

THE BOOK OF LEGIONS




A Sourcebook on Unlife in Ranks
for Wraith: The Oblivion™



THE BOOK OF LIONS

By Tim Akers, Ken Cliffe, Richard E. Dansky, Geoff Grabowski, Juliann Krute, James A. Moore,
Clayton Oliver, Derek Percy, Jeff Quick and Jonathan Woodward







They were men. They crept upon their hands
and knees. They used their hands only,
dragging their legs. They used their
knees only, their arms hanging idle
at their sides. They strove to rise
to their feet, but fell prone
in the attempt. They did
nothing, naturally...

Ambrose Bierce
"Chickamauga"

Credits

Written by: Tim Akers, Ken Cliffe, Richard E. Dansky, Geoff Grabowski, Juliann Krute, James A. Moore, Clayton Oliver, Derek Percy, Jeff Quick and Jonathan Woodward

Additional Writing by: Ken Cliffe

Development by: Richard E. Dansky

Editing by: Cynthia Summers

Art Direction by: Lawrence Snelly

Art by: Fred Harper, Brian LeBlanc

Front Cover Art: Guy Davis & Vince Locke

Cover Design: Katie McCaskill

Layout and typesetting by: Katie McCaskill

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THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

—••••• Table of Contents •••••

Chapter One: Introduction	8
Chapter Two: The Silent Legion	14
Chapter Three: The Emerald Legion	32
Chapter Four: The Skeletal Legion	48
Chapter Five: The Legion of Paupers	64
Chapter Six: The Legion of Fate	80
Chapter Seven: The Penitent Legion	98
Chapter Eight: The Iron Legion	112
Chapter Nine: The Grim Legion	128
Appendix	140

Beginnings

The Ferryman let me off at a Silent Legion post along the Lethe. It's not the real Lethe, of course, but that's the name that Bonyhands' mapmakers have slapped on it, and it serves well enough.

The Legionnaires — there were three of them — stepped forward and saluted when the raft scraped against the shore. Behind me, Severus stood, holding his scythe loosely in one hand the way I've seen thugs and Renegades hold baseball bats. "This is as far as I can take you, Erik," he hissed. "You know what you have seen, yes?"

I turned my back on the Hierarchs. There was nothing to fear, not with a Ferryman present. They might try to jump me once Severus shoved back off into the Lethe, but not with him around.

There are some folks in Stygia who still have manners.

I looked back at the Ferryman. He was clearly edgy, not wanting to stay in one place longer than necessary. I wondered why: what could possibly scare a Ferryman into that sort of edginess? Then again, maybe I don't want to know. "Look, Severus,

I appreciate the ride, and I know exactly what I've seen. I can recite the details for six hours, if the interrogators want. But I have no idea why you're dropping me off here." I could hear the Legionnaires behind me shuffle their feet. Obviously, they weren't prepared for anyone backtalking a Ferryman; hell, they looked the type not to backtalk their baby-sitters.

"Because this is the place where I am supposed to leave you. That is why." Severus' grip shifted on his scythe just a fraction. Underneath his cowl his eyes were the same green they'd always been. Despite the fact that we've traveled together a dozen times, I've never seen what's under the hood of his cloak, except for those green eyes. He caught me staring, again. "You're still questioning. Why?"

I shrugged, mock-theatrically. "Oh, I don't know. Just that I'm a known Renegade, and you're dropping me off at the East Backass outpost of a Legion, thank you very much, so I can work my way up the command chain with military intelligence the Deathlords will never believe anyway. It makes no sense." I turned and

stomped off the raft. The dock creaked under my shoes.

"Erik." Severus was in front of me suddenly, and I could hear the rasp of the grunts' swords coming clear of their scabbards. "This is important."

"Well, that's the damn trouble, isn't it? If it's so damn important, why don't you just cruise up Weeping Bay, knock on the Smiling Lord's door, and say 'Bob, thought you should know about the city full of vampires I just found.'" I waved to the Silent bullyboys. "Put the swords away, guys. You're outclassed." Out of the corner of my eye I could see them comply and back off. I'd obviously overloaded them. Arguing with a Ferryman, admitting Renegade status, talking about that city I'd seen from Severus' raft — it must have been a bit much for three stiffly randomly plucked from the pile to watch this godforsaken stretch of river.

Right about then I realized something. Severus was still staring at me. He hadn't moved, he hadn't shifted at all — but now he was dripping power. I could feel how tightly he was reining himself in, and it terrified me. If his Shadow had gotten loose — or if I'd gotten the real Severus mad, then I was in trouble. Those three Legionnaires were so

thoroughly outclassed it wasn't funny. I'd seen Severus use the scythe to slice a Shade and all the parasites it carried into ribbons. He could easily do the same to the guards.

Or to me.

And while I was rattling off this exposition to myself, I could see he was still staring at me. I froze. So did the guards, and for the longest time there was no sound except that of the river sucking greedily at the dock, and the whistle of the Tempest somewhere far off.

"We do not," he finally wheezed, "go to that place any longer. They will not have us there. Nor do we wish to enter Weeping Bay, and we shall not, not until the end of things, when Stygia will be the last rock in the storm." Then, he just stared at me again. I felt like I'd just told my father that I hated him, the shame was that intense.

"But why this?" I said weakly, almost pleading. "If this is so important, why do it in this way? It'll be so easy for the message to get lost."

Severus looked down at the ground then, and that terrified me more than anything else he'd done or said. "Because," he said, his eyes on the ashen sand. "Because I have been told that this is the way things

must be done, if they are to be done at all."

"Severus...." I started to say something, but stopped as I saw the flash of green from beneath his hood. I knew what that meant, and prayed he wasn't using it on me.

"Say nothing more." Off in the infinite distance, the guards snapped to attention. "This small kindness I can provide, the first step on the path. But that's all." He looked at me, and I swear there was pleading in his eyes, or hurt, or something that a Ferryman is just not supposed to feel. "I cannot do any more, Erik. I am not permitted. Take this and go. I have other... duties besides you, other wheels which must be spun." He strode past me onto the raft and started poling it away from shore. Behind him, his robe trailed off into the wind and down into the water, making him look like a stormcloud given a face and a name. The further from shore he got, the more the wind picked up, until I could hear the Spectral cackles starting to seep through. Severus just kept moving downriver, a herald of the coming storm.

I shivered, even as the rain started to needle down from the rumbling sky. A Ferryman, even one I knew, apologizing? I was in far, far too deep.

A footstep crunched on the strand behind me. A hand took my left arm above the elbow, gently. I turned.

"Sir?" It was the Centurion who commanded this outpost. His deathmarks were drawn with broad strokes on his face, and his armor was scored with heavy use. A black beard rolled down from his chin, and he had an apologetic look on his face. "Sir, we'd appreciate it if you'd come in out of the storm. There are a few things I want to discuss with you inside, too." His smile was friendly, polite. Only a flash of Severus' green flickered in his eyes. Behind him, the two subordinates guarded the door to the way station, swords drawn.

I sighed. "Your prisoner, sir. Let's go."

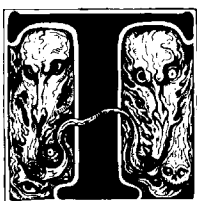
"Oh, no, sir." He shook his head. "Our guest."



A decorative border surrounds the page, featuring a series of stylized eyes and skulls. The top border has several large, detailed eyes looking forward. The right border is a vertical strip with a repeating pattern of skulls and decorative flourishes. The bottom border also features skulls and decorative elements.

Introduction

*Sergeant Greene is really mean
Someone pissed in his canteen
Sound off! One-two
Sound off! Three-four
Move it on down!
One, two, three, four
One, two — three four!
— Traditional US Army cadence*



he Guilds have all the mystery. The Heretics have their faith. The Renegades have that darling counterculture cachet; plus, they don't pay taxes.

But in the end, none of these groups hold the line against Oblivion. That privilege and duty falls to the wraiths of the Legions. From the dusty Isle of Eurydice to the mean streets of the New York Necropolis, it's the men and women of the Eight Legions who keep the Underworld safe. The Renegades are too disorganized to defend anything other than their own Haunts. The Heretics would just as soon turn on one another, and as for the Guilds, well, they don't exist, right?

So when the Maelstrom winds howl and Spectres boil up from the Tempest, you can call on your Renegade buddies to try to save your ass, but you'd be better off standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Legions. So buckle up your gear, soldier — and when I say soldier, I mean "soldier," dammit! Stop messing around with those pansy other groups, and get in line where you belong! You're one of us now, son! Wear your deathmarks proudly! The Beggar Lord is lookin' down on you, so stand up straight, suck in your Shadow, and move it on out to the front lines! Do you hear me? Forward, march!

What Is This Book?

In a very real sense, the Legions *are* Stygia. With the exception of Charon, every wraith since the dawn of Empire has belonged to a Legion. Stamped by destiny with deathmarks, the souls of the Western Dead fall neatly into eight categories, each covered by a Legion which protects them, arms them, gives them shelter and calls them its own. Victims of Madness go one way, victims of Violence another, and everyone is about as happy as is possible, considering the circumstances. It's a very neat and simple system.

In theory.

In the real Underworld, it gets a bit more complicated. People are murdered by a madman — who gets the souls? Deathlords squabble and dance around each other, each trying to amass more souls than the next. Enfants defect to Renegade and Heretic gangs. And all of those raw materials have to come from somewhere — and someone.

Hence, **The Book of Legions**, a guide to the less-than-perfect world of the average Stygian citizen. After all, every wraith in the Dark Kingdom of Iron is part of a Legion, regardless of whether he's a soldier on a Byway, a barghest trainer in the pits of Stygia or just a harried clerk

in a two-bit Necropolis. This book explains how all of those wraiths fit in, how they get shuffled to their final "rewards," and how the military and civilian sides of the Legions fit together so that Stygia functions.

Because the second that the Legions break down, Oblivion is waiting.

How to Use This Book

What you're holding is a comprehensive guide to the eight Legions of Stygia, which theoretically include all of the souls of the Western Dead. Each chapter focuses on a different Legion, who comprises the Legion, who runs it, what secrets they have, and, just maybe, what they're after.

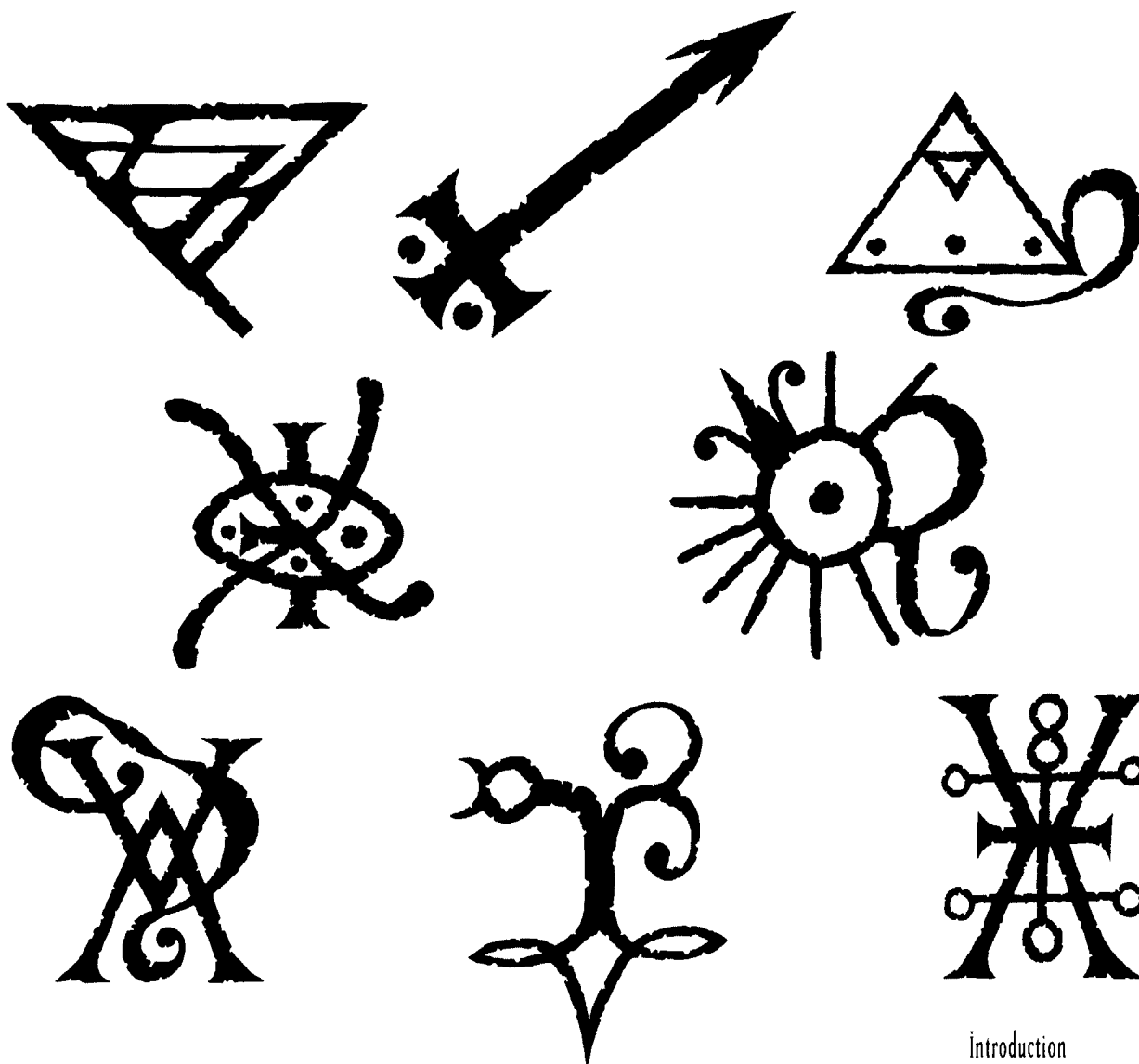
Each chapter contains an overview of the Legion, including typical deathmarks and equipment, as well as some looks at Legion organization both in and out of ranks. There's also a look at each of the Deathlords — the powers in Stygia since Charon's disappearance — some no-

table wraiths of each Legion (some of whom might surprise you with their presence), and a sample wraith from each Deathlord's retinue.

At the back is an Appendix with information on small-unit tactics for taking best advantage of your Arcanoi. Also included are notes on arms and armor, and the horses of the Underworld. Finally, there's also a list of the Legions who never quite made it — including the Shivering Legion, wraiths who had their bodies placed in cryogenic suspension.

This book is intended for both players and Storytellers, as it includes both character and background information. Storytellers may wish to restrict certain parts of this book, so that players don't learn too much too soon, but most of the text is intended as a help in creating Legionnaire characters who actually have a place in the Stygian regime.

So this is it. You've been inducted. Welcome to the Legions, constant reader. Good luck — you're going to need it.



Questions

The outpost was pretty friendly, as far as prisons go. I mean, it wasn't a prison *per se*; Severus' parting present had seen to that. However, the local Centurion had no idea what to do with me, and as such he was sitting on me. I think he was hoping I'd hatch.

"So, umm, Erik?" That was the younger of the two grunts, a kid named Ollie. He looked all of about 16, tossed into relic armor that was obviously a hand-me-down from some stiff six sizes bigger than he was. The various plates clanked and rattled on him, not that he wasn't a klutz to begin with, and he kept banging into things. He muttered to himself a lot when he did this, too, and I kept an weather eye out for Catharsis as a result.

I turned. Ollie had pulled up one of the other stools to the rough table in the center of the common room (really a phone company wire spool; I knew the type) and propped himself at the table. He was staring at my hand, which a lot of people do. Not that I blamed him, it's kind of odd-looking. The pins never lose their shine, and there are times when I swear the damn things are growing.

In the meantime, I'm just really careful which hand I use to scratch.

"What is, it, Ollie? Storm over yet?" I asked.

He nodded. "Glazer says that it's all clear. Want to come out for a look?"

I nodded. The Centurion, whose name was Bates, had spent the three days of the storm looking quizzically at me. Ollie had heard of me and acted like I was some sort of celebrity, and Glazer had obviously been hit too hard by the Ferryman's Intimation. So the past three days had not been the most fun I'd had since I died. Stretching, I got to my feet and followed Ollie to the door. Bates closed ranks behind me, just to make sure I didn't bop the Lemure on the head or some such. However, I had no intention of doing anything of the sort. Severus' parting words had impressed certain things on me.

The door was open, and the dirty light of the Byway sky filtered through. Glazer, a hefty man of about 50, stood there at attention. Ollie ignored him and walked through, and I followed. Bates closed the door behind us. We all stood there, blinking, in the light for a second. The river was

calm, and I could actually see a few trees way the hell and gone downstream. It was about as pretty as the Underworld gets, and peaceful.

That, I suppose, was why I knew things were about to go to hell. Of course, my Shadow didn't help. *Pssst*, it said. *Fley! Erik! Yo! Down here!*

I ignored it, while looking around frantically for what could possibly go wrong. Glazer was standing by the closed door, looking at the sky. Bates was next to me, and Ollie...

Did I mention the kid was about to flip? Oh, I'm sorry, you weren't listening. I could catch my Shadow's snickers of glee even as I spun to see where Ollie was.

He was exactly where I expected, with his sword sticking two feet out of Glazer's left eye. Even as I watched, a Nihil ripped open and Glazer screamed his way down to a Harrowing. Bates was moving to cut the kid down, but Ollie was faster. Letting the sword fall with Glazer, he grabbed the one that his buddy had dropped on the way down and ducked underneath Bates' swing. That turned into a vicious cut block at the Centurion's knees, and the two went down in a heap. I backed away and checked the



mental reserves to see how much I had in the tank in case Ollie came after me.

I needn't have worried. The kid came out on top, sword balanced on Bates' Adam's apple. Ollie was shaking, holding off on sending Bates downstairs by the skin of his teeth. "Go on," he rasped. "Get out of here, Erik. I'll hold him off."

Bates looked up at him. "Ollie, son, do you have any idea what you're doing? This could get you in some ser—"

"Shut up!" Ollie was actually crying, wet plasm splattering down on Bates' breastplate. "Just shut up. I don't want to have to hurt you, and I don't care what they do to me. Just let Erik go, okay? Then you can melt me down like you've always wanted to."

"Ollie...." I said as I stepped closer. "What the heck are you doing, man?"

He turned to look at me, wild-eyed. "You've got to get out of here. I read the communiqué, Erik. There's a whole boatload of troops coming. Not ours, either. Skeletal Legion. Man, if they catch you it's over, man. Over!"

You'll never find her if they take you to Stygia, my Shadow whispered.

"Oh, Ollie, I'm sorry." I walked up closer to him. Bates looked up at me, confused. Well, I didn't blame him. "You heard what the Ferryman said, right?"

"Yeah, but he didn't know. I'm trying to help you, Erik. Please, let me help you." Underneath, Bates did his best impression of a rock.

"He's a Ferryman, Ollie. I've got to trust him. If he says I need to go to Stygia because he can't, well, then, I've got to go." I found myself behind Ollie, a step to the left. Perfect. "Oh, and there's one other thing I need to do."

"What? C'mon, Erik, *hurry!*"

"This," I said, and I clamped my hand, the one with the spines, over his face. He screamed, well, he burred, and I used my other hand to slam the spikes home. The sword fell to the ground, and Ollie collapsed in a heap, leaking plasm from the ruins of his face. Bates rolled out from under him and frowned at me as I shook bits of Ollie free from my hand.

"Was that really necessary?" he asked, looking down at the wreck of his soldier.

I shrugged. "Possibly not, but I wasn't about to let his Shadow staple you to the bank there. And this was kinder than some of the other things I could have done." Ollie was crawling now, trying to reach the river. Bates kicked him compassionately, and the kid collapsed.

"He was right, you know. Bonyhands has sent a whole cohort after you." Bates grinned humorlessly. "I suppose I should feel honored to have had such an illustrious guest."

"Let's not mince words, Bates." I knelt down on the sand. "Prisoner. And if Severus hadn't told me to stay, I would have taken Ollie and split. We both know that." I looked over at the wreck that had been the kid's face. "I really am sorry, you know." All I got back was a look of hurt betrayal.

Bingo, said my Shadow.

Bates didn't smile. "Prisoner, then. Whatever. In an hour, you're off my hands. Shall we go back inside?" He gestured with the sword.

"What about Ollie?"

An impatient wave of the sword was his response. "What about him?"

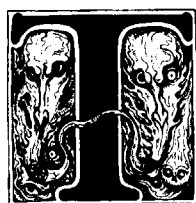
I nodded, and went back inside.



The Silent Legion

*He's haunted by the memory of a lost paradise
In his youth or a dream, he can't be precise
He's chained forever to a world that's departed
It's not enough, it's not enough
— Pink Floyd, "Sorrow"
"Congratulations, citizen. You've just volunteered for Hell."*

By Their Own Hands



he traditional salutation of a Silent Legion Reaper to his new charge, this simple statement perhaps defines the ranks of the victims of Despair better than any Sandman's eloquent prose ever could. From its inception, the Silent Legion has stood apart from all other Stygian institutions in that it is composed near-exclusively

of wraiths who chose their own times and methods of dying. How, then, do those who seek Oblivion react upon finding that they've only exchanged one life of torment for another?

Before examining the ranks of the Silent Legion, it is necessary to look at the membership requirements. Not every suicide victim becomes a wraith. Many simply have no strong emotions to live for, and pass on, unimpeded, to whatever lies beyond the Shadowlands. Those who remain



Silent Legion Lexicon

Every peer group develops its own slang. The Silent Legion is no exception. Here are a few of the terms and phrases that are common among the ranks:

Jumper: A wraith who attempts to commit a second suicide after realizing she's still "alive." This term comes from the most common practice of suicide effective in the Underworld, which is the act of diving headlong into a Nihil.

Quiet, The: Members of the Silent Legion. This usually refers specifically to the majority of suicides rather than the minority of martyrs.

Shadow-Nudging: The act of influencing a mortal on the brink of suicide to follow through with it, or the act of "assisting" at a critical moment. This is frowned upon as both a violation of the *Dictum Mortuum* and, more importantly as far as this pragmatic Legion is concerned, a potential Angst-builder.

Steel Martyr: A wraith who volunteers to be soulforged in order to find peace. The Silent Legion tries to scrutinize these rare individuals for undue Shadow influence before allowing them to be forged, but most soulforgers have no concerns about their raw materials' motivations.

Wrist-Slitter: A would-be Jumper who hasn't figured out the rules of the Shadowlands well enough to pick a suicide method that works. This is often used as a general derogatory term for a clueless or stupid wraith.

do so because they are tied more tightly to the Skinlands than they ever wanted to be. For these individuals, it's often a rude awakening to find that the universe has forced them into bondage to the very problems they were trying to escape. Many of the Quiet are Fettered to the people or places that were their greatest sources of turmoil when they were alive, and they find that gaining closure in the Shadowlands is a much more difficult task than it would have been had they elected to remain among the Quick.

On the other hand, not all suicide victims who cross the Shroud are inducted into the Silent Legion; a significant minority are claimed by the Penitent Legion for obvious reasons. Finally, not every victim of Despair dies by his own hand. Martyrs burned at the stake, rear-guard volunteers, hunger strikers and assisted euthanasia patients — all can end their lives in a condition of hopelessness so extreme as to leave deathmarks of Despair. The end result is a diverse, if somewhat morose, Legion.

No one who is happy with life kills herself. The Silent Legion, with the exception of the small but vocal martyr demographic, is made up of wraiths who so despised and feared their mortal existences that they found a total end to be better than any other alternative. That kind of nihilism leaves marks on a person even before death. In the Shadowlands, the Quiet radiate an almost palpable air of hopelessness. This, piled on top of the wraiths' already considerable emotional imbalance, often leaves them ostracized even more than they were in their mortal lives. The Silent Legion provides a vital support network for such individuals, who would otherwise be lost to Oblivion in record time.

Suicide Among the Restless

One of the Silent Legion's dirtiest secrets is its high turnover rate. The Quiet have an estimated annual loss to suicide that is over 10 times that of the next highest Legion's. (For those who care, the Penitent Legion runs a distant second). Many of the Legion's Enfants simply can't handle the fact that their suicide didn't work, and try it again as soon as possible. Most Jumpers consign themselves to Oblivion during the first week after their Reaping. Around-the-clock vigilance on the part of a Reaper is crucial during this critical period. Some Quiet Reapers have, as a preventative measure, taken to chaining their new charges down for a couple of weeks post-Reaping while teaching them the ropes. Needless to say, this practice is not looked upon with favor by some, and its effectiveness in suicide prevention is frequently questioned.

Suicide in the Shadowlands isn't quite the same as in the Skinlands, although many of the newly dead find an ultimate end at the finale of a Destruction Harrowing brought on by a 20-story dive to the sidewalk or a game of tag with a train. Although it is possible to find a final resting place in an Anacreon's parlor, few among the Restless Dead find voluntary soulforging to be a palatable concept. However, there is one other way of ending it all, all over again. If a wraith enters the Tempest and allows herself to float aimlessly while in a depressed state, she will eventually drift down into the Void in a matter of hours. This may provide a dramatic plot hook, as a Circle searches desperately to find their wayward friend before she finds Oblivion — or before some of the unsavory denizens of the Tempest find her.

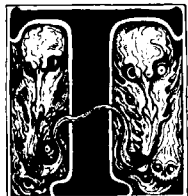
Politics

It's mine!

No, it's mine!

— Overheard on any playground

Stygian Relations



The Silent Legion, next to the Legion of Fate, is the smallest of the Legions, and as such has been overshadowed and over-muscled since time immemorial. Indeed, some have remarked that the Quiet have only survived as a political entity thus far through divine (or diabolical) intervention. As a result, the Legion's political, military and social practices have come to emphasize subtlety and precision over brute force and complexity. This has not been easy, but the Quiet have thrown themselves into building their power base with the single-mindedness born of desperation.

Throughout its history, the Silent Legion has been a favorite target of the Laughing Lady, who has pronounced that Despair is Madness and should be treated as such (coincidentally funneling most of the Quiet into her coffers). The Smiling Lord, whose pronouncements on suicide hold that it is a form of Violence against one's self, is another age-old enemy of the Legion, and these two are formidable opponents. Relations with the Grim and Penitent Legions, therefore, have been less than cordial, and sporadic military actions have ensued from decade to decade. The outcomes of these low-key conflicts have been evenly split, as the other Legions intervene before any one Deathlord gains too much of a measure of dominance over any other — or any potential ally is weakened too much.

The Silent Legion is on cordial terms with the Legion of Paupers and the Emerald Legion. Both of these groups contain a large number of wraiths who don't understand how or why they died, and the Quiet are some of the best counselors and Castigators in the Empire. On a more economically motivated note, there is little dispute between Despair, Mystery and Happenstance. Accidental suicide is a very difficult thing to accomplish, and if a wraith doesn't remember killing herself, the Quiet are more than glad to let that particular stone remain unturned.

Cool neutrality marks relations with the Legion of Fate. The Hand of Fate has remained a fixed, unbiased point in the tempest of Stygian politics since the Empire's birth, wielding a power completely out of proportion to its small numbers, and none publicly argue with its opinions or soul selections. Many Quiet will privately remark that they chose their own fates rather than wait for Fate to choose them, but this is something of a inside joke. It does not pay to offend the Legion of Fate.



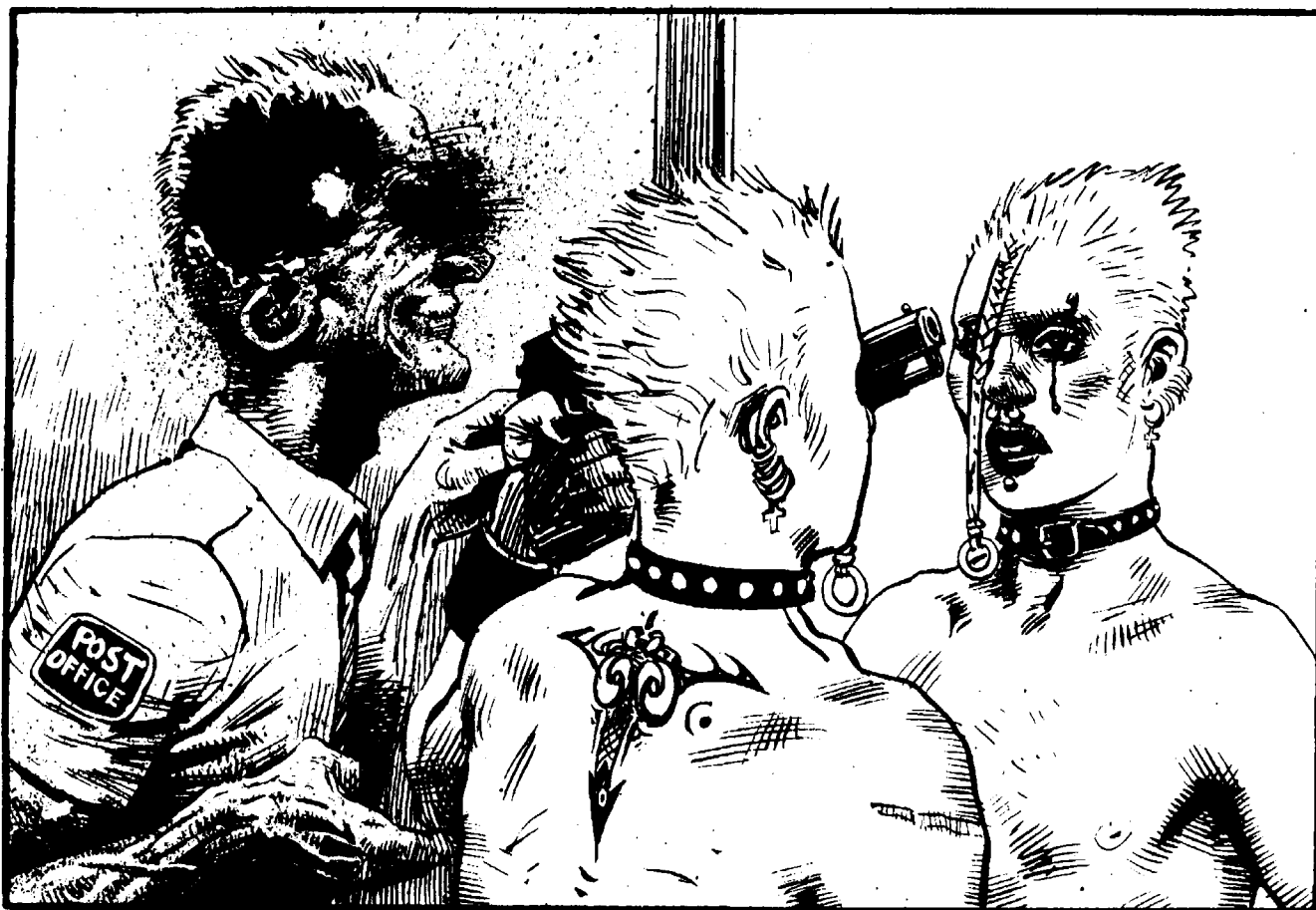
The Skeletal and Iron Legions have historically maintained neutral but tense relations with the Silent Legion. Although the line of demarcation between claimed souls is usually well-defined, there have always been those mortals who would rather end their existences than face the ravages of age or disease. Until recently, this was not enough to cause more than an occasional rude remark or snide letter to pass between the involved Deathlords. However, within the past decade, the right-to-die movement in the United States and Europe has garnered enough attention that both the Ashen Lady and the Skeletal Lord have both publicly accused the Quiet Lord of inciting it in order to "get the jump" on souls that rightfully belong to them. Observers of Stygian machinations speculate that this may be the next great inter-Legion conflict. Several bands of Reapers have already clashed over disputed souls in Detroit, London and Venice. No Destruction Harrowings have yet been reported, but all of the Deathlords are keeping close watch on the situation.

The Legion itself has always been adaptable. Change, after all, is what is necessary to break out of any cycle of despair, and so the Quiet have espoused King Arthur's ideal of "Adapt, adopt, and improve." As a result, the Quiet Lord has always been a voice for innovation, if at times a cautious one. Most of the Legion's political lead-

ers follow his lead, and the Quiet are some of the more liberal voices in Stygia and the Shadowlands alike.

It is worth noting that individual members of the Silent Legion have been some of the most persistent Stygian violators of the *Dictum Mortuum*. In truth, the Legionnaires themselves are one reason for the Legion's small size. The Quiet are perhaps the largest suicide prevention network in the World of Darkness, albeit one that is anything but organized. Many of the Quiet willingly cross the Shroud in order to keep a mortal from ending his own life. The explanation these Quiet give is that any victim of Despair is a potential tool of Oblivion and would be better off dying at a later date with (hopefully) a bit less Angst riding his soul. In many cases, however, the underlying motivation behind such an action is that the wraith is a bit soft-hearted or nostalgic, and is inclined to give the would-be suicide victim a "second chance." On the other hand, more than a few Quiet Reapers indulge in the occasional bit of Shadownudging in order to boost their profit margins.

The conflict between these two viewpoints is frequent and intense. The Quiet Lord could easily end the matter with a decree, but his apparent reluctance to levy a stiff penalty upon any wraith who so violates the *Dictum Mortuum* has fueled the debates and fostered a "don't get caught" attitude. Needless to say, the other Deathlords are less than pleased.



Foreign Relations



ersistent rumors of the Silent Legion's ties to various Heretic cults have followed it for centuries. The stories usually follow a common pattern: A Skinlands cult commits suicide *en masse* and crosses the Shroud relatively intact. Upon being Reaped, the cult adapts its beliefs to fol-

low the sudden shift in locale and sets up shop again. Spokeswraiths for the Silent Legion persistently deny any such association with a smirk and a statement that the Laughing Lady is more than welcome to those souls. The outspoken Anacreon of Paris, Lilith Donois, has been quoted as saying that the Deathlords should form the Bumbling Legion and place within its ranks all the wraiths who appear to be victims of their own stupidity. The general Quiet opinion on Heretics is similar. They are seen as misguided, stumbling, and ultimately useless and harmless to anyone but themselves.

The Silent Legion actually opposed the disbanding of some of the Guilds, which gained it no small amount of disfavor from those Deathlords who followed Charon's lead unquestioningly. Pardoners and Monitors, in particular, were openly protected by the Quiet, and a few of the most skilled users of those Guilds' respective Arcanoi are still trained within the Legion's ranks.

The Artificers, on the other hand, were known to view the Quiet as a source of raw materials, both voluntary in the case of Steel Martyrs and involuntary for the rest of the Legion. More than one soulforger went on record saying, "The Steel Martyrs have the right idea. If you're going to kill yourself again anyway, don't feed yourself to Oblivion. Make something useful of yourself, or, more to the point, let us make something useful out of you." The Silent Legion was universally glad to see the Artificers broken, and Quiet troops were at the forefront of the battle against the Guild during the Great Revolt.

Silent Legion leaders historically despised the Masquers' Guild for reasons that were never made public, and this distaste filtered down through the ranks. To this day, there is still a general reluctance among the Quiet to undergo even cosmetic Molation, and those skilled in Moliare are quietly shunned by their brethren. More of a tradition than a fad, this prejudice is slowly dying out, but Legion Gaunts still spit upon those who advertise Molation services for hire.

The breaking of the Mnemoi was publicly applauded by the Quiet. Too many wraiths had tried to forget their mortal existences only to be the targets of unpleasant flashback sequences commissioned by an enemy. However, just as many individuals sought the services of the Mnemoi in numbing their memories of the Skinlands, and some wraiths might well undergo such erasure voluntarily if the Guild still existed — or its remnants could be found.

Every member of the Silent Legion is painfully aware of the effect that excess levels of despair can have on a Shadow, and thus they are mutually supportive where depression and Angst are concerned. However, some wraiths still slip through the cracks, and anyone who has spent any length of time among the Quiet has almost certainly seen at least one friend succumb to Oblivion out of hopelessness. The Spectres generated by this process show unusual cunning and insight where their former brethren are concerned, and take fiendish delight in dragging the Quiet down with them through conversation or carefully engineered setbacks. Even more alarming is the fact that a large number of wraiths who perish of Despair fall straight to Spectrehood in a relatively short time after death. Accordingly, the Silent Legion views Spectres as a much more immediate and insidious threat than some other Hierarchs do, and the Quiet have adopted a "stab first, and let the Grim Legion ask the questions" policy where the servants of Oblivion are concerned.

