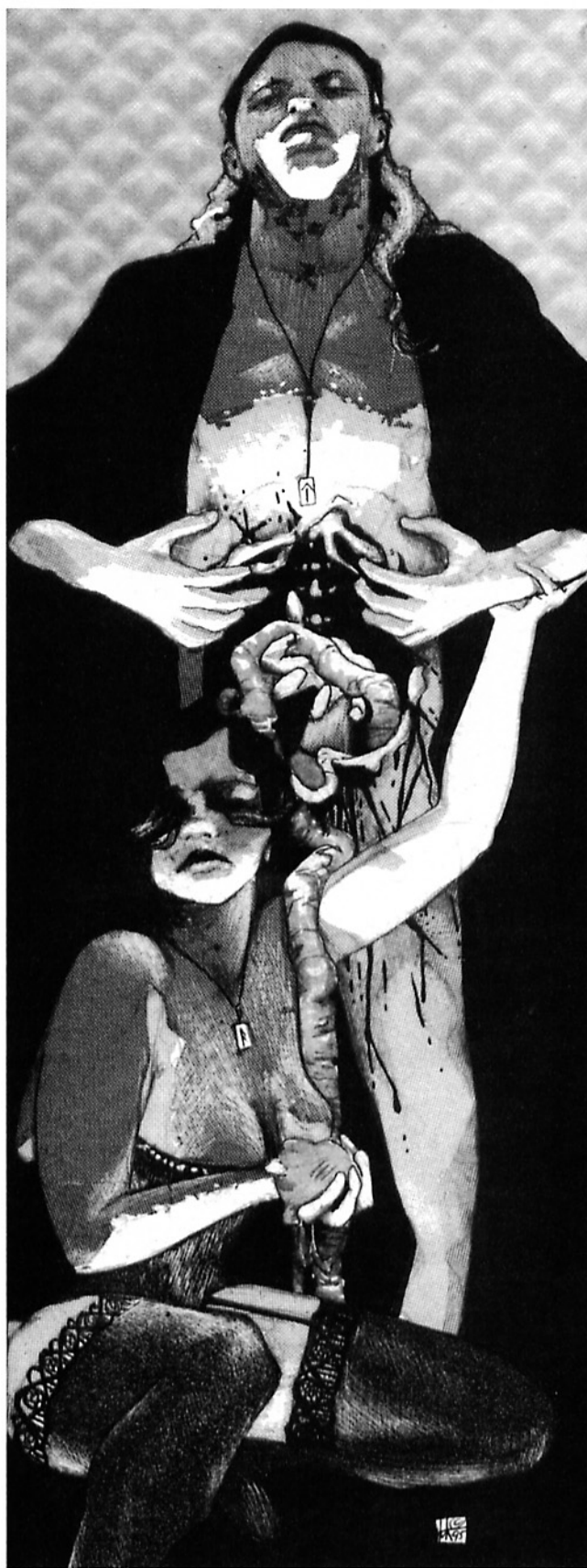


pectre chronicles should be hard and fast, dealing with one specific theme or issue, with the Storyteller taking care to ensure that the action does not get slowed down by unnecessary detail and steers away from complicated sub-plots. The best spectre chronicle is focused, intense and short, ideally no longer than four to six sessions duration. This unique style of roleplaying makes for a frantically memorable chronicle, as the Storyteller pulls out all the stops and races hell-for-leather towards the dramatic climax.

## Chronicle Concepts

### Conquering The Necropolis

This might be viewed as the archetypal spectre chronicle. The span of the chronicle tells the efforts of the characters to infiltrate, assault and destroy a Necropolis. What is the Renegades role in such an attack? Can they be manipulated into doing the spectres' work for them? And how are the Heretics involved — sudden allies of the Hierarchy in the face of concerted spectre attack, or sheep for the slaughter? The intricacies of such a chronicle are partially solved for the Storyteller if she bases her chronicle in a setting such as Necropolis: Atlanta which presents the non-spectre side all ready for action. It remains for the Storyteller to detail the spectres' ranks, including traitors, potential enemies and allies, and just how the assault will happen.





## Dark Passions

An effective chronicle could be constructed by centering each story around a particular Dark Passion. Stories would come from the Dark Passions of each of the characters, and certain stories might focus on particular characters. Such a chronicle would rely on thematic coherence rather than a solid and logical plot for its structure and direction, and might be dreamlike or surreal in execution.

## The War To End All Wars

This chronicle tells the characters' attempts to destroy the world. The spectres should certainly find themselves tangling with the Hierarchy, as well as running up against Heretic cults and Renegade gangs. Other supernaturals, such as vampires and werewolves, might play a role in the chronicle. Perhaps the characters are manipulating Sabbat vampires into triggering Gehenna, or deluding Black Spiral Dancers into believing that their pronouncements are the word of the Wyrms. How far are the characters prepared to go for their dream?

## In The Beginning

In this complicated chronicle, which should have two completely separate sets of themes and moods, the characters begin death as wraiths, as per the normal rules in **Wraith: The Oblivion**. Due to unavoidable events, a steady decline or circumstances beyond their control, halfway through the chronicle the characters become spectres and are reborn according to the rules in this book. In the second part of the chronicle, the character relate to their Fetters, contacts and wraith associates in a new, different and possibly deadly way. The characters may also learn new Arcanoi, become involved with the politics of the Mortwights and Striplings, and otherwise become enmeshed in spectral society as the chronicle plays itself out.

## Live Very Fast, Die Very Young

The characters in this chronicle are Striplings. Their brief mortal life is over far too soon, and (possibly with a brief stop-over in the Shadowlands on the way) they find themselves infants in the Labyrinth, mocked by Shades and ignored by Nephwracks. This chronicle should emphasize the fever-pitch mood of spectrehood to an insane degree. Everything about the plot, as the characters go out haunting mortal children and hopefully scaring them to death, (perhaps encountering a vengeful witch-hunter or maternal Garou along the way, with a little Tempestuous politics thrown in for good measure) should be delivered in a rapid-paced series of short, sharp shocks.

## Oblivion Wants To Be Free!

This chronicle focuses on the characters as agents of Oblivion, and explores the nature of Oblivion itself. The Storyteller must decide how to interpret Oblivion: a sentient being; an inexorable force comprised of and strengthened by the spread of violence, despair and disbelief throughout the world; something insatiable but incarnate, all-devouring and unstoppable. A major focus in such a chronicle might be the Haunt of the characters, where the growing power of Oblivion increasingly makes Its presence known, and where It can be personified and active appropriately. The Haunt could be an apartment building, crumbling and graffiti-scarred, in whose inhabitants the spectre characters slowly fan the flames of Dark Passions, ripening them before the harvest. Outside elements might conceivably be involved. Oblivion, what Garou call "the taint of the Wyrms," might become so strong in the spectres' Haunt that a pack of werewolves arrives to deal with the spectres. Alternatively, inquisitive mages or agents of the Arcanum might arrive on the scene, or perhaps even be occupants of the house from the very beginning.

## Prophets of Oblivion

In this demanding chronicle, players take on the roles of Malfeans and direct the course of spectral society and the cult of Oblivion. This chronicle might take place over centuries of game time, as the Malfeans wake to enact their commands and doctrines, then return to their slumber for decades. Utilizing this chronicle structure may well allow the Storyteller to present the final onrush of Oblivion (Gehenna, the Apocalypse, etc.). Entire stories may be told as dreams. Stories might involve the manipulation of human cults, challenges from other Malfeans, ambitious Nephwracks, vampire Methuselachs or even the much-feared Antediluvians. Powerful Angelics and other inhabitants of the Tempest might also make appearances in this chronicle, which is probably best suited to the ambitious and cataclysmic-loving Storyteller. Although higher-powered than many people might be comfortable with, this chronicle also presents unprecedented opportunities for roleplaying and Storytelling, as the destiny of the Shadowlands is played out.

## Stories



Stories are the adventures that make up a chronicle, the meat in the sandwich. Although the direction of a chronicle is determined primarily by its theme, the individual stories should not be so constrained. Stories can have a narrow focus (the char-





acters haunt a particular location) or a broader one (they scare a mortal to death, then have to deal with the vengeful wraith hunting them down). Stories can overlap, or be self-contained. It is recommended that a spectre chronicle contain no more than four to six stories, all of which should have some bearing on one another, in order to ensure that the chronicle conforms to that hard-n-fast school of spectre style.

## Mood

Each story may have a different mood, sometimes one akin to that of the overall theme in the case of a story which forms an integral part of the chronicle, sometimes a mood which is radically different. **Dark Reflections** has many moods: fear, hate, envy, malice — as many as spectres have **Dark Passions**. A story's mood should permeate the session or sessions that story takes to play out, just as a theme underlies the chronicle. The use of lighting effects to convey mood is strongly urged, such as candles, spotlights or dim red lighting. Music is also a boon to the Storyteller; a haunting saxophone solo or a hammering, abrasive industrial track can lend that particular, needed edge. Other props, such as incense, perfume, flowers or other olfactory mood triggers, might also be considered, although the principal author recommends that Storytellers steer away from attempting to convey a decayed mood in such a fashion.

## Hate

A story whose mood is hate should pit character against character as well as present an array of antagonistic opponents. The mood should be present in the portrayal of the Tempest, howling storms that seem almost alive, and in the actions of those the characters meet, such as vengeful wraiths out to exterminate them.

## Fear

Fear motivates many spectres, and is an excellent mood for spectre stories. Such a story might highlight a spectre's fear of his Psyche, or a more pervasive fear of the Void, the hungry maw which will eventually swallow the characters. Fear of the Void may motivate the villain of the story (such as a Nephwrack who seeks to stave off his dissolution at the cost of the characters' existence), while fear of the spectres themselves could also bring other entities, such as Garou or Kindred, into conflict with the characters.

## Madness

Highly appropriate as a mood for a spectre story is madness. Seen from the perspective of wraiths, spectres are mad. Such a story might hold up the spectres' behavior as a mirror



to the players, revealing what monsters they have chosen to play. A story based on the theme of madness might also run in such a way that rewards irrational thinking, showing that insanity can be a gift as well as a curse.

## Isolation

A story with this mood may concern the spectres dragging themselves back from the Void through distant and unexplored sections of the Labyrinth, with nothing familiar to be seen. The Shadowlands are also a perfect setting for a story of isolation, as to the characters' eyes the Shadowlands are an empty wasteland of rot and age run riot.