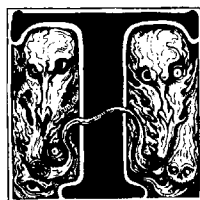
Non-Military Life

Roll away the stone

If you could just move yours

I could get working on my own

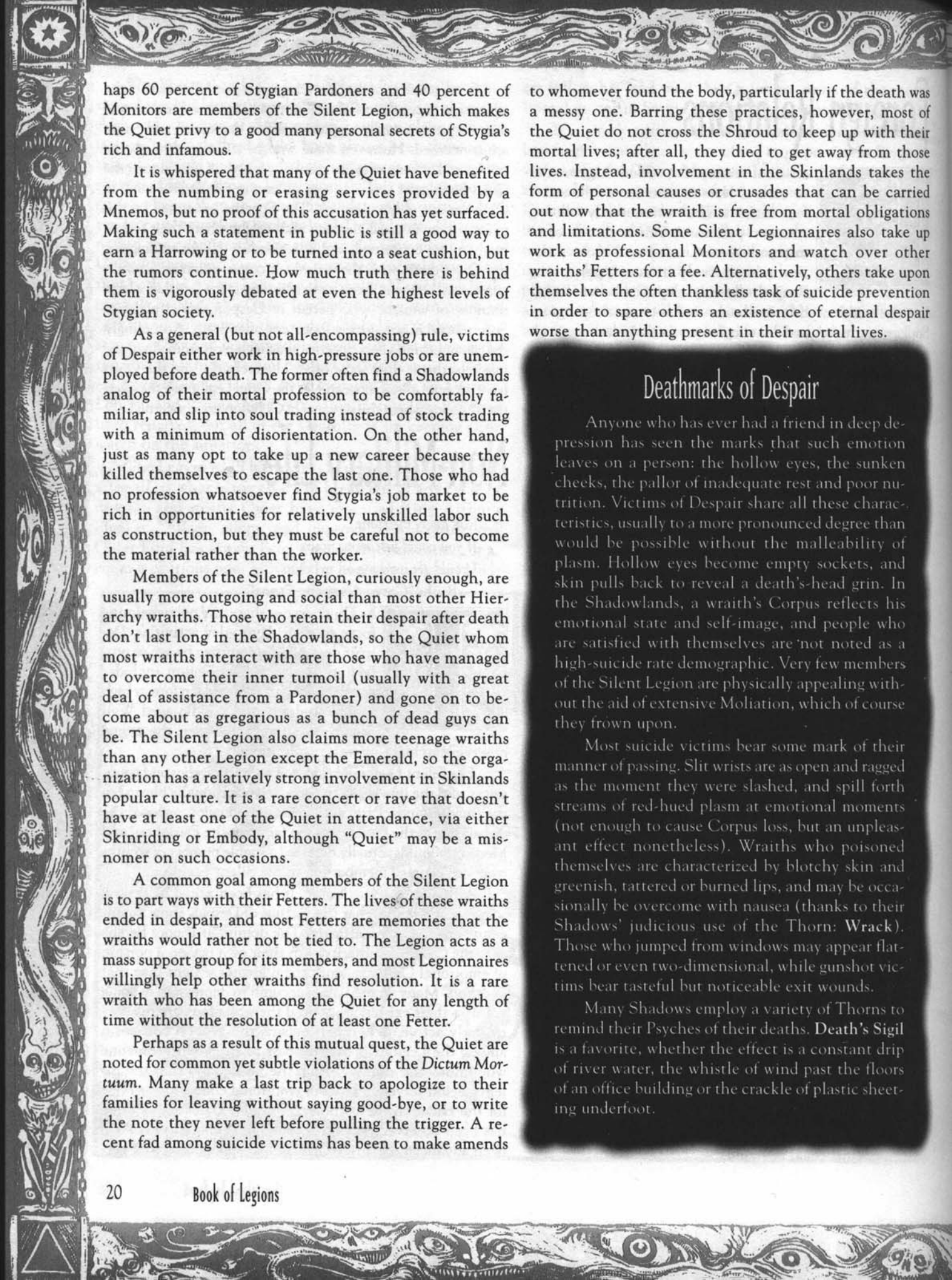
— Rush, "Carve Away the Stone"



he Quiet do not share any overwhelming focus to their day-to-day activities. Despair does not discriminate by age or profession, so the Silent Legion includes equal numbers of angst-ridden former high school students and middle-aged Wall Street executives. However, the casual observer can make a few generalizations.

The Silent Legion is best known for its mystics and counselors, and the line between the two is occasionally blurred in the Shadowlands. Part of the reason the Legion opposed the disbanding of the Guilds was the fact that the Pardoners' and Monitors' Guilds actually included a sizable number of wraiths who also claimed membership in the Silent Legion.

Although it seems ironic, it has been noted by several scholars of Arcanoi that the victims of Despair show an uncanny aptitude for Castigate. The dominant theory here is that the Quiet's familiarity with their own personal portion of emotional Oblivion lends them greater insight into that of others. Many wraiths also succumb to depression at some point in their existences, even if their Shadows are not particularly active. When this occurs, the general consensus among the Legions is that it's best to speak with someone who knows the situation from the inside, and thus the Silent Legion serves as a sort of emotional counseling service for the Hierarchy as a whole. A similar knack for Lifeweb has been observed, but no acceptable explanation has yet been advanced for this. Regardless, it is estimated that per-



haps 60 percent of Stygian Pardoners and 40 percent of Monitors are members of the Silent Legion, which makes the Quiet privy to a good many personal secrets of Stygia's rich and infamous.

It is whispered that many of the Quiet have benefited from the numbing or erasing services provided by a Mnemos, but no proof of this accusation has yet surfaced. Making such a statement in public is still a good way to earn a Harrowing or to be turned into a seat cushion, but the rumors continue. How much truth there is behind them is vigorously debated at even the highest levels of Stygian society.

As a general (but not all-encompassing) rule, victims of Despair either work in high-pressure jobs or are unemployed before death. The former often find a Shadowlands analog of their mortal profession to be comfortably familiar, and slip into soul trading instead of stock trading with a minimum of disorientation. On the other hand, just as many opt to take up a new career because they killed themselves to escape the last one. Those who had no profession whatsoever find Stygia's job market to be rich in opportunities for relatively unskilled labor such as construction, but they must be careful not to become the material rather than the worker.

Members of the Silent Legion, curiously enough, are usually more outgoing and social than most other Hierarchy wraiths. Those who retain their despair after death don't last long in the Shadowlands, so the Quiet whom most wraiths interact with are those who have managed to overcome their inner turmoil (usually with a great deal of assistance from a Pardoners) and gone on to become about as gregarious as a bunch of dead guys can be. The Silent Legion also claims more teenage wraiths than any other Legion except the Emerald, so the organization has a relatively strong involvement in Skinlands popular culture. It is a rare concert or rave that doesn't have at least one of the Quiet in attendance, via either Skinriding or Embody, although "Quiet" may be a misnomer on such occasions.

A common goal among members of the Silent Legion is to part ways with their Fetters. The lives of these wraiths ended in despair, and most Fetters are memories that the wraiths would rather not be tied to. The Legion acts as a mass support group for its members, and most Legionnaires willingly help other wraiths find resolution. It is a rare wraith who has been among the Quiet for any length of time without the resolution of at least one Fetter.

Perhaps as a result of this mutual quest, the Quiet are noted for common yet subtle violations of the *Dictum Mortuum*. Many make a last trip back to apologize to their families for leaving without saying good-bye, or to write the note they never left before pulling the trigger. A recent fad among suicide victims has been to make amends

to whomever found the body, particularly if the death was a messy one. Barring these practices, however, most of the Quiet do not cross the Shroud to keep up with their mortal lives; after all, they died to get away from those lives. Instead, involvement in the Skinlands takes the form of personal causes or crusades that can be carried out now that the wraith is free from mortal obligations and limitations. Some Silent Legionnaires also take up work as professional Monitors and watch over other wraiths' Fetters for a fee. Alternatively, others take upon themselves the often thankless task of suicide prevention in order to spare others an existence of eternal despair worse than anything present in their mortal lives.

Deathmarks of Despair

Anyone who has ever had a friend in deep depression has seen the marks that such emotion leaves on a person: the hollow eyes, the sunken cheeks, the pallor of inadequate rest and poor nutrition. Victims of Despair share all these characteristics, usually to a more pronounced degree than would be possible without the malleability of plasm. Hollow eyes become empty sockets, and skin pulls back to reveal a death's-head grin. In the Shadowlands, a wraith's Corpus reflects his emotional state and self-image, and people who are satisfied with themselves are not noted as a high-suicide rate demographic. Very few members of the Silent Legion are physically appealing without the aid of extensive Molation, which of course they frown upon.

Most suicide victims bear some mark of their manner of passing. Slit wrists are as open and ragged as the moment they were slashed, and spill forth streams of red-hued plasm at emotional moments (not enough to cause Corpus loss, but an unpleasant effect nonetheless). Wraiths who poisoned themselves are characterized by blotchy skin and greenish, tattered or burned lips, and may be occasionally be overcome with nausea (thanks to their Shadows' judicious use of the Thorn: **Wrack**). Those who jumped from windows may appear flattened or even two-dimensional, while gunshot victims bear tasteful but noticeable exit wounds.

Many Shadows employ a variety of Thorns to remind their Psyches of their deaths. **Death's Sigil** is a favorite, whether the effect is a constant drip of river water, the whistle of wind past the floors of an office building or the crackle of plastic sheeting underfoot.

Military Life

Life has risks... The difference is that normally you ignore those risks.

I spent my tour believing during every waking moment in the imminence of my death. I think that was pretty common among the people I knew.

You can't live that way and stay sane.

— David Drake, *The Military Dimension*



The popular Stygian conception of the Silent Legion's military arm is that of a band of wild-eyed Warriors of Lethe, screaming at the tops of their lungs whilst hurling themselves headlong into a Maelstrom to kill as many Spectres as possible before succumbing.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Unit Composition

The Silent Legion, as has already been noted, is one of the smallest Legions in terms of size and influence. It cannot afford to lose wraithpower on senseless suicide charges. The Warriors of Lethe are exceptions who are only grudgingly tolerated by the Quiet Lord. He sees their value as an outlet for the most self-destructive of his troops, but fears that they may set an unfortunate example for the rest. Silent Legion military policy has always favored intensive training of a small cadre of elite troops and precise use of those troops, as the Legion simply cannot field a massive army like that of the Smiling Lord.

Legion units are built on Circles of five wraiths, rather than 10. This is both tradition and pragmatism: The normal Hierarchy Circle would stretch the Legion's resources too thin, and every Silent Legionnaire is expected to fight twice as hard as any other wraith. Unit cohesion and survival are emphasized over any other points. "We can't afford to lose any of you," is an all-too-common statement voiced by superior officers from the Quiet Lord all the way down the ranks. Very few Circles will fight to destruction over any goal; those who do usually have run out of other options.

Individual combat training emphasizes speed and brutality. The goal is to cause as much damage to an enemy as quickly as possible, disable him, and move on to the next one. The Quiet Lord has spared no expense on his troops, and throughout Legion history he has owed a perpetual debt to other Legions (and occasionally other Dark Kingdoms, it is said) for the loan of instructors. Many Silent Legion soldiers are forced to rely on this training extensively. Because of the ancient enmity of the Artificers, the Legion does not receive a large share of Stygian steel weapons, and the demand for even soulforged swords sometimes exceeds the supply. This has been yet another point of contention between the Silent and Grim Legions, and occasional hijackings of supply shipments have been known to occur.



Operations

The Silent Legion's actual military operations are usually defensive in nature, whether the troops are protecting Hierarchy holdings or guarding a Nihil. This is not to say that the Quiet troops fight only from entrenched positions; pre-emptive assaults are quite common and successful. Unfortunately, these efforts are now hampered by the lack of a coordinated intelligence network, and the Legion has cut back its usual rate of activity to perhaps a quarter of what it was.

Aside from strikes against Spectral buildups, the main duty of every Legionnaire is peacekeeping, and this is the assignment usually drawn by wraiths fresh from the orientation cadres who are waiting their turn at advanced training. Silent Legion military policy when dealing with citizens is to speak softly and carry a big soulforged stick, preferably one that was formerly a local malcontent. Legion officers frown upon excessive use of force and exploitation of the civilians whom the Legion troops are tasked to protect and police. Quiet troops tend to be more lenient than those of other Legions where minor breaches of Hierarchy policy are concerned, so long as the offender does not have an outstanding warrant. Recently, Legion Anacreons have been cracking down on Heretic cults whose beliefs center around the approaching end of the millennium. No explanation has been given for this upsurge in policing, but the orders reportedly come from the Quiet Lord himself.

External Intelligence

The Legion had a competent, if not outstanding, espionage arm until about a year ago, when a series of infiltrations and subsequent assassinations by Doppelgangers sent most of the organization's key officials to Oblivion in exceptionally painful fashion. Rebuilding efforts have been hampered by a constant stream of soulforged and Moliated threats directed at potential replacement officers. Popular opinion holds that a third party assisted the Spectres in the assaults. Rumors have laid the blame at the feet of everyone from the Laughing Lady to the Mnemoi, but the Quiet have not yet been able to rebuild their intelligence organization sufficiently to conduct their own investigation into the matter.

The one area of external intelligence operations that has been unaffected by the recent casualties is that of Spectral infiltration. The Legion has long been known for its plentiful, if occasionally inaccurate, data on happenings in the Labyrinth. Such information has actually become more reliable over the past year, which leads observers to speculate about a possible collaboration between Legion higher-ups and various Spectral powers. The Legion, of course, hotly denies all such accusations, even though the Legion's intelligence network in the Labyrinth should, by all rights, have had some warning of the coming assaults. The one certainty in this issue seems to be that no one knows the whole truth.



Stygian Intelligence

Due to the high percentage of Pardoners within the Legion, the Quiet have a better understanding of the inner workings of Stygia than most other parties. Although only 60 percent of Stygian Pardoners are members of the Silent Legion, perhaps another 30 percent have been trained by the Quiet. This has created a loose network of mentor-student loyalties that occasionally serves to funnel many important "confidences" back to the Quiet Lord and his trusted subordinates. The Legion has thus gained a significant edge in political struggles, and its Anacreons are not above using blackmail or threatening another wraith's Fetters in order to ensure their success. Before the breaking of the Guilds, the Silent Legion and the Masquers Guild came into frequent conflict over such operations.

A Quiet, Subtle War

From time to time, the Silent Legion received assignments from Charon concerning Stygian internal security. The Emperor tasked the Legion with such operations due to their widespread network of contacts among the Pardoners and, to a lesser extent, in the Labyrinth. The Quiet gained a reputation among those few in the know for cold, decisive and impartial action when orders came down from the Onyx Tower. In the last decade before Charon disappeared, these tasks became more and more commonplace, leading the Quiet Lord to speculate on the Empire's stability and to begin preparation of an extensive network of operatives to maintain Stygia's cohesion in the event of some catastrophe.

The effectiveness of this network in its original role has been questionable. However, since Charon's disappearance, the Silent Legion has used its informants and Pardoners to gain a large amount of sensitive information on other Deathlords and Anacreons. The extent of this knowledge and its effectiveness is up to the individual Storyteller to determine.

Since Charon's battle with Gorool, the Silent Legion has come into direct and vicious conflict with members of the Masquers Guild. One of the last assignments given the Silent Legion was to determine the extent of infiltration of the Empire, and the Quiet Lord has expanded this directive to include taking direct action against the Guild's operatives that are unMasqued. Not a month goes by without the public execution-by-soulforging of an accused Guild collaborator. The Masquers have responded with a series of surprisingly ineffective strikes against Silent Legion spymasters and commanders which has left the Quiet's command structure largely untouched. Recently, however, several Quiet Anacreons have been called to Stygia and have not returned to their Necropoli. Speculation has run rampant in the ranks, but no explanation has been forthcoming.

Note: It must be stated that only non-Guild Pardoners take part in information-funneling operations. Were the Guild to discover such a gross breach of the Pardoners' Oath, no doubt drastic measures would be taken.

Artifacts

Agony Siphon (Level 2 Artifact)



Some individuals sank into despair in their mortal days because of self-loathing or a lack of self-confidence. These unfortunate souls often carried their problems over into the Shadowlands, and one Artificer who was so afflicted developed Agony Siphons in order to gain strength through suffering.

Agony Siphons take many forms, but most appear as a piece of ember-red jewelry, usually worn on the head or over the heart. If a wraith who has a Passion involving self-loathing or a similar self-destructive emotion wears an Agony Siphon, he may gain Pathos through pain. Whenever a such a wraith takes damage, he may roll a number of dice equal to the number of Corpus levels inflicted against a difficulty of his own current Willpower. Each success grants him one point of Pathos; this energy cannot be used to heal but may be utilized for any other purpose.

However, fiendish Storytellers and Shadowguides should be aware: Shadows with appropriate Archetypes (The Martyr, among others) or with appropriate Dark Passions should be allowed the same roll to gain temporary Angst.

Blade of Severance (Level 4 Weapon)

The signature weapons of the Warriors of Lethe, these wholly unpleasant swords are bonded to the owner upon forging. The owner must be present when the weapon is created in order to sacrifice two points of her permanent Corpus to the sword (thus, any character allowed by an overly considerate Storyteller to start play with a Blade of Lethe only has 8 permanent Corpus). In addition, the sword must be forged from the soul of someone to whom the wraith was close in life.

The price of a Blade of Severance is high, but those who bear such swords feel that the benefits justify the cost. First, a Blade of Severance does aggravated damage (Strength + 4 dice, at a difficulty of 5 for the owner and of 9 for anyone else) to any and all victims. Second, one of these weapons may never be lost or destroyed save through the destruction of its owner. If one temporarily parts company with its bearer, the two will be reunited by a twist of fate within three days. Finally, the bearer of a Blade of Severance may make all rolls involving Fetter resolution at a difficulty of two less than normal.



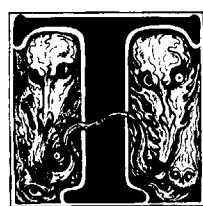
Cloak of Morbidity (Level 5 Artifact)

These rare items of apparel are created from a unique application of both Keening and Usury to the Moliation process. A Cloak of Morbidity appears to be a long, flowing cloak of black silk, from which drip tiny droplets of an oily gray fluid at random intervals. The cloak adds two dice to any rolls the player makes for the wraith to avoid visual detection, as the gaze of an observer simply rolls off the surface. However, this is not the cloak's primary function. By flinging open the cloak, spending two points of Pathos, and rolling Manipulation + Expression (difficulty 8), the wearer may flood the minds of all observers with an unbearable depression. All beings (except Spectres) within eyeshot of the inside of the cloak lose a number of dice on all rolls equal to the number of successes the wearer rolls. This penalty lasts as long as the victim can see the inside of the cloak, although a wraith may spend a Willpower point to overcome the effect for a turn. The wearer can take no other actions save holding the cloak open and moving at a slow, intimidating pace. At the Storyteller's discretion, this effect may send Garou into Harano.

Special Orders

*I would do anything that would get you through
Draw the line for you
Take the fifth for you
I would stand on a bridge and jump off it too
— Tom Cochrane, "Paper Tigers"*

Warriors of Lethe



he Warriors of Lethe are wraiths who have volunteered for military service in the hope of finding peace — and Oblivion — in combat. Membership is not confined to the Silent Legion, but perhaps 90% of the Warriors come from the ranks of the Quiet. As has been noted elsewhere, the Warriors of Lethe are bound together by their overwhelming desire to forget, whether out of pain, fear or embarrassment, their mortal existences. Their ranks also include many who wish for others to forget them and so hide behind the featureless midnight-blue masks of the Warriors. The Quiet Lord uses the Warriors as a sort of fire-and-forget guided missile, giving the Anacreon of the Warriors a target and standing back to watch the results from a safe distance. As might be expected, most Warriors accomplish one grand feat of devestation, but few are noted for repeat performances.

The Band of Quixote

The Band of Quixote is a semi-formal social organization composed of those among the Quiet who died unfulfilled. Quixoteans feel that wraithly existence has given them a chance to "live again" and follow through on unrealized dreams, and are sardonically accepting of the "Mitty" label. These armchair adventurers are found throughout the civilian sector of the Legion; most wraiths who choose a military career find more than enough excitement to keep them from ever regretting a "boring" mortal incarnation. A wide spectrum of wraiths finds its way into the Band of Quixote, and members of all Legions are welcomed, though few actually accept the invitation. Quixoteans generally wear a red-and-brown ribbon somewhere on their persons to signify their affiliation. Most Necropoli of any size host at least one Circle of Quixoteans, who volunteer to accompany military Circles on patrol, to explore the Shadowlands, or to perform other "exciting" tasks for the local Anacreon.

Angels of Angst

Angels of Angst are, one and all, wraiths who committed suicide as teenagers or young adults; the eldest were perhaps 23 at death. The Angels are more of a social stratum than a formal organization, and their name was bestowed upon them by the Anacreon of Chicago in one of his more cynical (some would say drunken) moments. Much like their "Generation X" counterparts in the Skinlands, the Angels have adopted the name while complaining about it all the while. The ranks of the Angels change from year to year as members "grow up" and take a more active part in their wraithly community. Most Angels only claim Hierarchy citizenship for the benefits and protection; few have yet to settle down into a Shadowlands occupation. The Angels are fairly widespread; they are most predominant in Los Angeles, Chicago and London, but any city of size has at least one Circle of angst- and Angst-ridden teenage ghosts. Angels of Angst rarely perform any productive tasks, but regularly congregate to complain about the lack of freedoms available to them in the Empire, the unbearable weight of being dead, and the poor fashion taste of their elders.

The Bleak Legion

The Bleak Legion is the arm of the Silent Legion that controls the Russian and Eastern European Shadowlands, where the Quiet have the greatest power. The region has long been noted for its inhabitants' calm, silent suffering in the face of any adversity, and Despair is almost a way of life on the steppes and in the Carpathians. Over the past five years, contact between eastern elements of the Bleak

Legion and Stygia has become more and more sporadic. Investigators have returned with reports of abandoned Necropoli, empty save for the keening of a cold wind blowing where no wind should be.

The Ten Thousand

When conversation turns to the elite military units of Stygia, Xenophon's Ten Thousand are spoken of with awe and reverence. Despite its name, this all-volunteer Legion has never numbered more than a few hundred wraiths at any given time. Much like their historical namesakes in the Skinlands, the Ten Thousand were all soldiers whose service in foreign lands left them bereft of any hope of seeing their homes again. Unlike the original Ten Thousand, the members of this Legion never returned home. The leader of this Legion does go by the name of Xenophon, though none can say whether he is the original general who led his mercenaries on a long march home in 401 BCE. Given the record of the Ten Thousand, however, none are willing to raise any doubts. This sub-Legion is known to have more than passing contact with the Lost Legion, and has mounted several raids into the Shadowlands of Vietnam to rescue the wraiths of American and French troops. The Ten Thousand are all trained as Equitaes, regardless of their military specialty in life. Their banner is a tattered relic of a black war-stallion rearing against a gray field, and they wear suits of dull gray armor forged from the Corpora of fallen foes.

Notable Wraiths

Life levels all men. Death reveals the eminent.

— Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

It has been said that most artists don't achieve greatness until after their deaths. As any wraith will tell you, this holds true for all professions.

Xenophon

Xenophon was a mercenary officer in a regiment under contract to Cyrus, a Spartan who attempted to overthrow the King of Persia in 401 BCE. After Cyrus' army was soundly defeated, the surviving commanders met with the Persians under a flag of truce to negotiate a retreat for their forces. The Persians murdered the Greek leaders, and Xenophon, previously a junior officer, took charge of the remaining troops through a stirring oration. He kept his men together through a year-long forced march over foreign, hostile territory, arriving home with 6000 of his original 10,000 still alive.

Xenophon did not perish of Despair, but as soon as he could make an informed *post mortem* decision he rejected membership in the Iron Legion in favor of re-form-





ing his regiment in the Shadowlands. His philosophy was simple: Whatever the era and whatever their country, there will always be good men who need to be brought home, and the Ten Thousand will either bring them back to that home or be it. Xenophon is one of the oldest known wraiths who is able to enter the Shadowlands, and many would pay handsomely for information on his Feters. He and his men rode at Charon's side, and their presence has been recorded at every major military action in the Hierarchy's history. There may be more than one wraith who wears the mask of Xenophon, or he may be a legend who is maintained only by popular belief. No one has seen Xenophon directly in centuries, but stories of him still circulate. Only the Ten Thousand know, and they aren't talking.

Marcus Stavaston

Most Warriors of Lethe have a combat record of precisely one battle after joining the company. This is not so for Marcus Stavaston, the Anacreon in command of the Warriors. Marcus has led the unit for almost a century, taking command after the previous Anacreon perished at Ypres in the Fourth Great Maelstrom. It is said that Marcus has sought Oblivion as readily as any other Warrior of Lethe, but, whether through skill or fate, he has survived all opportunities to find final peace. None have called his bravery into question, but few will vouch for his sanity.

Marcus is a short, muscular man of Germanic descent who eschews the traditional full mask of the Warriors for a half-mask across the left side of his face. The mask covers his left eye, and some have seen a sickly green glow emanating from under it. Marcus can be found wherever the Warriors of Lethe are operating, but he maintains his headquarters in the Amsterdam Necropolis.

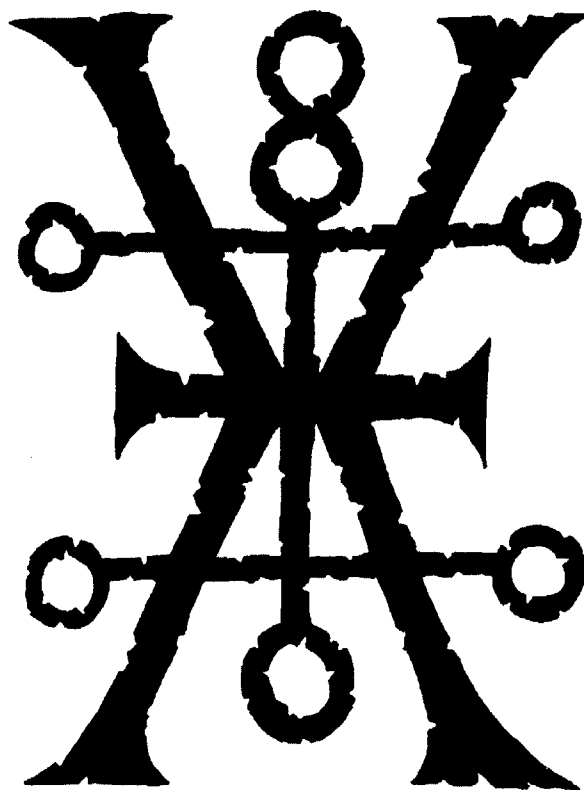
Sergei Tokarev

Sergei was a loyal Party man, a Siberian mining town boy who worked his way up to become a high-level intelligence analyst in the KGB. He was perfectly content to stay blind to the excesses of his organization and his nation until his son Aleksandr was reported missing and presumed dead in Afghanistan. Sergei turned to the bottle then. His performance went downhill for six long months until its slide came to a sharp halt at the end of his service automatic.

Sergei was almost "recruited" by the Skeletal Legion, as the local Anacreons tried to argue that he had drunk himself to death, but the presence of the still-smoking relic Makarov in his hand ended those claims. Since his demise, Sergei has made a name for himself as a consistent, reliable source of information on all happenings in both Skinlands and Shadowlands, and the word in the

Moscow Necropolis is that he may soon be promoted to become Anacreon in charge of the Bleak Legion's spy networks. What is not so widely known is that Sergei is abusing both his new and old contacts in an effort to find out what really happened to his son, and his violations of the *Dictum Mortuum* may not be overlooked much longer.

Sergei has spent a great deal of time observing supernatural occurrences in the Skinlands, and is probably one of the few individuals in the World of Darkness who has anything resembling a clear picture of what has happened over the last decade in the former Soviet Union. However, he is holding this information quite close and is unlikely to give it up easily.



Bodyguard

Quote: *You don't have to like me. You just have to trust me with your life. Now how did you say this Spectre came after you last time?*

Prelude: Your problems started when you were about 10. Your parents were going out to dinner, and you were old enough to watch your little sister without a babysitter for the first time. She was playing in the front yard, and you let her out of your sight just long enough to get a snack. You never saw her alive again.

You sort of drifted for most of your life after that. School was dull, and you enlisted in the military for lack of any other vision for your future. Four years of service taught you how to fight and how to survive — only one of which you really cared to learn.

After you got out of the service, a former platoon leader put you in contact with an agency in California that was hiring "personnel of your unique talents and mindset."

You didn't understand quite what he meant by that until you went to check out the office and found that you'd been sent to a private security firm.

You had a natural aptitude for the advanced training the agency put you through, and within a year you were freelancing, providing "executive protection" for some of the up-and-coming names in show business and big business alike. Few principals enjoyed your company, however, and in spite of your talents you were rarely re-hired.

The night you went down was much like any other: a whirlwind of paparazzi, spotlights and limousines. The only difference was that this time one of the run-of-the-mill death threats was serious. You didn't spot the hitter until her gun was already coming up, but your reflexes got your principal out of the line of fire, leaving you as the only target. Your last vision in the Skinlands was a perfect sight picture of the assassin behind the bore of her pistol.

Concept: You're a competent, ruthless guardian of whomever you happen to be assigned to protect.

However, your choice of profession stems from something a bit darker than lofty ideals or the lust for a few oboli. Deep down, you know that your life isn't worth much of anything, and if you can sacrifice yourself to protect someone who deserves her existence, the Underworld will be a better place.

Roleplaying Hints: Keep your hands free and your eyes moving, and always know where all the exits are. Let diplomacy and tact take a back seat to ensuring the safety of your principals — the wraiths you're assigned to protect. Ignore the little voice in the back of your head that keeps telling you to let those wraiths take what's coming to them; after all, they can't be any less deserving of existence than you are, can they?

Relics: Glock 17, Kevlar vest, mirrorshades

THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Martyr
Demeanor: Bravo
Shadow: The Paranoid

Life: Bodyguard
Death: Line of duty
Regret: Lack of self-worth

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		Passions		Fetters	
Relic-vest	●●●●●	Find sister's rapist/murderer & pay him back (Vengeance)	●●●●●	Sisters grave	●●●●●
Relic-pistol	●●●●●	Protect others more deserving of life (Self-worth)	●●●●●	Site of own death	●●●●●
Status	●○○○○	Protect other little girls (Love of innocence)	●●○○○	Firing range	●○○○○
Memoriam	●○○○○	Discover what happened to assassin (Morbidity curiosity)	●●○○○	Star whose life you saved	●○○○○
	○○○○○			Assassin's gun	●○○○○
	○○○○○				○○○○○
	○○○○○				○○○○○

Arcanos

Argos	●○○○○
Fatalism	●●○○○
Lifeweb	●○○○○
Usury	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Corpus

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Willpower

●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience

Pathos

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Fetters

Sisters grave	●●●●●
Site of own death	●●●●●
Firing range	●○○○○
Star whose life you saved	●○○○○
Assassin's gun	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Angst

●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thorns

Freudian Slip	Trick of the Light
Aura of corruption	

Dark Passions

Let other wraiths get what's coming (scom)	●●●●●
Make psyche fall in love with assassin (sadistic glee)	●●●●●

Rumors

"Walsingham, that's a Thorn!"

"Sorry, sir, Habit." The Anacreon of Happenstance for the Research Triangle Necropolis (Raleigh HQ) looked haggard. "I just don't know what else to say."

"Well, then, Walsingham, say nothing!" Doherty was in a bad mood. She stomped around the conference room, looking for something, *anything* to throw, but the soulforged table furnishings were too ostentatiously expensive to waste, even for a moment of blissful release. (*Catharsis*, her Shadow mumbled.) With conscious and visible effort, she collected herself.

"Let's run over the facts again. We know that Bonyhands himself just got a communiqué from someone telling him that there was an important prisoner out there. We know that a runner from Eurydice came in a few hours prior to the Skeletal anthill getting kicked over. And we know that a very heavily armed launch, loaded to the gills with Sickies, just headed up the mouth of one of the River's tributaries."

"Which one?" called a voice from the back.

"Lethe."

"No one down that godforsaken stretch but Quiet," interjected Walsingham, eager to atone for his earlier error.

"Exactly." Doherty turned wishing idly to herself that they'd invent an Artifact dry-erase board *soon*. "And considering the way those two get along, this might well be a raiding party. Are we prepared if it is?"

The answers came back like gunfire from around the room.

"Soulfire supplies at capacity at four of five sites. Fifth is at 94 percent."

"Hand-held weapons caches are secure in major Necropoli and on the Isle. Iron Hills site was recently compromised, and we are in the process of redistributing weapons to other sites in the region."

"Oboli reserves up 24 percent over the last decade, with the surplus primarily coming from Drones and *Dictum* violators."

"Two new cohorts just came online, but we don't have any cavalry,

which will hurt if we come up against the Grim or Doomed. On the other hand, the caltrop program is finally bearing fruit, even though the expense is insane. R&D thinks we've got a 70 percent chance of slowing down even Equitacs with those things."

"The North American Necropoli are ready to batten down the hatches."

"We've got non-aggression with the Ivory Queen, two Native American nations and the Paupers."

"Firearms supplies are at the highest they've been in two decades. Ammo is also at record levels. We've got everything from Colt .45 bullets to artillery shells."

"Ember guarantees neutrality on the part of the forges."

"Good." Doherty smiled a grim little smile. "So we're as ready as we're going to be, I take it?" There were nods of assent from around the room. "Does anyone know the nature of the team that went upriver?"

Everett, part of the permanent project team on the Isle, stood. "Witnesses at the docks report that at 1400 hours by the tide clock,



Marshall Clement of the Skeletal Legion requisitioned a launch. Reports indicated that between 100 and 150 heavily armed shock troops boarded the ship, armed with over 20 firearms including two visible relic machine guns. A quantity of soulfire crystals were also loaded, presumably for the firearms. The launch left Charlie dock (also known as Smoke's Pier) at 14:45 hours, and steamed under full power into the Great River, thence into the Lethe. The filed mission plan stated that the troops were on a prisoner pickup, at Silent Legion request—"there were gasps from around the room at that one"—of a Renegade, apparently of some stature. No further details are given, save that apparently the orders came down from the Seat of Dust, along with orders to bring the prisoner back in one piece—or else." He sat with a "harrumph."

There was a low whistle from somewhere, then silence.

"Anyone got anything to add?" said Doherty hopefully. No one answered. "Right. Dismissed. And keep your heads down."

They filed out then, one and two at a time, murmuring plans and worries and ideas. It reminded Doherty of water leaking out of a broken vase.

Eventually, the room was clear, except for Doherty and Everett. The latter hadn't moved from his seat. The door clanged shut, and the two were left alone.

"You know who the prisoner is, don't you." Doherty simply stated the fact, without accusation. Everett nodded.

"It's Erik."

Doherty blinked. Twice. "I thought official policy came down from Eurydice that he was to be left alone. Period."

Everett shrugged. "Perhaps the policy has been changed. Remember where the runner came from."

Doherty stood and walked to the door. "But, dammit, it makes no sense. The kid's, well, a kid. Dead less than a decade. Obsessed with finding his girlfriend, whom no one has any record of ever having existed. But about as unlikely to cause trouble as... hell, as

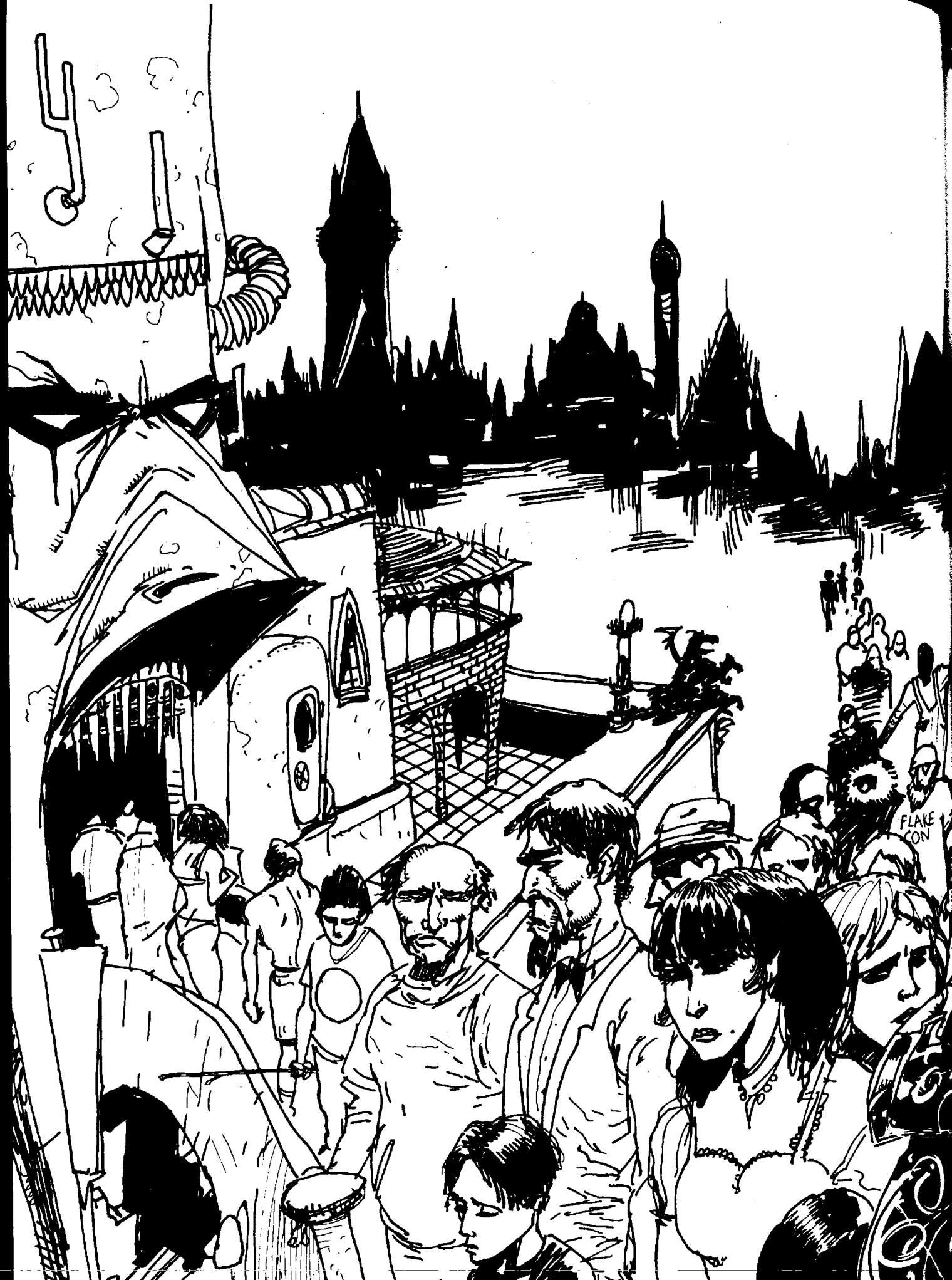
Haight is at this point. Why send 150 shock troops, armed to the teeth?"

Everett's voice was calm, quiet. "Mr. Bonyhands has always had a fondness for overkill. He probably just wants to make a statement. 'Look what I've got.'"

"Yeah, yeah. I'd just be a lot happier if the focal point of this little psychotic break were worth that kind of effort. There's something else going on here."

Everett got to his feet and grinned without humor. "There always is. I'll be back in three hours," he said, and flung himself out the window.

Doherty cursed under her breath. The first time Everett had pulled that stunt she'd rushed over to the window, only to see him soaring on Argos-inspired wings. Ah, well. Not this time. She opened the chamber door and slammed it behind her, loud enough to drown out the thud of Everett hitting the street, far below.





The Emerald Legion


*I have seen something else under the sun:
There is no profit in the craft
or the battle to the strong,
nor does food come to the wise
or wealth to the brilliant
or favor to the learned;
but time and chance happen to them all.*
— Ecclesiastes 9:11

Happenstance is an equal opportunity killer, and as a result, the Emerald Legion is nothing if not diverse. Unlikely and untimely deaths occur across the spectrum. Tragedy trips up the mighty and the meek, the opulent and the opprobrious, the peerless and the pitiable... especially the pitiable.

The hodgepodge nature of membership in the Legion makes Emerald Legionnaires themselves difficult to pigeon-hole. So many things are swept under the Emerald Lord's aegis that Emerald Legionnaires often find themselves with nothing in common except an improbable death tale. A 70-year-old diabetic who died when the candy stripper accidentally unplugged her dialysis machine works alongside an innocent teenager riddled with bullets in a drive-by shooting. Even in

cases where dozens of Legionnaires died together, the only bond these wraiths share is the lethal "Oops" that shoved them across the Shroud. Hearing several Legionnaires' stories in a row tends to generate uncomfortable laughter in listeners; tale after tale of unlikely and often embarrassing deaths has led many a Circle into fits of absurd hilarity, with death as the punch line of a bad joke that won't end.

Still, some demographic information is available. A sizable number of Emerald Legionnaires were simply clumsy or careless in life. Smoking in bed led to painless asphyxiation for many, even as their houses burned down around their corpses. Clumsily tripping over their own feet has been the inadvertent death of a few. Some Legionnaires were considered to have bad luck all their lives, leaving a trail of disasters in their wake. Some wraiths tell of a string of near misses before a final slip killed them.



Other Emerald Legionnaires had maverick streaks in life. Athletes, especially those involved in extreme sports, are a small but highly visible segment of the population. Skaters can and do turn every place in the Shadowlands into their own gothic skate parks. BASE jumpers who misjudged the wind in life leap with relic parachutes off of Underworld landmarks. Rock climbers who lost their grip on a mountain scale the Stygian architecture for sport. Since these athletes prepared so meticulously for their dangerous games, only sheer chance sent them under the offices of the Emerald Lord.

And of course, large numbers of new recruits appear en masse at the site of earthquakes, hurricanes, airplane crashes, sinking ships and gas explosions.

Thus, while not an entirely happy group, the Emerald Legion largely consists of those who claim no malice or hatred against a mortal foe. On the whole, Emerald Legionnaires' Passions tend more toward "softer" emotions, such as regret and envy, rather than hate or revenge.

One unusual feature of the Emerald Legion is the fact that many of its members, even older ones, are more strongly attached to their Fetters than are the members of other Legions. The sheer randomness of these wraiths' deaths leaves them with more unfinished business on average. Furthermore, fewer members of this Legion have tales of Transcendence than other Legions, because of the inherent difficulty in making peace with Happenstance. Legion philosophy is simple: Better to make do with what's in front of you now than to take your chances on a complete unknown.

Despite its outmoded purpose, the Emerald Palace continues to host the wondering dead as they search for meaning. An "act of God" is a particularly unnerving way to cross the Shroud, and in the relentlessly mechanistic Hierarchy, one rarely even has the luxury of being permitted a god to rail against for one's death. So Emerald Legionnaires of all stripes are encouraged to spend time in the "merry old land of Oz" (as the palace is known outside of Stygia) reflecting on their deaths.

Time spent in the palace facing the vagaries of Happenstance tends to vex more than soothe. The maddening confrontation therapy inside consists of a viridian maze in which scenes and memories of a wraith's former life flicker and jump on the edges of peripheral vision, then suddenly loom directly ahead. Wraiths who enter the maze are expected to remain inside until such time as they've come to grips, even marginally, with their histories. Pardoners are stationed at strategic points in the maze to assist wraiths thrown into Catharsis by sudden reminiscence, and no less a personage than Sister Acceptance has lauded the maze as a therapeutic tool. However, not every Emerald Legionnaire journeys to Stygia to undergo such treatment; with time and reflection, many have come to accept their circumstances, even if explanations for those circumstances remain lacking.

Thin Edge of Heresy

Another suggested therapy is gambling at the Hanging Gardens casino in Atlantic City. Though some Legionnaires become addicted or lost in the Atlantic City debauchery, others see the truth they were meant to see: Chance happens. To resent it is like resenting nightfall. It will happen, and you may not even know until it's dark.

Of course, Transcendence is no longer the goal of this therapy. These days the Legion just wants competent, settled Legionnaires. Some interpret the openness of the Emerald Palace as meaning that the Deathlord actually cares about his Legionnaires' well-being, and that this coming to terms is seen as necessary work in getting "sea legs" for the afterlife. Others just call it a Deathlord protecting his assets.

Politics

...If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me.
— William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*



Pragmatism is the defining political rule of the Emerald Legion. As regards the edicts of Charon, the Legion seems to prefer to ask the proverbial forgiveness rather than permission. While some would say that this is standard operating procedure for all the Hierarchy, the Emerald Legion is particularly unsubtle about its dealings with the Skinlands, Heretics and Renegades. Officially, the façade of following Charon's Law is maintained, but some Legionnaires gave more thought to interstate speed limits in life than they do the *Dictum Mortuum* in death. A good bit of this laxness is due to the Emerald Legion's own written code of behavior. Though the Lord is silent on specific interpretation of his code, it is understood to supersede Charon's when the two conflict. This code of behavior, known as the Emerald Values, is drilled into every new recruit, and there are harsh penalties for those who don't get with the program quickly enough.

The Emerald Values appeared shortly after Charon's disappearance, apparently written by the Emerald Lord himself. These Values would undermine the Empire's entire status quo if widely enacted, but even hard-core idealists see that as unlikely. However, the Values have remarkably changed the details of organization and operations within the Legion. What the Emerald Lord hopes to accomplish by these radical notions is known to him alone, but the growing influence and higher profile of the Emerald Legion are signs of some success.

The Emerald Values, and what is commonly called the "Stygian Interpretation", are:

Value One: Determine Risk

Don't simply calculate your chances for success, determine them. If you don't like your odds, fix them.

Value Two: Cogs Turn Wheels

The reason anything works is because Legionnaires and clerks make them work. They deserve the highest respect and reward for their individual contributions.

Value Three: Throw it Up and See if it Flies.

Failure is acceptable. Not trying isn't. If an idea doesn't work, rework it and try it again, until you make it work.

Value Four: Talk Emeralds, not Thorns.

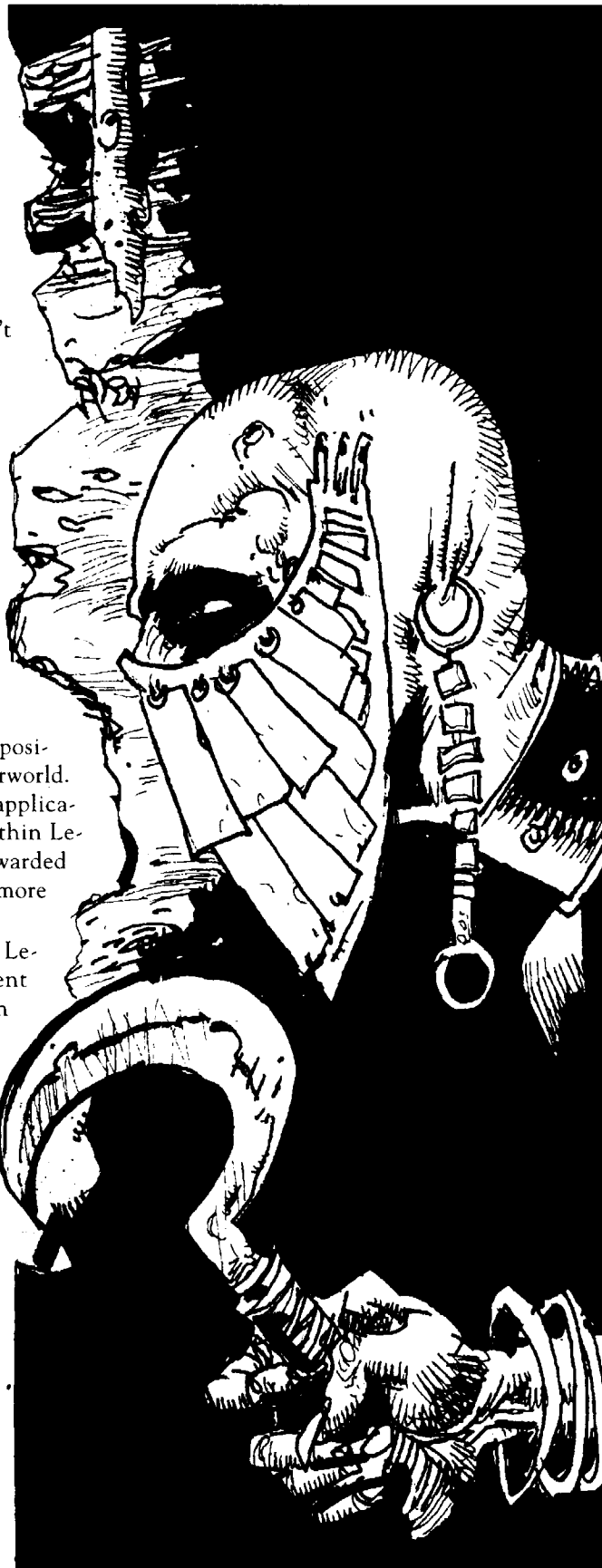
"Emeralds," in Legion vernacular, are solutions. "Thorns," by contrast, are those things which obstruct solutions. They are also stock in trade for Shadows.

Plaques bearing the Emerald Values are posted in every Citadel and domain in which the Emerald Legion has a stake. Specific interpretation of Values varies through the Empire; they are darkly twisted in some places, items of convenience in others. In some places, however, they are gospel. It is in this third group where the Emerald Legion shines (or glares) most brightly, and no better case study exists than in Stygia itself.

Stygian Emerald Legionnaires are the most shockingly positive, performance-oriented Legionnaires found in the Underworld. This is due in no small part to the Anacreon's gung-ho application of the Emerald Values to every job-related aspect within Legion purview. In Stygia, innovation and risk-taking are rewarded above success. Interesting solutions that half-work receive more enthusiasm than routine ones that do completely.

This attitude tends to have two effects on Emerald Legionnaires: 1) Champions of a particular idea emerge, intent on a better solution at any cost (sometimes to the chagrin of more conservative thinkers); and 2) Virtually every wraith takes personal pride in her job because she feels respected for her contributions and areas of specialty. These Values often seem to contradict the Hierarchy's track record, but their efficacy is undeniable.

The first Emerald Value, *Determine Risk*, deals with the most fundamental issue for every Emerald Legionnaire: chance. Chance is an ocean, rocking and tossing all on its rolling tide. Chance can be dangerous and unpredictable. Storms brew quickly, and the greatest dangers lurk unseen below the waterline. But, if one learns to read the signs and watch for patterns, predictions can be made. Because of this attitude, the Legion is hallmarked by risk-taking, not as a fanatical concept, but a practical, methodical approach to goals. The formula embodying the first Value is: Size up circumstance for likelihood of success, change factors to ensure success, and then succeed. The Legion doesn't give out consolation prizes for nice tries.





Manufacturing change is a tricky business, however. Necessary factors are specific to each situation, and there's no guarantee that changing them in a perfectly reasonable fashion will create anything resembling a desired outcome. Caveats aside, certain changes are good bets. One of the most reliable factors is information-gathering. Talking to experts about projects in their areas of expertise or doing research have been shown consistently to increase likelihood of success. Another common method involves direct communication with wraiths or Shadows in a position to make a project happen. This can be anything from politely asking favors to pulling rank to rude threats. Note that bargaining with Shadows can often virtually ensure short-term success. The long-term consequences of this sort of deal, however, can be decidedly unpleasant.

To facilitate negotiation skills with unpredictability, every Legionnaire is taught the basics of Fatalism and encouraged to consult with experienced Oracles before undertaking major tasks. In fact, most Emerald Legion leaders keep skilled Oracles on staff for just such consultations. Under proper Risk Determination protocol, Legionnaires are taught to restructure circumstance to create 80/20 odds of success before proceeding. Legionnaires should never attempt any action which generates less than a 50/50 chance for success. That would be poor Risk Determination. To encourage worthwhile Risk Determination, Emerald Oracles have developed their own art, Odds Are.


Fatalism :: Odds Are

This art is used to judge the possible short-term success of a plan of action. It does not determine what consequences an action will have, nor in which manner it will succeed or fail, but it does provide a rough percentile estimate, such as 50/50, 60/40 or 30/70.

System: The player rolls Perception + Fatalism (difficulty 6) to learn the rough odds of an action. Three or more successes suggest further actions which could change odds in the character's favor.

For example, Valencia is applying for a special messenger position, hoping to travel to other Necropoli and find news about her lost son. Odds Are tells her that she has a 70/30 chance of having her application succeed (but not whether she will find anything of value about her son). She also scores three successes, and learns that courier positions are dispensed on a first-come, first-served basis. A 70/30 split is good, but Valencia remembers her training and tries to bump the odds up a bit more. She offers the clerk who is processing her application a few oboli if he will just move hers to the top of the stack. She quickly checks with Odds Are again, and finds that her chance of acceptance has jumped to 90/10. Now, to start contacting Ferrymen....

This art costs 1 Pathos.



The second Emerald Value, *Cogs Turn Wheels*, is an emphasis on the front-line worker. From the Legionnaire in the trenches fighting the Spectral hordes™ to the clerk behind a desk shuffling monthly reports, the “little guys” make the entire Legion run smoothly. No one knows how to do a job as well as the wraith actually doing it. Therefore, the manner in which the job is done is immaterial, as long as it gets done. Ignoring or denigrating one Legionnaire’s judgment in these matters cripples the entire Legion. Let Cogs turn Wheels, and everything goes around nicely.

This Value places a premium on manpower. Very few Emerald Legionnaires get smelted into soulsteel or items of convenience. No one wants to turn a soul into an end table when that soul can be using his hands and brains somewhere else. As a result, Legion offices are spartan and functional. Emerald Legionnaires typically must make do with short supply unless they have a large pool of malcontent wraiths nearby to forge, or access to a steady supply of relics.

The third Value, *Throw it Up and See if it Flies*, is a call to action. Legionnaires are encouraged to plan and determine acceptable levels of risk. But the best-laid plans of mice and men are worthless unless someone acts on them. If the plans fail, that’s fine. As long as something was learned in the attempt, no one bats an eye at a setback. The important thing is to make it work *eventually*. A popular Legion adage says, “The chance of any one thing’s working is small. The chance of one of a whole bunch of things working is pretty big.”

The fourth Value, *Talk Emeralds, not Thorns*, is the means to instill innovation in Legionnaires and take toys away from Shadows. Any potential solution to a problem, no matter how improbable, is an Emerald. Any excuse for not finding a solution is a Thorn. Note that this is not the same as “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything.” Negative comments are fine, so long as they lead to workable solutions and don’t devolve into *ad animam* attacks.

This is widely considered to be the toughest of the four Values to implement. Many workable Emerald Legion projects have imploded because of a Shadow’s untimely whisper. While nothing completely silences a Shadow, an Emerald Legionnaire should offer it fewer opportunities by not dwelling extensively on negatives.

A Second Look

Unfortunately, this uncharacteristic optimism is hardly the case in every domain held under Emerald sway. In joint-command Necropoli, Emerald Legionnaires often have to compromise just to get along. Other Necropoli ignore the Values because of the work involved in implementing them. However much the Emerald Values support the efforts of common Legionnaires, the Values’ worth is still only as good as the interpretation of local authorities.

A prime example of local abuse of Emerald Values lies in Assessor States. As any Renegade will tell you, abuse comes naturally to Hierarchy officials. In a small number of Citadels, the Emerald Values are used to enforce a near-Orwellian state of paranoia among wraiths within their sphere of influence. These are called Assessor States because of their strict and constant assessment of a Legionnaire’s contributions to the power base of the local branch of the Emerald Legion.

Centurions known as Assessors make up the enforcement arm of the Hierarchy in Assessor States, working for the Anacreons or Regents of their particular Citadels. Assessors watch over Legionnaires as they work, maintaining close authoritarian supervision. They keep exhaustive records of a Legionnaire’s performance, checking closely to assure that the proletariats show “appropriate loyalty” and “judicious risk determination” in word and deed. Assessors appear randomly and often drag “disloyal” Legionnaires away from their jobs or Haunts with no warning and with only the vaguest hints of due process. Such Legionnaires themselves are little more than Thralls without chains. (Some claim Thralls are better off; at least Thralls know when their time is up.)

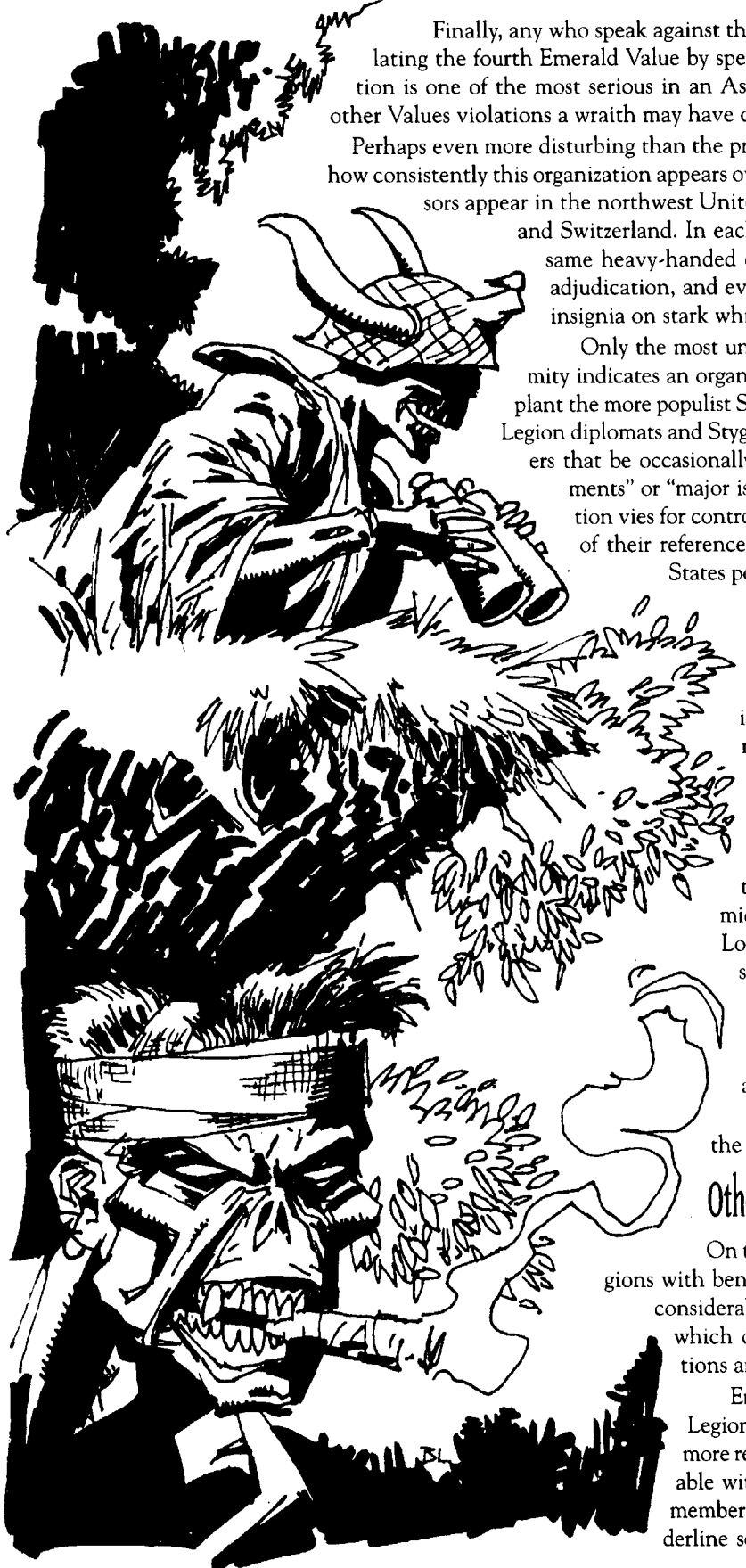
Those wraiths whom Assessors deem lacking in loyalty or judicious risk determination are sent for review before an Assessor Review Board. Boards are comprised of other Assessors, and are for all intents and purposes kangaroo courts. Reviews are held in cavernous rooms with the Assessor Board sitting behind raised desks. For evidence, they rarely take testimony, instead silently consulting stacks of papers which supposedly contain the wraith’s record of service and loyalty. To no one’s surprise, these papers are never shown to the accused.

The fate of the charged lies mostly in what the Board sees as their most immediate need, and how much of a threat the accused presents to his masters’ desire. For infractions as small as interrogating a Heretic instead of immediately turning her over to the Citadel’s forgers, a Legionnaire has been soulforged herself to “teach a lesson about proper associations with outlaws.”

Thus, the first Emerald Value is redefined to mean that Legionnaires should *Determine Risk* according to Assessors’ rule.

Assessor States interpret the second Value as an imperative, not a declaration. They place value on the Wheel, rather than the Cog. Those who work slowly or unwillingly (in the flagrantly subjective view of the Assessors) are accused of not turning the Wheel, and are subject to review.

The third Value is used to goad faster work from the Assessors’ charges. “Throw It Up” is, to an Assessor, to turn out goods and services faster. “See If It Flies” is to ensure quality of work. Though in reality the two mandates are often mutually exclusive, Assessors accept no excuses. They occasionally toss a wraith to the barghests to encourage others to work both quickly and meticulously.



Finally, any who speak against the Assessors or their masters are accused of violating the fourth Emerald Value by speaking Thorns against the leaders. This infraction is one of the most serious in an Assessor State, and is usually compounded with other Values violations a wraith may have committed against the Legion.

Perhaps even more disturbing than the presence of this Emerald Legion Secret Police is how consistently this organization appears over a broad geographic range. Pockets of Assessors appear in the northwest United States, Central America, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In each of these locations, the Assessors display the same heavy-handed enforcement style, the same board method of adjudication, and even the same uniform, down to the black scale insignia on stark white masks.

Only the most unobservant do not see that this lockstep uniformity indicates an organized plan. Possibly the Assessors intend to supplant the more populist Strygian interpretation of the Emerald Values, yet Legion diplomats and Strygian officials do nothing to counter it. The powers that be occasionally make fleeting allusions to "internal disagreements" or "major issues to be discussed" as the Stygian interpretation vies for control of these blackened mirrors. But the vagueness of their references and the many concessions made to Assessor States point to a conspiracy at the highest levels.

The inherent appeal of the Stygian interpretation makes it a popular choice in the ranks, yet the Assessor interpretation seems to be gaining support in the upper echelons where policy is made. Where this support comes from and why remains a mystery. Many see it as a sign of weakness in the Emerald Lord that he has not put a stop to this grotesque mockery. Some think the Assessor States are the brainchild of the Emerald Lord's own Shadow. Others theorize that the Deathlord is playing both ends against the middle for some purpose of his own. The Emerald Lord himself makes no mention of the growing crisis, and seems oblivious to the potential repercussions of allowing the Assessors to run amuck. Meanwhile, Assessors continue to smelt hapless victims into bricks and steel, justifying their atrocities in the name of the Emerald Values.

Neutral observers have only one comment on the matter — something has to give. Soon.

Other Legions

On the whole, Emerald Legionnaires view other Legions with benign condescension. The Emerald Legion takes considerable pride in its unique views, and other Legions which discourage or ignore their members' contributions are seen as unenlightened.

Emerald Legionnaires tend to regard the Pauper Legion as cohorts. Domains overlap so often that in more remote places, they regard Paupers as interchangeable with their own troops. In spite of their aggressive membership-drive mentality, Reapers usually cede borderline souls to the Beggar Lord with little dispute. On

the other hand, the Grim and Gaunt Legions send more souls to the forges in a year than the Emerald Legion receives in total. This is a sore spot for Anacreons who work to build their Legion, yet still find themselves understaffed.

Finally, low-level resentment is held toward the Legion of Fate. Victims of Happenstance must accept that accidents happen and that they cannot dwell in the past. The Ladies of Fate don't seem bound by similar emotional compromises. They may have answers that plague uncounted Emerald Legionnaires, yet they don't share their knowledge. Don't they see how it could benefit everyone if they would only share information?

Renegades

Renegades receive ambiguous treatment from the Emerald Legion. They are understood to be enemies, especially since their actions most often define them as such. But since Renegades operate under fewer rules than the Hierarchy, they make fascinating operational models for study. Breaking the mold is a Renegade specialty, and, as a result, they probably have hundreds of unorthodox methods for dealing with simple problems that never make it into Hierarchy think tanks. No one hurries to discard such an educational opportunity.

One branch of the Order of Archimedes' Bathtub observes Renegade Circles in the field in find newer, better ways to tackle old problems. If the researchers believe they have milked a particular group for all they can learn, the Order then gives their behavioral studies to the military branch of the Legion. The Renegades suffer a crushing Hierarchy attack shortly thereafter.

Heretics

As long as Heretics remain splintered and present no serious threat to the Hierarchy, they are tolerated or studied. Interestingly, the Riders of the Wheel is a Heretic group that the Emerald Legion seems not only to tolerate, but very nearly to embrace. The Anacreon of the Trenton Necropolis is openly seen in the Hanging Gardens casino, and is said to be a nigh-infallible card counter. Some Legionnaires come to understand the nature of chance, or to test their prowess at risk determination. Others just come to gamble or watch the fights.

Though gambling one's own soul is officially forbidden, a Legionnaire occasionally turns up missing after a bad night at the casino. If he is still missing after several days, another wraith is assigned to his former post, and the foolhardy gambler is quietly filed MIA. This practice is becoming increasingly common in areas surrounding Atlantic City, though none of the higher-ups have addressed the problem. The Trenton Anacreon may have some stake in the Hanging Garden casino's continued existence, but no one gives voice to this suspicion in the open.

For more information on the Hanging Gardens, see **Haunts**.

Non-Military Life

Chance brought you here. Don't let it catch you off-guard again.

— Emerald Legion motivational poster



In non-military affairs, the Legion operates very much like a business. Anacreons and Regents view themselves as CEOs and vice presidents. Ministers and Inspectors loosely translate to supervisors and middle managers, while clerks work in tiny cubes on simple jobs like record-keeping and resource management.

Overall, the civilian Legion works to stockpile Shadowland resources for the "company." These resources are not merely oboli and Artifacts, though. Conventional wisdom states that the most valuable resource for a small Legion is manpower. Therefore, in accordance with the Emerald Values, the business focuses on retaining current Legionnaires and recruiting new ones from recent arrivals and the ranks of Renegades and Heretics. Turning otherwise serviceable souls into raw material is a waste. A preferable course for many Anacreons is to get their charges to follow orders of their own free will. To do so, they adopt one of the most alien, least understood concepts in the Underworld.

Kindness.

In adherence to the second Value, *Cogs Turn Wheels*, Anacreons communicate regularly with their Inspectors. They even wander around the offices, talking directly with clerks. They tell clerks how much they appreciate them, encourage their ideas, and reward risk-taking that pays off. They offer regular incentives for quality work done on schedule. Perks include time off to visit Fetters, free use of Legion facilities and good old-fashioned oboli. At the same time, Anacreons firmly admonish wraiths who aren't team players, and encourage those who seem disconsolate about death to spend time at the Emerald Palace. These motivational tactics were severely criticized by other Legions when introduced, but the results show undeniable success.

The kindness shown to clerks got passed on to their customers. Artificers began to take exacting pride in their structures and repairs. Usurers became open and helpful, rarely giving customers an unfair exchange. Reapers acted like big brothers and sisters to Enfants rather than stern authority figures or fearmongers. Granted, backstabbing and ulterior motives still exist, but Legionnaires now often ask rather than manipulate to get things, and it usually works just as well.

After initial uncertainty, the change paid off. When most wraiths have a choice between a bored, mechanical Pardoner and a friendly, non-judgmental one, the latter wins again and again. With the goal of serving the Underworld in better, more innovative ways than anyone else, Emerald Legionnaires are, if not the best at what they do, by far the most pleasant. Except when fighting the occasional Spectre rampage (or under the influence of their Shadows), Emerald Legionnaires are polite on the job, and they uniformly seem to enjoy their work.

The loss rate to Renegade and Heretic groups also slowed with this shift in Legion mission. Currently, in most places, the Emerald Legion is enjoying a membership increase. Anacreons ignore detractors who claim this is because of the rise in natural and man-made disasters in the past few years. They choose to believe instead that judicious application of the Emerald Values has paid off.

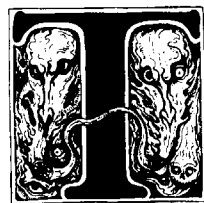
Other concrete displays of the Values include requisite monthly seminars. Specialists come in from other Necropoli on a seminar circuit, designed to introduce new ideas and stir debate on current events. They speak on practical topics such as "Try A New Arcanos," "Quality Fetter Management" or "Talking Back to Your Shadow." In addition, every Inspector and Minister is expected to spend at least half her time walking around, talking and listening to clerks, and pitching in occasionally to better understand how a clerk's job works. Impromptu meetings are held whenever a problem comes up, and the necessary participants are summoned to confer on a problem, recommend a course of action, and then proceed with it.

In all of this, however, no member of the Legion wears a permanent smile or claims to feel happy-go-lucky. Every wraith still feels the pull of Fetters, and hears the whisper of the Shadow. And rare is the wraith who wouldn't bargain his soul for another chance at life. But in a wash of suffering and regret, the Emerald Legion can be a small island of respite where a Legionnaire can find appreciation and perhaps even a bit of encouragement.

Military Life

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

— General George Patton, Overlord of the Legion of Mystery



hough the non-military side of the Legion operates surprisingly well under the Emerald Values, the military arm has failed miserably attempting to mix notions of autonomy and innovation on the battlefield. Gaunts, calling themselves the Old Soldiers (some of whom had been soldiers for hundreds of years), refused to believe that a more effective tactical unit existed than the simple infantry block. One hundred wraiths with swords, they reasoned, was formidable enough opposition for any foe.

This type of head-down bulldozer approach conflicted sharply with the individual, autonomy-oriented Emerald Values. After several years of stubbornly ignoring the Values, the Old Soldiers were finally forced to reorganize in the late '60s by a consortium of Anacreons tired of seeing large numbers of wraiths march off to war and small blocks of wraiths come back. Under the new regime, individual Legionnaires were given basic training and told to use their "best judgment" on the battlefield. The Old Soldiers saw this as civilian bureaucrats meddling in business they knew nothing about, and swore they would prove what an utter failure it would turn out to be.

Certain evidences seem to indicate that the Old Soldiers may have arranged the 1969 Birmingham Necropolis riot for just such a purpose. To this day no one has been found responsible for the Heretic white supremacist riot following the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. Disorganized and outgunned, nearly 300 Legionnaires were lost to Oblivion as white-hooded wraiths looted and razed part of the Birmingham Necropolis using relic pistols and rifles, along with years' worth of stockpiled relic bullets. Charging through the Necropolis, they mercilessly cut down Legionnaires armed only with swords and their "best judgment." Prisoners were rapidly smelted down into new weapons for the rioters, who were only subdued by a rush of well-disciplined reinforcements from Stygia itself.

The Old Soldiers, with barely concealed pleasure, announced that this massacre was final vindication of conventional troop organization and maintenance. Believing that this loss of face would quiet the insistent champions of the so-called "Emerald Values" once and for all, the Old Soldiers began reordering their troops in a manner more befitting the time-honored tradition of command.

This palace coup might have gone unchallenged, except for the sudden, timely appearance of Marcus Lowry a few months later. Lowry had a military past and a vision for the future. His greatest asset was an intense personal magnetism. He was the kind of person you wanted to be your friend. On top of this, he was also a competent commander and tactician.

By dint of his masterful escape from the jungles of Vietnam, Lowry proved his mettle and demanded a right to be heard among the Old Soldiers. He agreed that large-scale organized military movements failed spectacularly when several hundred wraiths gang-tackled an objective using several hundred approaches. But instead of concluding that the Emerald Values should be discarded in military affairs, Lowry chose to incorporate them.

In a detailed report to the Emerald Lord himself, Lowry outlined a new standard for military organization within the Legion, starting by eschewing the previous literal standard of commanding 100 Legionnaires in a Century. He conceded that victory through main strength might work in a larger Legion, but the woefully understaffed Emerald Legion could fight more efficiently when not committed exclusively to huge blocks of infantry.

To everyone's surprise (except Lowry's), a trial period was approved. Lowry reorganized the army into small, tight units known as "Ranks," which contained 10 or fewer Legionnaires. He then gave field promotions to dozens of Legionnaires, making them "occasional Centurions" in charge of a Rank, and placing regular Centurions over 10 to 12 Ranks. Ranks could then be quickly assembled into Centuries, or dispersed into small units at a signal. Essentially, Lowry broke the basic Emerald military unit into even smaller units. Though this seems an elementary solution in retrospect, his timely intervention healed a Legion-wide breach before it got out of proportion.

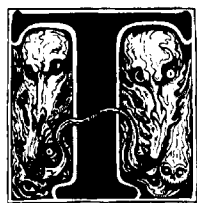
Once the concept of Ranks had proven itself in a few minor battles, the idea was adopted Legion-wide. But Lowry wasn't done. Next he negotiated with other, larger Legions who could afford the luxury of mass ground troops. Emerald Legion Ranks were then "loaned" to other Legions for assignments of ambushes, sniping, harassment, decoys, reconnaissance or any other potentially dangerous job another Legion wouldn't want to lose troops to. Maintaining the second Value, such Ranks were simply given mission objectives with no details and few stipulations. They were expected to work out details for themselves, as long as they meet or exceed the expectations given by their temporary commanders in other Legions.

Despite the grudging respect given to Lowry personally, "Lowry's Ranks" still meet with disdain from the Old Soldiers who prefer their own methods. In many Necropoli, particularly ones where the Values are distorted, Ranks are simply never dispersed, and old-style infantry blocks are still the rule. The commanders in place complain that "Lowry's Ranks" would be ineffectual as military units if other Legions were not able to back up the hit-and-run guerrilla fighting in which they specialize.

Until this century, military dress in the Emerald Legion was highly formal and standardized, consisting of long coats, trousers, knee-high boots and square-billed military caps. More recently, with the advent of the Emerald Values and emphasis on individuality, each Rank has adopted its own name and insignia. The names and styles vary as much as the hundreds of Ranks that exist. Military motifs still crop up most often, with straight military names (Charlie Company) or inspired by nostalgia (Flying Tigers or The Argonauts). Appearance is kept in check by the demands of service; no wraith wants to make herself a target by dressing like a rodeo clown in combat. Final decisions are usually left up to the Centurions who must command the troops.

Special Orders

Guardians of the Labyrinth



The wraiths sworn to guard the Veinous Stair seem like a separate entity from the rest of the Emerald Legion. Allegedly called to service by Charon himself, the Guardians watch the Stair and defend against Tempest incursions with single-minded intensity. The experimental, freewheeling attitude of other Emerald Legionnaires is replaced by a lookout's eye and a sniper's cool. The Guardians are effective enough that no one challenges their methods.

Order of Archimedes' Bathtub

The story goes that Archimedes discovered the concept of buoyancy while taking a bath. When he hit upon the idea, he leaped out of the tub and ran naked down the street shouting, "Eureka!" all the while. In that tradition, the Order of Archimedes' Bathtub consists of late inventors and engineers dedicated to finding innovation in unusual places.



One current "Tubber" project is to create a portable Maelstrom shelter. To this end, several Tubber groups have set up their base camps far from populated areas and bathyscape into the Tempest to test experimental shelters. Such teams are secretive, but occasionally can be seen constructing or launching soulsteel and plasm contraptions into the Tempest. It is said that these experimental shelters usually contain a test subject, though the subject's willingness is an issue of debate.

Green Teams

Reaper "Green Teams" avoid the usual distorted masks and bizarre insignia of Hierarchy functionaries. Instead, they adopt smiling faces and friendly, welcoming attitudes. Since Emerald Enfants often cross in groups, due to multiple deaths at disaster scenes, Green Teams can consist of up to 20 Reapers, all trained to be non-threatening and congenial. In fact, Emerald Reapers often seem more like camp counselors than soldiers. They gather Enfants in a circle, play get-to-know-you games, and sing upbeat songs laden with positive messages about Hierarchy life.

After a quick debrief, Enfants are marched back to a "welcome center" at the closest Emerald Legion outpost. On the entire march, Green Teams teach Enfants marching songs and echoing chants. Versions of "Louie, Louie" are a popular choice — most people know the song, everyone can join in the chorus, and carrying a tune is optional.

At the welcome centers, Reapers answer questions, introduce Enfants to the Emerald Values, teach a crash course in basic statistics and tell stories of some of the Legion's legendary innovators and risk-takers. Reapers lightly sidestep complicated or charged political questions at this point. They want to create comfort and good feelings while introducing friendly Legion values and culture.

Green Teams, like so many other parts of the Emerald Legion, receive much criticism. Some is even deserved. Outsiders criticize Reapers' "Sesame Street" propaganda, calling it trite misrepresentation of Shadowland existence. Less subtle critics call the indoctrination "brainwashing," though Reapers insist the dazed expressions on the newly Reaped are a holdover from death and the Caul. Regardless, Green Teams still boast the largest member retention rate in the Hierarchy, and the Legion itself has a slowly growing population base.

Though most Guild members in the Emerald Legion do a passable job of hiding Guild connections, many Green Teams incorporate Monitor Guild symbols into their Reaper uniforms. Open eyes appear on buttons and cufflinks, and little televisions adorn hats, coats and shoes. Reapers defend their stylistic choices by claiming that these symbolize protectiveness for their charges. Even sympathizers call this a rationalization, though, and incautious Monitor Guild members get reassigned quickly, usually to perfunctory jobs. No one wants to lose a solid worker, but blatant evidence of Guild connections is simply unacceptable, even in the Emerald Legion.



Notable Wraiths

Marcus Lowry

Marcus is a recent import from the Skinlands, having only been dead for 28 years. When he was alive, Lowry's buddies swore he pissed charisma and had the brains to back it up — but his eyes always seem focused somewhere else. He graduated from West Point third in his class, and, to his family's dismay, immediately requested a tour in Vietnam. He spoke of "places to be" and a recurring dream of a huge emerald filled with frightened people, but never gave more details. Eager to accept his first command in the field, he flew to the jungles of Vietnam expecting to defeat the Communists and restore peace in South Vietnam all by his lonesome. However, the details were a little messier. As Marcus was flown out to the firebase where his command was stationed, he jumped out of the hovering chopper a bit early, estimating a 50-yard sprint to the compound. The premature leap sprained his ankle, which wasn't so bad considering he landed directly on a land mine.