## Story Concepts

Many kinds of stories are possible in spectre chronicles, although those roleplayers fond of gentle games of sweet melancholy may not find playing spectres to their liking. Spectre stories tend to be sharp-edged and ugly, tales of violence and cruelty, mob mentality and vicious spectacle. From the roaring edge of the Void to the soul-steel walls of Stygia, spectre stories have a wide range and limitless possibilities. Spectre stories should above all be short and nasty, like spectres themselves. A variety of story suggestions, which the Storyteller is urged to ignore or alter as he sees fit, are listed below.


## A-Viking

The spectres go soul-surfing across the Tempest, or are carried on a minor Maelstrom across the Shadowlands. What adventures are they caught up in along the way, and what other entities are trapped within the storm as it passes? Where does the storm deposit the characters, and how will they get back to the Labyrinth from there? Are their surroundings one of the strange Shifting Zones of the Sea of Shadows? What happens if the characters find themselves tossed aboard the Midnight Express?

## Reconnaissance and Reverence

A typical day in the Labyrinth begins with the characters seeping from where they have been Slumbering in the glacial walls, answering the summons of a Nephwrack factor and presenting themselves in the chambers of a hibernating Malfean. As the gargantuan assemblage of scales and hair shivers and snores behind the characters, the factor explains to them their duties, as declared by his master through the Hive-Mind. The spectres are sent on a reconnaissance tour of a distant portion of the Labyrinth, where the rippling walls seem as fused mercury and the floor quivers as they pass, reflecting views of their happy pasts, cued by their Psyches. What do the characters encounter there? Why has the Nephwrack sent them here —





to discover something, to kill them or to have them away from the Malfean's side when some other plot unfolds? No night is ever quiet in the Labyrinth.

## Object of Worship

After enacting a graphic haunting, the spectres find that they have become the focus of a minor mortal (or supernatural) cult. How do the characters react? Will they attempt to build up their influence, so that the cult rivals that of a Malfean in terms of influence and destructive potential, or will they turn the cultists against one another and incite a bloodbath? And what happens if the real spirit worshipped by the cult turns up on the scene? Worse yet, if the characters have been flagrant enough in their activities to build up worshippers, might a witch-hunter not also be on their trail?

## Spy Mission

A Malfean commands that the spectres creep in and pose as wraiths in order to discover certain information. The characters may have to put up with bickering Striplings and an arrogant Nephwrack as part of their infiltration team. They will get caught up in the politics of the Restless. All the while they are hopefully scouting out the Necropolis, spreading chaos and slowly coming closer to whatever secret they were sent to uncover in the first place. Does knowing the secret involve the spectres in something out of their depth? Are they targeted for dissolution by a rival Malfean, or even their master, once they've uncovered it?

## To Hell and Back

The characters are sent to one of the many Hells found among the Far Realms. The ruler of this particular Hell has decided to retire, and his valuable collection of souls is up for sale to the highest bidder. Have the characters been sent to destabilize the bidding, or are they perhaps there to make an alliance with the dominant bidders and later betray them, claiming the souls for Oblivion? In Hell the spectral appearances of the characters will not matter, as they are surrounded by twisted demons and other nightmarish monstrosities. Among the various ambassadors are other spectres, wraiths from Stygia, representatives of other Hells and Heavens, and perhaps even a Ferryman or two, here to ensure that at least some of the souls are steered towards Transcendence. Can the characters navigate a path through such tortuous plots and triumph?

## A Harrowing Day — "The Making of..."

The characters are roped in to help an important and prestigious Nephwrack nightmare-director (who is skilled in Tempest-Weaving and Phantasm) conduct a Harrowing. This

story will be a behind-the-scenes look at a Harrowing, perhaps even from a slightly comical perspective. Normally a Harrowing is experienced from a wraith's perspective, a smoothly blended succession of nightmare images. This story reveals the reality of frantic spectres assembling scenery at the last minute, trawling the Tempest for appropriate plots and memories, and reshaping themselves with Moliate to take on the roles of extras. Prima donna antics from the director, not to mention a victim who will not play by the rules and bumbling spectre assistants, all make for an entertaining story.

## Conflict and Antagonists

Conflict is an intrinsic part of spectre chronicles, given the nature of spectral existence. Spectres are trying to bring about the end of the world; naturally there will be people trying to stop them. Other conflicts arise from the turbulent and emotional nature of spectral society, and because of the whims and commands of the Malfeans. When running spectre campaigns, one need never look far for a source of conflict and drama, as the following suggestions show.

### Spectre versus Wraith

From time to time the Hierarchy masses against spectral society, sending rank after rank of Legionnaires down into the Labyrinth to do battle. At all times Stygia is poised to defend itself from spectral attack, although not always successfully. Renegades alternate between allying with spectres and fighting them at the drop of an obolus. The Heretics too are to be feared, for more than one Heretic cult has the means to raise an army of fanatics as ferociously suicidal as any Shade. Spectres serve to remind wraiths of what it is they can become, and for this reason more than any other, are the focus of wraiths' hatred and the target of their Stygian steel.

### Spectre versus Mortals

Although spectres pride themselves on being the hunters, sometimes the tables are turned. Mortal parapsychologists with access to scientific advances may be able to invent equipment allowing them to take the chase into the Shadowlands and beyond. The Sons of Tertullian and Euthanatos have already begun to penetrate the Underworld, sometimes in number. Supernatural agencies have their own devices. Ghost-traps are one danger mortals present to spectres; another is the inquisitiveness of such organizations as the Arcanum. The Inquisition would destroy spectres as demonic forces. Mortals should never be underestimated, as more than one spectre has discovered in the past.



## Spectre versus Spectre

Not all threats are external. Spectres have just as much reason to fear treachery and attack from within their own ranks as from the outside world. Being creatures totally without mercy or pity, spectres can and do attack one another at the slightest provocation. As well as motiveless violence for its own sake, spectres also enjoy intrigue. The plots of Malfeans that enmesh lesser spectres as pawns, as well as the ploys of ambitious Nephwracks and Mortwights, offer considerable scope for conflict in a spectre chronicle.

## Spectre versus Psyche

One of the few things feared by a spectre is its Psyche. The last remnant of its personality to have withstood Oblivion, the incessant nagging of the Psyche serves to remind the spectre

that it was once human. The Psyche may offer salvation, but at the cost of the spectre's own identity. Debate and conflict between spectre and Psyche is sure to offer considerable drama.

## Spectre versus Others

The myriad denizens of the World of Darkness may all interact with the inhabitants of the Tempest. Spectres may be combated by Euthanatos mages or Silent Strider Garou intent on preventing their destruction of the worlds. Alternatively, the Malfeans the characters serve might be allied with Nephandi. The spectres might pose as demons, and be worshipped by deluded mortals or pursued by corrupt vampires seeking an alliance with them. The Followers of Set seem to have much in common with spectres and would serve as fine allies, until such time as the Setites revealed their own goals, and conflict erupted once again.



# Spectres as the Foe: Considerations for Traditional Wraith Chronicles

*Amid all this confusion  
We lose sight of the enemy  
Like evil gods of destruction  
They move through liquid transparencies.*  
— Front Line Assembly, "Millenium"



Spectres are the most common foes that wraiths will face. Like wraiths, they are incorporeal and deathly, inhabiting a world ravaged by Oblivion and isolated from the mortal world they once were part of. Spectres and wraiths share common ground aplenty, perhaps too much, for more than one wraith has made the mistake of thinking of spectres in mortal terms, and been slain as a result of his misguided comprehension of the inhuman creatures he faced. Spectres are the dark reflection of wraiths. They remind all wraiths of their ultimate fate, should they lose contact with their loved ones or become detached from their Fetters and their Passions. Oblivion waits at the bottom of the downward spiral. Most wraiths take the first step easily, often unknowingly, and the descent is invariably a rapid one.

Spectres make good enemies in **Wraith** chronicles — the interests of wraiths and spectres are often in direct conflict. Spectres also represent "the Other." They understand Oblivion in ways which no wraith can, or would want to. They are a manifestation of the Shadow, the embodiment of a wraith's fears and inadequacies. There may also be something which wraiths find seductive about the apparent freedom of spectres. Some wraiths might deliberately abandon their Fetters and join the ranks of Oblivion, not discovering their mistake until the irrevocable step is made. Finally, spectres are the howling beasts whose rampages catch wraiths unawares and literally rend them apart.

All these reasons make spectres prime candidates for villains in **Wraith**, but spectres are much more than just the wandering monsters of the Tempest. Doppelgangers are skilled infiltrators and can be found posing as wraiths in most Necropoli. Through their disguises and Arcanoi, they manipulate and trick wraiths, leading them towards self-destruction and the Shadow, their true selves. Nephwracks can be

old friends of the characters, horribly warped by Oblivion (but not quite beyond recognition) come back to haunt them. Shades are relentless hunters, dogging the characters' every move once they have a sniff of the characters' Angst. Malfeans are nemeses, rulers of strange realms to which the wraiths must someday surely venture. Mortwights are an unknown force, mysterious and horrifying. Characters should reflect on how close their own deaths came to transforming them into Mortwights. Striplings are equally terrible, combining innocence and evil, forcing each wraith to confront her own past.

Because of the deep similarities between wraiths and spectres, it is quite possible that meaningful relationships of various kinds might develop between wraith characters and spectres. Perhaps while the spectre believes that he and the Shadow are dragging the wraith down to Oblivion, the wraith believes that she and the Psyche are redeeming the spectre. Perhaps both are correct, perhaps neither. The interactions of spectre and Shadow, wraith and Psyche should provide much material for Storyteller-generated plots and adventures.

Spectres are allies of a wraith's Shadow. This is an important aspect of their significance as enemies. They are intimately connected to that part of herself with which the character constantly wrestles. Through use of Arcanoi and careful plots, spectres assist Shadows in their struggles, and do great harm to wraiths. Spectres as the Shadow embodied are the most frightening adversary a wraith can encounter.

Wraiths that have become spectres make poignant and interesting Storyteller characters and adversaries. Wherever there is a nihil or a Shadow, a spectre is sure to lurk. Their plots and machinations, grand aims and deadly games ensure spectres a memorable role in every **Wraith** chronicle, regardless of whether spectres play the roles of heroes or foes.

## Systems



This section discusses character traits and how they may change during the progression of a spectre chronicle, through means of experience and learning, as well as the effects of damage and decay.

## Being

As discussed in Chapter Two, a spectre's Being trait determines the character's strength of will, and also its core emotional nature. Being differs from Willpower in that Being is determined by and linked to Passions. A spectre's highest Dark Passion determines both the essence of the spectre's Being (i.e. Hate, Lust, Despair) as well as its initial rating (1-5). Although Passions cannot be higher than 5 dots, Being

has a maximum of 10. Whenever a spectre encounters a mortal or wraith with a Passion of the same essence of its Being, the spectre must make a Being roll (rolling as many dice as it has permanent Being) or become Rapacious. A Rapacious spectre attacks the target by Emoting.

## Emoting

Emoting is an attack launched by a Rapacious spectre against the permanent Willpower of a wraith or mortal, triggered by the spectre's Being. A successful Emote drains the target of permanent Willpower, and increases the spectre's Being by an equal amount. To Emote, the spectre must overcome the target's Willpower with its Being in a resisted roll. Each success rolled by the spectre that is not canceled out by the target's successes equals the number of points of Willpower that the spectre drains. Mortals, who often have only a few points of Willpower, can often be killed by an Emoting spectre. Their bodies, when found, appear to have died of fright or some similarly intense emotion.

## Experience

Spectres live accelerated lives. Often a chronicle will see at least half the characters devoured by Oblivion before it ends. For this reason, spectres gain more experience points than wraiths do. It is also easier for spectres to increase their traits. In this manner, players can watch their characters develop and grow, even within the limited framework of a spectre chronicle.

## Awarding Experience Points

### End of Each Chapter

Award each character one to five experience points at the end of each chapter (game session) in your chronicle, under the following guidelines. Note that all of these points do not have to be given out at the end of each individual session, and indeed doing so may create characters that grow to be too powerful, too quickly. A five-point session should be a rare thing indeed.

**One point — Automatic:** Each player gets at least one point after every game session.

**One point — Learning Curve:** The character learned something from her experiences during the chapter. Ask the player to describe what his character learned before you award the points.

**One point — Roleplaying:** The player roleplayed well — not just entertainingly, but appropriately. Award this point of experience for exceptional roleplaying only.

**One point — Concept:** The player acted out her character's concept very well. This point should be given out sparingly.

**One point — Heroism:** When the character risks himself for others, give him an extra experience point. Note that heroic acts do not include those made while Rapacious, as the spectre is not in control of his own acts during such times.

## End of Each Story

At the culmination of each individual story which makes up the chronicle, you can assign additional experience points to the characters on top of those described above. Again, these points are strictly optional, and it is not mandated that they be awarded.

**Two points — Success:** The characters completed the story in a way the Storyteller deems a success, even if was not the ending she had initially envisioned.

**Two points — Danger:** The character experienced great danger during the story and survived. Some Storytellers may consider these two points redundant and not award them, considering the constant threat of Oblivion under which spectres act.

**Two points — Wisdom:** The character displayed great resourcefulness and inventiveness when dealing with the plot, or came up with a winning idea that should similarly be rewarded.

**One point — Served Oblivion:** If the spectre has furthered the cause of Oblivion, especially if at some cost to herself, the character should be awarded experience.

### Experience Chart

Trait	Cost
Attribute	current rating x 3
New Ability	3
Ability	current rating x 2
New Arcanos	6
Arcanoi	level of Arcanos x 2
Being	current rating

## Injury and Healing



Like wraiths, spectres are beings composed of Corpus. While invulnerable to damage that could cripple or kill a mortal, spectres can still be injured and even destroyed. Unlike wraiths, when a spectre's Corpus points reach zero, instead of falling into the Tempest to be Harrowed,



spectres cease to exist. Their fragmented essence is sucked into the Void through a nihil, and they may never return to the Labyrinth. A spectre character who dies in this way is out of the game for good. The player should be consoled, and either assigned a Storyteller character to play for the remainder of the chronicle, or asked to create a new character.

Falling, fire, darksteel and certain Arcanoi, as well as the teeth and claws of other spectres, are all capable of inflicting damage. Spectres suffer no harm from being caught in a Maelstrom, though objects caught in the whirling winds can certainly cause them harm. Spectres can trade Angst for Corpus to heal non-aggravated wounds. Only one point of Corpus may be healed per point of Angst, per round. The loss of Corpus inflicted by Oblivion is considered permanent, unless the spectre has access to the Dark Arcanos Larceny.

Spectres also heal damage through Slumbering. Instead of seeping into their Fetters, as wraiths do, spectres fade into the walls of the Labyrinth for eight hours. The player must then make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). The character heals one level of non-aggravated damage per success. Oblivion-lost Corpus cannot be healed in this manner.

Aggravated wounds, such as those inflicted by darksteel or another spectre, are healed through Slumbering and the additional expenditure of three points of Angst per aggravated wound. Only one aggravated wound may be healed in this manner each day.

## The Psyche

*And now my life has changed in oh so many ways  
My independence seems to vanish in the haze  
But every now and then I feel so insecure  
I know that I just treat you like I've never done before.*  
—The Beatles, "Help!"



Just as wraiths have a Shadow, a separate and malign entity manifesting everything bad, weak and cruel about the character, spectres have their Psyches. A spectre's Psyche is the last remnant of anything kind or good about the character. Most times the Psyche is weak, its voice thin and sickly. However, employing the Dark Arcanos Larceny to offset the destruction of Oblivion can allow the Psyche to gain strength. At most times the Psyche is only an ever-present voice, whispering away like a guilty conscience, reminding the character of how she used to be and how kind and good she was before being corrupted by Oblivion. The Psyche is the flip-side of the Shadow, and should be played in a similar manner. But while wraiths can expect the occasional "bad hair day" with their Shadows, the Psyche walks a much finer





and more careful line around spectres since higher urgings are seen as weakness, and liable to get the Psyche (and its host) turned into ectoplasmic hash. The wise Psyche grades the road to Redemption to be an almost imperceptible rise, especially to its host's peers.

## Psycheguide

As in **Wraith**, players take on two parts in spectre chronicles: their own character and another character's Psyche. In the manner of the Shadowguide playing the Shadow, the Psycheguide manifests the character's higher urges. Unlike the Shadow, however, the Psyche does not resort to cruel and brutal tricks in order to win over the character. Psyches employ praise when it is deserved, produce happy memories of the spectre's mortal or wraith past, and otherwise attempt to guide the spectre with kindness and love. On the rare occasions when the Psyche is dominant, the role is taken over by the spectre's player, not the Psycheguide.

## Psyche Character Creation



The Storyteller should develop the Psyche after the player has finished all other stages of character generation. Although the Psyche is part of the spectre character, details concerning the Psyche should be kept as secret as possible, in order that the player remain generally unaware of the heights of rapture to which the Psyche aspires. Even so, the Storyteller must take care not to create a Psyche totally at odds with the player's own perceptions of his character. The Psyche is a integral part of any spectre character, not a separate element, and should be designed with all due care.

If players feel that they should be the ones creating their Psyche, this desire can be accommodated as well. It means that any element of surprise the Psyche might have possessed is now gone. On the other hand, allowing the player to generate their character's Psyche ensures that it will consistent with the spectre character concept.

### Step One: Concept

The Storyteller should choose, with input from the player, a Psyche archetype from the list below. This represents the Psyche's general personality, but also should reflect the Nature of the spectre character.





# Psyche Archetypes

## Agent

Always looking out for your best interests, seeking to find something constructive and positive for you to do, this Psyche wants to manage you, guide you and generally help you better yourself. And if the Psyche profits along the way, so much the better! Constructive criticism plays a major part in this Psyche's repertoire; it helps you look at your performances and learn from your mistakes. If there is anything you need, your Psyche will promise to get it for you, allowing you to get on with the important business of redemption. Remember, he does it all for you, and genuinely expects nothing in return.

## Comrade

This Psyche is the shoulder to cry on, the friendly smile on a bad day, always ready to lend a hand or help you through a bad patch. Like any old friend, the Comrade knows you intimately, and accepts the bad along with the good. The Comrade always seeks to defend its friend's reputation. Perhaps the Comrade is puzzled and hurt as to why the character is behaving so maliciously. It may blame itself, or be insecure and thus cling to the character, whom it constantly admires. By comparing the character's noble past to its present activities, and by acknowledging that it is inferior to the character, the Comrade also hopes to help the character realize that he or she was once kinder, more noble and so on.

## Confessor

Stern but kindly, this Psyche's gruff exterior hides a fount of love and compassion. Although affronted by the sins it is witness to, the Confessor would never think of revealing them to others. There is a little of the martyr in the Confessor. This does not stop it from confronting the character with evidence of her sins, seeking to sway her towards penance. As far as the Confessor is concerned, a little guilt never goes astray when it comes to redemption, and this Psyche feels no qualms about hectoring and lecturing the character, so long as such drastic measures are for the good of the character's soul.

## Counselor

The Counselor is the person you can tell anything, that part of you prepared to sit and listen to another person's problems without judging them or berating them. The role of the Counselor is to help the character realize where her own problems are, and assist with setting strategies to deal with them.

This Psyche listens, asks open-ended questions and tries to help the character recognize and define her own weaknesses and faults. Rather than ignoring these problems, the Counselor wants to help you make them go away. This Psyche is removed from the character and claims to have no vested interest in the character's existence.

## Nurturer

This Psyche is maternal, supportive and caring. It is concerned about the kind of people the host hangs around with, and considers them a bad influence. Although the Nurturer may scold, it never loses its temper. The Nurturer wants you to be safe, warm and happy, and will do its best to ensure you are, even if it is not what you want. This Psyche has almost infinite patience, and cannot be intimidated or beaten down by the host character. The Nurturer knows what is best for you, and is determined that you shall have it.

## Saint


Few spectres are strong enough to stand up to this Psyche. Proud, commanding and authoritative, the Saint stands out as an incorruptible beacon of purity in the host's mind. The Saint knows evil exists, but has no time for it. A spectre who has this kind of Psyche will be constantly tortured by the bold and unforgiving comparisons the Saint makes between the spectre and itself. This Psyche's tone is matter-of-fact. It knows your sins and chastises you for them.

## Savior

This Psyche is the way and light, the road to salvation. Constantly preaching the host, the Savior wants the character to listen only to it. No other can lead the host to redemption except the Savior. The Savior is self-sacrificing, prepared to suffer any harm should that in some way advance the redemption of the spectre. The Savior is both preacher and friend, and wants most of all to have the spectre as an equal, understanding and infinitely forgiving. When this Psyche dominates, it loves to take the opportunity to debate, preach and deliver sermons to those around it. It advises forgiveness for the spectre to all who will listen.