Lowry was Reaped by American GIs under similarly bad conditions in the Jade Kingdom. Surrounded by Spectres and Jade Kingdom soldiers, Lowry led the small band of Legionnaires through miles of thick jungle, in and out of a meeting with Colonel Roth's Lost Legion, and finally to a tiny Stygian outpost in Hong Kong. With audacity rarely seen in Enfants, he commandeered transport to Stygia. Upon arrival at the Isle of Sorrows, he waved away Legion representatives and began looking at buildings. When he saw the enormous Emerald Palace surrounded by a thick maze of thorns, he walked straight toward it.

Though some Gaunts call him cocky (or worse), Lowry embodies the wild card sensibilities of the Emerald Values, along with the discipline and honor of a career soldier. Lowry engineered the "Rank" organization of small-unit tactics which had been so desperately lacking before his arrival. Currently, he oversees implementation of the "occasional Centurion" school, teaching leadership and guerrilla fighting to qualified Legionnaires.

Lowry's Fetters are weak, and his Passions are already tied inextricably into his wraithly existence. Many question why a man of such obvious purpose wound up in the Shadowlands to begin with, though few complain. Some also wonder who put dreams of giant emeralds in his mortal sleep.

Sandra Quattlebaum

While still among the Quick, Sandra Louise Quattlebaum was a middle-aged corporate secretary: quiet, mousy and efficient. Her desk was always neat, her files straight, and her boss well-informed. Like any good secretary, she ran his office with or without him, but rarely spoke her mind. In all honesty, no one listened to her when she did. She did her job cleanly and quietly, and kept her mouth shut except when answering the phone.

Her company sent a tasteful wreath for her funeral after her brakes failed on a highway off-ramp. Everyone said nice things about how neat and quiet Sandra was and how she would be missed at the office. Then they went back to their lives.

Sandra found a similar job in the Shadowlands, except for one difference. Instead of asking her for coffee and then waving her away when she had a suggestion, her superiors listened to her. Dismayed by the lack of reliable communication between Necropoli, Sandra wondered out loud one day why there was no next-day package delivery between offices. "I don't know," her Marshal said. "Why don't you look into it?"

She did, and Sandra spent the next four years developing a system for tracking and delivering packages across the entire Dark Kingdom of Iron. The start-up required, among other things, a massive effort to locate hundreds of skilled Harbingers willing to make regular deliveries, a means to funnel enormous amounts of Pathos to fuel their Argos, as well as finding an open space inside Stygia large enough to process and reroute the packages that came through.

Perseverance won out, and eventually Sandra overcame all these obstacles through encouragement from her superiors and her own quiet tenacity. When the Iron Delivery Express System (IDES) debuted earlier this year, the results were phenomenal. At the end of every day, thousands of Harbingers travel from their various Citadels all over the Empire to the central depot in Stygia, trailing bundles of packages and papers in huge closed rickshaws. There, in a matter of hours, packages are processed and redirected to their destinations, and the Harbingers scatter again to finish their appointed rounds. This may be the closest the Hierarchy has ever gotten to a unified postal system, and members of other Legions have begun asking IDES to make drops for them as well.

As part of the process of organizing IDES, Sandra has attained no small measure of Guild and Legion status for herself. Although she is understandably quiet about her Guild involvement, Sandra's purposeful jet-black eyes and the deference she receives from other Harbingers tells more than words ever will.

Triathlete

Quote: *Just one more mile. I can do this.*

Prelude: You put the "try" in triathlon. Your endurance, athletic ability and intensive training made you a contender in every triathlon you entered, and sponsors were finally beginning to take notice. You hadn't placed first yet, but the World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, was where you would show big. Winning Kona would seal your reputation within the triathlete community, and in your dad's mind. He was always so critical of your decisions; he'd have to recognize that you had made something of yourself if you were the world's best triathlete.

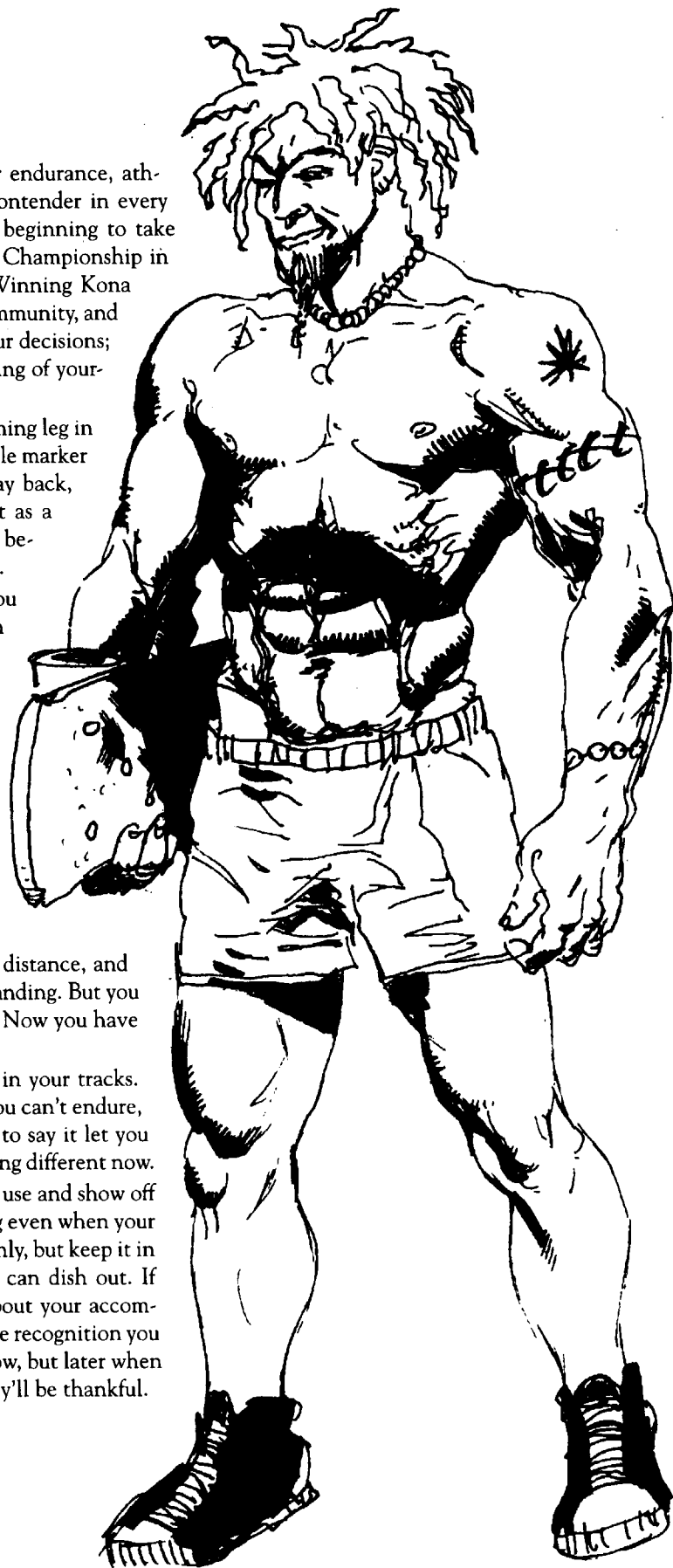
Without much warm-up, you began the swimming leg in unusually choppy waters. You made it out to the mile marker a full minute ahead of everyone else. On your way back, however, a wave knocked the air out of you just as a muscle cramp kicked in. No one could get to you before the next wave washed over... and the next....

You sort of got your wish. People remember you now, but your name is attached in memory to a cash prize awarded to other promising triathletes. Your reputation is sealed, but not the way you wanted it. Dad probably just shook his head when he heard the news.

When you crossed over, your Reaper told you belonged in the Emerald Legion because you died as a fluke. You're back to being a nobody, but you've still got your will and your endurance, and the Legion seems to want you. You're a messenger now, doing long runs across the Tempest between Necropoli. It's not so bad. You still get to travel and push yourself to go the distance, and most of your superiors are friendly and act understanding. But you were going to be big. You were going to be so big. Now you have to start over.

Concept: The freakin' pink bunny collapses in your tracks. There's no amount of physical or mental torture you can't endure, and you even like the pain, sometimes. You used to say it let you know you were alive. Hunh. It must mean something different now.

Roleplaying Hints: Look for opportunities to use and show off your stamina. Don't Slumber, and keep on fighting even when your Corpus is dangerously low. Don't brag about it openly, but keep it in people's minds that you can take whatever they can dish out. If anyone appears even remotely interested, talk about your accomplishments in the Skinlands. Keep searching for the recognition you *almost* had in life. They may not appreciate you now, but later when you're there for them at the end of their rope, they'll be thankful.



THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Martyr
Demeanor: Survivor
Shadow: The Martyr

Life: Semi-Pro Triathlete
Death: Drowning
Regret: Didn't win World Championship

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		Passions		Fetters	
Allies	●○○○○	Make people notice your abilities (Pride)	●●●●●	Trophy Collection	●●●●●
Eidolon	●○○○○	Get dad's approval (Insecurity)	●●●●●	Kona Racecourse	●●●●●
Memoriam	●●●●●	Prevent award's recipient from winning (Revenge)	●●●●●	Lucky Bandana	●●●●●
Status	●○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
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	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Arcanos

Argos	●●●●●
Embody	●●●●●
Fatalism	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Corpus

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Willpower

●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
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Angst

●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
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Thorns

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Experience

Pathos

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Dark Passions

Run yourself to death (Self-hatred)	○○○○○
Make others feel inferior (Contempt)	●●●●●
Sabotage Kona Race (Envy)	●●●●●

Travelers

The plague boat was about as pleasant as such things can be. I had a full honor guard, maybe 150 wraiths all armed to the teeth. I saw a dozen different Arcanos markings represented, including a couple that you're not supposed to see in Stygia. I pray those were Monitors I was talking to for a while there. Of course, the deathmarks I saw weren't terribly pleasant either. There were nothing but gaunt, wasted faces, with the marks of disease still leaking green plasm onto the floor of the boat.

My tour guide was a Marshal who introduced himself as Clement. "Clem," as he insisted on calling himself, was over six feet tall and built like a soldier. He also had the hugest hands I'd ever seen. I made the mistake of asking him how he'd died. He grabbed me with his left hand and hoisted me in the air, then held me out over the side of the boat. All of the other soldiers hooted and hollered (at least the ones who still had their voiceboxes), while Clem

just held me there, my toes trailing in the water.

"There are Spectres in this river, Renegade. You know that?"

I choked out a noise that might have been, "Yes."

"We catch Spectres in this unit, Renegade. You understand that?"

Again, "Yes."

"And you know how we catch them?" Behind him, I could see relics and oboli changing hand. The soldiers had obviously seen this before, and were betting on how long it would be before I became Shade bait. "Do you? Do you?!"

And with that he ducked me into the river, still holding me with one hand. The current tore at me as I fought to keep my head above the surface, but Clem pushed me further and further down. I could see shapes moving in the depths now, a fish-belly white monstrosity rising. Desperate, I thrashed, but I had no purchase, no angle.

Mind if I help out? sneered my other half. *Pressure call, not much time....*

I could see the thing below me. It had a huge maw and two bulbous eyes that shone like searchlights through the churning water. It was rising fast, keeping up with the pace of the boat.

Fish food, fish food, yummy yummy fish food. The Shadow was in fine form today, oh, yes.

I could count teeth. I knew that if I was important enough to get 150 troops sent out to escort me, they weren't going to feed me to Spectres immediately. Then again, Clem hadn't looked like he was in control. *He's one of ours now,* whispered my darker half. *Time's running out.* The Shade was right beneath me. I could hear its bubbling roar of triumph, could sense my Shadow speaking to it somehow—

— and Clem pulled me out, dumping me on the deck. As I coughed and sputtered, he clomped over to me, making sure I was in the shadow he cast. The rest of the troops gathered round, though one or two stayed at the back to train Artifact rifles on the trailing Shade.

"Renegade," Clem spat, "I have been in this Legion's army for 70



years, and I have never had to waste this much manpower escorting a little shit like you. Now you get one thing straight: I don't like you. If I didn't have orders from Bonyhands himself, I would have let that thing bite off my hand, just to make sure it got you too.

"But the Tower of Bone says you're important, and that means that I can't cut you up for chum the way I want. Listen close, though, Renegade," and he leaned in that I could sniff the ghost of his bad breath. "You're on my watch, you behave. No more snippy questions, no more bad attitude, no more treating this like a cruise for your benefit. Now you just sit right where you are 'til we get to the Isle of Sorrows, or I'll forget I got those orders and toss your ass overboard. Understand?"

I nodded, dumbly. The point was most definitely not worth pushing.

"Good." He turned around and went back to the bow. "Virak, Gabrels, keep an eye on the prisoner. Epstein, Penn, go give that Spectre something to think about. Everyone else, ready in case it had friends."

I huddled low and miserable as the shots rang out from the back of the boat. In the distance, the Spectre roared, and I heard some splashing. Hopefully, that was the end of it.

I didn't look up as Virak and Gabrels planted themselves next to me, though perhaps I should have. Both were probably attractive when they were alive, though at this point I didn't want to guess what particular microorganism had taken them out. The results were not terribly pretty. Both were dressed in regulation Skel-etel Legion gray, and Virak even had a relic uzi. Clement hadn't been kidding around — nobody has uzis to waste.

"You shouldn't have asked him about his death." This was Gabrels, who had squatted down next to me. "That was your big mistake."

"My big mistake," I corrected her, "was getting hit by a bus."

"Very funny." She took out a knife and whetstone, both soulforged, and started sharpening the blade. I couldn't see any improvement, but what the hell, it kept her busy.

"Why's he so touchy about it, anyway?" I asked, not realizing that it was better to quit while ahead. Maybe the other half had pushed that sentence out; he'd shown a knack for that of late. "I mean, we're all dead, right?"

Gabrels gave me a look of contempt. "He was a professional soldier, a drill sergeant. Developed ALS. Had no idea why he kept on getting weaker and weaker, but tried to cover it up. Finally blew it in the field in one of the US' little incursions into Central America in the '20s, and got his entire command killed because he couldn't lift his damn gun."

"And that," said Clement as he loomed over me once again, "is why I don't like to talk about it." With infinite professional courtesy, he kicked me in the face, then turned and walked away.

I spent the rest of the trip to the Isle trying to heal, and listening to my Shadow's laughter.



A decorative border runs along the top, bottom, and right edges of the page. It features a repeating pattern of stylized skulls, some with large, staring eyes, and other macabre symbols. The right side of the border is particularly dense, with a vertical column of skulls and a small cross symbol at the top right corner.

The Skeletal Legion

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!" And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering, and to conquer.

—The Revelation to John, 6:1-2

The Skeletal Lord and the Seat of Dust

In a pale, pale tower in the land of the Dead, there stands a ghost. He is the Lord of Pestilence, and he loves his work. The Tower of Bone stands just outside the central plaza of Stygia, near the Great Library. It is a nearly featureless vertical column, apparently made of bone. The crown is a stylized skull, consisting of the vaguest sketch of a nasal opening and two enormous dark eye-sockets that gaze out over the Sunless Sea. Inside, the entire skull is a single room, with two round windows each a hundred feet high. At rear center of the burnished black floor squats a slightly raised dais, on which rests an unassuming throne. Those who enter the hall won't find the Lord sitting there, except on formal occasions. Some believe this is why it is called the Seat of Dust.

The Lord of Pestilence prefers to stride around his room while he thinks and declaims. To be more precise, he prefers to stand, gazing intently out over Lower Stygia, and then, without your noticing his movement, he is behind you, peering over your shoulder or whispering in your ear. Whether he is using Flicker or is merely an expert at misdirection is unknown.

There is always at least one other wraith with the Skeletal Lord, sitting on a small stool and furiously scribbling away. Every word spoken by the Lord is written down in the *Journals* of

Bone and stored in vaults deep beneath his tower. If one gets a chance to read these *Journals* (and permission is occasionally granted, mostly to researchers who fawn properly), they are found to be heterogeneous mixes of dry biological data, historical reminiscences and epic diatribes on the philosophy of disease. Each volume (he dictates a new one roughly every week) is closed with a paraphrase of Revelation 22:18-19 from the Christian Bible: "I warn everyone who reads the words of this book; if anyone adds to them, let be added to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of this book, let be taken away his share in the tree of life."

From the evidence available, one might conclude that the Skeletal Lord is insane.

One would be right. While he seems, if not stable, at least rational most of the time, on other occasions the Skeletal Lord appears to believe that he is the literal, Biblical embodiment of Pestilence. It is only the absence of Charon (whom he sees as Death) that prevents him from riding into the Skinlands beside his brethren. He speaks of the fine work he did with the Black Plague, or the simple craftsmanship of AIDS. He has even claimed the credit for the plagues visited on Egypt during the time of Moses (however, even if he is the same Skeletal Lord who formed the Hierarchy beside Charon, the dates do not correspond).

In appearance, the Lord is a robed skeleton, wearing a simple crown. He often carries a staff, and his fingers, at casual glance, seem to have too many joints. His visage is all a mask, of course, and no one has seen what lies under it. The Lord's personality is fluid, but he is generally distant, courteous and a bit frightening when his madness seeps through his polite façade. Scholars have noted that when the Skeletal Lord starts one of his didactic speeches, he is prone to expansive gestures in grand Roman oratorical tradition.

"Mr. Bonyhands'" identity is the subject of as much Agora discussion as for any of the Deathlords, and many agree that there was a definite change in the flavor of the Skeletal Lord's proclamations around 1900. Those who are actually in a position to know scoff at the unspoken theory that there was a palace coup at that time, and defend the Lord by saying that one simply has to be dead for a very long time before acquiring his unique fervor.

Names

The Skeletal Legion is also called the Gaunt Legion, the Legion of Bone, the Legion of Pestilence and "the Sickies."

The Skeletal Lord is also called the Lord of Bone, Lord Pestilence, the Gaunt Man and "Mr. Bonyhands."

The word "Legionnaire" is used both to refer to the lowest rank in the military branch, and as a generic term for any member of the Legion. The adjective "Skeletal" is sometimes used to distinguish things unique to this Legion.

After I had finished stroking the Skeletal Lord's ego for nearly two hours, he finally gave me permission to look at the Journal in question. The descent from his throne room to the vaults has got to rival the Vicious Stair for sheer number of steps. How far down do those things go? Anyway, this sycophantic aide stuck me in the reading room while she went to get the book. The "room" was the meeting place of half a dozen tunnels, with a chair, a table and a torch in the middle. Cozy. You would not believe the noises I heard while I waited. When the aide got back, she said that I had been hearing echoes that the tunnels eventually connected up with the Great Library and the Opera House, but bookworms and tenors don't sound like someone ripping a man's guts out through his ears.

As to the book, after slogging through it for the rest of the day, I've confirmed two things: The Jade Kingdom is in trouble, and the Gaunt Man is a fruitcake.

— Intercepted letter from Lyman Gage, clerk in the Skeletal Legion, to a suspected Renegade cell.

Politics and Policies



The Skeletal Lord is conservative and not contentious. He does maintain a subtly adversarial relationship with the Ashen Lady and the Quiet Lord, due mostly to disputes over souls. His most aggressive enmity is with the Smiling Lord, simply because they control the two largest Legions. The Gaunt Man has tried to keep this conflict polite, however, and has ordered nothing more active than the occasional waylaid Grim patrol and some espionage. He is content with his position and power, and one sometimes gets the impression he dabbles in politics simply to keep himself occupied until the Apocalypse. The Beggar Lord is considered something of an ally, and the Emerald Lord is being cultivated, though that particular bloom has not yet flowered. The Skeletal military has specific orders to aid members of the Emerald Legion in need.

The Lord currently has an isolationist stand with respect to the Dark Kingdom of Ivory, mostly due to his frequent, strident calls for the conquest of the Jade Empire. (Indeed, he has an entire corps stationed near the Great Wall, and would order an invasion on the slightest pretext.) He firmly believes in taking one conquest at a time. In his view, all shall eventually fall before Charon (and Plague), so there is no rush. Only the most naïve do not recognize this as a

power move, based on the relative differences in mortality demographics between the Hierarchy-controlled lands and those of Asia. In regards to the minor Kingdoms, the Lord's stance can vary between conquest, isolationism and outright denial of their existence.

We have managed to capture a record book belonging to one of the viraith tongs in Chinatown. It's a record of Jade Kingdom funds, agents and material being sent into the city. It reeks of imminent invasion; I'll send it on to you by escorted messenger. Mr. Bonyhands himself had better see this — he's going to love it....

— Communiqué from an External Affairs agent stationed in San Francisco to the home office

The Policy on Renegades

As to the Renegades, any who dispute the authority of Charon shall be hunted and brought to trial. If they can be made to recant, let them be enthralled; otherwise, to the forges with them.

Those who merely disagree with Hierarchy policy, while still recognizing the wisdom of the Absent One, may be safely ignored. A certain quantity of dissenting viewpoints is required to keep the Corpus Politic ~~happy~~ the way I want it.

— From the Journals of Bone, the word of the Skeletal Lord, dated the 17th of December, 1837





The (Unofficial) Policy on Heresy

The Skeletal Lord believes himself to be the literal embodiment of a Biblical metaphor, and, as a result, Stygian heresies such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism (loosely, Purification and Supplication Cults) are tolerated among the Skeletal Legion. (No one has yet suggested to the Lord that he might be the embodiment of Shiva, and all who know him are grateful.) While public expression of one's beliefs is still discouraged among Legionnaires, *holding* those beliefs is not considered to be a crime worth prosecuting.

The Policy of Division

...The Skeletal Legion shall receive all wraiths who die of viral and bacterial disease, cancer, starvation, dehydration, radiation sickness, genetic defects and long-term chemical damage.

The following forms of death are specifically excluded: Poison (refer wraith to Emerald Legion for animal bites, Silent Legion for suicide, and Penitent Legion for murder), and all sudden deaths due to heart disease (unless chronic) and stroke (refer to Iron Legion if 60 years of age or more, Emerald Legion otherwise).

Those who die after one month or more in a coma should be judged on a case-by-case basis, with due attention paid to both the original cause of the coma, and the eventual cause of death....

Excerpt from the Skeletal Code

The Policy of Dispute

The Legion's chief disputes over souls are with the Iron Legion (over deaths complicated by old age) and the Silent Legion (regarding those who allow themselves to fall ill and die due to despair). In most instances these are handled in bulk. If a given group of Enfants contains 10 wraiths who are disputed between the Ashen Lady and the Skeletal Lord, the local representatives of each Legion simply divide the newcomers five and five.

If someone (including the Enfant in question) argues, the Skeletal Legion-approved procedure is to have the disputed wraith, one representative from each of the claimant Legions, and two wraiths from third-party Legions discuss the matter for a period of time not to exceed one hour, and vote on the matter at the end of that time. A wide variety of appeals and other delays is possible, and this procedure is not recognized by every Legion, regardless. As a practical matter, the relative personal power of the clerks

involved, the strength of their Legions locally and the complex interweave of bureaucratic favors and debts are what usually determine an *Enfant's* fate.

The Policy of Plague

If God causes man to be sick, sickness must be good, and its opposite, health, must be evil, for all that He makes is good and will stand forever.

— Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science movement

The doctors of this century are more effective than my contemporaries, true, but the tide of Pestilence has not been turned back, only slowed. For the foreseeable future, those under my authority are expressly forbidden, above and beyond the Dictum Mortuum, to artificially encourage the spread of disease in the lands of the Quick. Disease is the Will, and needs no help from the Dead.

— From the *Journals of Bone*, the word of the Skeletal Lord, dated the 17th of August, 1928

The Policy on Arcanoi

The Legion's regulations regarding the arts of the Dead have a direct correlation with the Legion's relationship with the Guilds. This balancing act of necessity versus rivalry is kept hidden from the lower ranks, who have no understanding of why they are ordered to roust one group of "conspirators" and not another.

As in any sane organization of the Restless, the higher-ups encourage education in the arts of Argos, Castigate, Inhabit and Moliat among the ranks. The Legion of Bone turns a blind eye to most associated Guild activities that come from this quest for education, and indeed, most of the Restless trained thus have no idea that their teachers might technically be Renegades.

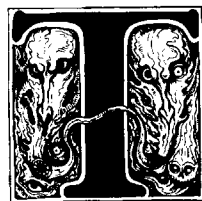
Fatalism, Keening, Phantasm and Usury are less appreciated by the Skeletal. While knowledge and use of these Arcanoi is not forbidden, any affiliation with the Guilds themselves is not tolerated.

Embodiment, Intimation, Lifeweb, Outrage and Puppetry are forbidden, and use of these arts is punished with enthrallment, at best. (It can be assumed, however, that the Skeletal Lord keeps a few experts on these Arcanoi locked away somewhere, for emergencies.)

Flux and Pandemonium are also technically forbidden, but it is rumored that the R&D Department (see *Special Orders*) has "labs" dedicated to a detailed understanding of these abilities, with emphasis on the possibility of using them to cause (or, conceivably, prevent) disease. The Lord allegedly keeps a very close, very secret relationship with the Haunters and Alchemists.

Mnemosynis? Banned entirely. Any questions?

Secret Arts



These abilities, developed in the secret labs of the Legion, are unknown to all but high-level Skeletal personnel and equally important members of the appropriate Guilds. A minimum Status of 4 (Skeletal Legion or the appropriate Guild) is required before the wraith even hears of these arts' existence.

Flux ***: Disease

This art allows the wraith to give a living target a mild sickness, such as a cold or the flu. No Health Levels are lost by the victim, but the Storyteller may assign a +1 difficulty to any action the target takes. With decent medical treatment, the illness can be shaken off in a week. Otherwise it may linger and nag for up to a month.

This art costs 1 Pathos and 1 Willpower, and grants 1 point of temporary Angst.

Pandemonium ****: Tumorous Growth

This ability causes one of the Quick to develop a (relatively harmless) cancerous growth. It may cause mild discomfort or disfigurement, but is not actually malignant. A successful Intelligence + Medicine roll (difficulty 7) is required to control the type of tumor, otherwise the growth's location is at the Storyteller's discretion.

This art costs 2 Pathos and grants 1 point of temporary Angst, and the tumor usually requires up to two weeks to manifest.

Policy

The Policy on Charon

I serve him now as I served him then, and all that I do, I do in his name. He has not fallen to Oblivion, but walks the worlds, looking and learning. He will return, riding a pale steed, and I will stand ready at the head of my Legion, and the Shroud shall fall.

— From the *Journals of Bone*, the word of the Skeletal Lord, dated the third of April, 1896

The Policy on Supernaturals

Practically speaking, there isn't much of one. The Lord regards vampires, werewolves and mages as ignorable threats, and changelings as simply ignorable. However, if a supernatural being (or, indeed, one of the Quick) should be encountered in the lands of the Dead by a Legionnaire, the

wraith is expected to contact a patrol or otherwise attempt to apprehend the being for transport to the Tower of Bone. Unless the captive can somehow prove it is worth more alive, it is efficiently interrogated, and then its physical limitations are tested to destruction (e.g., does Moliate work on a vampire? What if we light it on fire first?).

Deathmarks

There are a variety of deathmarks prevalent in this Legion, but all tend to give the wraith the appearance of someone with a wasting illness. On some wraiths, the area around the eyes is darkened, or the eyes themselves are a flat, lusterless black. Other wraiths may have patterns of blackness on their cheeks that evokes the jawline of a skull. A fairly common and innocuous mark consists of a series of dark lines on the backs of the hands, running from the gap between the fingers back to the wrists, generally suggesting a bony hand. A few wraiths have a similar effect on their chests, evoking bare ribs.

Internal Structure



At the Necropolis level and below, the organization of the Skeletal Legion is reasonably similar to that described in the *Hierarchy* sourcebook, though it varies somewhat from city to city. To speak very broadly, however, rule-by-committee is discouraged in the Skeletal Legion. Single leaders at each level

have full power to make decisions, and these wraiths bear the expectation that their underlings will carry them out. This has the advantage of speeding up the decision-making process, but does tend to promote unrest among the lower ranks, who often feel (accurately) as if they have no say.

The Military

A wraith of Centurion rank oversees a squad of Legionnaires usually numbering 10. A given squad typically has the duty of patrolling a particular section of a Necropolis or the surrounding area. Without exception, patrols are housed, along with several other squads, in a bunkhaunt overseen by a Marshal (inside a Necropolis) or a Regent (in an outlying area). A Marshal oversees four squads, while a Regent may be responsible for up to eight. These groups of squads are called "companies." Each Necropolis has four to 12 companies assigned to it, organized into battalions of three to four companies each. Each battalion is commanded by a Overlord, with no more than four military Overlords per Necropolis. The Overlords, in turn, take commands from the local Anacreon,

who holds both a military and a civil position, and their High Overlord, who oversees a large area containing five or so Necropoli. High Overlords may have their HQ in the largest Necropolis under their command or in Stygia. Currently, the only rank higher than High Overlord in the military is the General Overlord. That office is held by a wraith, name unknown, of brilliant military genius. He is addressed solely by rank, and rumors abound as to his identity. All that is known of him is that he took office in the early 1950s.

Unique Aspects of the Skeletal Military

A strong emphasis is placed on the longbow in the Legion, despite the increasing scarcity of relic bows. (The Legion pays quite well for any new archery equipment that comes through the Shroud.) Typically, a squad has one or two dedicated bowmen, and one company in any given battalion is all bowmen, trained for strategic assaults.

Up until this century, the single largest killer of soldiers in combat was disease. (In the American Civil War, for instance, fully six out of 10 fatalities were from illness.) Most of the Skeletal military was assembled from the ranks of these Dead, and the troops frequently act as if they have something to prove. As soldiers laid low by the wrong enemy, these troops had dishonorable deaths in life, and wish to do a little better this time around.

A Skeletal patrol can usually be identified first by the soldiers' helmets or caps, which have distinct points suggesting a crown. Uniform style is somewhat hodgepodge, but tends toward 19th century US cuts. The general symbol used on the Legion's flags and uniforms is a clenched skeletal fist, with different battalions distinguished by missing fingers. (For example, the First Stygian Battalion of the Skeletal Legion uses a black fist with the pinky missing on a maroon background.) The intact hand is used solely by the Hands of Bone.

The Civil Service

The non-military side of the Skeletal Legion is larger and less homogenous than the ranks in arms. There are many departments dedicated to affairs ranging from the picayune (there is a Lost and Found office) to the Hierarchy-shaking (External Affairs). Most of these divisions are headquartered in the Tower of Bone, with importance being gauged by how far above street-level one is. (The Lost and Found office, for example, is in the fifth sub-basement.) Most of the organizations under the Legion's aegis have official names that, while frequently quite pretty, tell nothing of their true purposes, and modern wraiths often end up dubbing the departments with more informative equivalents.

Internal Affairs and the Inspector-Generals

Exceptional Legionnaires recruited from the ranks of the Legion's Marshals can become Inspector-Generals, whose sole duty is to tour Necropoli and report back to the



Internal Affairs department on conditions found there. Working Internal Affairs is a dangerous and thankless job, and only the most vigilant and loyal Legionnaires are suited for it. After all, a wraith whose mandate is to seek corruption among his fellows is not likely to have many friends.

Inspector-Generals have as their primary task to determine if abuse of power is leading to excessive dissent within the Legion. With that mandate, they interview the members of the Legion's lower ranks, minutely compare ledgers with Stygian records and conduct grueling statistical studies of *Enfant* distribution. I-Gs often consult the files of Quick hospitals to make sure that every death is accounted for. Members of Internal Affairs supposedly cannot be bribed, and never give their reports to anyone of lower rank than the Assistant Magister of Internal Affairs. Serious situations are taken to the Skeletal Lord himself. Several Anacreons have ended up as furniture as the result of an Inspector-General's visit, and more than one I-G has been clandestinely "murdered" and tossed into the Tempest by nervous Anacreons.

External Affairs

This is the largest single department outside of the military itself. It consists of "ambassadors" to the other Legions (and, unofficially, to various organizations both dead and supernatural), spies and a vast battalion of clerks whose sole duty, in conjunction with their counterparts in the other Legions, is to attempt to coordinate the eight-headed

bureaucratic hydra that is the Hierarchy. (Most governments, no matter how poorly run, have no more than one or two departments trying to do the same thing, not eight.)

Research and Development

More properly known as the Department of the Crimson Trefoil, this is a division of scientifically inclined wraiths whose duty is to know everything there is to know about disease. In part, they serve as a "library" for the members of the Legion, so that the Legion's wraiths can better understand what killed them and whether it could have been prevented. R&D is not completely altruistic, however, as it charges for information. Prices vary from one obolus for the data on the common cold to as much as 1000 for the facts on secret military plagues. Despite their commonly used name, R&D's wraiths do not develop new diseases, at least so far as anyone admits. If they have connections to the CDC, it is in an entirely unofficial capacity.

Legion Constables

This branch is devoted to the internal policing of the Legion, and is technically part of the military. However, it acts mainly as an investigative bureau, with authority to call in the military when force is required. Constables are uniformly feared, due to both their authority and to the personal aura of their chief, Isabella Somerset (see **Notable Legionnaires**).

Maps and Charts

The responsibilities of this department include both exploration of the Shadowlands and Tempest, and the creation of the resultant maps. (Charts of the Tempest are nearly useless things, but there are rumors of special maps that change even as the Sea of Shadows does.) The Maps and Charts bureau also has remarkably beautiful street maps of Stygia (only occasionally modified for political reasons) available for one obolus.

General Service

This is the blanket term for those wraiths who, while technically part of the Skeletal Legion, do not hold government jobs. They number slightly less than one quarter of the total Legion body count, and include shopkeepers, entertainers, Patnos-harvesters, writers, bums, riffraff and other miscellany.

Special Orders

The Hands of Bone

Members of the Skeletal Lord's elite personal guard all Moliat their off hand into a skeleton's claw, both to inspire fear and for the sake of easy identification. The Lord considers it improper for anyone else (of his Legion or another) to take on this mark, and demonstrates his displeasure upon those who disobey him in this.

The Plague Guard

A small but highly trained and fanatically loyal group, these wraiths stand guard over "disease warehouses" in the Skinlands, particularly the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta and its sister organization in Moscow, where the last two samples of smallpox are stored. The party line is that these guards are there to prevent tampering by the Dead, but popular rumor is that they are a literal honor guard for a well-beloved tool of Pestilence. It is whispered where the loyal won't hear that the guards have been ordered to release these germs if the Skeletal Lord ever needs reinforcements.

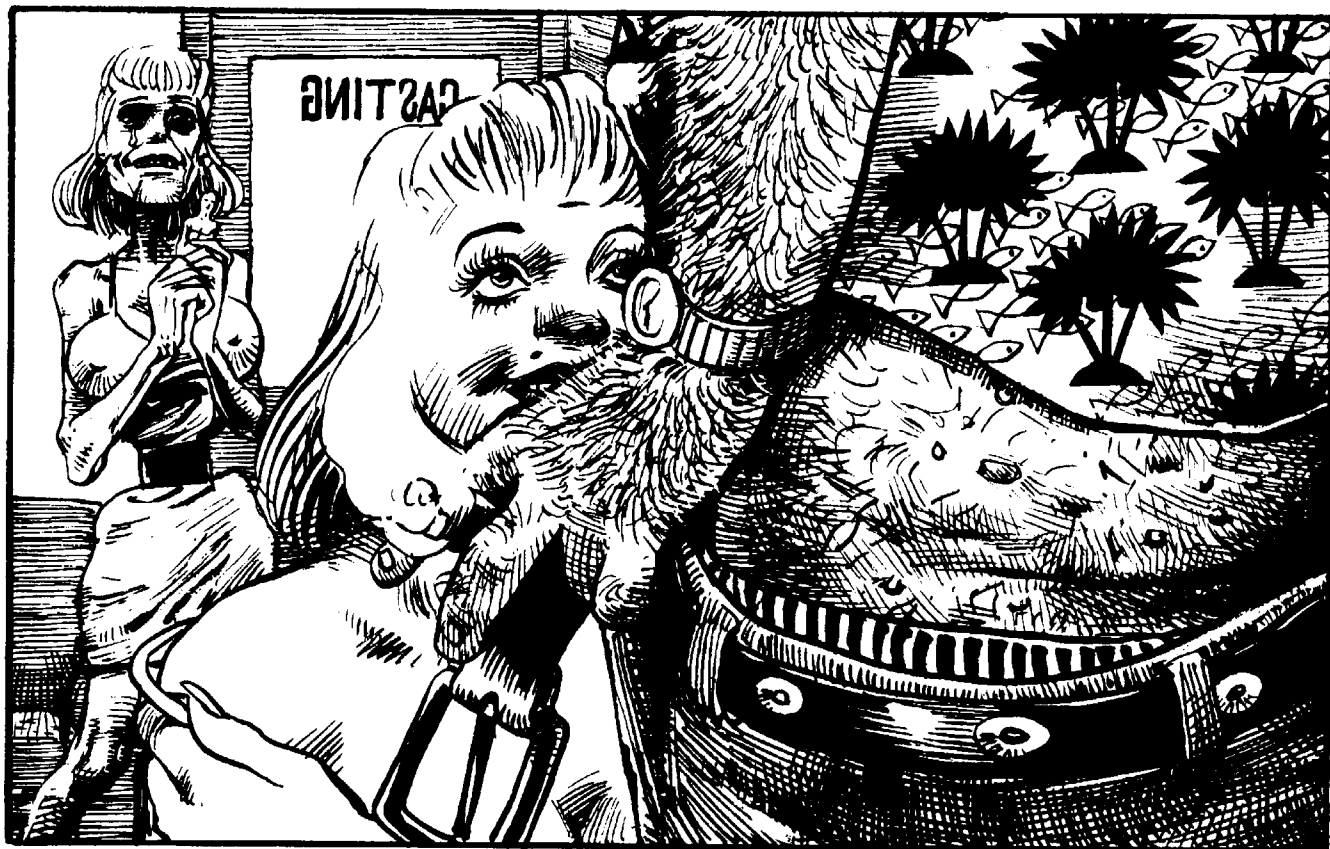
The Order of the Quill

There are a great many clerks in the Skeletal Legion, and these are their elite. It is difficult to rise to the rank of Magister or Anacreon without having become a member of this order and earned the right to wear an ebony quill in one's lapel.