## Step Two: Composure

The Psyche is powered by a trait called Composure. Composure represents the degree of serenity and peace the Psyche possesses. There are two kinds of Composure, permanent (the circles) and temporary (the boxes). It is from the latter that Composure points are spent powering Fronds. Permanent Composure represents the degree of control the Psyche has over a character. The permanent Composure rating always



begins at a level equal to or less than the host's Being. Roll a number of dice equal to the character's Being (difficulty 6). The number of successes indicates the amount of permanent Composure the Psyche has at the start of the game.

Temporary Composure begins at a rating equal to the Psyche's permanent Composure, but fluctuates thereafter. Temporary Composure can and often does exceed its permanent score. Composure can be increased by use of certain Fronds. The Dark Arcanos Larceny is another source of Composure, and it can also be increased by fulfilling Passions.

Like Angst, temporary Composure can also exceed the host's Being. When this happens, the Psyche can attempt to assert control over the character. If temporary Composure ever reaches 10, the Psyche can trade all 10 points for one point of permanent Composure, bringing the character that much closer to Redemption. Composure will vary during play. It is recommended that the player never know how strong her Composure rating is, and thus never know how close, or how distant, she is from being Redeemed.

## Step Three: Passions

Next the Storyteller must define the Passions of the Psyche. Passions are concerned with higher morals and drives. Passions include Love, Honesty, Sincerity, Hope and Faith. Fulfilling a Passion allows the Psyche to increase its Composure trait. Like the spectre's Dark Passions, which they reflect, Passions should be recorded on the Psyche character sheet as a one line description of the exact nature of the Passion, followed by a one word summation of the type of Passion. An example of a Passion might be "Help host realize the error of his ways (Hope)."

Passions are often the opposite of those of the spectre. Much of the drama inherent in **Dark Reflections** is drawn from the clash between the goals of spectre and Psyche. Seven points are assigned to Passions when designing the Psyche. Freebie points can be used to increase these Passions at a later stage in the Psyche's development.

## Step Four: Freebie Points

The Storyteller may now spend 10 freebie points among the Psyche's traits. Fronds can be brought with freebie points, and Composure and Passions increased. The Psyche's permanent Composure score cannot be brought above the character's Being by using freebie points, although this restriction does not apply to temporary Composure.

**Permanent Composure** — 5 points per dot

**Temporary Composure** — 2 points per dot

**Passions** — 1 point per dot

**Fronds** — listed individually below

## Fronds

A Psyche's Fronds are the equivalent of the Shadow's Thorns. These unique gifts are employed by the Psycheguide to harry the character. Ideally, the character should be kept in suspense as to the nature of his or her Fronds until they manifest in the game.

## Wraith Prestige (1 point/level)

The Psyche is known and respected among certain wraiths, and might be aided by them in times of need.

## Allies (1 point/level)

The Psyche regularly communes with wraiths in the area. This Frond is the Psyche equivalent of the Background Allies, applicable only to the locale's wraiths.

## Memories of Life (1 point)

What the spectre has forgotten about his former existence (as wraith or mortal) the Psyche remembers. The Psyche can offer the spectre any information, trait or knowledge from that life free of charge. A spectre who accepts such aid, however, is exposed to images of that former, more worthy existence, and must make an Angst roll against a difficulty of 5. Any dice that do not roll a success represent the loss of a point of Angst. Botches indicate the loss of two points.

## Mirror (1 point)

Usually possessed by the Psyches of Nephwracks or Shades, this Frond reveals to the spectre, in every flat surface they can see, an image of what they have become or what they might have been. Such a revelation is horrible for many spectres, and those who are affected by Mirror must make an opposed Angst roll against the Psyche's Composure. Failure results in the spectre being wracked by self-loathing and being unable to act, except in self defense, for the remainder of the scene.

This art costs 3 Composure.

## Pure Relic (1 point/relic)

When the Psyche is dominant, it manifests a relic, which appears at no other time. Such a relic can be a weapon.

## Psyche Sigil (1-3 points)

This Frond causes the host to manifest some trace of the Psyche's existence, such as the scent of roses or baking bread, the faint singing of a heavenly choir and other uplifting or cheerful sensory triggers. This sigil manifests wherever the character goes. The character can "turn off" the Frond for a scene at the cost of one point of Being.



## Psyche Traits (2 points)

The Psyche may add one dot to a character's Attributes or Abilities for one action provided that the host agrees. The exact nature of the purchased trait must be decided when the Psyche is created. Every time the host draws upon this extra dot, the Psyche gains a temporary point of Composure.

## Guilt (3 points)

The Psyche has the power to make the spectre feel great guilt about a recent action. This is more than merely a verbal chastisement, but a crippling wave of feeling which overwhelms the spectre. It costs one point of Composure to use this Frond. The host must make a Being roll (Difficulty 6) upon experiencing the intense feelings of guilt, losing a point of temporary Being for each dice rolled under the difficulty.

## Indulgence (3 points)

This Frond allows the Psyche and the spectre to enter into a pact. A spectre can purchase the right to be unhindered by its Psyche in some imminent action by spending a number of Angst points. For every point so spent a die is rolled (versus a difficulty 6), and each success grants the Psyche a point of temporary Composure. Once the Psyche has agreed to such a bargain, however, it may not renege and cannot interfere or berate the spectre for that action.

## Freudian Slip (4 points)

By spending a temporary Composure point, the Psyche may cause the host to make an involuntary action or blurt out an embarrassing phrase or secret. The character can resist this by making a Being roll (Difficulty 8). Only one success is needed to resist.

## Penance (6 points)

When the spectre loses a point of Corpus to Oblivion through a botch (or other means), the Psyche can offer to prevent that loss through use of this Frond. If the spectre accepts the offer, then the Psyche prescribes a penance. Such a penance usually involves a kind act or worthy deed and does not usually take more than a scene or two to perform. It may have a profound effect on the spectre in question, though.

## Psyche Independence (7 points)

Every time the spectre Slumbers, her Psyche takes control of the Corpus and lives a secret life of its own. The host remains unaware of these activities, as the Psyche blanks out all memories of its activities. Because the Psyche maintains





its own existence, the host may find itself burdened with enemies it does not recall making, and falling into traps the Psyche has arranged for it.

## Guiding the Psyche

Just as playing the Shadow is an important role in traditional Wraith chronicles, so too is the Psyche in *Dark Reflections*. Although the Psyche is a secondary character of the Psycheguide, it should be played with as much care and dedication as the player puts into her own spectre character. It is important for the Psycheguide to keep track of Composure, as well as the host's Being. You must also have a good understanding of the host's character, in order for you to more properly play that same character's suppressed higher urges.

The Psyche is the last of the character's good side to have survived. Even if the character was cruel and malicious in life, there were still aspects of his personality that strived toward the light. Decency, love, compassion, tolerance — such traits as these have been devoured by Oblivion almost completely. Only the Psyche remains, a tiny beacon of light within the spectre's dark heart. Guiding such evil toward good is an uphill battle. It is this conflict you, as Psycheguide, must personify.


## Psychic Healing

Although the Psyche battles to save the character's soul, to slow or even reverse the downward spiral toward Oblivion, it is gentle about it. The tools of the Shadow — abuse, deceit, cruelty and brutality — are not those of the Psyche. The Psyche seeks to heal the divisions in the character's mind, not aggravate them. To this end, the Psyche employs kind words and pleasant memories in order to achieve its goal. The Psycheguide must walk a thin line between hectoring and healing, hurting and helping the spectre. If the Psyche fails to lift the character towards the light, it too is doomed, and this knowledge adds a note of desperation to the Psyche's battle.

## Passions

Passions are the finer, higher emotions experienced in everyday life, and which are absent in the Labyrinth. Spectres know and understand only Dark Passions. Each Bright Passion which a Psyche possesses has an essence (the specific type of emotion in brackets following the general Passion statement). Whenever the Psyche fulfills a Passion, it may attempt to roll a number of dice equal to the score of that Passion against a difficulty of 7. Each success rolled allows the Psyche to gain a point of temporary Composure. The Psyche is said to have fulfilled its Passion by triggering that emotion in its host,





or fostering that self-same emotion in others via the use of Arcanoi. Merely witnessing the emotion is not enough; the Psyche must have played an active role in its development.

## Catharsis

Just as Shadows can take over wraith characters, so too can the Psyche attempt to take control of the character if its temporary Composure is higher than the host's Being trait. If the Psyche dominates, it takes control of the character for the remainder of the scene. The player, not the Psycheguide, takes over the running of the Psyche character when this happens.

## The Catharsis Roll

The Psyche attempts to gain control of the host by spending one temporary Composure point (this may bring Composure to equal or below the host's Being, but the Catharsis roll continues regardless, as the Psyche's Composure was greater than the host's Being when the action began) and rolling a number of dice equal to its temporary Composure. The host may resist by rolling permanent Being. Both rolls are at difficulty 6, and are considered to be standard Resisted Actions.

When the Psyche is dominant, it has access to all the character's Arcanoi and Dark Arcanoi as well as its own Fronds. The rules applying to the Shadow regarding Willpower and Angst apply equally to the Psyche. See Chapter Seven of *Wraith* for further information.

**Important Note:** While the Psyche can still use the host's Arcanoi while it is dominant, those Dark Arcanoi that usually give the user Composure will instead cost the Psyche the equivalent number of Composure points.

## Gaining Composure

Psyches can gain Composure in several ways:

### Psyche Dice

The Psyche can offer the host extra dice on any roll the character wishes to make. One point of Composure is gained for each success that is rolled on the Psyche dice, which should be rolled separately from the character's usual dice pool, in order to keep track of the rolls. Botches rolled on the Psyche dice only affect successes on the Psyche dice roll, and are the exception to the Corpus loss such botches normally incur. The Psyche can offer as many dice as it has permanent Composure. Whether or not such an offer is accepted, the Psyche's Composure rating remains unaffected.

## The Psyche's Passions

By fulfilling the essence of one of its Passions, the Psyche can gain Composure points. Roll the appropriate Passion when the Psyche accomplishes that Passion's goal (difficulty 7). As with Shadows, if the Psyche forces the emotion on someone, the difficulty is a 9.

### Larceny

The Dark Arcanos Larceny gives the Psyche Composure when it is used.

### Roleplaying

The Storyteller can also give the Psyche Composure if she believes such a reward is deserving because of the Psycheguide's roleplaying. This should only be done if the player is in agreement.

## Losing Composure

### Fronds

Certain Fronds that the Psyche has access to cost variable points of Composure to employ.

### Using Larceny while the Psyche is dominant

As discussed above, this Dark Arcanos usually confers Composure upon the spectre who uses it. When a dominant Psyche uses Larceny, the Psyche must spend the equivalent amount of Composure points, instead of gaining them.

### Botching any roll while the Psyche is dominant

Rather than the character losing Corpus for botched rolls, the Psyche instead loses a point of temporary Composure for each botch incurred while it is in control of the character.

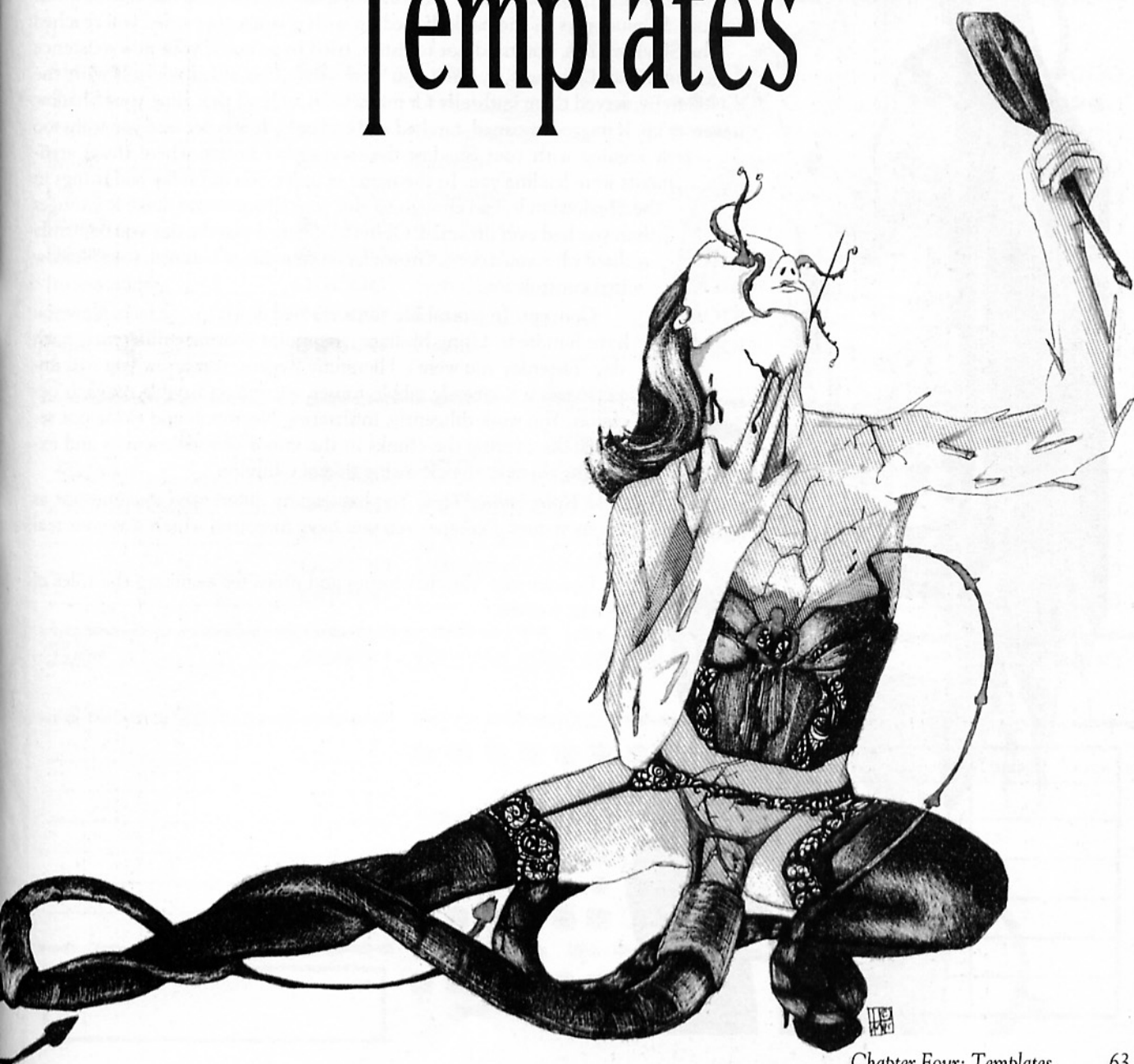
## Redemption

If a Psyche's permanent Composure ever reaches 10, the character is considered Redeemed. No one really knows what happens after Redemption, save that spectres who are Redeemed instantly vanish from the Labyrinth. Whether the character is reborn as a wraith and must begin existence in the Shadowlands all over again, or instead Transcends to whatever reality awaits beyond is unknown, although countless opinions are offered by spectres and wraiths alike on this subject.





# Chapter Four: Templates



# Doppelganger Impostor

**Quote:** But of course I am who I say I am. If you question my identity, then surely you should also question your own — for how do you know you are not a spectre pretending to be yourself? And if you are not who you think you are, what about the world itself? Is anything really as it seems?

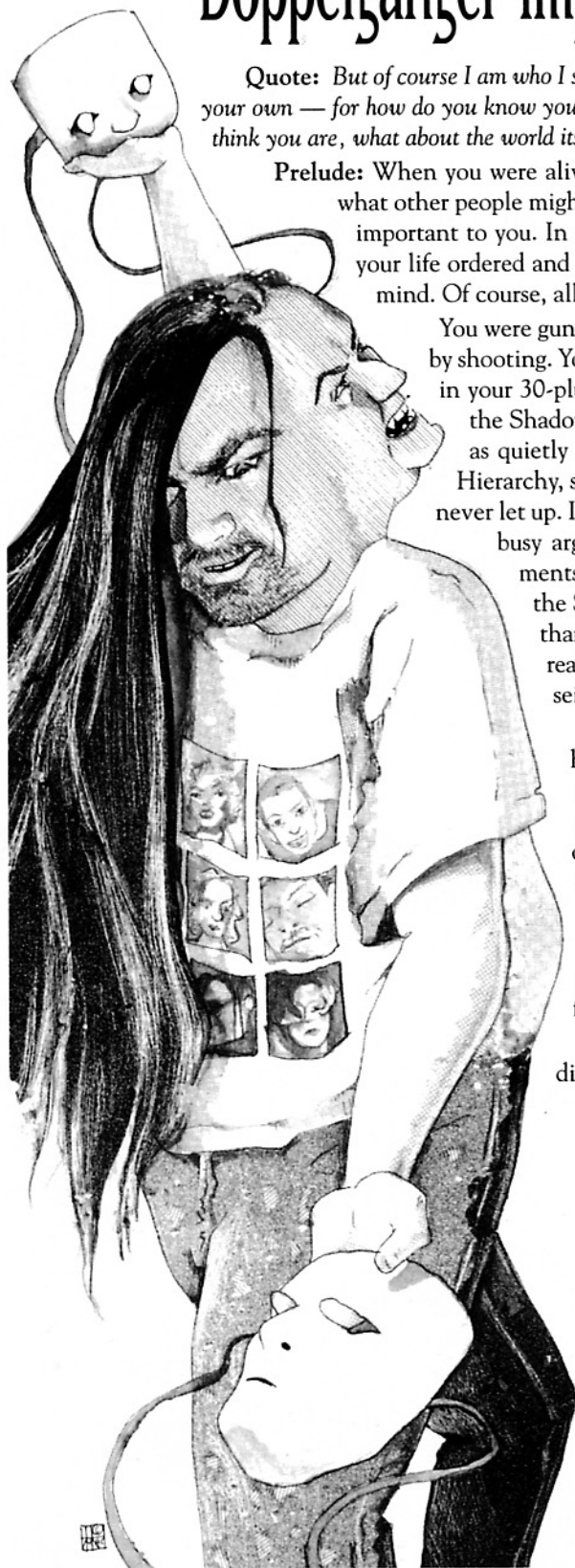
**Prelude:** When you were alive, you did your best to preserve the status quo. You worried about what other people might think, and so never did anything to disturb them. Equilibrium was important to you. In this violent, ever-changing world, you seized on monotony to keep your life ordered and acceptable. Deviating from the norm was always furthest from your mind. Of course, all that changed after you died.

You were gunned down on your way to see a movie, the random victim of a drive-by shooting. Your Shadow, all that jealousy and spite and hate you had locked down in your 30-plus years in the bank, boiled up with a vengeance once you reached the Shadowlands. You tried not to listen, tried to go about your new existence as quietly and boringly as when you were alive. You allied yourself with the Hierarchy, served them faithfully for many years, and all that time your Shadow never let up. It nagged, moaned, bitched and bickered. It was because you were too busy arguing with your Shadow that you didn't notice where those arguments were leading you. In the name of order, you did some bad things in the Shadowlands, bad enough to glut your Shadow and make it stronger than you had ever dreamed. Oblivion claimed you the day you first truly realized what you'd done. Grown fat on your diet of betrayal, your Shadow seized control.

**Concept:** In mortal life you were tied down to one face. Now you have hundreds. Using Moliage, you sculpt your face differently each day. Yesterday you were a Hierarchy Regent, tomorrow you will impersonate a Renegade rabble-rouser, stirring up trouble on each occasion. You work diligently, infiltrating Necropoli and eking out secrets, discovering the chinks in the armor of your enemies and exposing them to the cleansing tide of Oblivion.

**Roleplaying Tips:** You have many different voices and just as many names. Perhaps even you have forgotten which was your real face.