Demographics

Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged... to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.

—Susan Sontag



Disease plays no favorites, but medical treatment comes with costs. A notable percentage of the countries covered by the Hierarchy have socialized medicine, but nevertheless a disproportionate percentage of the Skeletal Legion were poor in life. This is generally to the Legion's benefit; luxuries are few beyond the Shroud, and those who don't expect them are more content with the few they do receive.

A second factor affects the satisfaction of the rank and file in a surprising way. Many of the Legion's members are *happy* to be dead. Their last months on Earth were spent wasting away with some painful illness, bed-ridden and with more needle-marks than a junkie. They watched their faculties slip away and their muscles atrophy. They begged for the pain to stop... and one day, it did. They woke up, relatively intact, whole in Corpus (if not in spirit), and felt immeasurably pleased to have finally died. Even when the thousand downsides of being a wraith are explained to them, they can't help but feel that they got the better end of the deal.

This leads, inevitably, to another factor. Most people who die of illness have had some time to come to terms with their impending deaths. Such wraiths may not have liked the idea; indeed, they may have fought it kicking and screaming, but they knew that, inevitably, it was coming. This leads, in general, to the members of the Skeletal Legion having fewer regrets and less ties to the living world. On average, Fetters and Passions are not as strong for Skeletal wraiths as they are for members of the other Legions.

All of these factors, along with the general melancholy associated with those who died a wasting death (as opposed to a quick one), makes Skeletal Legionnaires better suited for non-combat positions over military ones. Of the four larger Legions, only the Iron Legion has a larger percentage of clerks.

Geography

The Skeletal Legion is a strong presence across all of Hierarchy-controlled territory; there are no areas where disease does not take its toll. However, due mostly to the strengths of the competing Legions, the Lord of Bone has the least relative influence in Eastern Europe, parts of South America, the Middle East, and certain violent urban areas such as Detroit and New York City.

Disease Chic



Here's dying, and then there's dying with style. Within the Legion, certain illnesses are regarded as being "hipper," "classier," "sexier" or simply "better" than others. Cancer, for example, is considered to be dull, in a dread-inspiring way. Tuberculosis, on the other hand, is nearly as eroticized in 20th century Stygia as it was in 19th century London. Bubonic plague is a "commoner's disease," while typhoid is deemed upper class. The Spanish flu is widely believed to have given its victims strange powers of precognition, and Oracles actively recruited from the Legion's ranks while the disease was manifesting.

The Mary Mallon Club

This posh club in south central Stygia is exclusively open to those who contracted typhoid from Mary Mallon, a.k.a. "Typhoid Mary." The club's members were all New York State residents who died in the early years of this century (many of them members of the same families), and it was natural for them to cling together in the Shadowlands. Over the decades, these wraiths have become a well-networked institution in the Skeletal Legion, and they are responsible for much behind-the-scenes maneuvering. Membership peaked in 1917 at about two dozen, and has been slowly declining since. Mary herself died in 1938 after two decades isolated on North Brother Island, and did not become a wraith, to the apparent disappointment of the waiting members of her "fan club."

Members spend their time trading favors (both with each other and those they need to get in their debt) and subtly pushing their way up the ladders of power. A long-term goal appears to be nothing less than the eventual replacement of the Skeletal Lord with one of their own.

Members of the Mary Mallon Club always have, at a minimum, Contacts 3 (all Skeletal), Etiquette 2 and Politics 2.

The Spectre of AIDS

I have learned more about love, selflessness and human understanding in this great adventure in the world of AIDS than I ever did in the cut-throat, competitive world in which I spent my life.

—Anthony Perkins, in a statement published posthumously

In death, the only contagious disease is Oblivion. Further, the vast majority of the dead passed through the Shroud years before AIDS was named and stigmatized. Unfortunately, stupidity and bigotry are not the exclusive domain of the Quick. There is a small but dangerous Heretic faction whose members believe that AIDS is the wrath of God, and that its victims should be punished unto Oblivion itself. These wraiths call themselves the Red Hammer, but they are usually lumped in with the "unaffiliated" AIDS-bashers as "those idiots."

Since the Hammer's targets are universally members of the Skeletal Legion, unofficial policy within the Legion assigns paramount importance to the safety of AIDS victims. (Rumor has it that the Skeletal Lord himself handed down the ruling on this.) Until such time as the Legion smashes the Red Hammer entirely, the wraiths of AIDS victims are also generally assigned "safer" positions that involve fewer dealings with potential Heretics.



Most post-AIDS wraiths appreciate this, but there is, inevitably, a noisy minority who regard it as patronizing reverse discrimination. In death as in life, AIDS is a topic of often-vitriolic argument.

Notable Legionnaires

Jean Baptiste Lully, 1633-1687



Jean was a French composer under Louis XIV who is today regarded by the living as the father of French opera. After his death, he quickly displayed a natural talent for Keening, and spent nearly a century as a wandering troubadour. By the early 1800s, he had attained high rank in the outlawed Chanteurs Guild, and opened a small theater in Stygia. The Skeletal Lord attended and enjoyed one of his operas, and as a result, funded construction of the Stygia Opera House. Today Jean is regarded as the finest single musician in Hierarchy society, and his lavish productions are always heavily attended. Though in his life as head of the Royal Academy of Music he tended toward simpler forms of opera, his style has grown increasingly baroque in death. He holds the honorary title of Magister within the Skeletal Legion.

The Stygia Opera House

One of the Skeletal Lord's pet projects, this mammoth building is modeled on the Paris Opera House of the late 19th Century, and is home to some of the finest theatrical performances known, living or dead. The Chanteurs and Masquers are at their most public here, and the Deathlords have a quiet agreement not to interfere so long as the entertainment continues. Over the past years, popular productions have included *The Fall of Rome*, *Schindler* and a textually accurate *Phantom of the Opera*.

Margaret "Peg" Woffington, 1714-1760

A famed Irish actress of the 18th century, Meg gave portrayals of both elegant women of fashion and male scoundrels that were roundly praised. Such was her fame that she herself was the subject of several successful 19th century plays, which ironically hit the stage at a time when she was just beginning her post-Shroud career as a spy. A skilled Masquer, she is one of the most infamous intelligence agents of the past century-and-a-half. She has developed something of a "Jane Bond" legend, and there is a well-known joke about how she is the perfect Peg for any role, round or square.

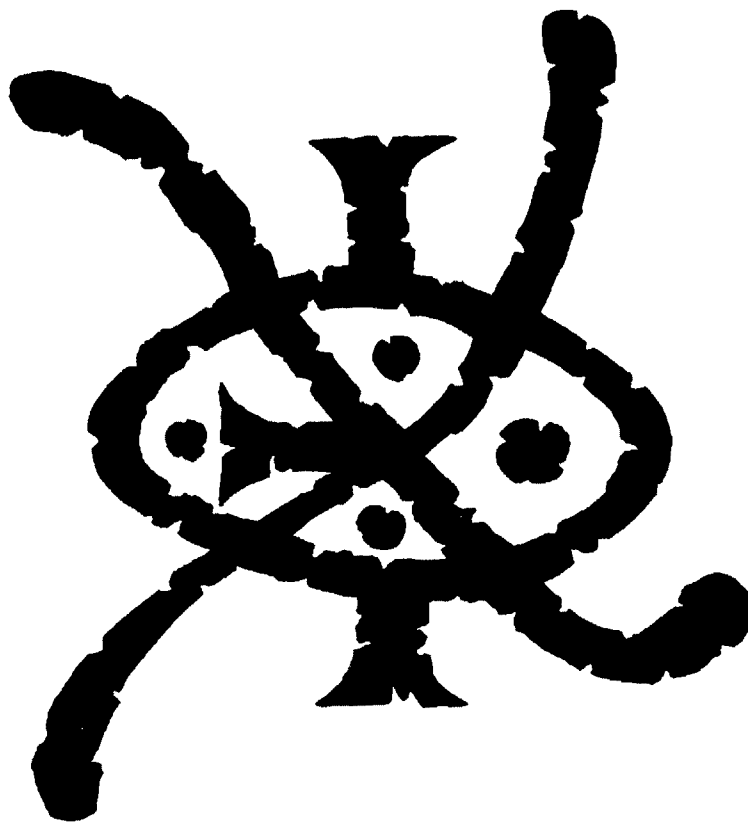
Michal Czajkowski, 1808-1886

Born in the Ukraine, this Polish revolutionary spent his life searching for spiritual truths while fighting for freedom. His life read like a novel: He was involved in several rebellions against Russia, converted to Islam and then to Greek Orthodox Christianity. After being granted amnesty by Russia, he spent his last years as an author in Kiev. In death, he came to believe that he was finally seeing the universe stripped of all illusion. He renounced all religions as being equally wrong, and decided that Oblivion was the true enemy of the souls of humanity. With clockwork precision, Czajkowski rose through the military ranks, and today is a High Overlord, charged with the command of several thousand wraiths. He has been assigned command of the battalion stationed on the Russian side of the Great

Wall, and the rumors he has heard of the Chinese Hell make him eager to mount an expedition into the Yellow Springs.

Isabella Caroline Somerset, 1851-1921

This English philanthropist devoted herself in life to temperance work, gaining some international fame for her sincerity of purpose. Beyond the Shroud, she found her cause absent — legislation against Pathos was not about to come down from the Onyx Tower. After moving from department to department, she eventually found her niche in the Legion Constables. Since 1970 she has been the chief of this bureau, and her intensely puritanical vigor is genuinely feared by any who would oppose her. Even most who agree with her aren't quite comfortable in her presence, and the incorruptible image of the Constables is entirely her work.



Unfulfilled Clerk

Quote: *No, sir, I'm afraid I can't work late tonight. I have, umm...plans.*

Prelude: You lost your mother at an early age, and as a result your father had to work twice as hard to care for you and your siblings. That taught you the need for self-motivation. You put yourself through college, then found a job at a large corporation as an accountant. Working there for 20 years, you sent money home every week to care for your relatives. You never had time for yourself, depending on your job to be everything. That worked well enough, at least until you were "downsized" and found yourself with nothing at all.

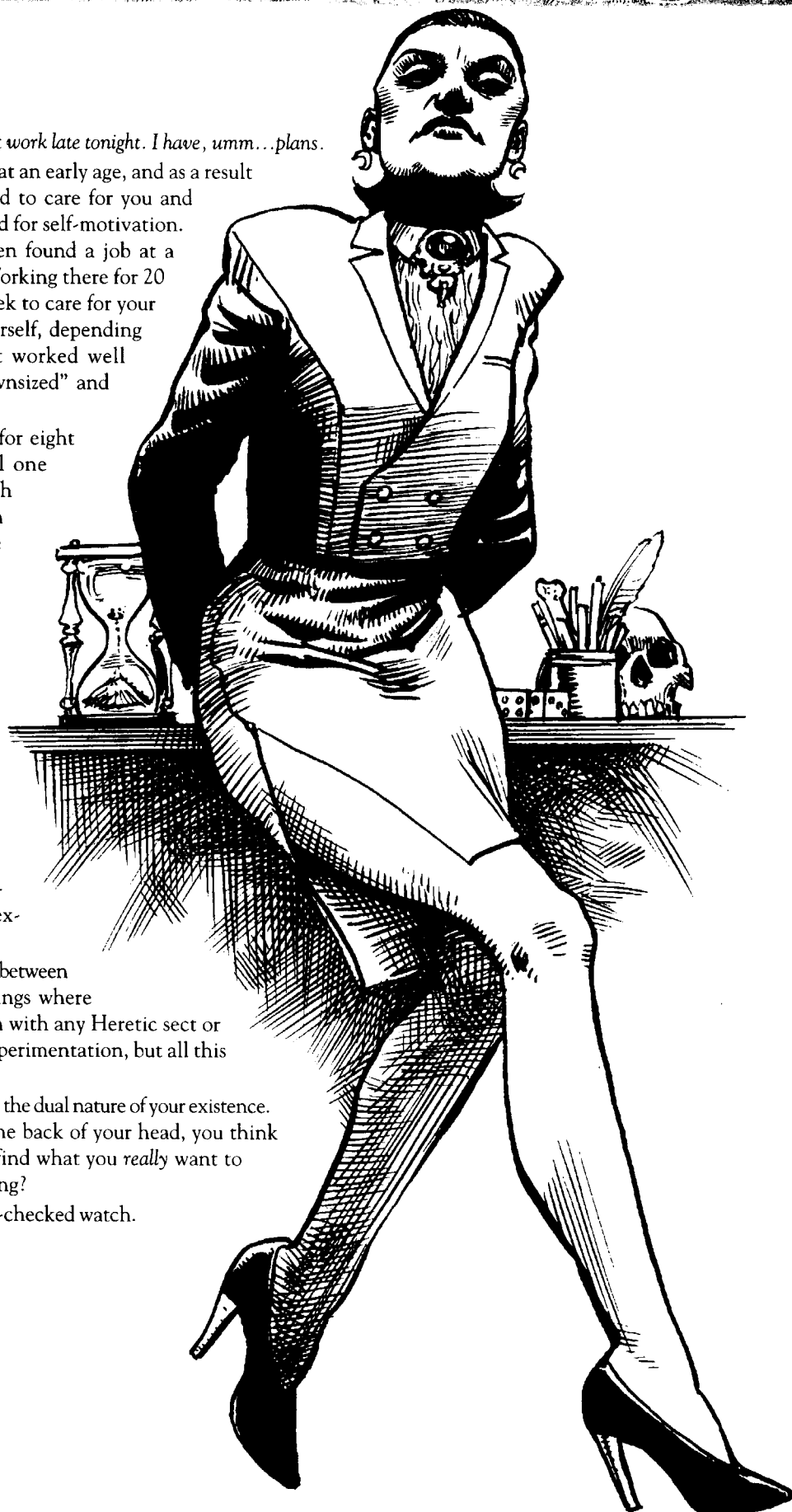
You lazed around the apartment for eight weeks after your rude removal until one morning you realized that nagging cough that had been with you for a month hadn't gone away. You collapsed on the way to the hospital, and, without your company's health insurance, the doctors de-prioritized you until it was too late.

Beyond the Shroud, things ran on rails for you. You fit right into the Skeletal Legion, and played the good little employee all over again — at least until the day you realized that, even if you were dead, it wasn't too late to live a little. Now, you spend your days totaling up columns of numbers in an office, and your nights seeking out the exciting underside of Stygia.

Concept: You live a dual life, split between gray and official workdays, and evenings where anything is possible. You may throw in with any Heretic sect or Renegade gang, just for the thrill of experimentation, but all this is kept secret from your co-workers.

Roleplaying Hints: Emphasize the dual nature of your existence. Be prepared to try *anything* once. In the back of your head, you think you might quit the Legion when you find what you *really* want to do... or is that just your Shadow talking?

Relics: Well-worn pen, an often-checked watch.



THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Name: _____ Nature: Explorer Life: Accountant
 Player: _____ Demeanor: Bureaucrat Death: Illness brought on by apathy
 Chronicle: _____ Shadow: Rationalist Regret: Didn't live while alive

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		Passions		Fetters	
Memoram	●○○○○	Do my work correctly	○○○○○	My former cubicle	●○○○○
Allies	●○○○○	(Pride)	●○○○○	The guinea on which I died	●○○○○
Contacts	●○○○○	Live to the fullest	○○○○○	Mortal father's work boots	●○○○○
Eidolon	●○○○○	(Joy)	●○○○○		○○○○○
Status (Hierarchy)	●○○○○	Understand the world	○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○	(Curiosity)	●○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Arcanos

Argos ●●○○○
 Inhabit ●●○○○
 Castigate ●○○○○
 ○○○○○
 ○○○○○
 ○○○○○

Corpus

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
 Willpower
 ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Angst

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ □ □ □ □ □ □

Thorns

Spectre Prestige (1 point)
 Freudian Slip

Dark Passions

Punish sloppiness (Anger) ●●○○○
 Make stupid decisions (Self-hatred) ●●○○○
 Promote pointless change ○○○○○
 (Frustration) ●●○○○

Experience

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Pathos

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Riotst s

We tied up at the Iron Pier at the end of the military wharf district. Peeking over the gunwales, I could see a lot of activity. The *Arizona* was in, and so was the *Maine*, and I could see the soulfire blowtorches from the Artificer welding crews. They were slamming armor plating from other wrecks onto the hulls of whatever could float. There were other ships, too — the *Antelope* and the *Serapis*, and something freaky and weed-encrusted that bore the name *Prince Alexsei*. Way off in the distance, the *Atlantic Conveyor* was taking on pallets of arms and armor under heavy guard. Wraiths swarmed like ants over the sides of ships, while Harbingers darted like dragonflies from deck to deck, shouting orders.

Me, I felt like a slug. My face still ached where Clement had kicked it in, and neither of my two guards had offered sympathy or conversation to break up the cackling of my Shadow. I've had better trips, yes.

The Iron Pier is about as far from the center of Stygia as you can get and still be on the Isle. In other words, there are a lot of places for someone to get lost along the way to where the Deathlords plant their butts, so Clement was taking no chances. He slapped Thrall chains on me — the kind that burn

— and put them on my wrists, ankles and neck. Gabrels took the lead and yanked me to my feet, while Virak moved in behind me to make sure I kept moving.

"Look," I said in my best I'm-a-reasonable-sort-of-Renegade voice, "you really don't need to do this. I don't want to escape. I want to—"

At which point Virak calmly stepped forward and whacked me across the jaw with the butt of her gun.

I spit out plasm and stared up at her. She looked back, impassive, and readied the gun for another swing. I tried again. "All I'm trying to say is—"

She didn't even wait for me to finish the sentence. On the dock, I could hear Clement laughing.

Bitch, came that familiar voice. *Not at all like our sweet little lost lamb, is she? Or wait a minute — could it be that you like this sort of treatment? Come on, mouth off again — she might hit us. I'd like that. Wouldn't you?*

"You're really not being helpful," I muttered under my breath. *I'm not supposed to be*, came the reply, but thankfully, he shut up for a bit after that.

They hustled what was left of me up onto the dock, complete with an honor guard of 100 wraiths. The rest stayed on the launch and took it over to one of the Silent Legion landing areas, but there was no time to watch, as

Clement started hustling the troops up toward the palaces.

There was a Pauper in attendance, I noticed before Gabrels gave my chain a particularly vicious yank. He was a little guy, mashed to what looked like half his natural height, and his eyes locked with mine for an instant. Then I got tugged forward by my personal trainer, and he scuttled off into the crowd.

The walk uphill was hell. Clement had chained my feet so that I could only take baby steps, but he set a grueling pace. Gabrels actually ended up dragging me half the way, but every time I opened my mouth to ask that they at least take the manacles off my feet so I could keep up, Virak stepped in. And of course, every time she did that, I had to deal with the lewd commentary from the back of my head.

The city had changed since my last visit as well. It always reminded me vaguely of Manhattan, but the feeling was much stronger now. There was a sense of frantic urgency to the place. Soldiers were everywhere, while civilians kept their heads down. Every so often I saw someone in the livery of the Unfidded Eye moving through the crowd like a shark, with everyone else clearing out of his way.

And everywhere, there were Paupers. Crushed one, hanged ones, shredded ones — every sort of odd-lot wraith you can imagine. They flanked our little procession like a pack of wolves on the hunt. Every few blocks a couple would turn off,



and a few more would turn on. I looked around as best I could to see if any of the Skeletal Legion Marching Band had noticed anything, but the neck collar kept me from turning too much. Still, they looked mostly oblivious. After all, Paupers were part of the Stygian scenery. No one was afraid of *Paupers*.

God damn, there were a lot of them. I know that the Paupers are supposed to be about as small as a Legion gets, but the more of these geeks and freaks I saw creeping out of the woodwork, the more I doubted that axiom. Apparently, the Beggar Lord had been doing well in the corridors of power of late.

The march continued, but instead of heading into the Agora, as I expected, we took a turn down the Jebus Gate Road, through a trio of buildings Charon had rescued from the sacking of Tyre, and along toward the Tower of Bone.

Mr. Bonyhands wanted a few words with me personally, apparently. This was Not A Good Thing. Word on the grapevine was that he was one of those nuts who talks about himself in the third person all the time, which is never a good sign. There were other rumors, too, less pleasant ones, about plagues of the Dead that the guy was supposedly developing. Upon due reflection, I realized that I'd probably rather have my face ripped off than meet this guy.

The other crowds thinned out as we neared the Tower of Bone, but the Paupers stayed with us. I couldn't believe

that the guards hadn't noticed this, but I guess they were just not conditioned to see Paupers as a threat. Unbelievable.

There was a figure on the steps ahead of us. It looked like an old man in a hooded robe, brown instead of Ferryman black. He sat, playing jacks if you could believe that, and waited for our approach. Clement apparently didn't like the notion of someone loitering on his Deathlord's stair, and moved forward to evict the poor sap.

Of course, any idiot could see that it was a setup, but Clement was clearly not just any idiot.

"You'll have to shove off," he grunted in his best attempt at being polite. "This is private ground." The old man looked up at him, and I bit my tongue. There were soulfire gems in the mask the intruder was wearing, at least a dozen of them.

Like I said, a setup.

"Marshal Clement, I've a perfect right to loiter wherever in Stygia I please." The voice that came from behind that mask was high and whiny, but I got the definite vibe that it was a put-on.

"You don't have the right to park your sorry butt here, old man. You don't like it, call a Ferryman, but get the hell out of here. Now!" Without waiting for a response, Clement motioned a couple of soldiers forward with manacles. "Get his carcass out of here," he growled. "Form up!"

And the Paupers came boiling up out of the woodwork. There must have been a thousand there, and they swarmed the Sickies like army ants on a cheeseburger. Meanwhile, the Beggar Lord had reached forward and, with a casual flick of the wrist, slammed Clement to the ground. Alarming shapes danced beneath the Deathlord's robes, and there was real fear in the Marshal's eyes. "Clement, Clement, Clement... my dear friend, the Skeletal Lord, had always talked so highly of your intelligence. I am so disappointed to find that he was lying. Your orders were to bring the prisoner to the Onyx Tower, and instead I find you trying to keep *our* little tidbit," — a chain snaked out from his sleeve and pointed in my general direction, which freaked the hell out of me — "all to yourself. That's just not good thinking."

All the while, the Paupers were busy taking charge of me and shuffling the Sickies off to the side. There was no doubt who had custody of me now.

Silently, the Paupers marched me off to the heart of the city. Behind me, I could see that the Skeletal Lord had come out of his home and, in conjunction with the Beggar Lord, was disciplining the unfortunate Clement. I shuddered once, and turned back around, then thought better of that and simply put my head down.



The Legion of Paupers

My girlfriend is weird. She asked me, 'If you could know how and when you were going to die, would you want to know?' I said, 'No.' She said, 'Okay, then forget it.'

— Steven Wright



Smiling thinly, stretching forth their empty hands, they stand before you: the Paupers, ruled by the bitterly jovial Beggar Lord. The Paupers are the mongrels of the Legions of the Iron Kingdom, the rejects, the clowns and the hopelessly clueless. Imagine an army of darkness composed primarily of all the people who got picked last for kickball on the playground. Many of them

can't even claim the dignity of knowing how or why they died, though most of them claim not to care.

As one might expect, they're lying.

For centuries, the Paupers have been the among the lesser of Stygia's members, the rare handfuls among the throngs who serve the other Deathlords, but they're a very close group, bound by a mysterious loyalty. Standing in the shadows of Stygia, the Paupers are united by strange demises and the shared fear of a Shadow who begs for an end to the mystery.



The Paupers

Members of the Legion of Paupers are primarily known as victims of Mystery, those who died under mysterious circumstances. It's enough of a burden being dead, but not knowing why it happened can make it even worse. Still, "Mystery" is a loose guideline at best — most Paupers have no idea what they're doing in the Underworld, who they're with or what to do next. Identity, for them, is where they find it.

While the victims of Mystery make up the single largest group of wraiths who call themselves Paupers, they don't make up the totality. The rest of the Beggar Lord's subjects are leftovers from the other Deathlords' tables, groups so small that there's little need for separate classification — those who steeled themselves to choose suicide over starvation or torture; those who succumbed to progeria, a disease which causes rapid aging in its victims; and the almost insignificant minority of people who are crushed beneath toppled vending machines every year. Tiny segments of other Legions have been willfully donated to the Beggar Lord, and this is the only way that his subjects have remained large enough to continue to qualify for the designation of Legion. The Legion of Paupers is the most chaotic, hodgepodge collection of souls in the afterlife. They fit no single archetype; they defy simple description.

It's no wonder that the Legion of Paupers is considered by many other wraiths to be populated by the stupid and the unfortunate. As the second-smallest Legion to involve itself in Stygian politics (the smallest overall being that serving the Ladies of Fate), and without any common denominator to bind its members together, this Legion is seldom considered a threat to the plans of other wraiths. However, as do all Legions, it has an Anacreon in every Necropolis and Legates in every corner of the Shadowlands. Because of this, Paupers are everywhere and yet frequently overlooked, seemingly harmless and yet full of venom over the price they've paid to Mystery.

The oldest and wisest wraiths will say you should neither speak too loudly around Paupers nor assume they can do you no harm. After all, you don't think the Paupers' master has survived this long on sheer charm alone? Even though it's widely known what sort of people are thrown into the Legion of Paupers, its most prominent members seem to be intelligent, well-socialized and strong-willed individuals. They're a little strange perhaps, but nothing that far outside of normalcy. So why the less-than-sterling reputation? It's common knowledge that this Legion is fueled by the lesser wraiths of other Legions — but like any group, the victims of Mystery have their shining examples.

Character Creation

Unlike the creation of a typical Wraith character, in which the player generally selects a character's manner of demise and then decides to which Legion the new wraith belongs, a player must put a little more thought into the construction of a Pauper. A Wraith character serving this Legion is generally a Pauper first, with his death serving as an explanation for his service.

Optionally, the Storyteller can decide on the character's method of death and hide it from the player. Whether or not the Storyteller tells the Shadow in instances like these is up to individual preference.

On the Nature of Mystery

The Beggar Lord's most cherished servants are those who came to him directly, the souls who left the Skinlands under genuinely mysterious circumstances. Mystery, by its very nature, is a vague concept. Many wraiths consider this Legion to be a catch-all category for the unusual, but some fairly stringent rules for membership must be followed to satisfy the other Deathlords (most of whom suspect the Beggar Lord's ranks to be much larger than he lets on).

A Mystery to Whom?

First, mystery is all in the perspective. Death must be a mystery to the victim — deaths which are mysterious only in the Skinlands, and not to their victims, do not add to the Beggar Lord's holdings. In the past, the wraith's perspective has been the overriding qualifier, although sometimes strange deaths have a mystery all their own. Someone who'd been in a car crash might assume she died in the crash, but if she was killed by an incompetent anesthesiologist, then her death gets filed under "Mystery," and she joins the ranks of the Paupers.

So: first and foremost, there must be an element of uncertainty in the wraith's death, though the mystery may not seem immediately obvious to the *Enfant*.

The Mystery is "How"

As shown above, the most basic sort of mystery that brings a wraith to this Legion is simply not knowing what finally brought death knocking. Sometimes a death is so strange, or has so many different parents, that its actual cause is muddled. If too many forces contribute to a person's death, then that soul goes to the Beggar Lord. It's a neat way of avoiding conflicts between the Deathlords.

Finding someone on the other side of the Shroud who might be able to clarify a wraith's mystery is perfectly acceptable behavior for Paupers, so long as it doesn't interfere

with their duties. Also, the Beggar Lord's Anacreons collect stories of strange deaths, trading valuable goods for tales, in the hopes that someday they might help resolve a soul's mystery. With the percentage of people who become wraiths being very low (not counting those whose souls end up as coins in hand), odds are against it. Fortunately, members of the Legion of Paupers know all about weird odds, and try to remember strange death stories as best they can.

So: a wraith unequivocally belongs to the Legion of Paupers when she herself does not know how she died. A wraith also becomes a Pauper when his deathmarks are dramatically different from what he believes his cause of death was, or he has three or more radically different deathmarks.

The Mystery is "Why"

Then there are deeper mysteries, like wraiths who may know how they died, but not why. The exact nature of these deaths — which may have been directly caused by Violence, Pestilence or any other killing force that would normally fall into the realm of another Deathlord — might be crystal clear, but the reason for the death may be vague to the level of absurdity.

For example: A woman is killed in her apartment. It could've been a burglary, or it could've been someone sent by her husband to cash in on her insurance policy. If there's an important motivation behind a death that the victim

doesn't know about, it falls under the bailiwick of the Beggar Lord. (Occasionally, when the waters are muddy, it's easier for the wraiths working the Necropoli to sign someone over to the Beggar Lord and be done with it.) Also, if one of a wraith's Passions is **Find Out Who Killed Me**, or **Find Out Why I Died**, she is typically classified as a Pauper.

So: A wraith is assigned to the Legion of Paupers when the cause of her death might not be known, but it is related to other events outside the person's awareness (as reflected in her deathmarks).

Option D — All of the Above

Generally, even if a wraith doesn't know exactly how she died, she can hazard a pretty good guess. The tire tracks across the Corpus, the bullethole leaking plasm — the signs are often there. There are a few wraiths who are the true victims of Mystery, who really don't know what the hell happened. These are the souls who have the hardest time reconciling the fact that they're dead in the first place. Understandably, for these wraiths, service to Stygia is a secondary consideration.

To sum up, if you're not sure how you died, or your deathmarks contradict your memories, or there were greater forces at work which you weren't aware of, or you really didn't see the truck coming — then you're definitely a victim of Mystery.

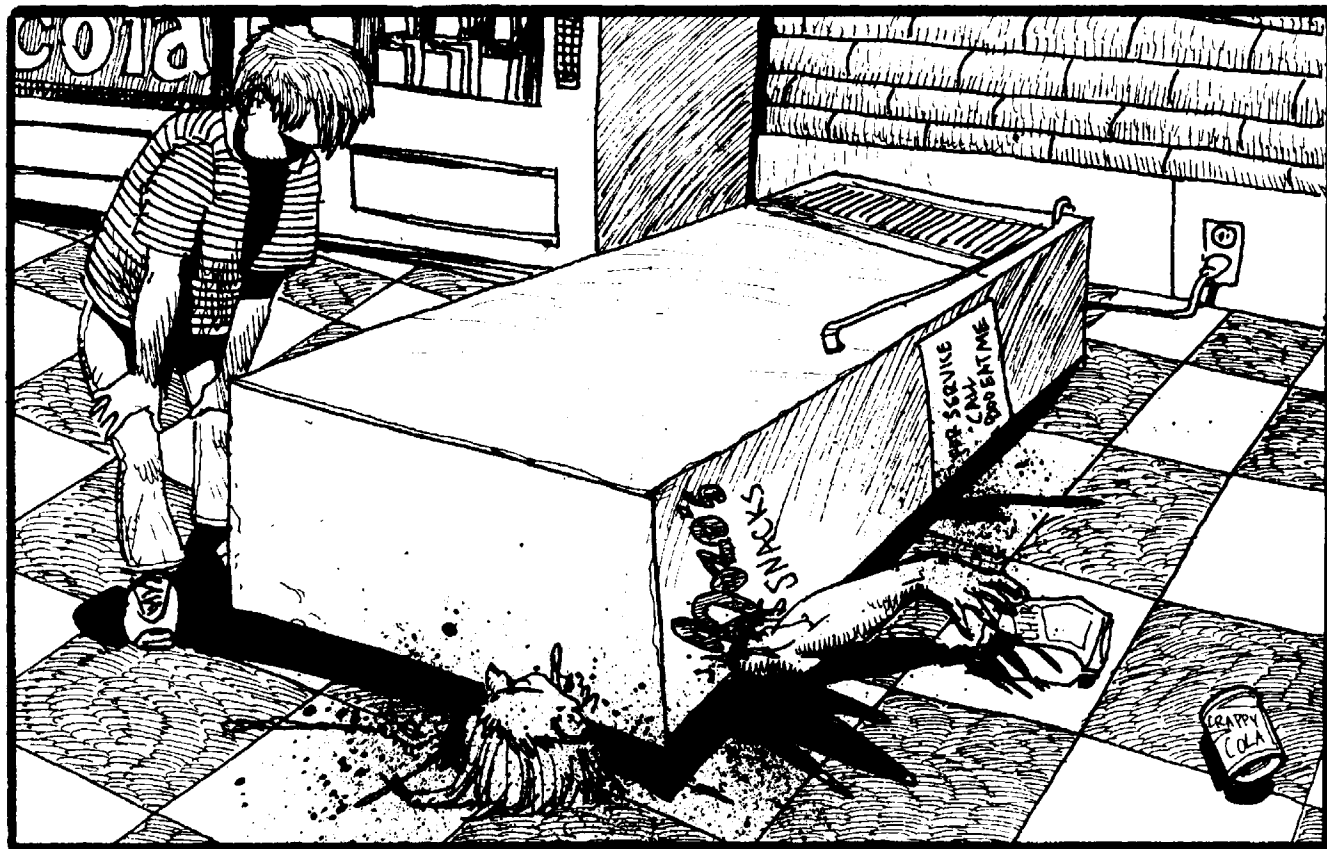




Table Scraps

Even with these guidelines in place, depending on who's counting the souls, "nudges" are frequently made to favor one side or the other. Particularly troublesome souls may be assigned to the Legion of Paupers for no better reason than to keep them from "contaminating" the loyal forces of other Deathlords. Similarly, when a powerful soul who *might* qualify as a Pauper passes through, errors tend to be made to favor the other Legions — unless the person doing the counting is also a Pauper.

Concessions

A major source of souls for the Beggar Lord are concessions granted in exchange for political favors. When the Laughing Lady and the Quiet Lord can't come to terms on who should get a group of souls, rather than fight over it they occasionally just sign the lot over to the Legion of Paupers and be done with the matter.

People who've been given to the Beggar Lord as concessions are generally less than pleased with their fates, and don't get along well with other Paupers. Such "secondhand" Paupers don't know why they were singled out, but they're not happy about it. Shadows of these wraiths tend to see such discontentment as a weak spot, and start gnawing there first.

Mystery Resolved

If the cause of a wraith's death is common knowledge on the other side of the Shroud, chances are someone will eventually bring the news over. Still, without directly meddling in the affairs of the Quick, it might be difficult for some to unearth the truth. The other Legions claim that the Beggar Lord is soft on those of his Legates who stick their ghostly hands into the affairs of the living. His servants, having observed their own kind adding light to Stygian forges, know this is not true. The Beggar Lord enjoys making up in armament what he can't make up in numbers. His wraiths have some of the finest armor and weapons in the Shadowlands, and it has always been at the cost of their own kind. Disobedience and betrayal are dealt with swiftly.

However, if one of his subjects is able to clear the fog of Mystery surrounding his death... he remains a Pauper, regardless of how much effort he invested or how epic his saga. Mysterious causes were still at work in that wraith's demise, and while other Paupers may applaud his work, he won't be transferred to a more appropriate Legion. He should instead be grateful that he was able to resolve his problems at all. The Beggar Lord himself claims to be unaware of how and why he died, and with the destruction of his Fetters it's unlikely he'll ever find out.



Freaks

Then there are the wraiths who have normal Fetters and Passions, but who were freaks in life and whom dying hasn't changed a bit. Poorly socialized wretches who manage to make it to the Shadowlands and stand on their own two feet are still wretches, but if they're genuinely useful then it's better for everyone to see them logged in as Paupers than going Heretical or Renegade. The Beggar Lord has a good reputation for accommodating the strange.

Unfortunately, such off-kilter souls have a poor grasp on anything resembling objective reality, and tend to have weak wills toward resisting their Shadows. Paupers' Shadows have convincing arguments, and the more freakish of the Paupers have a hard time not listening to their blandishments.

Misfits

Just as there are freaks in the Underworld, there are those who don't fit in anywhere, who resist all molds and force their way out of every stereotype. Out of personal pride or spite, these wraiths refuse to fit in. This doesn't make them useless, though it does make them squeaky wheels. The Beggar Lord has a good rep for dealing with squeaky wheels, and since he's always bemoaning the fact that he's the weakest of the Deathlords, the others are glad to dump their misfits on him as it silences two whiners at once.

Misfits in the Legion of Paupers are really no different from the gifts and the freaks, except for their strong feelings of wanderlust, coupled with senses of perpetual frustration. Misfits' Shadows are constantly nagging at them, whining in discomfort at every situation.

Attitudes

The Legion of Paupers, while made up of widely disparate individuals, is bound together by its love of individuality. The Legion tends to be the most tolerant of radical perspectives, much to the chagrin of some of the more conservative Deathlords, and the most accepting of strange sorts. Its members aren't reputed to have any genuine sense of tact, although none of them would ever be so rude as to point out another person's oddities or strange behavior.

Seldom fazed by anything, Paupers have a sort of humor, bitter though it may be. They have a hard time keeping a smile from becoming a sneer, and they extract a cruel delight from the reactions of the more sensitive by saying the most tactless things at the most inappropriate times. Most Paupers defend their behavior as extracting the smallest bit of entertainment from an uncaring universe, a universe which is obviously entertaining itself at their expense. On the other hand, most don't even make that much effort.

In addition to being victims of Mystery, Paupers are generally up to their ears in it. A blasé attitude toward strangeness gets them caught up in the weirdest plots imaginable. Paupers adore things that are more warped than themselves. Many actively seek to resolve Skinland mysteries, telling stories of "what really happened" as a way to claim control over their own mysterious destinies. For instance, a gang of Paupers living on the outskirts of the Memphis Necropolis have spent two decades giggling over a Thrall they claim is Elvis — then again, several of the Circle show the hallmarks of high skill with Moliate, and, well, that's just the sort of story one would get out of this Legion, so no one's taking the matter too seriously.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Most members of the Legion weren't all that happy with their lot in life, and focus themselves on living their afterlives with as much energy as possible. In the best case, Paupers are able to push away most thoughts of the Skinlands, at least those above and beyond maintaining their Fetters and Passions, and serve the Iron Kingdom well. The environment might be oppressive and menacing, but life itself was bad enough. Death, they think, certainly can't be any worse.