**Equipment:** Various clothes and props for assuming the roles of different wraiths.





Life: *Bank Clerk*  
Death: *Drive-by Killing*  
Devoured: *Shadow*

## Attributes

	Mental	
Perception_____	●●○○○	
Intelligence_____	●●●○○	
Wits_____	●●●○○	

## Abilities

Knowledge

Bureaucracy_____	●●○○○
Computer_____	●●●●○
Enigmas_____	○○○○○
Investigation_____	●○○○○
Law_____	●●○○○
Linguistics_____	●○○○○
Medicine_____	○○○○○
Occult_____	○○○○○
Politics_____	●●○○○
Science_____	●○○○○

## Advantages

Arcanoi / Dark Arcanoi	
<i>Moliate</i>	●●●●○
<i>Hive Mind</i>	●○○○○
<i>Tempest-Weaving</i>	●○○○○
<i>Shroud-Rending</i>	●○○○○
	○○○○○

## Fetters

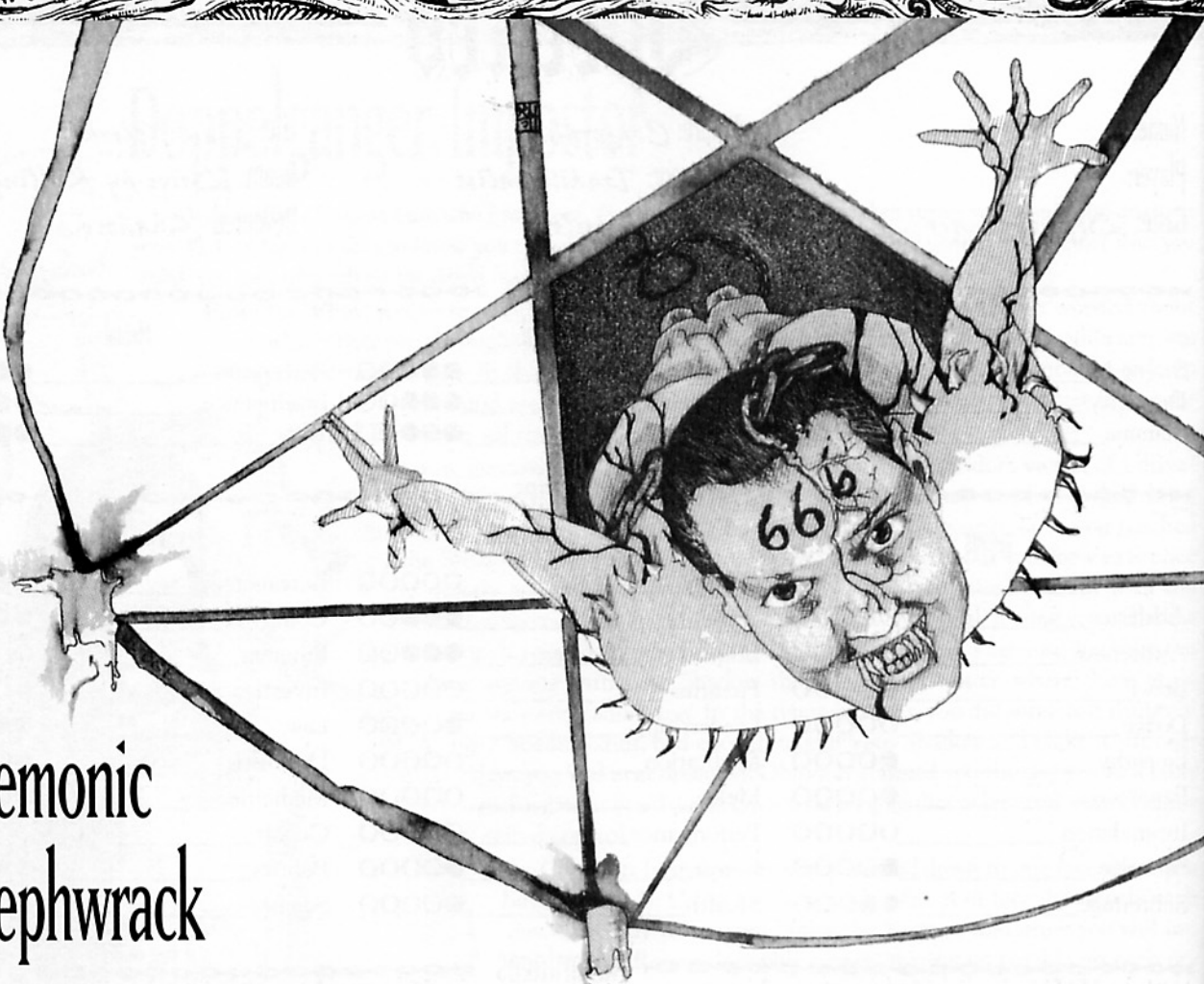
Life 00000

## Shade Powers

**■ ■ ■ ■ ■**

## Combat

[illegible]



# Demonic Nephwrack

**Quote:** *No hope. No future. No point.*

**Prelude:** You remember so little of your meat days. Flashes of memory torment you from time to time — wrack-become fewer and further between. Soon, when Oblivion devours you forever, they will trouble you no more. Even your memories of the Shadowlands are scattered and patchy. An endless succession of gray days and an utter inability to affect anything around you. Hopelessness. It was to the hopelessness that you clung, when otherwise you would have drowned in the Tempest. Oblivion Devoured you, burned you, transformed you. The shard of despair within you was heated and worked, tempered, strengthened. Now you are hopelessness incarnate, the spirit of despair.

**Concept:** You hurt, therefore you are. Lately you have taken to briefly appearing before a mortal cult in the Skinlands despite the wracking pain such episodes cause you, infecting the deluded members with an apocalyptic millennium madness. They believe you to be a demon, or a god. Your every manifestation drives the cult closer to mass suicide or mass murder. Soon they shall be ready for the master-stroke, when they either extinguish themselves in a frenzy of self-destruction, or hack a bloody swath across their metropolis. Every last one of them is infected with your purposeful despair and suicidal agony. The hungry black flames of Oblivion burn in their hearts. Soon you'll set them free.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Stare unblinkingly as long as you can, hunch your shoulders and lean your body forward like a solid mass of malice and melancholy. Pitch your voice low, and make the tone both despairing and menacing.

**Equipment:** Insane cultists willing to die at your command; secret temple in decayed inner-city location.



Life: *Vague Memory*  
Death: *Forgotten*  
Devoured: *Shadow*

## Physical

Strength\_\_\_\_\_●●○○○  
Dexterity\_\_\_\_\_●●●●○  
Stamina\_\_\_\_\_●●○○○

Social

Charisma\_\_\_\_\_●●●●○  
Manipulation\_\_\_\_\_●●●●●  
Appearance\_\_\_\_\_●○○○○

Mental

Perception\_\_\_\_\_●●●○○  
Intelligence\_\_\_\_\_●●○○○  
Wits\_\_\_\_\_●●●○○

## Talents

Alertness	●●○○○
Athletics	○○○○○
Awareness	●●○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○
Expression	●●●●○
Intimidation	●●●○○
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

## Skills

Crafts	●●●●○
Drive	○○○○○
Etiquette	○○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Leadership	●○○○○
Meditation	○○○○○
Melee	○○○○○
Performance	●●●●○
Repair	○○○○○
Stealth	●●○○○

knowledge

Bureaucracy	_____	00000
Computer	_____	00000
Enigmas	_____	00000
Investigation	_____	00000
Law	_____	00000
Linguistics	_____	00000
Medicine	_____	00000
Occult	_____	●●000
Politics	_____	●●●00
Science	_____	00000

## Backgrounds

<i>Contacts</i>	●●○○○
<i>Haunts</i>	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

## Dark Passions

Spread hopelessness 00000  
(Despair) ●●●●●

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Destroy all mortals(Hate) ●●0000

---

End all the pain(Misery) ●●●000

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00000

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00000

### Arcanoi / Dark Arcanoi

Embody	●●●○○
Puppetry	●●●○○
Hive-mind	●○○○○
Larceny	●●○○○
Tempest-Weaving	●○○○○
	○○○○○

## Fetters

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## ■ Shade Powers

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## Corpus

100

## Combat

Weight	Difficulty	Demands	Recovery
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Being

Being

*Despair*

Despair

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

## Angst

⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡ Angst ⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

## Experience

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[illegible]

# Stripling Prodigy

**Quote:** *Just because I'm a child, doesn't mean I'm an idiot.*

**Prelude:** You were born to a happy middle-class family, the youngest of three children, and, if your mother was to be believed, the most special. Certainly you showed many promising signs, walking and talking before you were one year old. You were sent to a school for gifted children, and by the time you were eight years old, you were well on your way to equaling the academic achievements of a college-age student. Your brilliant career, perhaps as a brain surgeon or a gifted musician, was cut sadly short when you died in a car crash before your ninth birthday. If your mother had been paying more attention to the road and less attention to you, you might still be alive.

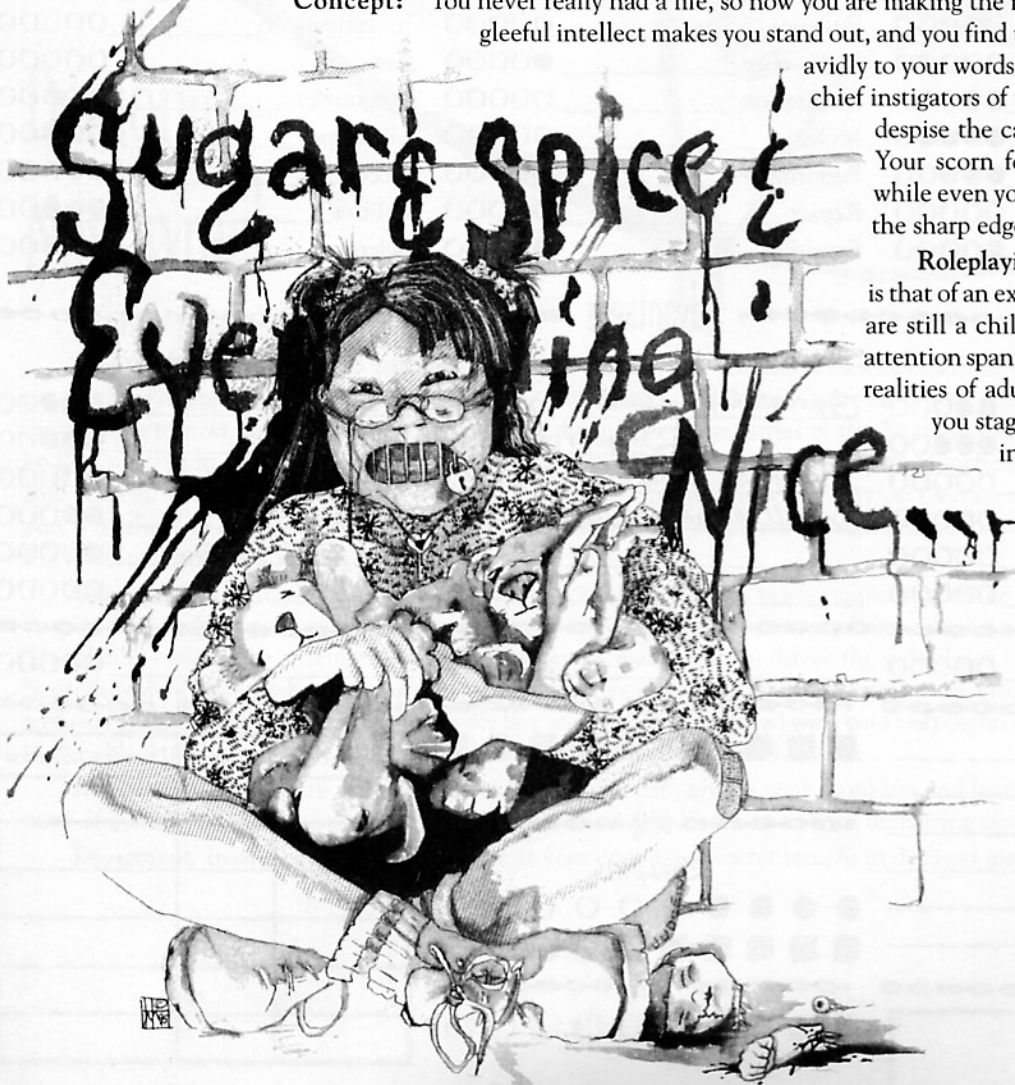
You never found your mother in the Shadowlands, although your memories of that gray limbo are uncertain at the best of times. You spent only a matter of months there, but you hated every minute of it. You barely escaped being Moliated into a torch-flame to light a Citadel in your first week as a wraith. Soon after that incident you declared for the Renegades. Even among their anarchic ranks you were treated as a child despite your ferocious intellect. The anger that grew within you fueled your Shadow, in many ways the parent you no longer had. You listened to your Shadow, and fell into Oblivion in short order.

Now you desire little besides the companionship of your fellow Striplings, as together you harry and hate the living and the dead. Even in the Labyrinth you are misjudged. Although they call you a Doppelganger, you shun the caste to which you supposedly belong.

**Concept:** You never really had a life, so now you are making the most of your death. Your evil, gleeful intellect makes you stand out, and you find that many of your peers listen avidly to your words. You have become one of the chief instigators of the Stripling movement, and despise the caste system which binds you. Your scorn for adults knows no bounds, while even your fellow Striplings often feel the sharp edge of your tongue.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Although your mind is that of an extremely intelligent adult, you are still a child at heart. You have a short attention span and little experience with the realities of adult life. You are brilliant, but you stagnate in the Labyrinth, where intellectual stimulation comes a poor second to savage fancies.

**Equipment:** Relic glasses perched on the edge of your nose.





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# Mortwight True Believer

**Quote:** *Follow me, and I shall lead our caste to glory!*

**Prelude:** Life? What life? You were homeless, living on the streets before you were 12 years old, and hustling your ass to anyone who'd pay for it. Your adolescence was a hell of cold nights and colder clients. You had few friends save the other emotionally scarred, half-feral kids that lived like you, and although their friendship was strong, it wasn't enough to stand against heroin, disease and the brutality of everyday life. You sank lower and lower, malnourished and malicious, harboring a burning hatred of the society that promised you so much but delivered nothing.

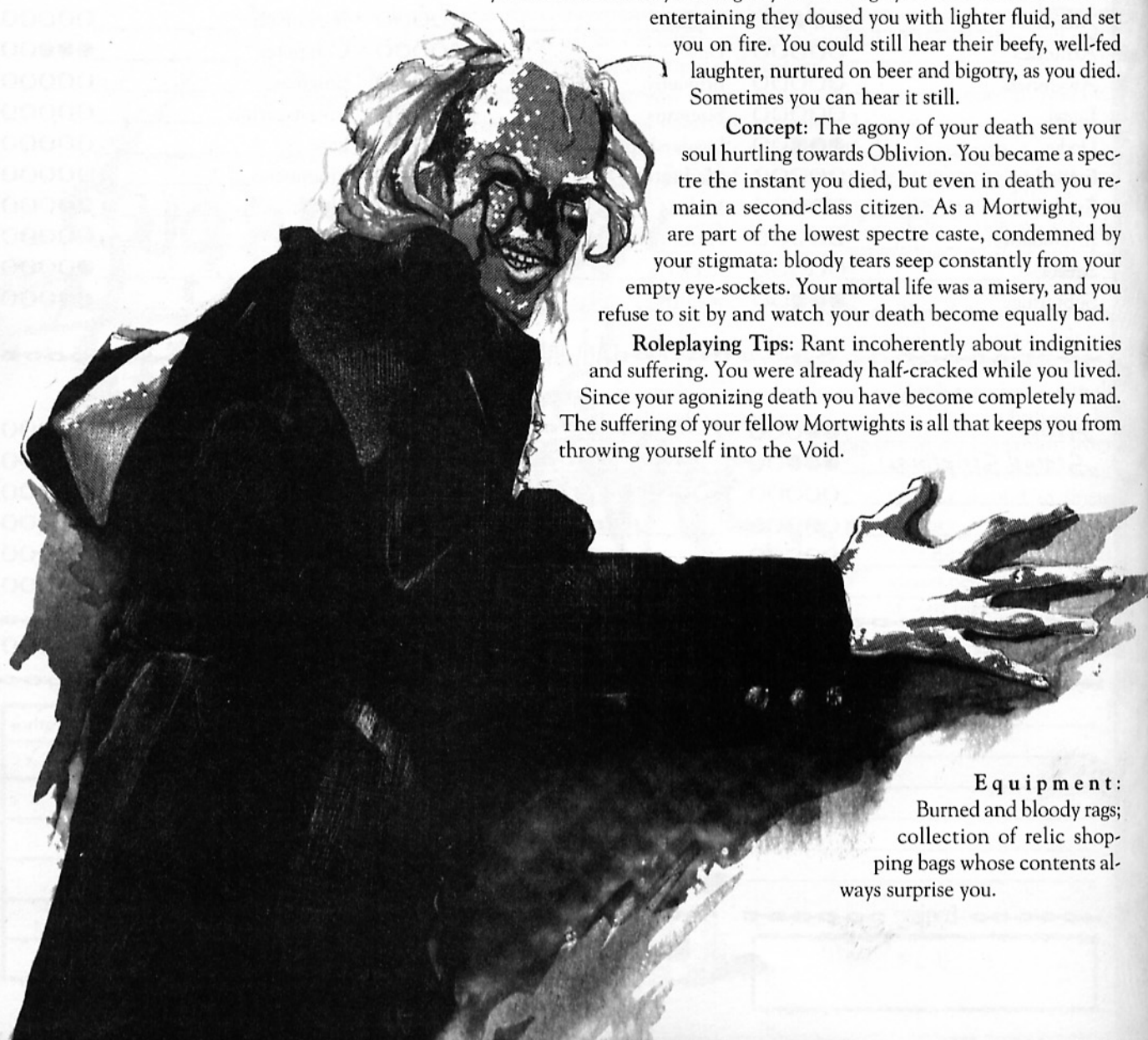
Somehow you managed to survive until you were almost 25, a ragged, muttering mass of rags and hair and a pair of bright, mad eyes half-hidden by dirt. That was how you looked when the frat boys found you. They didn't like your type. They were all going to be rich one day, and they decided that people like you brought the property values down. People like you didn't deserve to exist. To teach the other street people a lesson, they decided to kill you.

First they sprayed oven cleaner in your face, and laughed as you screamed and staggered about the alleyway which was your home frantically clawing at your burning eyes. After that ceased to be entertaining they doused you with lighter fluid, and set you on fire. You could still hear their beefy, well-fed laughter, nurtured on beer and bigotry, as you died. Sometimes you can hear it still.

**Concept:** The agony of your death sent your soul hurtling towards Oblivion. You became a spectre the instant you died, but even in death you remain a second-class citizen. As a Mortwight, you are part of the lowest spectre caste, condemned by your stigmata: bloody tears seep constantly from your empty eye-sockets. Your mortal life was a misery, and you refuse to sit by and watch your death become equally bad.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Rant incoherently about indignities and suffering. You were already half-cracked while you lived. Since your agonizing death you have become completely mad. The suffering of your fellow Mortwights is all that keeps you from throwing yourself into the Void.

**Equipment:**  
Burned and bloody rags;  
collection of relic shopping bags whose contents always surprise you.





[illegible]

# Rampaging Shade

**Quote:** Kill! Kill! Kill!

**Prelude:** It was all Rebecca's fault. If only she had gone out with you, none of this would ever have happened. You were still in high school, a four-eyed computer nerd, and Rebecca was a cheerleader. You loved her. Passionately. You finally worked up the courage to ask Rebecca out to the prom, never dreaming she would say no, let alone respond to your invitation with derision and scorn. You skulked out of homeroom with your head hung low and a broken heart. That night you slipped a hose over the exhaust pipe of your mother's car and gassed yourself in the garage.

You awoke in the Shadowlands, and realized that it was your love for Rebecca that was keeping you there. Your Shadow called you a fool, and said that you should kill her for what she did to you. You ignored it, and lovingly haunted Rebecca instead. So busy were you in your task that one day you failed to hear the bells of the Necropolis tolling in warning. The Maelstrom caught you unawares, and flung you screaming into Oblivion. You were still screaming when you came out, but now your cry was the hunter's howl.

**Concept:** You are a remorseless killer, motivated only by Dark Passion. Like all Shades, you are part of an assemblage of shock troops, insane warriors who attack Oblivion's enemies in wave after shrieking wave. Many of your companions have already been claimed by the Void. You burn for such a glorious demise. Your only fear is that you might succumb to the vile temptations of your Psyche before Oblivion claims you, and so die without honor.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Howl, hiss, whisper and prowl. A monster, you are driven by Dark Passion, and are completely insane by mortal standards.