On the other hand, Paupers often grow more and more self-absorbed as they continue to reflect on their mysterious ends. Many gradually lose interest in anything else except the resolution of their mysteries. The Beggar Lord's loose hand of authority gives his rebels enough room to express themselves, and thus his rate of attrition to Renegades and Heretics is lower than that of any other Deathlord — but when Paupers go bad, they go spectacularly bad. Some of the most implacable Spectres to threaten the New York Necropolis in the last hundred years were Paupers who gave in to their Shadows. On several occasions, various factions (sometimes other Paupers) loudly decried the poor psychological state of many of this Legion's members, but action is seldom taken to rectify the matter. The Beggar Lord's desperation for souls has given new meaning to the old chestnut: "Beggars can't be choosers."

Non-Military Life

The sort of confusion typical of Paupers is common among densely packed metropolitan areas, like New York City, which is home to some of the most powerful servants of Mystery.

The majority of the Beggar Lord's servants take bureaucratic roles in Stygian government, shuffling the endless reams of ghostly papers from one desk to another. For obvious reasons, their Deathlord enjoys seeing his servants in charge of the disposition of new souls.



Deathmarks of a Pauper

Paupers, who faced death in countless ways, have the least identifiable deathmarks of any Legion. If a wraith appears to have radically unique deathmarks, he's probably a Pauper. Also, true Paupers — that is, the genuine victims of Mystery and not merely those souls who were given to the Beggar Lord for whatever reason — have extraordinarily complex and esoteric deathmarks. They're reminiscent of full-body ritual scarification and seemingly enhanced with a mottled pigmentation from which different patterns may seem to rise on different days.

Some say that these patterns illustrate the story of the wraith's demise and, when properly read, tell the true story of the end of that soul's life. Others say that signal can be pulled out of any noise, if examined closely enough.

It's true that if the deathmarks on a wraith's Corpus can be matched, then the cause of his death can be identified. Unfortunately, the members of this Legion died from such widely disparate causes that there's seldom any good guide to go by. On those rare occasions when a Pauper is able to resolve the mystery surrounding his death, his deathmarks don't change. Rather, the particular subtleties of that wraith's deathmarks should be remembered as being connected with his uniquely peculiar demise, with the hope of clarifying a mystery for others in the future.

Military Life

The wraiths who serve with Stygian steel beneath the banner of the Beggar Lord are always anxious to change the minds of those who consider the Legion of Paupers to be the runts of the Underworld. After all, plenty of the fiercest warriors disappeared from the Skinlands under mysterious circumstances, even entire armies. From souls who marched through the Alps following Hannibal's lead to victims of the Bermuda Triangle, these wraiths fight all the more strongly because they have something to prove. General George Patton is one of the Beggar Lord's most notable wraiths, and after almost 50 years of serving the Hierarchy he will tell anyone in no uncertain terms that the Legion of Paupers is one of the richest in terms of courage and willpower.

Special Orders

Beyond the ranks of standard Hierarchy bureaucrats and beat cops, the Legion of Paupers contains many wheels within wheels. It should be no surprise that the Legion composed of victims of Mystery enjoys shrouding its activities from others in layers of subterfuge, acting as double-agents to double-agents.

Legion of August

The melancholy souls of the Legion of August are those Paupers who are most troubled by their Shadows, and who are sent out to the countryside with wraiths belonging to other Legions in an effort to change their darkened hearts. Members of this Legion patrol the land surrounding their Necropoli, hunting Spectres and confronting their own personal demons.

After a period of service, usually no less than five years, a dutiful member of the Legion of August may petition the Beggar Lord for a year-long sabbatical during which he may attempt to resolve the mystery of his demise. Whether or not he's successful, the wraith is expected to achieve a sense of closure as regards his death. When his sabbatical is over, he may either return to the Legion of August or be reassigned to a traditional Hierarchy post — but he must push aside all concern for his personal mystery and focus on the here and now, forever.

Legion of the Onyx Tear

Those Legionnaires who belong to the Legion of the Onyx Tear are the Beggar Lord's most trusted souls, his personal bodyguards and confidants. A wraith who serves this order knows where all the bodies are buried, metaphorically speaking. There are never more than 25 Paupers serving in this Legion at any one time, but they're impossible to miss. They wear tall, black masks, with stylized weeping eyes and laughing mouths.

Legates of the Onyx Tear are never allowed to gather in a group larger than six at a time; sources are divided on whether this is to prevent them from being wiped out in a single attack, or to prevent them from getting together in a large enough group to put together their master's secrets.

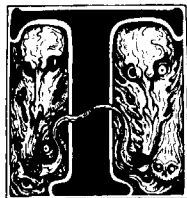
As the Beggar Lord's bodyguards and representatives, they almost never leave Stygia. Instead, they act on their master's behalf in the courts of other Deathlords and on the streets of the City of Eternal Death. Members of this Legion are privy to most of their Deathlord's schemings. This is dreadful knowledge, though, and there's generally at least one vacant slot among the ranks of those who wear the masks of the Onyx Tear.

Legion of Revelations

It's not known by anyone, outside the Deathlord who commands it, how many wraiths belong to the Legion of Revelations. Few wraiths know it exists, which is how it's preferred; it's responsible for handling the Beggar Lord's covert actions.

These wraiths are the hands of the Legion of the Onyx Tear in the Shadowlands, uncovering some mysteries and further obscuring others. They even meddle in the affairs of the Skinlands for their master, doing so with greater and greater impunity in the decades following Charon's disappearance.

Noteworthy Paupers



here are plenty of members of the Legion of Paupers who were famous in the Skinlands. Think of all the mysterious disappearances and deaths you've ever heard of — there's D. B. Cooper, Marilyn Monroe, JFK — and that's just recently.

For whatever reason, few celebrities have achieved the same heights after death as they did in life. Below are a handful of some of the more noteworthy wraiths who hold rank among the Legion of Paupers: the beautiful, the horrified, the mundane and the twisted.

Julie Firewalker

Julie Marie Christenson had been invited to camp out with some friends. The climax of the weekend, she'd been told, would be firewalking. It did end up being a climax of sorts. After building up the passionate emotional reserves necessary to ignore the fiery pain, she took a few steps across the embers. What followed was unexpected, to say the least. Julie quite suddenly and completely burst into flames. After two minutes, she was little more than ash; her strawberry-blonde hair and her hands were all that remained. Her friends were stunned. It was entirely inexplicable.

As a victim of SHC (spontaneous human combustion), Julie bears the unmistakably alien deathmarks of a true Pauper. She's embraced her strangeness in several ways. Most notably, her hair and hands appear to be constantly engulfed in flames, and she's taken "Firewalker" as her new last name in death.


A weekend sports buff in life, Julie took to the military life of the Legion with great gusto, especially relishing the slaying of Spectres. She was quickly recruited for the Legion of Revelations, where she met her soulmate (see "Norman Gregg," below). They travel the roads of the Shadowlands together, she as the fiery enforcer and he as the quiet backup.

Favorite hero of the local everywraiths, Julie stands in danger of exposing her membership in the secret Legion to the public eye. Recently, she's received word that the Beggar Lord desires to induct her into the Legion of the Onyx Tear, relocating her to Stygia. Since this would take her away from the only wraith who means anything to her, Julie's current dilemma concerns what to do if rumor becomes reality. While she wouldn't disobey her Deathlord, court intrigue isn't her style. Give her steel and point her in a direction, and she'll bring back any head you want. Ask her to be subtle, though....

Norman Gregg

Norman is one of those guys who woke up in the afterlife saying, "Huh?" He turned back to the door to kiss his wife goodbye — leaned forward, closed his eyes and fell right through where she was supposed to be. When he opened his eyes again, after an interminable period of clawing through some thick fog to get back





to his feet, his wife was gone and so was his house. After escaping his Caul, Norman found himself in the Shadowlands.

Gregg hadn't made much of a difference while alive. He'd grown up aspiring toward, and eventually reaching, the American daydream of ignorant bliss. As he'll gladly tell you, he spent the first three days after his death hiding among ruined buildings on the suburban edge of his local Necropolis, desperate and afraid. On the third day, he came upon two Spectres attacking a Legate, striking her down and knocking her weapon out of her hand. It was like a movie, he says, the way the sword of Stygian steel slid across the pavement, stopping right in front of him. He knew he couldn't hide anymore.

Norman picked the sword up and wildly attacked the two Spectres, giving Julie Firewalker enough time to collect herself and finish them off properly. Impressed with how he escaped from his Caul under his own steam, she assumed he must have been a person of great willpower in life. Being an honest man, he told her the truth (or at least, what he thought the truth was): that he was a nobody and a coward and a loser. "No, my man of mystery," she smirked, "I think you're a model Pauper."

Now Gregg travels the Iron Kingdom's dead highways as a member of the Legion of Revelations, hunting Spectres with the soulmate and the courage he never had in life. For some wraiths, the afterlife isn't all that awful a place — while death crushes some souls, it turns others into heroes.

Norman is afraid of what will happen to Julie if she's called to Stygia to serve the Beggar Lord directly. Her sudden disappearance is one mystery that Gregg would not let rest. If the Beggar Lord isn't careful, this one lowly wraith might lead a revolution that would topple a millennia's worth of plottings, all for the lost comfort of love after death.

Michael St. Croix

The mystery isn't why Michael St. Croix is dead. The mystery is why he was alive in the first place.

A seemingly normal young man, Michael made average grades in school, hung out with the average kids and, well, did about average, until one day he kicked off while driving to work. Beyond the fact that Michael's sudden demise killed six other people in the ensuing freeway collision, the coroner knew there was something very wrong with the situation. Michael's skull was filled with a transparent yellow fluid, with only the smallest vestigial tendril of brain tissue keeping him alive. Doctors were baffled. How he'd lived almost 20 years in the first place was an impossibility, though it was speculated that some kind of chemical activity must have been taking place in the soup between his ears.

Unlike Gregg, for whom death was an awakening, Michael continued to plod along after death in much the same steadfast way he had in life. While not a particularly powerful or noteworthy wraith for who he is, he's important for the position he holds. After spending 40 years in the bureaucracy of the Legion of Paupers, his accuracy and resilience in the face of mind-numbing tedium has worked him into the offices of soul disposition. He deals with Reapers to

determine a soul's final destination — Legionnaire material, or something more base. He's an honest wraith, but a good (or bad) word to him can make all the difference in the world as to where someone gets assigned. Of course, it's said that more souls end up going to the Beggar Lord on his watch than is average for others, but his judgment has always proven fair when scrutinized.

The Beggar Lord Himself

"I'm afraid I just don't share your perspective, Lady. I do not feel as though your interests align enough with those serving under me."

The Ashen Lady bared ghostly teeth behind her mask.

"Perhaps," she said as calmly as she could muster, "if your ranks were to suddenly include those who choked to death on stale fruit after the age of 90?"

Both of them? the Beggar Lord chuckled to himself.

"Certainly," he replied, standing to leave. "Someone as generous as yourself may rely upon my vote tomorrow."

One soul at a time, he reminded himself, although two will never be refused.

The Beggar Lord himself, with so few charges relative to his peers, enjoys playing a personal role in his subordinates' afterlives. As such, Paupers who distinguish themselves are frequently called to his chambers to suffer his idle conversation. These invitations are eagerly sought — once. No one who's endured an hour or two in the Beggar Lord's company has any interest in repeating the experience.

Note: The Storyteller should play up the Deathlord's bitterly strange manners, ranging from childishly flippant, in the hopes of inspiring a personal bond of mutual disdain with his servants, to agonizingly formal in the most patronizing of fashions.

His Politics

The Beggar Lord, were anyone to ask him, would loudly decry the noisy nattering of politics and curse the shameful breaches of personal integrity it forces people into, even in the afterlife. Unfortunately, the Paupers Legion, with the fewest members on record of any other Legion active in Stygian politics, must of course rely upon politics to get the bulk of its work done. The Legion's members look to its master, the Beggar Lord, as a model of behavior. His extensive politicking is what other Legions have seen and characterized as "begging," as he makes political concessions in exchange for increasing the ranks of his followers. Although sometimes he does have to get down on his bony knees and plead his case, it rarely comes down to that. Besides, he's not adverse to a touch of groveling if it gets him what he wants.

Things could have been more difficult recently, though. Without Charon around to intercede in affairs for him, the Beggar Lord has been faced with seven ears to beg for attention rather than just one. Luckily, as things tend to happen for the Prince of Beggars, the other Deathlords (more often than not) come seeking political assistance.

Of course, there's an obvious reason the Beggar Lord is patronized by the Ladies and Lords of the other Legions — without him and his kind, barring the return of the Ladies of Fate to political matters, there would be an even number of Deathlords in Stygian politics, which could easily lead to stalemates on every level. The Beggar Lord and his kind act as very important swing votes when major decisions are made. Not surprisingly, the ranks of the Legion of Paupers swell noticeably before an important vote is called.

The Beggar Lord, both publicly and privately, makes a great deal of noise about his relationship with the Ladies of Fate, particularly concerning their mutual disdain for politics. It's assumed among members of the Paupers Legion that the Beggar Lord could appeal to the Ladies of Fate to clarify the mystery concerning any individual wraith's death, were he suitably moved to do so. While the Ladies of Fate claim to concern themselves only with the demise of those for whom Fate held a place, the Deathlord himself has implied on occasion that the good Ladies aren't considered the Underworld's greatest Oracles for nothing. And, although the Beggar Lord has never actually intervened in clearing the mystery surrounding a Legate's death, he does seem to relish torturing his servants with promises of "great rewards" for unwavering loyalty under extreme circumstance, followed by veiled references to the Ladies of Fate.

His Schemes

The Beggar Lord, like others of his kind, is currently embroiled in a variety of complicated webs of intrigue.

Most notably, he supports an official return of the Guilds. Shortly after Charon issued the Proclamation of the Breaking, the Beggar Lord realized it was a bad idea, but if the Emperor went back on his previous ruling it would be a show of weakness before his enemies. As such, the Beggar Lord bit his tongue and bided his time. But now, with Stygia's emperor gone these five decades, the Beggar Lord believes it's time to start making some serious changes. Naturally, some of the Guilds would prefer to stay hidden, free from the shackles of Stygian domination, so his plan isn't perfect. But he's working at it very diligently, with agents in the strangest places.

The Guilds exist, he argues, whether or not anyone believes in them. Current figures suggest that as many as 10 percent of all wraiths are members of a Guild, so why do the majority of wraiths claim to be ignorant of their existence? That's a lot of ignorant hicks in Deadtown. The Beggar Lord believes that the best thing the Deathlords could do is to legalize the Guilds so as to tap their resources for the good of Stygia.

After all, if the other Dark Kingdoms are unwilling to ally themselves with Stygia against Oblivion, then surely someday they will attack the Kingdom of Iron. When that happens, Stygia must have the strongest wraiths with the most effective Arcanoi. The Beggar Lord believes that best way to insure this is to bring the Guilds into the open and start them properly training the populace on how to use the abilities they possess.



The Beggar Lord can go on and on in this vein for as long as he's permitted. This is because, due to extreme vanity and no small measure of insanity, he honestly believes that he can come out on top in the end. The Beggar Lord thinks his victory is assured because even though he's been whining to the other Deathlords for so long about being the least powerful with the fewest wraiths, he's actually worked himself into a strong position by silently accumulating an incredible number of mediocre souls. Admittedly, these are only valuable to him after they've entered his forges, but every soul counts.

In fact, the Beggar Lord realized more than a century ago that the tables had begun to turn — the size of his Legion was almost average relative to the other Deathlords. If someone noticed, then the Beggar Lord certainly couldn't beg for souls anymore. He might actually have to work for souls, like the other Deathlords, or rely on the random luck of how people actually died. He was horrified.

So to reduce his visible numbers, while still being able to accept the rejected unwashed masses of his peers, the Beggar Lord has been taking these souls, the nutcase rejects from other Legions, and melting them down for their plasm. He's been stockpiling swords and other soulforged constructions, with the help of the Artificer underground, in exchange for spearheading the fight to restore the rightful place of the Guilds in Stygian society. He hopes that his Legion, armed with soulforged armor and dark implements of destruction, will

stand above all others, positioning him for the ultimate power grab. The last will become the first, and the Beggar Lord will beg no more, having claimed the emperorship for himself.

It's widely suspected, and sometimes jokingly implied, that the Beggar Lord is insane. Most wraiths, even his own unflappable Legates, would be surprised to hear how far from sanity he really is.

His Weakness

As wraiths grow old, they forget what it was like to be alive. The sensations they have in a day are literally shadows of the ecstasy it is merely to have the wind blow across your back, or the pleasure it is to walk upright in a healthy body. Sometimes the Restless even start to seek out extremes of experience to remind them that even though they're dead, they're oddly enough still alive.

The Beggar Lord was one of Charon's oldest counselors when he was made a Deathlord at his friend's whim, and had already been dead a very long time. A wry soul, he enjoyed the Republic and the imperial days which followed. But so much has changed over the millennia that the Beggar Lord hasn't felt anything on his own in quite some time.

The Legion of the Onyx Tear is not merely his personal guard. Once a week, within the funhouse-like privacy of the Seat of Golden Tears, its members take turns tying their



master down and performing extraordinarily painful maneuvers, such as pressing soulforged fishhooks into his back and pulling out meaty gobs of Corpus. (This hardly gets a reaction out of the Beggar Lord, but they have to start someplace.) After a few hours of such torments, he begins to get this tingling feeling, as though he might almost be feeling something again.

If the other Deathlords found out far gone the Beggar Lord is, much less how many arms he's accumulated by melt-

ing down and abusing their leftovers, action would have to be taken regardless of how it would destabilize the political balance on the Isle. If the Guilds knew they were dealing with a madman, they would distance themselves from the entire Legion of Paupers. If his own wraiths knew how gibberingly insane their master has become, they would laugh and laugh and laugh — and leave Stygia.

But would they tell anyone? Of course not.



Token

Quote: *There's one in every bunch — you're the one.*

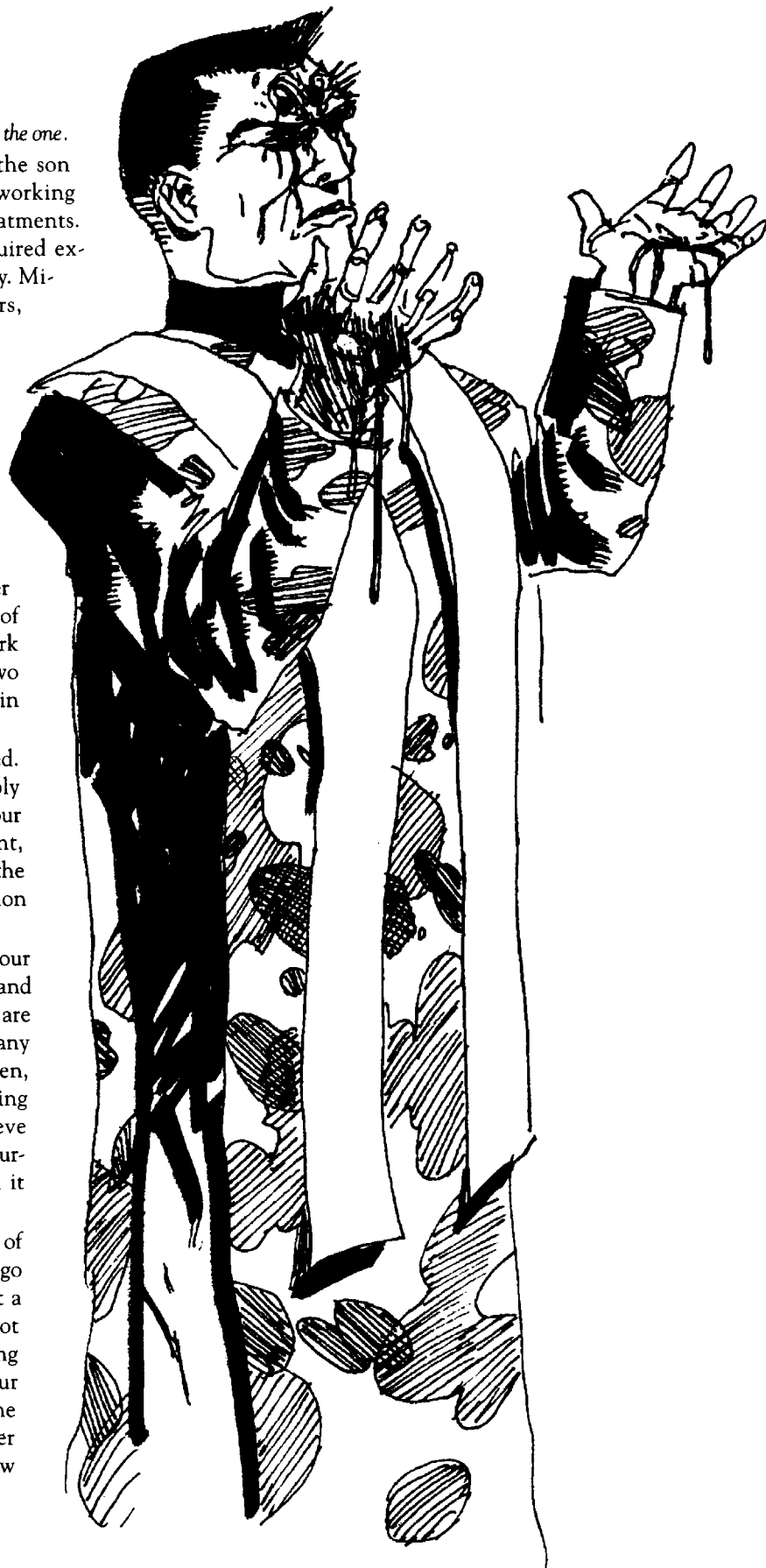
Prelude: You grew up in California, the son of a single mother. She was a waitress, working double shifts to pay for your medical treatments. You had a weak immune system, and required extensive care just to make it from day to day. Miraculously, you lived for almost 20 years, though you remained inside the house for most of them. This made you feel alienated from everyone else, and though you made several close friends at your small private schools, you had to take extreme care during every moment of the day. A single mishap could easily have cost you your life.

When you turned 19, your mother died. You slipped into a deep funk, no longer taking your medication and missing many of your treatments. You started going to the park and riding public transportation. Within two weeks you'd caught a bad cold, and within three weeks you were dead.

It was no surprise to you that you'd died. The surprise was that you'd died a horribly violent death — or, at least, that's what your deathmarks say. Rather than argue the point, and recognizing your sense of alienation, the local bureaucrats assigned you to the Legion of Paupers.

Concept: You're the token Pauper in your bunch. You're expected to be a freak — and relative to your traveling companions, you are — but you're growing tired of not getting any respect from your peers. More and more often, you're speaking your mind and not shrinking from the criticisms of others. Still, you believe a lot of what your Shadow tells you about yourself, and you don't always speak up when it could've made a difference.

Roleplaying Hints: Having spent much of your life in a room while your friends could go outside and play, you're all too eager to get a look at the world. Even though you're still not used to dealing with people, you're getting more and more practice at standing your ground. You're shy and soft-spoken for the most part, but when the discussion is over something that really matters, you jut your jaw forward and get ornery.



BOOK LEGIONS

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Gambler
Demeanor: Follower
Shadow: The Parent

Life: Invalid
Death: Slow Suicide
Regret: Never Having Lived

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

Status ●●●●●
Haunt ●●●●●
Contacts ●●●●●
Eidolon ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Passions

Experience what Life denied you (Envy) ●●●●●
Get out of the Legion (Anger) ●●●●●
Try to fit in (Loneliness) ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Fetters

City park ●●●●●
Hope ●●●●●
Mothers grave ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Arcanos

Castigate ●●●●●
Moliate ●●●●●
Outrage ●●●●●
Intimation ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Corpus

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Angst

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Thorns

Death's sigil ●●●●●
Freudian slip ●●●●●
Aura of corruption ●●●●●

Experience

Pathos

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Dark Passions

Let disease take you again (self-loathing) ●●●●●
Find and punish mom (Hate) ●●●●●

Cards

In the end, I was only in the Onyx Tower for about five minutes. By the time my dreary little parade had wended its way through the city to the place where Charon used to hang his hat, all of the Deathlords and their retinues were there, squabbling over who got to sit where and which chamber we were going to do this in, and all that sort of good thing. The Smiling Lord and the Ashen Lady nearly came to blows at one point, which probably would have made quite a mess. There were a dozen Unlidded Eye guards there to keep the peace, which says as much about what those bastards are capable of as you might think, but even with them the meet turned into a circus.

Digression: About half an hour into the debate, I realized what exactly I'd gotten myself into, and how far over my head I was. These were the Deathlords, for God's sake. I mean, I know that my story had gotten around a bit, and I was getting used to being a little bit recognized, but I always figured that the Hierarchy left me alone because I was harmless. Whacking me might have produced some screaming, but there

was no need to because I wasn't actually going to do anything to them. I mean, hell, I hate to admit this, but if I'd found the woman I'd been looking for, I would have forked over as many oboli as it took to get her back. I'm not a revolutionary. I'm just out here because of circumstance, dodging anvils as they fall from the sky.

And now the Deathlords are screaming over who gets to sit where when they talk to me. It doesn't make any sense.

I know what Severus showed me was important. He picked me up on the fringes of the Cleveland Necropolis, the barrowflame on the river licking up around his raft and me on the run from a couple of Heretics who thought that the pins through my hand meant that I was an emissary of Satan. I tried telling them that it was just a self-esteem thing, but Heretics aren't big on listening.

But Severus and his raft loomed up out of the night like an angel or a devil, and the Heretics just froze. He motioned for me to come on board, the way he had so many times before, and the Heretics started screeching something about the boat to Hell, and, well, to make a long story short, I got on board.

It was one of our longer journeys together. I mean, I'd traveled with Severus before — it was the considered opinion of a few of my friends that he was checking me out for potential Ferryman training — but we'd always stayed fairly close to the Shadowlands, if not actually in them. Not this time. We headed straight out into the Tempest. We started on a Byway, but pretty soon we were out on the Sea of Shadows, crunching our way through waves of broken glass.

Severus didn't volunteer a destination, and I didn't ask. It took us nine days of travel before he actually said a single damn word, and that was only to warn me to hold on as we headed into a pack of Shades. I stayed down, Severus sliced them apart, and then we slipped through some turbulence into still waters.

"Look," he commanded me then, so I got up and followed the line of his pointing finger.

It was monstrous. It was beautiful. It was a city, built like Stygia on an island of black stone. The walls were black and hundreds of feet high, and past them I could see the peaks of ziggurats and towers. There were shapes on the walls, mostly wraiths, Moliated and armored to the gills. Every so often, though, there was a figure

that was a little different from the rest. The auras on these anomalous figures didn't jibe with the rest of the crew on the walls. There was a familiar pattern to them, though, something I knew I'd seen somewhere before. Something that had no business being this deep in the Underworld.

Oh, shit, said my Shadow, and a second later, I had to agree.

Vampires. I was staring at a city of vampires.

"You are looking at Enoch," Severus said, his words dovetailing nicely with my panicked thoughts. "Home of the last remnants of the so-called True Hand, guardians of something they think is important."

"Well? Is it?"

"Important enough to them for them to spend millennia here guarding it. Whether it is important in the greater scheme of things," he gave a bony shrug, "I have no idea."

"Errr..." I stared up at the flat black walls. They seemed to suck whatever light there was right out of the sky. The wind was low and the waves were small, but I had no trouble picturing the crash of the storm against those walls come Maelstrom time, the scream of the Spectres clawing their way up the defenses, the sheer power un-

leashed to defend and hide this place. "So why are you showing me this?"

"Because Enoch has hidden from Stygia for a very long time, and we have decided that it has been long enough."

"Well, that's all well and good, but why show me? Why not haul the Smiling Lord out here, or a delegation of the Ladies? What good will it do if I tell a few Renegades about this place? No Gang's going to try to assault that, even if they can find it."

Severus made a noise that could only have been laughter. "You will be able to find this place again. I will make sure of that. And you will not be telling the Renegades, no."

"Stygia..." I said with a sinking feeling.

"Precisely. The fact that you are the only one who can find this place will ensure your safety. Word has been given to the appropriate souls to prepare a fitting welcome for you. Now hush. Memorize what you can of this place, for your memory will guide thousands."

What the hell do you say to that? We poled around the island so that I got to look at the fortress from ev-



ery angle imaginable, then we dove back into the storm.

All of which leads me to where I am now, standing on the deck of the *Sheffield* between a couple of very antsy-looking Overlords. We're steaming toward Eurydice, because the Ladies of Fate broke the deadlock and simply announced that the meeting would take place there, and that they would handle the seating arrangements. Everyone sputtered for a minute, then looked at each other, and shut up.

So they hustled me back down to the Iron Pier, where I got transferred to the ghost of the ship that took an Exocet between the eyes a few years back. It's a Doomed ship now, Legion-specific, and scary-looking as all hell.

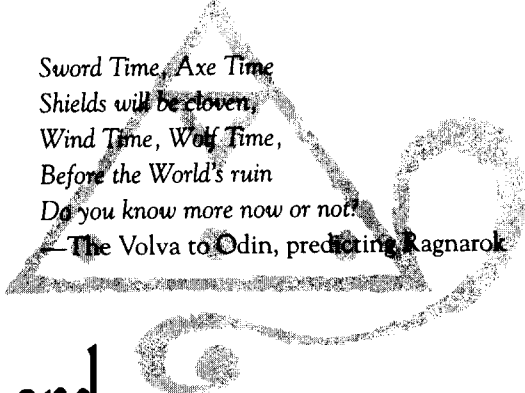
Eurydice's getting closer; I can see it through the spray ahead. The waves are rising, and there's a storm coming in. The Overlords beside me are already motioning me to come below, but I think I want to stay up here for a little while yet. I've got a feeling that I'll never be able to see anything like this again, and I want one last shot at it.

One last memory.





The Legion of Fate



Sword Time, Axe Time
Shields will be cloven,
Wind Time, Wolf Time,
Before the World's ruin
Do you know more now or not?
—The Volva to Odin, predicting Ragnarok

The Legion of Fate and the Isle of Eurydice



ll I have to say is that I really, really hope that the Lady of Fate isn't Shadow-eaten. Because nobody here ever questions orders. "It's kismet," they say. "It's fate." At first the situation's great. It's just like being 18 again, you're absolutely certain of everything you're doing. Then you start listening to your Shadow and your better judgment, and wondering if maybe the

people on top are as prescient as they act, and, you know, if you can trust their judgment. Is the better tomorrow you're striving for going to seem all that good when you get there, and is it really worth all the hassle? It's generally a day or two after you start asking these questions that the first little note asking you to see the Pardoner shows up. It's an incredibly ostentatious display, but it works. You stop wondering — they just know.

—Gretchen Long, Marshal, Legion of Fate, Lake Erie Province



Names

The Legion of Fate has the luck, or unluck, of being a Legion which has only one word applied to it. It is the Legion of Fate, governed from the Seat of Fate by the Ladies of Fate. Both the organization and the membership are sometimes called the Hand of Fate, the Hand or the Fated. "Doomed" is usually the only adjectival form used, as in "That's a nice Doomed sword you have there, friend. Probably not worth a Harrowing, though"

The Legion of Fate is the smallest, most irregular and, paradoxically, the most organized of the Stygian Legions. Composed entirely of those that Fate has marked as her own, its members presumably have the distinction of being the chosen servants of the entity who confirmed Charon to his post.

Those who make up the membership of the Legion are those whose deaths had special meaning. For most mortals, death is simply another event in a life, distinguished only by its unique finality. This is not true for the Doomed. Most knew of their deaths before the Shroud's descent upon them. The majority can tell the classic tales, the story of the soldier, pilot or man on the street who suddenly knows that tomorrow is *the* day. Others displayed a much more striking prescience in life. Such wraiths are not seen again after their Reaping and transport to Eurydice.

Many of those in the Legion are heroes in the classical sense — those who, with full knowledge, chose death over life. Some of them are heroes in the modern sense as well: the fireman who rushes into a burning building one time too many in an attempt to save an innocent life, the editor who dies from overwork trying to see that his newspaper prints the truth, the doctor who contracts a lethal illness while treating plague victims. Other selections are less explicable, or perhaps just less heroic, to our modern sensibilities. There are a lot of things one can do with the knowledge of the day and hour of one's death; not all of them are suitable for printing in *Reader's Digest*.

There are also many who pass the Shroud with Fate's eye upon them who know not why. Fate does not justify her actions, and this is held to make little difference. Both the prescient and the bewildered are treated alike by the Legion's exceptionally efficient Reapers. After a period of mourning and acclimation to the Shadowlands, the *Enfant* is taken to the Isle of Eurydice off the coast of Stygia, where the Ladies of Fate have made the Legion's home. Their initial training in these strange, quiet corridors lasts between two to five months, depending on need and what role each *Enfant* will be assigned to. After this initial training, the *Lemure* is considered a full member of the Legion, subject to the same rules and responsibilities as any other Legionnaire.

Deathmarks

The deathmarks of members of the Legion of Fate are usually much more obvious than those of the average wraith. To the ghostly eye, many of the Doomed have their deathmarks visible on them long before death. The deathmarks common to the members of this Legion are often associated with infinity and wisdom among the Quick. The inward-turning spiral, also the symbol of the practice of Fatalism, is particularly common.

Another common mark is the joined circles. These can appear like an infinity symbol, joined rings, an hourglass, a yin-yang or as a pair of concentric circles generally referred to as Odin's Eye. Most members of the Legion are very obviously marked. These marks make the Legion's inordinate protectiveness toward "their" *Enfants*, for which the Legion is justly renowned, all that much easier to implement.

Many servants of the Hand believe that Fate's deathmark, often called the Eye of Fate, is upon a being from the time of his birth, or even before it. If this were the case, it could technically be considered a violation of the *Dictum Mortuum*, though an admittedly difficult one to prosecute.

The Isle of Eurydice and the Seat of Fate

The Ladies of Fate do not make their home in Stygia like the other Deathlords, but instead reside on the Isle of Eurydice. This island off the coast of Stygia was given to the Lady of Fate as her own by Charon, a gift from a grateful ruler to a most-trusted advisor. Originally, the Lady's settlement on the Isle was a simple one. Over the years, the structure has grown haphazardly, so that today the entire surface of the island is a mazelike, fortified edifice.

The Isle is a miniature Stygia of sorts, a sort of colossal mansion, all courtyards and wings and balconies and porticos and porches. But if Stygia is clamor and racket echoing across the Sunless Sea, then the Isle of Eurydice is silence, where the sea breeze softly rustles the crowns of trees whose roots and trunks lie protected behind the high storm walls of the courtyards. The Isle of Eurydice is one of the few places in Stygia where trees can be found, and the Legion of Fate closely tends these lush, ashen-pale trees of death.

Most of the stone used to build the great mansion comes from the Isle itself, from great hidden quarries beneath the Legion's fortress-mansion. Much of the structure is disused, filled only with dust and silence. Some of it lies in barrowflame-scorched ruins, destroyed a Maelstrom or two ago and not yet rebuilt. After all, everyone here knows that what must be done will be done — eventually.



Stygian Paper and the Isle of Fate

The pulp of the dank, lush trees that grow on the Isle of Eurydice are combined with the pounded stalks of the reeds that grow along the River Styx and plasm to form what is called Stygian paper. The *paperiers* of the Legion of Fate are masters of this art. The sale of this paper, along with the special form of soulsteel called Glisten, are just about the only source of income for the Legion.

There are other papermakers in the Underworld, but none can make paper as silky smooth and durable as that of the Legion of Fate. Scripted with the inks of the Pardoner's Guild, the calligraphy of the Dead far surpasses anything that the living can accomplish.

The process of making Stygian paper is simple. Any liquid plasm, like that from the Sea of Souls, will do. The finest paper, however, is made from the liquetied Corpus of the Restless. The plasm is mixed with the pulps of the estate's trees, then spread out to dry in the dark Stygian night. The paper is then either folded and trimmed into a gathering, if it is to be bound into a book, or else cut into sheets, cards or whatever other stock is desired.

Pardoner's Ink is the most common, and most beautiful, of the inks of the Underworld. Made from the powdered Corpora of Thralls (who, some say, are force-fed Angst first), this fine black dust comes in as many shades and variations as there are individual Shadows. Mixed carefully with liquid Pathos, the calligraphy of a master can convey perfectly the different emotional tones and nuances of the written word.

Seven to 12 sheets of fine paper can be had for an obolus in the Agora, and a productive writer can buy cheap pulp for a quarter of that price, or even less. A jar of cheap, pre-mixed ink suitable for general purpose writing costs a few oboli. Master calligraphers have elaborate outfits with hundreds, even thousands of flavors and tones of Pathos and ink. These allow a master an incredible expressive range, but can cost tens of thousands of oboli and take a century to assemble.

Stygian paper usually decays after several centuries, especially if written on with Pardoner's Ink. There are certain more expensive forms, available almost exclusively from the Legion of Fate, that last for a much longer period. These fine grades of paper are generally considered too expensive for anything but the most important official or artistic applications.

It is said that no soul save the Ladies of Fate have ever trod all the hallways, and that none but the Lady of Fate herself have gone into the deepest of the natural caverns that lie below the mansion's deepest basements. It is said that there are entrances to the Labyrinth, and to other, stranger places, below the dark expanses of the libraries, soulforges, storage rooms and hidden armories.

The Legion's building in Stygia, often called "the townhouse," is ostentatious in a different manner. Set on a small, landscaped estate, one of the few remaining patches of open ground in Stygia, the townhouse is surrounded by a huge, black stone wall. This wall is thick enough to house the hundreds of wraiths the Legion donates to the garrisoning of Stygia. The estate is serene, and dotted with carefully tended trees from the banks of the River Styx. The townhouse itself bears somewhat of a resemblance to a Greek temple, and somewhat to a Roman villa in the Iberian style. Within its spare exterior is space for only a few dozen guests. This cool, black stone edifice is both tribute to the Legion of Fate's influence and power, and mocking dismissal of the self-aggrandizement common in Stygian politics. The majordomo makes the Legion's guests, usually Restless marked by Fate who have somehow evaded the Reapers, welcome until they can depart on the twice-weekly ferry to Eurydice. There is usually not a Lady of Fate, or indeed any significant official of the Legion beyond the Overlord of the Stygian garrison present, unless one has come to the city to engage in specific business.