**Equipment:** None.





# DARK REFLECTIONS

# Spectres

Name:

Player:

Caste: *Shade*

Nature: *Deviant*

Demeanor: *Fanatic*

Psyche: *Savior*

Life: *Computer Nerd*

Death: *Suicide*

Devoured: *Maelstrom*

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## Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●●●●○	Charisma ●○○○○	Perception ●●●●○
Dexterity ●●●●○	Manipulation ●●●●○	Intelligence ●○○○○
Stamina ●●●○○	Appearance ●○○○○	Wits ●●●○○

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## Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledge
Alertness ●●●○○	Crafts ○○○○○	Bureaucracy ○○○○○
Athletics ●●●○○	Drive ○○○○○	Computer ●●●○○
Awareness ○○○○○	Etiquette ○○○○○	Enigmas ●●○○○
Brawl ●●●○○	Firearms ○○○○○	Investigation ○○○○○
Dodge ●●○○○	Leadership ○○○○○	Law ○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○	Meditation ○○○○○	Linguistics ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○	Melee ●●●●●	Medicine ○○○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○	Performance ○○○○○	Occult ○○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○	Repair ○○○○○	Politics ○○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○	Stealth ●●●●○	Science ○○○○○

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## Advantages

Backgrounds	Dark Passions	Arcanoi / Dark Arcanoi
<i>Allies</i> ●●○○○	<i>Kill Rebecca(Hate)</i> ●●●●●	<i>Contaminate</i> ●○○○○
<i>Haunt</i> ●○○○○	<i>Destroy the world(Hate)</i> ●●○○○	<i>Hive-Mind</i> ●●○○○
<i>Shadowlands</i> ●●○○○	<i>Spread Oblivion(Hate)</i> ●●●○○	<i>Shroud-Rending</i> ●○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	<i>Tempest-Weaving</i> ●○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○

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○○○○○

Shade Powers

*Miasmal Breath*

*Shark's Teeth*

Fetters

○○○○○

Corpus

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Being

Hate

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Angeſt

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Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Pathos

Life: *Computer Nerd*  
Death: *Snicide*  
Devoured: *Maelstrom*



## Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●●○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●●●○	Intelligence	●○○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●●●○○

## Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
Alertness_____	●●●○○	Crafts_____	○○○○○	Bureaucracy_____	○○○○○
Athletics_____	●●●○○	Drive_____	○○○○○	Computer_____	●●●○○
Awareness_____	○○○○○	Etiquette_____	○○○○○	Enigmas_____	●●○○○
Brawl_____	●●●○○	Firearms_____	○○○○○	Investigation_____	○○○○○
Dodge_____	●●○○○	Leadership_____	○○○○○	Law_____	○○○○○
Empathy_____	○○○○○	Meditation_____	○○○○○	Linguistics_____	○○○○○
Expression_____	○○○○○	Melee_____	●●●●●	Medicine_____	○○○○○
Intimidation_____	●●○○○	Performance_____	○○○○○	Occult_____	○○○○○
Streetwise_____	○○○○○	Repair_____	○○○○○	Politics_____	○○○○○
Subterfuge_____	○○○○○	Stealth_____	●●●●○	Science_____	○○○○○

## Advantages

Backgrounds		Dark Passions		Arcanoi / Dark Arcanoi	
<u>Allies</u>	●●○○○	<u>Kill Rebecca(Hate)</u>	●●●●●	<u>Contaminate</u>	●○○○○
<u>Haunt</u>	●○○○○	<u>Destroy the world(Hate)</u>	●●○○○	<u>Hive-Mind</u>	●●○○○
<u>Shadowlands</u>	●●○○○	<u>Spread Oblivion(Hate)</u>	●●●○○	<u>Shroud-Rending</u>	●○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○	<u>Tempest-Weaving</u>	●○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
		Fetters			
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Shade Powers \_\_\_\_\_ Cornus \_\_\_\_\_ Combat \_\_\_\_\_

2000	2001	2002
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[illegible][illegible]

Experience	_____	Anest	_____			
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Experiences	Age			

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Pathos

# Psyche

Spectre: *Doppelganger*  
Psycheguide Player:

Archetype: *Counselor*

Fronds	Composure	Passions
<i>Psyche Independence</i>	● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	<i>Make host happy with</i> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
<i>Indulgence</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	<i>himself (Kindness)</i> ● ● ● ● ●
		<i>Seek beauty (Love)</i> ● ● ● ● ○
	Spectre Being	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
	● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○

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# Psyche

Spectre: *Mortwight*  
Psycheguide Player:

Archetype: *Comrade*

Fronds	Composure	Passions
<i>Memories of life</i>	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	<i>Create harmony (Love)</i> ● ● ● ● ○
<i>Mirror</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □	<i>Forgive host's oppressors</i> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
<i>Allies (1 level)</i>		<i>(Saintliness)</i> ● ● ● ● ○
	Spectre Being	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○



# Psyche

Spectre: *Nephewrack*  
Psycheguide Player:

Archetype: *Agent*

Fronds	Composure	Passions
<i>Psyche Traits (Strength x2)</i>	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	<i>Stop the incipient</i> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
<i>Penance</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	<i>destruction(Duty)</i> ● ● ● ● ●
		<i>Enlighten those the host</i> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
	Spectre Being	<i>has misled(Love)</i> ● ● ● ○ ○
	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○

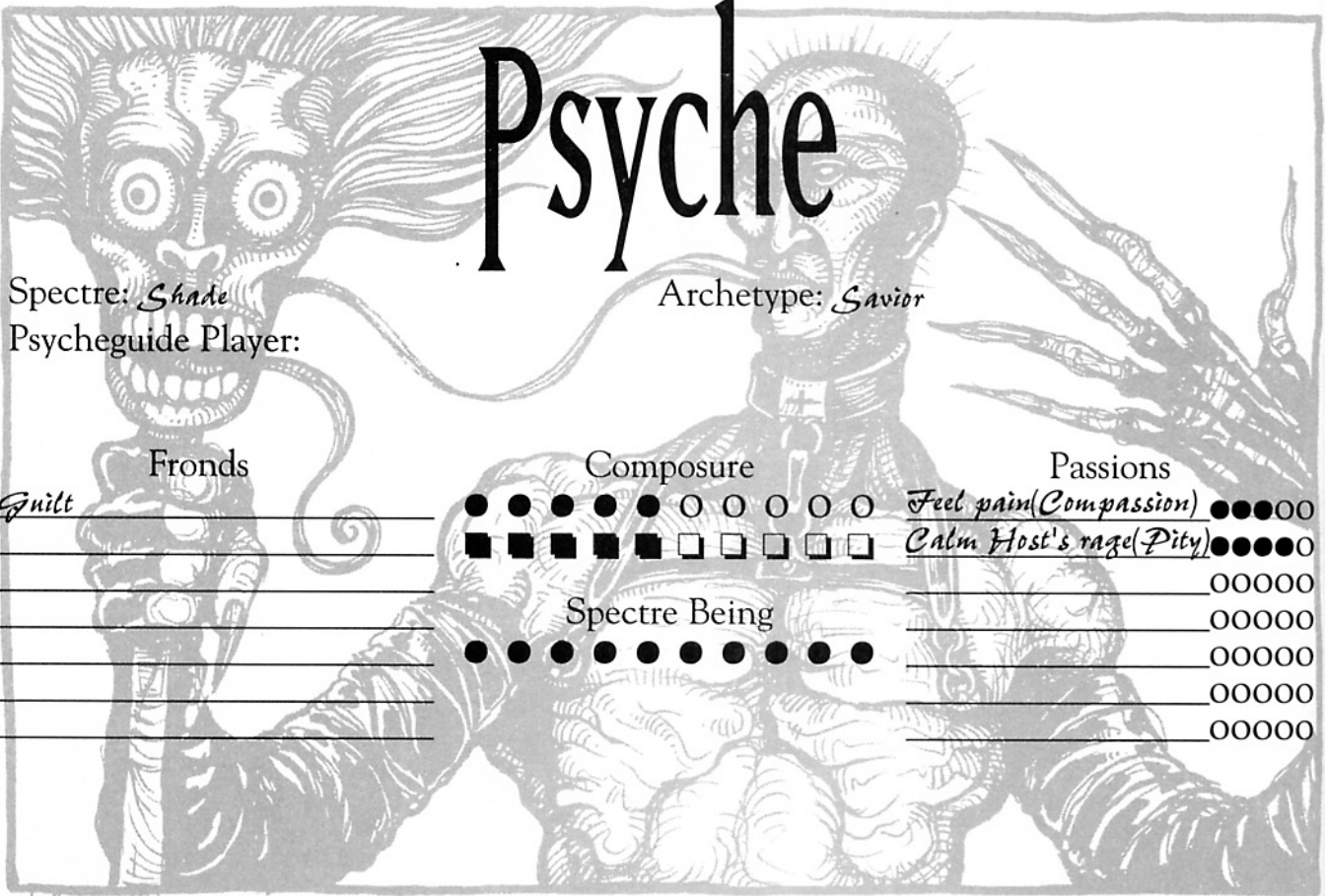
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# Psyche

Spectre: *Stripling*  
Psycheguide Player:

Archetype: *Nurturer*

Fronds	Composure	Passions
<i>Freudian slip</i>	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	<i>Teach Host to play(Fun)</i> ● ● ● ● ●
<i>Memory of life</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	<i>Be kind to other children</i> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		(Love) ● ● ● ○ ○
	Spectre Being	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○



# Psyche

Spectre: *Shade* Archetype: *Savior*

Psycheguide Player:

Fronds	Composure	Passions
<i>Guilt</i> ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □	<i>Feel pain(Compassion)</i> ● ● ● ● ○ <i>Calm Host's rage(Pity)</i> ● ● ● ● ○
Spectre Being		
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Archetype: *Savior*

### Psycheguide Player:

## Fronds

## Composure

## Passions

Guilt

Feel pain(Compassion) ●●●○○

Calm Host's rage(Pity)●●●●○

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## Spectre Being

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[illegible]

Archetype:

### Psycheguide Player:

## Fronds

## Composure

## Passions

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## Spectre Being

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# DARK REFLECTIONS Spectres

Name:  
Player:  
Caste:

Nature:  
Demeanor:  
Psyche:

Life:  
Death:  
Devoured:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ●○○○○  
Dexterity ●○○○○  
Stamina ●○○○○

### Social

Charisma ●○○○○  
Manipulation ●○○○○  
Appearance ●○○○○

### Mental

Perception ●○○○○  
Intelligence ●○○○○  
Wits ●○○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ○○○○○  
Athletics ○○○○○  
Awareness ○○○○○  
Brawl ○○○○○  
Dodge ○○○○○  
Empathy ○○○○○  
Expression ○○○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

### Skills

Crafts ○○○○○  
Drive ○○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ○○○○○  
Leadership ○○○○○  
Meditation ○○○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Performance ○○○○○  
Repair ○○○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○

### Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○  
Computer ○○○○○  
Enigmas ○○○○○  
Investigation ○○○○○  
Law ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Politics ○○○○○  
Science ○○○○○

## Advantages

### Backgrounds

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### Dark Passions

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### Arcanoi / Dark Arcanoi

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### Fetters

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### Shade Powers

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### Corpus

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### Being

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### Angst

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### Experience

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### Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Pathos

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# DARK REFLECTIONS

# Spectres

## Devoured by Oblivion...

*I was once as you are, but now my Shadow and I are one. We serve Oblivion, yes, and drag others down screaming to share in the sacrament of our torment. Join me willingly and partake of the blessings that Oblivion bestows. Refuse me, and you shall receive double your portion...*

—Coldheart, Nephwrack and Priest of Oblivion

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