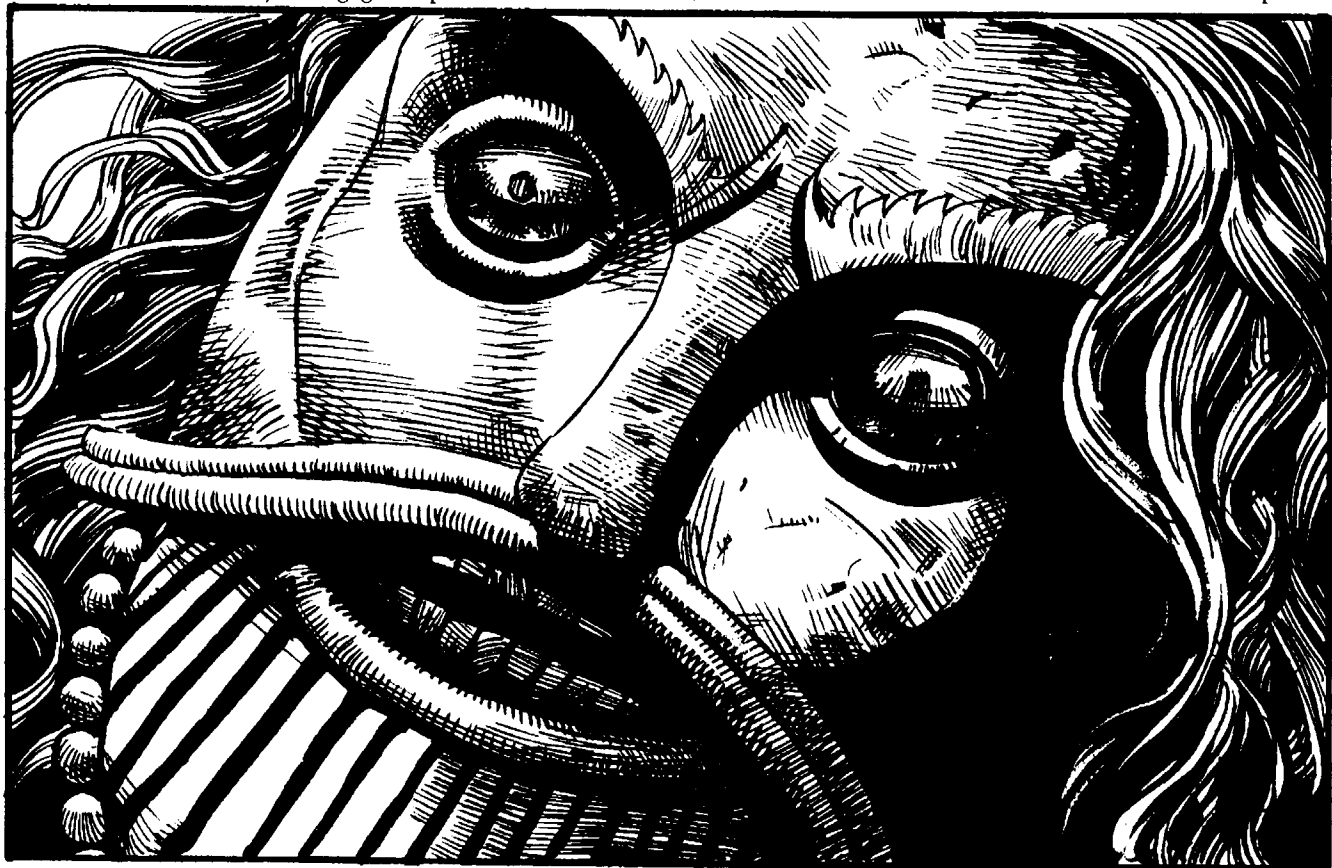
The Ladies of Fate


Well, I've seen a woman with an attractive build in a mask and robes. I've even seen a couple of them in the same place at the same time. I'm not sure how they tell each other apart, and I've never heard of them issuing contradictory orders. They're not The Lady though. I haven't ever seen her, but she's definitely around. She's the boss, even if the Ladies run things from day to day, or even year to year.

— Overheard in the Agora

The Ladies of Fate are probably the most enigmatic of the Deathlords. They maintain their distance from Stygian society, and even from members of their own Legion. It is generally assumed that the Ladies are the Lady of Fate's hand-picked servants, Moliated into identical forms to prevent outsiders from taking advantage of individual differences within the council. Some Masquers who have seen them agree with this, saying that the marks of Molation are clear to see. Others equally expert in the Arcanos claim just as fiercely that they are clearly not Moliated, and are some sort of Plasmic, like Angelics or Demonics. And there are those, of course, who claim that the black, flickering light of Oblivion can be seen behind their masks, if one is observant enough.

Individual Ladies seem to have no difficulty with speaking for the Legion as if they were the sole power behind its decisions, yet the Ladies are known to sit in council to discuss important





issues. The Ladies are extremely secretive about their numbers, however, and no trustworthy figures have ever emerged. There are known to be at least three of them, but most Restless who have spent a long period of time on the Isle of Eurydice claim that there are at least seven or eight Ladies of Fate.

The Lady of Fate has not made a public appearance since shortly after Charon's disappearance, but vanishing is always a matter of degrees. While she has been absent from the whirl of Stygian politics, her hand is nevertheless felt. Her comings and goings to Eurydice are difficult to track. Those with any long experience in the Legion know that she does indeed visit the island, though her appearances are infrequent and rarely discovered until well after they have ended. The Lady's appearance is similar to that of her servants, and there is a school of thought, particularly popular among certain Renegades, that the Lady of Fate is a hoax. None of these conspiracy theorists, who charge that the Ladies as a group have been impersonating the Lady of Fate since the Fifth Maelstrom, are from the Legion.

Charon's Mask

There are persistent rumors that any one or a combination of several Deathlords are in possession of Charon's mask, ready to don it and seize the reins of power as soon as the time is right. One of the most persistent, and credible, rumors is that the Lady or Ladies of Fate took Charon's mask and hid it away until his return or, alternately, until the coming of someone worthy of his title and position. If this is the case (and it may well be), then the existence and location of the mask is hidden from even the most trusted advisors to the Ladies. Some say that it is in the possession of the Lady of Fate herself, others that it is hidden in some deep basement or tall tower of the Legion's sprawling manse on the Isle of Eurydice.

The persistence of these rumors could be used against the Legion, if the political situation in Stygia deteriorates. With Stygian politics in their current abysmal state, an allegation of dark misdeeds might seem to be an excellent way to remove the only group that could deny a successful Deathlord the mandate of legitimacy.

The Magisterium Veritatis has recently begun to make inquiries into the disposition of Charon's mask. Their request that the Legion of Fate voluntarily open Eurydice to their inspection has been summarily denied. The Magisterium and the Unblinded Eye have filed a joint motion with the Deathlords that the Legion be forced to open the Isle for investigation. Assault troops of the Gray Legion have been ostentatiously practicing waterborne assaults against the uninhabited isle of Tethys off the coast of Stygia. Tensions between the organizations are what is euphemistically known as "running high."

The Lady is known to travel the Shadowlands, the Underworld and even the Labyrinth. Some claim to have seen her walking in the great places of the Quick, as if searching among them for someone in particular. A group of Helldivers report having watched her walk the corridors of the Labyrinth, calling out as if searching for someone. It is assumed (though not proven) that the Ladies of Fate know to what end the Lady wanders the Underworld. The Ladies aren't telling, however, and so rumors abound. Some say that she wanders the Labyrinth and the Shadowlands searching for the lost Shadows of Ferrymen, others that she searches for Charon.

Politics

*Six wraiths believed to be Circle A3 of the Legion of Fate were seen to have boarded the Midnight Express at its Johannesburg stop on Sunday night, in the company of a seventh wraith, who presumably joined them between their arrival on Friday (see item above) and their departure. Of the three members of the Aryan Underworld Brotherhood (including the dybbuk agent Alois — see **Aryan Underworld Brotherhood** file) who arrived on the Friday afternoon trans-African, reports are contradictory. They are presumed to have been sent to Oblivion, displaced to a distant Fetter, sent to a Destruction Harrowing, abducted or transformed into inventory.*

—Excerpt from the weekly intelligence report to the Lord of the Golden Legion, week of July 13, 1997

The average Hierarch (if there is such a thing) has an attitude toward the Legion of Fate that is best described as "harsh indifference." More so than any other Legion, the Fates have a clear goal in mind, and they aren't sharing their secret plan with anyone else. They're also led, at least in theory, by the person who gave Charon his mandate to rule the Deadlands. This connection confers an odd sort of status on members of the Legion of Fate, making them appear as "teacher's pets" of the Underworld. On one hand, this lends addition weight to the arguments of the Fated in council; on the other hand it also generates an almost palpable resentment among members of Legions such as the Grim and Iron.

Many Restless, including more than a few members of the Legion itself, consider the Doomed's designation as a Legion to be a purely *pro forma* issue. The Doomed work within the system because that's the easiest way to get things done, but if the system weren't there, they wouldn't really do things any differently. The Fated are in the Hierarchy, not of it.

Also, the issue of the Legion's geographical separation from Stygia proper raises uncomfortable questions. A group of wraiths ruled by a powerful being and her servants (who all seem to share a single mind) allows a fairly obvious conclusion to be drawn by those with inclinations toward suspicion. There has never been a formal charge to the effect that the Lady of Fate is a Malfean and the Ladies of Fate her Nephwrack servants, but the whispers to that effect have circulated in the Agora. Certain Deathlords, no doubt out of deep concern for the well-being of the Empire, have placed some weight behind this rumor.



Prescience and Nonsense

In general, a member of the Legion of Fate is trusted to operate independently and make necessary decisions competently without recourse to higher authority. She is also expected to question orders that seem stupid or suicidal, to ascertain that her commander is aware of the implications of the orders he has given. The Legionnaires are the valued servants of the Ladies of Fate, and the Ladies have no use for stupid or robotic servants.

Disobeying orders, however, is not an option. The Legion of Fate has no room for dead wood, and each member is expected to perform to his fullest in the service of the Ladies. In most establishments, disobeying orders is acceptable, so long as it brings success. In the Legion of Fate, disobeying an order, successfully or not, brings a future in the exciting field of lawn ornamentation. The philosophy behind this is that the Ladies of Fate are not predicting the future and acting accordingly simply so that their attempts can be thwarted by their own willful subordinates. Orders, even seemingly nonsensical ones that come down from on high, are expected, in the end, to be followed. This doesn't just apply to the military side of the Legion, either. A Legion of Fate Hierarch told to wait on a street corner in Kansas City until a yak walks past in the Skinlands, and to come back with a report of the beast's fur color had better be standing there until a yak goes past, or he'll be relieved of his post and probably enthralled in the bargain.

This doesn't engender the sort of resentment one would generally expect. The Legion's officials, with the possible exception of the Ladies themselves, have risen up through the ranks through merit, and are not the sort to give nonsensical orders for the sheer enjoyment of it. The Ladies are definitely of the opinion that their servants are far too valuable to waste without great deliberation. As a result, objectionable orders aren't passed down the line just to keep people busy or to prove that the officer in question can give any sort of order and have it obeyed. In any normal organization, this dogmatic insistence on obedience would be a horrible policy. Within the competent, fatalistic ranks of the Legion of Fate, it works well.

Stygian Politics

The Ladies of Fate themselves are the only members of the Legion, other than a few military and civil liaisons, involved at all in Stygian politics. The Legion's engagement is primarily as mediators and breakers of deadlocks. Affairs after the disappearance of Charon have made the council of the Deathlords a freewheeling oligarchy, and the rapidly shifting web of alliances and betrayals produces seemingly insoluble stalemates between the seven "active" Legions with frightening frequency. The Fates often act as ringmasters in

this carnival of a government. Since the Ladies also have the tie-breaking vote, they can always cast their influence behind the opponent of someone reluctant to come to the table.

The Doomed preserve their influence by strictly avoiding actually using their vote and becoming embroiled in the politics of the Dark Kingdom of Iron. Rather than being a minor voice in Stygian issues, they are invaluable facilitators and moderators of negotiation. Often thought of, rarely seen, and almost never heard of away from the bargaining table, the Legion's perceived influence is far beyond their actual capabilities. The only time that the Legion's voice can be counted on is when the issue is of direct and immediate concern to the Fated, or when the dilemma is so tightly woven that only active participation on the Legion's part can unravel the snarled politics.

Necropoli

The Legion of Fate is, and always has been, more concerned with furthering their particular goals in the Skinlands rather than in rule and temporal power, and it shows. Operations in the Shadowlands are far more closely associated with the Stygian wing of the Legion than is normally the case. The two groups can really be seen as two distinct branches of the same organization, rather than as a Stygian power trying to sway the actions of distant and largely indifferent Anacreons. The Legion of Fate is too small (and too unconcerned) to have a permanent presence in anything but the largest Necropoli. Instead, the Fates normally operate on a regional basis. The basic unit of their Shadowlands operations is the Province, an administrative region of between three to 10 medium to large Necropoli and the rural areas between them, depending on population and geography. Each Province has a staff that varies from less than 100 to almost 1000. The New York Autonomous Region alone has almost 700 Legionnaires, but it is one of the largest concentrations of Doomed wraiths in the Shadowlands.

The Legion generally does not involve itself in Shadowlands politics. Normal procedure is for the Legion to auction off local authority for the right of autonomy and the payment of a certain number of Spectres and Drones over the next year to be sent to the Legion's soulforges. The Legion keeps a single administrative Haunt, usually in or near the Citadel, staffed by a member of the Legion's bureaucracy, who is occasionally supported by a patrol or cohort of troops. Legion members on assignments in the city can stop in to rest or file reports, and the Haunt serves as a contact point with the rest of the Hierarchy. The Provincial Anacreon moves between the Necropoli under his command on a regular circuit. Using Argos or the Midnight Express, circuit riders can arrive at any given Necropolis within 24 hours, and often quite a bit sooner than that.

Non-Military Organization

People imagine that being part of the Legion of Fate is the most wonderful thing imaginable. And in a way, they're right. You're never a faceless drone, a nobody in a sea of numbers. The very fact that you're a member of the Legion makes you special. But there's a bad part, too, that everyone forgets. If you can't be lost in the crowd, you can't hide in it either. If you make a mistake, there's no question of who was responsible, and there's no question that you just hosed someone you care about. Oh, yeah, and we are the Restless Dead... for real. You can count on using just about all 24 hours of the day for work. It seems pretty hellish, but I've seen wraiths fall into Oblivion from ennui. I'd imagine it gets pretty bad, with nothing to do but sit around and contemplate your inevitable slide into Oblivion. Oh, well, I think I appreciate seeing my little girl grow up just one day a week than if I had nothing better to do than follow her around and take care of her.

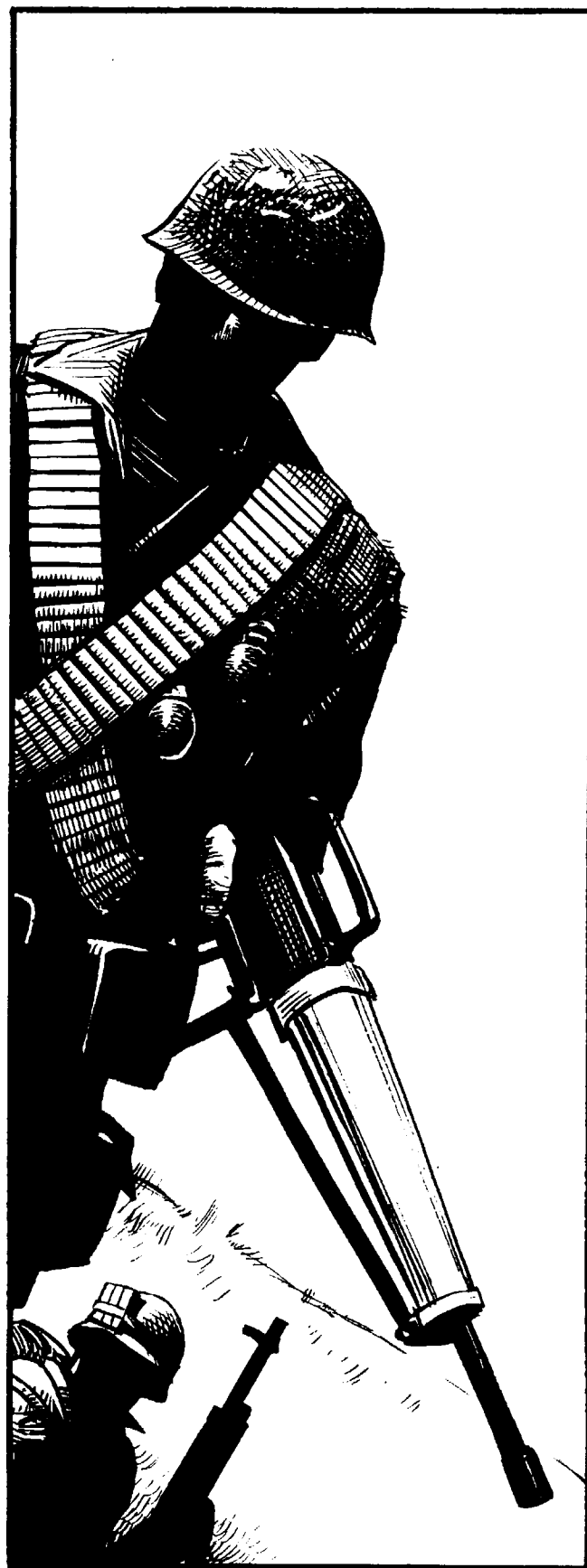
— Centurion René LeFerriere, Glasgow Province

Each of the Legion's Provincial administrations is generally run by an Anacreon. In the standard model of Provincial government, they are served directly by three

subordinates, the Chancellor of Reaping, the Chancellor of Politics and Administration, and the Overlord of Military Affairs. Below the rank of Chancellor, there is little formal organization. Most wraiths have some particular duty, but an administrative member of the Legion of Fate is expected to perform any task required of her. *Ad hoc*, mission-oriented groupings are the standard, with permanent assignments handed out only for the most-repeated tasks. To facilitate operations, there are only Ministers and Inspectors below the Chancellors. While there are some Adjusters and clerks on the Isle of Eurydice, they are used only as probationary ranks, given out to trainees as they progress through their course of instruction.

The small size of the Legion and the large area under the jurisdiction of each Anacreon make the members of the Legion's administration something of the professional travelers of the Underworld. There's never a dull moment, and six to seven-day weeks of 18 to 20-hour days are common. A Minister of the Legion might oversee the auction of the Legion's seat at one of the local Necropoli one day, then work as a liaison with the local administration of a different city during a Spectre hunt the next, then spend a week working through a rural area as group leader in a Reaping team.





Military Organization

We are, as you can see, a bit thin on the ground. We presume you will therefore please show concern for your own safety. We are not in the business of giving dead soldiers a chance to repeat their last and greatest mistake. Thus, you will please attend to the sergeant-major, who will be instructing you in the essential skills you will need to survive at your difficult new profession.

— Overlord Anton Variagschagin, speaking to a group of inductees

Like everything about the Legion of Fate, the words that best describe its military are small, skillful, fast and badly overworked. While it is larger than the Legion's near-skeletal bureaucracy, it also has vast responsibilities. Each Province has about as many troops as the average Necropolis, and is responsible for operations in an area between one and ten thousand times as large. They compensate for their lack of numbers partly by being extremely skilled at their duties. The prevalence of Fatalism among the troops doesn't hurt either.


Promotion in the Legion's military is entirely by merit, through the ranks. Just as in the bureaucracy, everyone starts at the bottom and works his way up. The average Legionnaire seems to have been specially selected for his job, and will probably never "cross over" into the bureaucracy. Some of the Restless who later rise to rank cross over into the non-military branches of the Legion, but many simply rise to Overlord and stay there. Whatever process selects wraiths for the Legionary military seems to have a definite bias toward professional soldiers, rather than careerists.

Provincial Military Organization

The Legion of Fate organizes its military as well as its bureaucracy around the Provinces. Each Provincial Anacreon has an Overlord of Military Affairs who directs the Province's military operations. Because the Legion of Fate is also concerned with the areas between Necropoli, the Overlord and his personal troops are often the only outside help that a small-town Necropolis can expect to receive. This makes them something like the Texas Rangers or the US Cavalry in the American West — the force of ultimate appeal.

The smallest military unit in the Legion of Fate is the patrol, usually called a section. It consists of four Legionnaires and a Centurion. These wraiths are usually heavily armed — between one and three of the members of the section will usually carry firearms. Stygian steel equipment is relatively common at lower levels, and almost universal at higher ones.

Four to six sections make up a cohort, commanded by a Marshal. These units normally contain between 18 and 25 wraiths, making them roughly equivalent in size to a



platoon. They are the smallest unit normally deployed independently, and make up the majority of units deployed on patrols and Spectre hunts.

Four to six cohorts make up a company. With between 80 and 100 wraiths, companies are the standard unit of deployment for long-range patrols into remote areas, attacks on Renegade and Heretic strongholds, counterattacks against Spectral incursions and similar battle assignments. A company is usually led by a Regent, who reports directly to the Provincial Overlord of Military Affairs.

Each Province has one or more companies assigned to it. Some extremely large or war-torn Provinces have as many as five, but one to three is much more common. Companies normally operate as independent commands, but they are occasionally "battalioned" together under the overall command of the most senior company commander or the Overlord. Each Province also usually has a cohort or three of commandos and other specialized troops, but there isn't a standard for such matters.

The Stygian Battalions

If the Shadowlands arm of the Legion of Fate's military is known for its elite, heavily armed forces, then the Stygian arm is apothecic of the philosophy. The Legion maintains three battalions, for a total of 15 companies, in the Tempest. Each company is commanded by an Overlord, and they take their orders directly from the Ladies of Fate. Two are companies of *Cataphractoi*, heavily armed and armored Equitaes. Composed of crack troops and lavishly overequipped, the Stygian Squadrons of the Legion of Fate are generally considered second only to the Smiling Lord's household cavalry in terms of training, and second to none in terms of equipment. At any given time, both of the cavalry battalions are usually committed to Byway clearance and patrol.

The 13 remaining companies are heavy infantry. Also overequipped and overtrained, these units are normally considered some of the best infantry in the Underworld. Doomed Legionnaires who have fought against the Jade Empire speak in complimentary tones of the Imperial Guard's capabilities, but don't treat them with the awestruck wonder common in other forces who have fought against them.

The 10 infantry companies rotate through duty stations. Five companies are generally kept as a garrison for the Seat of Fate on the Isle of Eurydice. This may seem high, but it should be remembered that the island is isolated, and a fine target for Spectral attack even when the Tempest isn't in a blow. Another four companies are generally left in Stygia and form part of the garrison. The final company is kept as a reserve. It is used to assist units in distress in the Tempest, or as reinforcement for a Province that finds itself desperately in need of additional military strength.

Special Orders

Order of the Scarlet Sword

Because of the small size of the Legion, personal contact and a lack of anonymity can make the personal ties of loyalty between two wraiths more important than their official relationship. This means that the investigation of a wraith who is thought to be corrupt or Shadow-eaten can require extraordinary measures. The Order of the Scarlet Sword are the people who take those measures, the Legion's internal affairs and auditing section. The members are mostly Gaunts highly skilled in Moliat. There are persistent rumors that the Order was founded by former members of the Masquers Guild just subsequent to the Guild Revolt. These rumors are probably just embroidery on the more well-known rumor that the Scarlet Blade is also home to the Legion's espionage and assassination section.


Membership in the Order is prestigious, and is only offered to Gaunts with extensive service experience in both Stygia and the Shadowlands. Those already skilled in Moliat are preferred, but the training program is said to include training in both basic and advanced Moliation, as well as instruction in other specialized Arcanoi.

Order of the Silver Hammer

The Legion of Fate participates in the soulforging trade, but in only the most limited fashion. The Doomed rely primarily on captured Spectres and harvested Drones for their soulsteel, rather than indulging in the mass processing of souls of which the Smiling Lord seems so fond. There are only a few dozen soulforgers and decorative Masquers in the Legion, and all of these are members of the Silver Hammer.

The soulsteel forged by the Legion has a very distinctive, glossy appearance. Stygian steel makes up a large percentage of the forges' product, and the Doomed's work has an appearance which sets it apart from more typical soulforged items. Doomed Stygian steel has an almost liquid look to it, as if it were black quicksilver, a look which other soulforgers have been trying unsuccessfully to emulate for centuries. Such steel is sometimes called Glisten, and it is one of the Legion's biggest sources of income.

This quality of the steel from the Legion's forges is attributed to many things. Some say that this is caused by the hammers used on the Legion forges, which are made from the silver pennies that were paid in tribute to Charon by the Quick in the days before the Republic. Others say that the Legion's techniques are even more secret than this, involving special plasmas and strange ingredients from other Dark Kingdoms. Some even whisper that the soulforgers of the Legion are not



operated in the tradition of the Artificers Guild, or even in the tradition of Master Nhudri at all. Whatever the case, Glis-ten is worth up to 10 times as much as standard soulsteel or Stygian steel of similar quality. The effect must either be incredibly difficult to achieve, or a closely guarded secret indeed, because it certainly isn't through lack of trying that others of the Restless, even the masters of the Artificers Guild, have proven unable to duplicate this effect.

Official Policies

Guilds? There are, of course, no Guilds, and all the Guildwraiths who took part in the Guild rebellion were turned into trivets. Of course. But the following story is still instructive, even if obviously patently false.

The Legion of Fate has always done a certain amount, nobody's sure just how much, of what the Masquers quaintly call Arranging. As in, "...for someone to have an unfortunate accident." Before the Guild rebellion, this was mainly accomplished out of house, through the Masquers Guild. A couple of days before the Revolt of the Guilds erupted, a couple of heavy-hitter Arrangers, heavy duty enough to be working for one of the Legions off and on, supposedly took a boat out to the Isle of Sorrow. This, if nothing, else, can be said to place the story in the category of urban legend — how would a witness have known that they were Arrangers?

The anecdote continues that these high-end Arrangers went to see the Lady, maybe to ask an indirect question or two about upcoming events from friends in the Legion of Fate. So they heard some terrible things, not-so-vague prophecies of impending doom, and decided to sit out the festivities. These Arrangers were supposed to be doing some rather important job at the time, maybe taking out Charon, or a Deathlord, or opening the gate of the Onyx Tower, or whatever. No Arrangers, the important task doesn't get arranged, and boom — the revolution fails. As a side effect, the prophecies of doom are fulfilled.

The obvious lesson here is not to consult the oracle of your enemy for advice about upcoming battles. But this particular story has all sorts of interesting implications. There's another version of the story that says that these Arrangers consulted people in the Oracles Guild.

The postscript is what really has impact, though. Practically nobody in the Oracles Guild showed up for the rebellion, and even fewer got bagged, which is no surprise at all, given that they're seers of future events. The funny part is that some really beautifully Moliated members of the Legion of Fate turned up in Stygia once the whole mess of the rebellion simmered down, and only a few people remembered seeing them before. But with the Hand of Fate, who could know? They're always scurrying around like ants, busy at some trivial scheme to use a grain of sand to unseat the axis mundi. As for the members in question of the Oracles Guild, they were never seen again. Fled into exile, consumed by the Tempest, secretly soulforged to prevent public outcry. Gone. So you put it together.

— Ahab Lawrence, *Lecture on Politics and Intelligence*, University of Pittsburgh Necropolis

Other Legions

The Legion of Fate is largely indifferent to other Legions. The Doomed don't generally think of themselves as part of the Stygian system, so the other Legions are seen as equally bothersome. The one exception is that there is a general feeling of kinship among the rank and file of the Legion toward the followers of the Emerald Lord. Most of the Fate-touched feel a certain kinship with the victims of Happenstance, seeing them as being fellow sufferers under a burden they had absolutely no choice in. While this doesn't color political relations between the Seat of Thorns and the Seat of Fate much, it can mean a great deal during a bar fight or a Maelstrom.

Heretics

The Ladies of Fate are studiously indifferent to the Heretics. While they have never come out directly against the idea that Transcendence is a myth, the rank and file tend to practice a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Heretics who are peaceful and relatively quiet in their beliefs are ignored or even surreptitiously aided. Those whose faith is dangerous to the Empire, or whose poison religion is particularly virulent, are either sent to a re-education camp or to the forges of some other Legion.

Renegades

While the Hand of Fate is temperate in its treatment of Heretics, its handling of Renegades is less generous. Renegades in rural regions where the Fated are spread thin, who advocate the dismantling of the Stygian system, are apt to disappear and return much changed after spending time in a Hierarchy re-education camp. Others have found themselves dropped into Harrowings, or had their Fetters destroyed, leading to extremely short careers in Stygian politics.

There have been persistent reports that the Legion underwrites certain reformist factions in Stygian politics who might be called Renegades by their political opponents. This has never been proven, and doesn't really rest on any evidence other than the long-standing Cassandra controversy, but the rumors have shown remarkable persistence that may indicate some basis in fact.

Guilds

It is a generally accepted fact that a fair percentage of the membership of the Oracles Guild, as well as a few members of the Monitors and Masquer "Arrangers," found shelter in the Legion of Fate after their ill-advised involvement in the Revolt of the Guilds. The average Legion member, if he knows of the event at all, generally assumes that it's all ancient history; whatever memory survives in the older members of the Legion is the last trace of the Guilds. Those high up enough or old enough to know the degree to which the Guilds survived the Ban are probably high enough up not to care.

Spectres

The Legion of Fate stands an extremely hard line against Spectres, and makes it the prime job of their extravagantly overarmed troops to hunt down and either capture (for the forges) or simply destroy Spectres. Mostly this is Doomslaying undertaken as a military operation: large, heavily armed brigades sweeping areas known to harbor nests of Spectres. Tactics used in these endeavors are something like a cross between Vietnam-style counter-insurgency warfare and a World War II-era patrol in force, and the combat is generally close-range skirmishing and ambush fighting.

There are reports that the Legion has sponsored one or more large-scale Helldiving operations. The operatives in question reportedly jumped off from the lowest basements of the Seat of Fate, though some reports indicate that these raids were Open Tempest operations. The purpose and degree of success of these incursions, if they actually happened at all, is unknown.

Transcendence

The Ladies and the uppermost ranks of the Legion's Restless have some sort of other goal in mind toward which they're directing the operations of the Legion. It clearly involves some sort of avenue to Transcendence — that much can be pieced together from the orders that come down from the Ladies of Fate. What or who precisely this involves is still a matter of mystery, but it often seems as if the Legion is preparing for something. Most assume this to be the Sixth Maelstrom, though others claim that it will be the coming of the Fishers' messiah to the Deadlands.

Ferryman

The relationship between the Legion of Fate and the Ferryman is a mysterious one. The Lady of Fate is known by all and sundry to have given Charon his mandate to guide wraiths to the Far Shores. Since the sacking of the Temples and the flight of the Ferryman, however, there has been no official contact between the Legion and the Ferryman. Despite that, Legionnaires are ordered not to interfere with the doings or goings of the Ferryman, under pain of the forges. Also, after they "proved a security liability" during the storms of the Third Great Maelstrom, all the windows that faced onto Ripple Bay were walled up. The Bay is an inlet on Eurydice once used for the launching and landing of very small boats, but access to the bay was also restricted after the Maelstrom. This has caused no small inconvenience, as Ripple Bay was the entrance to Messenger's Run, a long blank hallway and spiral stair that allowed messengers who had the door key to gain entrance to certain chambers used by the Ladies of Fate. Reed boats have been witnessed drawn up on the banks of the bay, sometimes as many as several at a time, and it is generally assumed within the Legion that the Ladies of Fate are giving *sub rosa* support to the Ferryman.





Specialized Arcanoi

The Legion of Fate has developed certain specialized arts to assist them in performing their duties. Not unexpectedly, these are in the Arcanoi Lifeweb and Fatalism. Many of the Restless know of the existence of these specialized arts, but they are not taught outside the Legion of Fate.

Fatalism

... Fate's Hand Apparent

This art is a specialized refinement of Kismet, used especially to detect the passing of one of those whom Fate has chosen. The possessor of this art gets a general sense of the impending demise of her target up to several days in advance. At the moment of the subject's passage across the Shroud, this awareness becomes highly acute.

System: The player should roll Perception + Fatalism (difficulty 4). For each success, the wraith retains an awareness of the Enfant's general state of being for approximately one day, until she comes into physical contact with the Enfant, or the Enfant suffers a Harrowing. The character will recognize the Enfant if she sees him with but a single success on a roll of Perception +

Fatalism (difficulty 3). The intensity of the death-trauma causes the wraith to gain a point of Angst at the moment of the Enfant's passage across the Shroud, and an additional point of Angst if the Enfant is severely traumatized in the process. It should be noted that attunement to one about to cross the Shroud is not a voluntary matter for someone with knowledge of this art.

..... Eldritch Awareness

As much a matter of long experience as an art, this ability grants the wraith possessing it a certain independent awareness of the Web of Fate as it relates to the plans of the Ladies of Fate.

System: When a character is confronted with a situation that the Ladies of Fate would wish her to take some action on, the player may spend two Pathos and make a Wits + Fatalism roll (difficulty 7). Each success allows the character a certain degree of insight into the proper (as seen from the Ladies' perspective) reaction. One success allows her to know she should undertake a particular action regarding the situation. Three or more successes grants her a near-prescient ability to know what she should do for the next several hours regarding the situation. When witnessing especially important events (watching unawares as a wraith vital to the Ladies' plans is sent to the forges, for example), the player automatically spends the Pathos and makes a Wits + Fatalism roll against a difficulty of 6, with results as normal. Characters who receive advice from this Art must follow it as best as they are able.

Lifeweb

... Following the Web

This highly specialized art is used by Reapers of the Legion in conjunction with Fate's Hand Apparent (see above) to find new members of the Legion. It can only be used by a wraith who possesses Fate's Hand Apparent and who has become attuned through the use of that art to an *Enfant* who has recently passed through the Shroud. It grants an approximate awareness of the location of the target to the possessor of Following the Web.

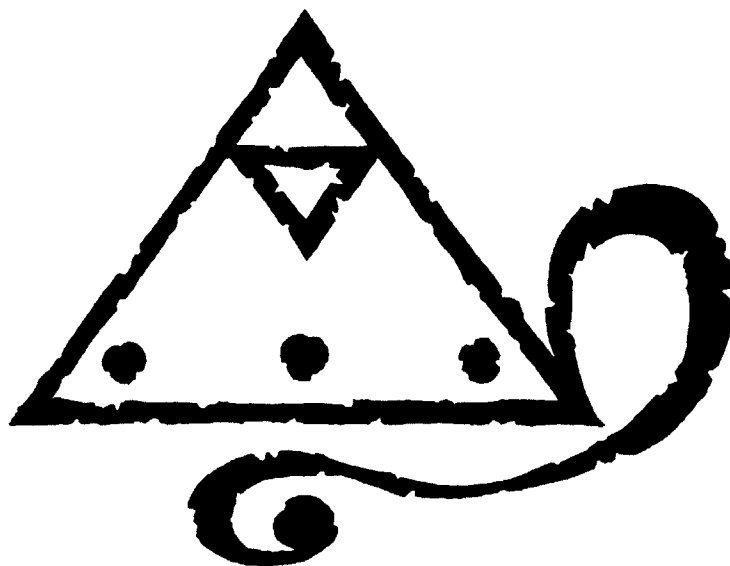
System: A player may spend three points of Pathos and a point of Willpower to make a second roll (Manipulation + Lifeweb, difficulty 6). The number of successes are added together and subtracted from nine. The result is the difficulty for a Perception + Awareness roll the player may make for her wraith to "home in" on the *Enfant* in question. One success on the Awareness roll gives a general awareness of distance, location and situation, and allows the wraith to feel her way to the *Enfant*. Three or more successes gives an accurate enough picture that the wraith could give a verbal description of the target good enough to allow a third party to find the *Enfant* without any trouble.

Destiny's Darling

Arnold Damiler

Damiler is the Anacreon of the New York Autonomous Region, one of the only Provinces to be contained entirely within a single Necropolis. New York is also one of the most heavily staffed Provinces, second only to London in terms of sheer numbers of personnel in place. Almost 300 Restless make up the bureaucracy, and the military arm musters a full five companies. Damiler is considered to be the Legion's best administrator, having taken over the troubled NAR around the turn of the century after the previous administrator fell to the Dead Riots of 1897.

Damiler's beefy Provincial administration acts as a reserve pool of manpower for the entire eastern half of North America. One of his companies is usually loaned out to one trouble spot or another, and his spare administrative personnel are always helping to clean up some natural or administrative disaster. Damiler is more than the Legion's most trusted man in the North American Skinlands. He's also known to make frequent trips to Eurydice, and has been rumored to meet privately with the Ladies of Fate during these excursions.



Doomed Troubleshooter

Quote: *Look, friend, don't jack up the price on me. We both know what that Thrall's worth. So you can either let that wraith out of those chains, take my oboli, and let him come with me, or I can whistle and have a company of infantry down here in precisely no time to let the kid out of the chains for you.*

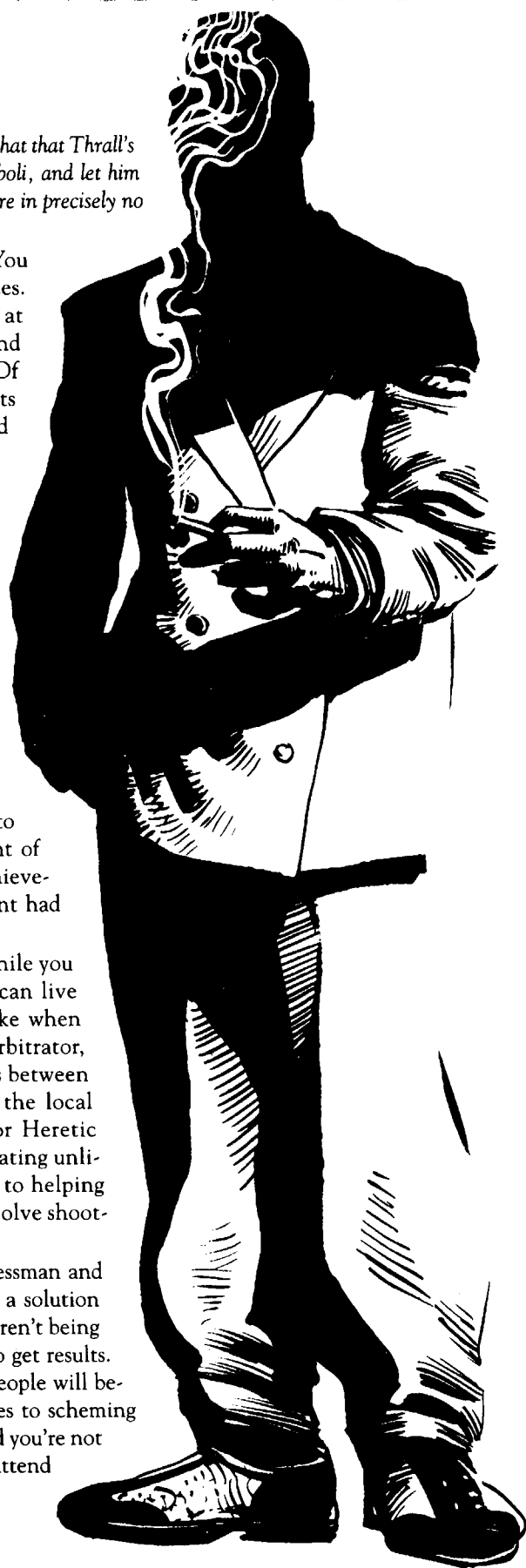
Prelude: During your mortal days, you were a facilitator. You had the luck to be born with money and educated in the right places. These advantages let you spend your life (what you had of it, at least) facilitating high-margin business deals for a percentage and acting as a fixer and influence dealer. It was the life for you. Of course, you knew your spouse was a prize-wife whose best assets were a bubbly personality and an attractive face, and you neglected your desire to create in your pursuit of a career of hotels, jet airplanes and the sweet feeling (not to mention large paycheck) of Making Things Happen. The only evidence of your creativity was a technothriller you'd been writing late at night on those rare weekends when you were at home. All the rest you figured you could save for your retirement.

You had a bad feeling one day while you were on the way to the airport. You ignored it, and boarded the plane for LA to attend a meeting finalizing the finances for a major chemical plant in your region. Your plane stalled from crosswind turbulence on takeoff. There was a tumbling sensation, screams — and then you awakened to the Legion's Reaper stripping off your Caul.

Thanks to your excellent foundation work, though, the deal for the chemical plant went through at your funeral, and you got to witness it from beyond the Shroud as they shook hands in front of your coffin. For anyone else, it would have been a crowning achievement, but you discovered that your career up until that moment had really only been a prelude.

You're a specialist in what you called "people interfacing" while you were alive. Your specialty is making compromises that people can live with, and deals that make everyone involved happy — just like when you were alive. It's just that while you used to be an impartial arbitrator, now you're a Minister in the Legion of Fate. You negotiate deals between different Provinces, keep good relations with the Legions in the local Necropoli, and you sometimes meet with Guild, Renegade or Heretic wraiths at your Anacreon's behest. Whatever it is, from investigating unlicensed slavers and Doppelganger infiltration of the Necropolis to helping put a railroad through a remote region, if it doesn't *exclusively* involve shooting people, you're expected to be able to do it.

Roleplaying Hints: You're a cross between a high-end businessman and one of the Technocracy's Men In Black. You'd really like to find a solution that makes everyone involved happy about the outcome, but you aren't being paid to be an impartial moderator and arbitrator — you're here to get results. Act with absolute confidence in your authority and ability, and people will believe the show you put on. Whatever it is, from screaming Shades to scheming slavers or venial and recalcitrant officials, you've seen it before, and you're not impressed. Inside, you still have a secret desire to create, and you attend all the best dream-pageants in your region.



Questions

"So you are telling us," the round-faced inquisitor bellowed into my ear, "that a Ferryman took you to see a city full of vampires out in the middle of the Tempest that no one else has ever seen before, and that he told you to come to Stygia to warn all of us about it?" He spat a bit while he yelled, which was an unpleasant change. Most wraiths stop expectorating when they die.

I nodded. "Severus told me to come here and tell you. What you do with the information is your own business. I'm just an errand boy." At that, the audience for my little interrogation stirred. There were maybe 50 wraiths in the room, Deathlords and their advisors sitting behind high, stark benches while armed guards stood at the doors. The Ladies themselves, or at least some of them, were at a bench at the back, but down front where the lights were brightest, it was just me and my questioner. I could tell by his deathmarks that he was Penitent Legion. Wonderful. My testimony was being beaten out of me by a loon.

"Don't you find that story a little far-fetched?" he purred as he paced around the box where I was chained. The inquisitor was a big, beefy man in ornate armor that looked uncomfortable as all hell. His face was bright red from all of the shouting, which looked funny — I mean, it looked like I was being quizzed by a bipedal lobster.

On the other hand, that lobster could get me hammered into a welcome

mat in no time flat. Severus would probably be annoyed at the turn of events afterward, but it wouldn't do me much good unless the Ferryman needed something on the raft to wipe his feet.

"I told you, Severus showed me this, then dropped me off at some two-bit outpost on the Lethe. All I know is that I'm supposed to come here, tell you what I know, and then quietly fade out of the plotline. That's it, I swear."

The inquisitor pounced. "That's it? You, a noted Renegade, are just supposed to wander into the heart of the Empire, deliver your little Pollyanna, and waltz right back out again? Seems a trifle suspicious to me."

"It does?" I was having a hard time holding my tongue, and my Shadow was egging me on. They'd hauled me here, chained me down like a monkey in this damn black box, and extracted the same confession — which I was perfectly willing to give — out of me a half-dozen times. Maybe they were looking for inconsistencies in the story. Maybe they wanted to see if the other Erik would take over and give them more leverage or cut a deal. I don't know. What I did know was that I was getting pissed off. "I risk myself on a Ferryman's word to give you important military info without bothering to arrange first how I'm going to get out of this goddamned rat trap." I was getting really worked up at this point, "and you're suspicious of me? Come on, if Severus wants to bribe you there are easier and bigger pre-

sents he can gift wrap and drop on your doorstep. I don't need to be here, I don't want to be here, and if you don't want to hear what I have to say, then screw you, I don't have to be here. Unlock these damn things, and I'm getting the hell out of here."

The Deathlords murmured at that, the rumblings starting way back in the peanut gallery. Outside, I heard something like a gong ringing, but no one else seemed to notice. In front of me, the lobster chuckled.

"Unlock them? I don't think so. This smells absolutely rotten. Why would the Ferrymen reveal this information now, and why do it through you? Piss-ant Renegades who think they have a rep are a dime a dozen. What, did you and some of your Renegade *friends*," the way he said it made the word sound slimy, "think that you could hatch this scheme and send us scurrying all over the Underworld looking for this mythical city? And perhaps, during that time, your friends might attack Stygia itself?" His voice rose to a triumphant crescendo at the end, almost drowning out another gong's beat and what sounded like some screams from outside.

This time, I could tell the Deathlords heard it. There was rumbling at the back, the tearing sound that comes with gratuitous Argos use, and the whisper of swords coming out of their sheaths. Lobster didn't notice. "My Lords and Ladies! I submit to you, then, that this Renegade has perpetrated, with the assistance of one Ferryman, a hoax upon us! I say we



Castigate the truth out of him, then turn what remains over to the forges!"

He was met with the sound of a titan gong ringing somewhere, and then silence. The Mourners had entered the chamber.

I stood up and tried to run, but the chains held me fast. Lobster-boy stopped his ranting and stared. Courtiers and soldiers scrambled out of the way. The Deathlords stood and gazed on impassively.

And the Mourners came on.

There must have been a solid hundred of them, robed in black and linked by heavy chains. They were singing some sort of dirge and marching in time, and the gloom of the Tempest just rumbled into the room with them. Every few steps that infernal gong would ring and the Mourners would look up, just for a second. Then whatever light had been in their eyes would fade, and they'd resume the steady, terrifying march.

No one moved a muscle. If the Mourners were after someone in the chamber, even a Deathlord, not a single soul in there would step in their way. Everyone knew the old stories about what happened to someone touched by a Mourner. Sooner or later you lost the light in your eyes, too, and just wandered off into the Tempest to join that eternal chain.

They came on. The Deathlords stared. And I realized that they'd made the turn around the spectators box at the corner of the room and were headed straight for where I was manacled. I pulled at the chains. They wouldn't budge.

"Oh, man, you've got to let me out," I hissed at the inquisitor, who just stood there, staring. *No, he doesn't,* said my Shadow. "Come on, man, unlock these things. Please!"

My Shadow was laughing. The inquisitor had dropped his little pointer that he'd waved around during his presentation and was gibbering in terror. The Mourners were closing in, step by slow step.

You'll never break these things, the other Erik said. *But I can. I can get us out of here. Because I don't want to get chained to those things. I want out, man. This isn't how I want to go. You've got to let me take over.*

"Not a chance," I whispered, seeing the brief glow in the lead Mourner's eyes. They couldn't be more than 50 feet away now. My questioner was standing there, shaking. If wraiths were capable of such a thing, he would have pissed his pants. Hell, I would have.

Don't make me take this, Erik. I need the strength to get us out. Shadow sounded panicked — for real. The Mourners stomped closer.

Please, Erik.

That was what did it. Shadow never said "please." I could hear he was terrified, too. Mentally, I nodded, hating myself. I fell back into that cage in the back of my mind, watching the other Erik surge to the fore. I heard him screaming obscenities as he pulled

at the chains. I heard the Mourners coming ever closer and the plasm of my arms ripping as my Shadow tore at my Corpus with a strength I never had. I swear, he was ready to tear my — our — arms off to escape. And I would have been glad if he'd been able to do so, because the Deathlords just watched as the Mourners closed with me, step by step, until they were less than a yard away. The inquisitor sank, nerveless, to the floor. From the cage inside my own skull, I looked into those glowing eyes.

Patience. I heard the Mourner say in Severus' voice. *You panic too easily.*

And the lead Mourner reached down and took my inquisitor. Took him. There was that same horrible screeching, tearing sound and a Nihil opened up right in front of me. One by one, the Mourners dropped into it, wordlessly. Then the damn gong rang again, the rift closed, and I was back in charge. The Deathlords were still there, watching.

Weakly, I tested the chains. They still held me, though my arms and legs were wet with plasm. The links rattled hollowly in the silence of the chamber. Suddenly, it was all too much. "Any doubts now?" I asked the gallery, and collapsed in laughter, at least as far as the chains would let me.





The Penitent Legion



Madness is a tough thing to nail down. I mean, we're all a little mad, aren't we?

— Tiburon, Reaper for the Laughing Lady



Insanity is a fickle lover. She does not consider bank accounts, family ties or social standing when she selects those to whom she will give her gift. And she takes as mercilessly as she gives, prying apart families, starting wars, stealing memories and loved ones without thought to consequences or apologies. In short, she's a bitch.

The Penitent Legion is the bastard child of this particular bitch. The Laughing Lady opens her doors to all of Lady Madness' children, from homicidal maniacs to the little old ladies they kill. It has been said that the Penitent can be split into two neat categories: the totally sane and the totally insane. This cute little assessment is, of course, wrong. All of the Laughing Lady's folk are at least a little crazy. Death does strange things to people. It's just that some appear more sane than others.



Membership in the Legion



enitent Reapers have a particularly difficult job. The souls of those who died from madness are almost always at least routinely claimed by other Legions. Those whose madness drove them to suicide get tagged by the Silent Legion, those who are killed by psychotics are claimed by the

Grim, the victims of such diseases as Alzheimer's or of neglect in nursing homes get gobbled up by the Iron Legion, and so forth. The only ones that the other Legions are willing to give up without a fight are the truly, criminally insane. Of course, most of those find their way to Oblivion pretty quickly, and the rest have "Spectre In Training" stamped on their foreheads, meaning that were matters left to themselves, the ranks of the Penitent would get thinned out pretty quickly.

This harsh fact has led Penitent Reapers to become an aggressive, sneaky lot. They don't bother with paperwork, they don't ask the other Legions for arbitration in cases of questionable ownership, and they certainly don't bother pleading their cases with other Reapers. Penitent Reapers simply take what they think they can justify taking, and as long as the gathered souls fall more or less within the guidelines of the Legion's requirements, the Laughing Lady is happy.

With that in mind, consider the membership of the Legion. The Lady's wraiths aren't really bound by a common identity, a common goal or really even common deaths. On one hand, you have the insane. Madness is a many-faced demon, and very few of these particular wraiths have all that much in common. In fact, the only thing they can really agree on is the uniqueness of each of their situations. You have axe murderers, soldiers who have died in insane military operations, old men who watched everything that they knew and loved slip behind a gentle cloud of forgetfulness, scientists whose mad search for truth led to their demises, children with 15 different people in their heads trying to make sense of it all, and obsessive compulsives who were so intent on counting the number of steps across the street that they didn't see the truck coming. A varied crew, to say the least. On the other side of the room, you have the victims: the little girl who walked down the wrong alley, the wife who said no once too often, the father who pushed his little boy to succeed until that little boy cracked, the cop who should have waited for backup before approaching that crowd on the corner. Their deaths were violent, horrifying. Some of them may have died at the hands of their fellow Legionnaires.

How to keep this crowd together? How to organize a bunch of murderers and their victims into a cohesive unit, a political power in the world of the Dead? This is the problem that faces the Laughing Lady every day.

A Common Goal

With the exception of the Silent Legion, the Penitent are the only ones to bunk with the people who killed them. Not every member of the Legion can directly blame their fellow Legionnaires for the present situation — in fact, most cannot — but stereotypes and prejudices are easy things to create. Maybe the specific officer who ordered that fatal charge has long since fallen to Oblivion, but there are plenty of other officers just like him all around. There are always plenty of people to blame. It is because of this rather sticky situation that the Laughing Lady built the Seat of Succor. Otherwise, her Legion would have torn itself apart within decades.

The Seat of Succor is nestled near the center of Stygia, and resembles nothing more than a giant, black, square rock. It towers up above the surrounding structures, looming over the passersby like some caricatured tombstone. Inside, a single voice in almost constant laughter can be heard, an echo of joy resonating from the cold walls. It is here that the disgruntled come, to search for the meaning of their madness, and to come to grips with the insanity of it all. Even those Legionnaires who are perfectly sane come to the Seat of Succor, seeking comfort, for none are turned away from the Lady's gates.

Those who walk into the halls of laughter may never walk out, and the Legionnaires who do leave never speak of their time inside. The only ones who seem to come and go as they please are the Laughing Lady's personal entourage, known as

Deathmarks of the Penitent Legion

The Penitent have accrued a debt to the Restless. Members of the Legion see themselves as having either directly or indirectly been responsible for the growth of Oblivion. Part of the process of becoming a member of the Legion involves accepting the debt of the other members of the Legion as your own, so that no one wraith can be blamed more than any other. While this might not seem fair, it prevents internal strife and helps the Legion maintain a cohesive front.

The deathmarks of the Legion, then, symbolize the debt that is owed. Penitent wraiths are stained with blood. The amount of staining is different from wraith to wraith, but the hands at least are always eternally purpled. Further intractions against society, such as allowing one's Shadow to gain too much power, increases the amount of staining. This tends to dissettle other Legions, as the Penitent proudly display their greatest fault for all to see.

the Order of the Keepers. The Keepers are in charge of the mental welfare of the whole Legion, and maintain a vigilant watch over the health of its members. Thus the Legion of the Mad maintains an uneasy internal peace.

Those who act up are dragged to the Seat for discipline. Others make the journey to Stygia more voluntarily; not everyone can forget the reasons behind their deaths or put old grudges behind them. If one cannot, he is taken to the Seat of Succor. Inside, he learns to deal with his internal strife, or he simply never comes out.

One thing that the Legion has managed to agree on is that Madness is an extension of Oblivion in the Skinlands. The insane, willing or not, feed Oblivion. Pointless wars, killing sprees and the fear bred by paranoia all add fuel to the fire. Therefore, the members of the Penitent Legion are largely responsible for the growth of Oblivion. Hence the name, Penitent. The Legion must make up for the damage that its members did before they died. Legionnaires must earn the forgiveness of their fellow wraiths, and the more spectacular the penance the better. The Penitent fight twice as hard, work twice as fast, and attack Oblivion with twice the fury of other Legions. After all, they have a lot of catching up to do.

The Penitent's hatred of Oblivion has focused in particular on the Shadow. Members of the Penitent Legion

view the Shadow as the most obvious manifestation of madness on this side of the Shroud, and attack it however they may. The Penitent were against the dissolution of the Pardoners Guild, and offered shelter to many of the Guild's members following the revolt. Castigate is the most commonly practiced Arcanos in the Legion, and while the existence of the Guild is universally denied by the Legion's spokeswraiths, the higher officials in the Legion maintain covert ties to the underground Guild.

The status of every wraith's Shadow is closely monitored by the so-called Keepers. While they can't hope to keep detailed records on every wraith in Stygia and the Skinlands, these Legion officials certainly try. Theoretically, each Keeper's specific job is to work to maintain the mental health of the Legion, and they have been known to keep tabs on wraiths outside of the Legion. If a powerful wraith is about to succumb to her Shadow, the Keepers may step in and intervene.

A Legion of madmen and their victims, trying desperately to come to grips with the nature of madness, all the while keeping a close eye on their own dark halves. The Penitent are working off a debt to society, but one of which they can never hope to absolve themselves. They fight side by side with those who killed them, while in the background the local version of Big Brother monitors their every move for suspicious behavior. It's a party.



Friends and Foes

Mine! Mine! My soul! Leave off, ya filthy bugger!

— Tiburon, Reaper for the Laughing Lady, following the breakdown of negotiations

People tend to dislike the Penitent. Usually, other Legions think of the Penitent as a bunch of cannibalistic, nun-killing psychopaths — and those are the high points. Of course, there's a little truth to that, but not enough to justify the widespread distrust that the other Legions hold for the Laughing Lady and her minions. To further complicate matters, the aggressive style of the Penitent Reapers tends to put people off. There is always some minor scrap between Penitent Reapers and their counterparts in the Silent, Grim and Iron Legions to keep the insults flying and the dislike bubbling merrily away. On top of all that, the whole Legion acts like it's paying off some great debt to society, and is sure to let everyone else know how much they're suffering to do so. Self-proclaimed martyrs are rarely popular, and especially not ones who come complete with snoopy, arrogant Keepers.

Despite the various prejudices and mistrust that other Legions tend to hold for the Penitents, the victims of Madness are not a force to be ignored in the political machinations of

Stygian society. The Penitent are capable of doing a lot for their friends, producing favors from providing military strength to arranging for the Keepers to apprehend a political enemy on suspicion of Shadow influence. On the other hand, this tends to produce a stream of momentary, *quid pro quo* relationships with other Legions. In the end, the only ranks with whom the Penitent are able to maintain fairly steady relations are the Emerald Legion, the Paupers and the Ladies of Fate.

Heretics and Renegades pose a peculiar problem to the Penitent Legion. Outlaws to a soul, they lie outside of the influence of the Hierarchy, and therefore outside of the careful vigilance of the Keepers. This makes the Penitent nervous. After all, there's no telling what kind of Oblivion-feeding activity is going on in the minds of those miscreants. Most Penitents, being the cynical lot that they are, consider religion to be a little like madness, and would be more than happy to absorb the various sects into their Legion. Of course, the Heretics might not be too pleased by this, but after a stay in the Seat of Succor, they would inevitably change their minds.

The only real ties that the Legion has to those outside of its members are with the dissolved Pardoners Guild, and only the highest members of the Legion are aware of this relationship. It's a rather shadowy affair, and is largely based on a mutual hatred for the Shadow rather than any commonality in political belief or ideology. The Penitent want the Shadow defeated, and so do the Pardoners. That's as far as it goes.



The Military of the Mad



War is insane. Pure madness. That means that when the gauntlet gets thrown down, the Penitent are right at home.

The leader of the military forces of the Penitent Legion is a wraith named Liamh, a warrior killed during the early phase of the Roman invasion of Albion.

It was Liamh's troops who met Julius Caesar's befuddled Romans on the beach, and who slaughtered the centurions whose heavy armor had sunk them into the sand just offshore. Of course, Liamh felt he had a secret weapon in these wars, for the voices of the gods spoke to him every night after evening fell and helped him plan his battles.

The voices foretold the coming of the Romans, and warned the young warrior to prepare. They outlined for him the strategies that would be effective against the invaders. Liamh took these messages from beyond to heart, and summoned a mighty force to his side. When the Romans came, he was ready.

Unfortunately, he was also a sucker.

The Romans were not the enemy that Liamh was destined to fight. The cold minds behind the voices that Liamh heard were those of artisans preparing a tool. They pushed Liamh into a risky endeavor, an all-or-nothing frontal assault that claimed his life, as well as the lives of most of his host.

When the dust settled and Caesar had been given time to record his victory in his annals, Liamh was already being trained on the other side of Shroud to lead another, greater host against another, greater foe: Oblivion.

It's been two millennia since Liamh fell on the beaches. He's finally started to think that he and his troops are ready.

Military Units Among the Penitent

The Legions were originally set up to assist new wraiths in their dealings with death, and to assist them on their path toward whatever Fate held in store for them. The ranks were a community of sorts, providing support for Enfants and giving them connections to other mortals who had died as they had. But with Charon's declaration that Transcendence was a myth and the banishment of the Heretics, the focus of the Legions shifted. The ranks no longer concerned themselves with achieving Transcendence, and became focused on staving off Oblivion. With that shift, the Legions transformed themselves from a support network to a military force dedicated to battling the forces of Oblivion, ensuring the safety of the citizens of the Hierarchy and enforcing Charon's laws.

These days, the Legions are regularly called upon to do battle with marauding Spectres, militant Renegades and dangerous Heretics, as well as occasionally enforcing the will of

the Hierarchy in exotic locales. The Penitent Legion, under the leadership of Liamh, has adapted well to this new set of duties, perhaps more so than any other Legion. Members of the other Legions look at Liamh's innovations, shake their heads and chuckle. "He's crazy," they say, and dismiss as worthless whatever soulforged monstrosity he's having his troops work on at the moment.

They're half-right


The Skirmisher Corps: The Storm of Night

The Storm prides itself on history. When Liamh first entered the Shadowlands, he was inducted into the body that became the Skirmisher Corps. The initiation rites that an *Enfant* entering the Storm takes today are the same rites that Liamh himself underwent centuries ago. Despite the hundreds of years that have passed since then, many things remain the same in the Skirmisher Corps. The uniform, which consists of jet-black light armor, has only been modified to keep up with technological advancements. Corpsmen still use bows and arrows, light swords and bucklers to attack the foe. The banners that fly over the Skirmisher Corps and hang in its barracks hall between conflicts tell the story of a hundred battles, a thousand martyrs and countless soldiers gone down into the final darkness. The Corps' greatest battles are depicted in rich pictograms, much like medieval stained glass windows told Biblical stories.

The Storm of Night takes the role of the Legion's first line of pickets, making first contact with the enemy and attempting to disrupt the momentum of his advance. The tactics that the Skirmisher Corps uses are simple: Meet the enemy, disrupt his line, and use *Argos* to pull out before he can muster a concentrated response. Ideally, the Skirmisher Corps disrupts the enemy, luring units into pursuing isolated Skirmisher platoons and thus breaking up the battle line. With any luck, the enemy's front dissolves in chaos just in time for the rest of the Penitent Legion to hit it. In the meantime, the Storm pulls back and picks off key targets, staying out of the thick of battle.

The Phalanx Corps: The Wall of Skulls

The vast majority of soldiers inducted into the military forces of the Penitent Legion find themselves in the Phalanx. The Phalanx Corps can also trace its history back to before the time of Liamh, but the group's role has changed over the years. Originally, the Wall of Skulls was the only actual unit in the Penitent army, with the other Corps attached as minor supporting players in the theatre of war. Debacles such as *Second Thermopylae* (the Persian ghosts won this one decisively) demonstrated, however, that relying on the Phalanx was a sure way to get outmaneuvered and crushed. Thus, the Wall of Skulls passed into a supporting role, in which the Phalanx ties up the enemy so that the specialized units can do their work. When time or numbers are called for (the Wall con-



tains over half of the wraiths in the Legion's military arm), it's the Phalanx that answers the summons.

The task of the Phalanx is to provide structure to the chaotic attack of the rest of the army. They are the front line, marching steadily forward while the Skirmishers and other units wheel around them. The Wall neither deals the deciding blow, nor draws first blood. Only once the Storm of Night has finished sowing chaos in the enemy ranks does the Wall of Skulls move up and engage the foe, pinning it down so that advance and retreat both become impossible. The Wall, as one might expect, is not a terribly mobile force, and depends upon the Skirmisher Corps to protect its exposed flanks.

Besides their distinctive bone shields, the Phalanx Corps is equipped with heavy armor, usually soulforged with a bone motif. The Corps also includes a contingent of musicians, drummers and trumpeters whose job it is to maintain the steady advance of the line, as well as signaling for unit maneuvers and the like. The Corps makes wide use of banners in battle, to help maintain unit cohesion as well as to strike fear in their enemies. These banners tell of the past deeds of the unit they represent, proclaiming the force and power of their history.

The Beast Corps: The Razor's Song

Liamh may well be Stygia's leading military strategist. He recognizes the potential of certain Arcanoi, and utilizes them. While most Legions are content with grinding their enemies into submission, Liamh would rather strike a sudden blow that maims his foe and wins the day. With this in mind, he formed the Beast Corps, and assigned its members to a particularly dangerous mission. In most Legions, the barghests are used to hunt down convicts and other unpleasant elements of society. The barghests of the Penitent Legion, however, are called upon to perform military duty. It's a duty that, to be honest, one would have to be lobotomized to accept.

The Razor's Song is organized into small groups of six, five barghests and one beastmaster. The barghests selected for the Corps are created from the most fiendish of the criminally insane. They are Moliated beyond the normal parameters of barghests to the point where they're hardly recognizable for what they once were, adorned with hardened carapaces bristling with razor-sharp blades. The beastmaster for each unit is encased in hardened armor, covering every inch of his Corpus to a degree that seems more insectile than human. Only the bravest and most insane are selected for the Corps, because their duty requires a level of courage (or madness) that causes most warriors to pale.

Once the Wall of Skulls has closed with the enemy, and the grind of battle has begun in earnest, the Beast Corps is brought up. As the battle continues and casualties rise, the enemy brings up his reserves and weakens his defenses in the rear even as he reinforces his front and flanks. That's where the Razor's Song comes in. Having spent days before the battle whipping his charges into a murderous frenzy, the beastmaster

then Flickers into one of the gaps in the enemy rear and turns the hounds loose. If things go well, all hell breaks loose shortly thereafter. If the barghests hit hard enough, the resultant fragmentation of the enemy line (caused by troops turning to meet the new threat) allows Legion infantry to engulf and annihilate the isolated segments of the enemy front.

The uniform of the beastmasters is impressive. It is a solid shell of soulforged armor, with the helmet resembling a stylized hound's head with teeth bared. The masters are directed to avoid combat if they can, because it is their duty to transport the barghests into and out of battle. They utilize no banners in battle, but within the war kennels of the Corps, numerous pennants hang, telling of the terror that the hounds have caused and commemorating victories won through barghest savagery.

The Flesh Corps: The Tide of Horror

Finally, the deadly blow may be struck. The Flesh Corps is the product of Liamh's twisted imagination, a horrid manifestation of nightmare and violence. Inspired by the Korean National Dragons and using an unholy combination of Moliate and soulforging, Liamh has created two types of monstrosities. Liamh's first creation was the Leviathans that form the center of the Flesh Corps, multiple wraiths twisted into single elephantine abominations that tower above the line of battle. Howdahs filled with spearmen, archers and the occasional sniper ride on the beasts' backs, peppering opponents with deadly fire from above.

Flesh Corps tactics are simple: Find a weak point in the enemy line, then hit it as hard as possible. Break through if you can, then turn and roll the enemy's line like it's cheap carpet. If some of your own troops get crushed in the process, that's the price that has to be paid.

The wraiths who ride the Leviathans are not actually members of the Flesh Corps, but Phalanx soldiers picked for special duty. The actual members of the Flesh Corps are usually not volunteers, but the Laughing Lady's policy is that leading lives — and afterlives — of unmitigated violence is as good a method as sticking your hand up and shouting "Pick me!" It's very simple, really: Psychopaths who cannot conform to the conditions of life after death find themselves Moliated into gargantuan, lobotomized beasts of war. It's one of the most effective and persuasive tools the Laughing Lady has for reform — no one in her right mind wants to be glommed onto a Leviathan.

The Machine Corps: The Cacophony of Death

The second form that Liamh devised to strike the final blow in battle is the Machine Corps. Soulforging is used to create hollow war machines, huge devices called Juggernauts that resemble early World War I tanks, with giant scythes and battering rams attached to further the damage they cause when they crash into the enemy lines. These devices are powered by massive soulfire crystals, meaning that when a Juggernaut gets stopped, the resultant explosion is spectacular indeed.

The Machine Corps is a truly horrid sight as it rumbles into battle, slicing its way through enemy lines and crushing soldiers beneath its soulforged treads, even as the half-forged wraiths that make up its armor scream their agony. The drivers of these devices are rotated out frequently to prevent Angst buildup, and given preferential treatment by Legion Pardoners. Liamh privately considers the Machine Corps to be an improvement on the Beast Corps — more predictable, he says — but has not yet begun to phase the old unit out. In the meantime, few foes can stand against the screaming beasts and howling machines of these two units.

The Banners of the Corps

Each Corps has a specific banner under which it goes to battle. These banners serve as rallying points, as well as telling the stories of past battles and valorous heroes.

The Skirmisher Corps

The banner of the Storm of Night is a gray field with a gathering storm on the horizon. A single black lightning bolt, ending in a spearhead, arcs across the sky.

The Phalanx Corps

The banner of the Wall of Skulls is a black field with a white skull at center. From the skull sprout white spears in the form of leg bones ending in metal points.

The Beast Corps

The banner of the Razor's Song is a blood red field with a white dog skull center. The skull is muzzled, and the reins lead to a black gauntlet below. The gauntlet is clenched and bristling with spikes.

The Flesh Corps

The banner of the Tide of Horror is black with a red Leviathan rampant. The Leviathan is standing on a gray, rocky outcropping.

The Machine Corps

The banner of the Cacophony of Death is black with a rust red cog wheel center. A single red drop of blood is dripping from the cog.



The Storm Maidens

The Storm Maidens are a specialized squad, and do not fall under Liamh's jurisdiction. Instead, they answer directly to the Laughing Lady. The Maidens are selected from the ranks of the Storm of Night, and are exclusively female in membership. The Laughing Lady uses them as an elite strike force, Helldiving into the Tempest to rescue stranded travelers and also to launch pre-emptive strikes on Spectral hives. The Maidens are unfailingly brave, and have saved many lost souls from the clutches of the Tempest. Liamh has repeatedly urged the Laughing Lady to dispatch the Maidens on a quest to find out what happened to Charon, but the Lady considers that to be an insurmountable task, and refuses to squander her resources on such a pointless mission.

Madmen of the People

William Henderson

William was a fairly normal chap. He worked all day as a science teacher at the local school, he came home to his wife and kids at night. Once he had put his children to bed, and kissed his wife good night, though, he went to the basement. William was an inventor of sorts. What sort? Let's just say that he read *Frankenstein* once too often when he was a kid, and that it impressed him in a rather unfortunate way.

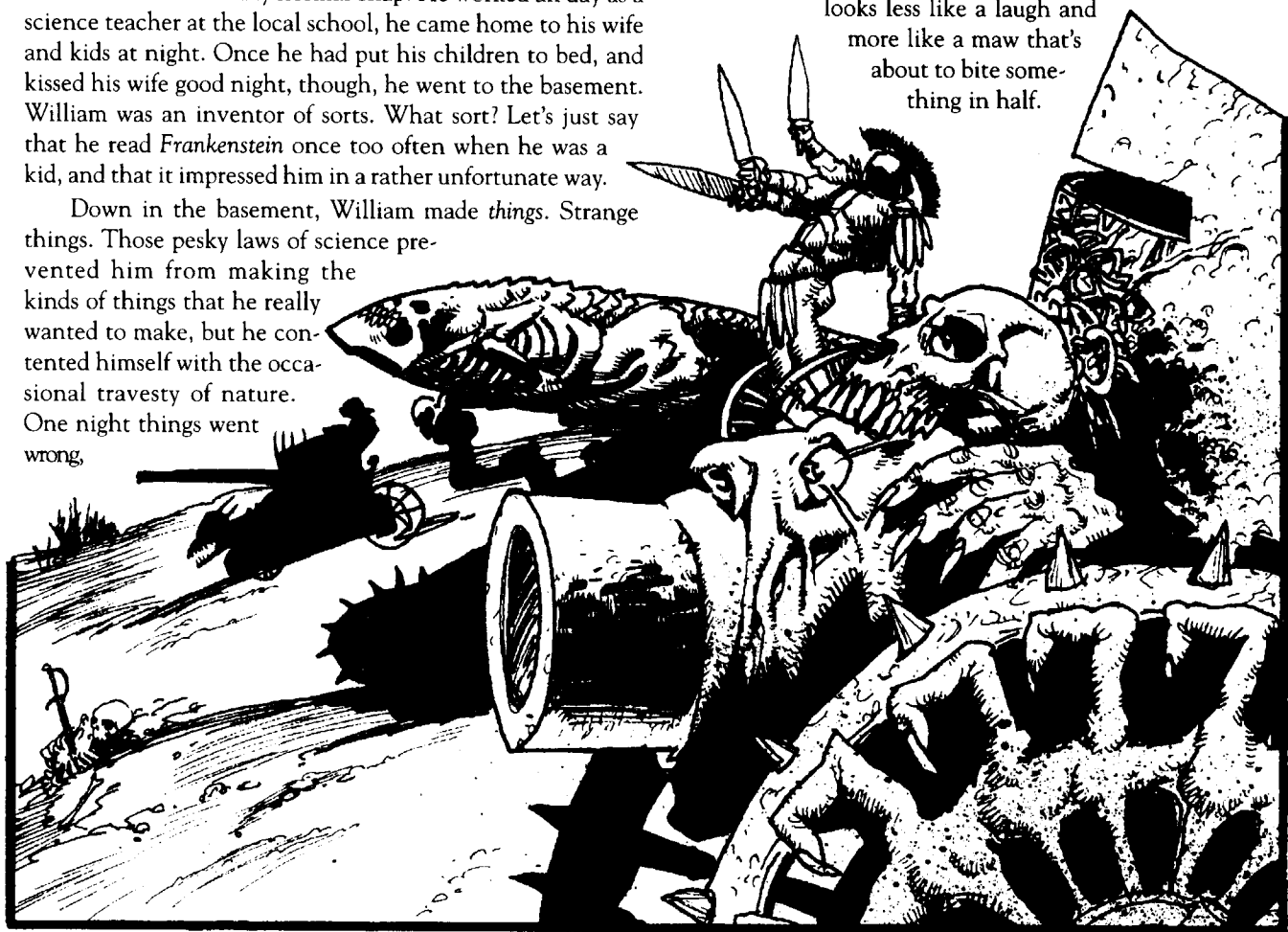
Down in the basement, William made *things*. Strange things. Those pesky laws of science prevented him from making the kinds of things that he really wanted to make, but he contented himself with the occasional travesty of nature. One night things went wrong,

and there was a teensy little explosion. The fire engulfed his house, killing William and his entire family.

When William woke up in the Shadowlands, he was met by a very nice man by the name of Liamh. Liamh spoke with a bit of a strange accent, and kept going on and on about the "battle to end all battles," but he was nice to William. Soon William found himself working on the sorts of things he'd always really wanted to make. Bizarre creatures out of nightmares, machines powered by human souls, that sort of thing. William's twisted mind became the genius behind the Machine Corps. He trained with Artificers and Masquers both, and merged the two Arcanoi into the creation of an abomination that would become known as the Juggernaut. William sometimes wonders what happened to his wife and kids, but then he gets back to work on soul-powered autoscythes and other nasties, and forgets that he ever lived.

The Laughing Lady

The Lady is an enigmatic woman, to say the least. She is never seen without her mask, a huge piece that sports an enormous, toothy grin. Despite her name, she doesn't laugh all that often. In fact, the grin on her mask looks less like a laugh and more like a maw that's about to bite something in half.



The Laughing Lady rarely ventures outside of the halls of the Seat of Succor these days, and is always accompanied by her personal unit of Keepers on those rare occasions when she does. She keeps to herself, making people wonder if she has lost control of her Legion and has become a mere figurehead. Those in the know think differently, of course, but wonder why she hasn't used the Storm Maidens to pursue the

whereabouts of Charon. The sheer volume of information that she must be able to glean from the Maidens' observations must mean that she knows more about the Tempest — not to mention the Labyrinth — than any other Deathlord. Yet she does not act. Perhaps she knows something the other Deathlords do not — or perhaps she's just gone quietly mad. At the moment, no one's willing to investigate too closely.



Member of the Order of Keepers

Quote: Yes, I understand. So after the alleged Spectre appeared and forced you to steal these Artifacts, what did he say? I see. Would you come with me, please? Ivan, get the chains.

Prelude: You were always a nosy little prat. You spied on Mommy and Daddy, your brothers, your classmates. You kept a little notebook with everyone's secrets, including your own. Every day during lunch, you'd scurry to your locker to write down the newest dirt. Someone watched you do this, though, and popped your locker door when you weren't looking. He read through your book of secrets and found his own in there — and then he found yours. Half an hour later, photocopies were all over the walls of your high school. You were so driven by guilt that you snapped. Two months before graduation, you appeared in assembly naked, rushed the podium and sang two verses of "Mary had a little lamb" before the authorities arrived. You spent the rest of your life in a little cell, babbling about all the things you knew. Of course, being locked in a cell prevented you from learning any secrets, so you made them up. When you died, you were inducted into the Order of Keepers, and have been there ever since.

Concept: You know. You know *everything*. You watch everything, you see everything, and most importantly, you judge everything. If you decide someone needs to be brought in for questioning, he is. You can lock people up, torture them and bring out their hidden demons without breaking a metaphorical sweat. It's more power than you had in life, but you have a knack for squeezing the truth out of people. And, oh, do you love knowing it all.

Roleplaying Hints: Stare at people. Take notes. Say "Tsk, tsk" at critical moments. Ask questions about how people are feeling, and chart the results. Occasionally have someone dragged off kicking and screaming.

Relics: Notebook, pencil, straightjacket.



Routes

The trip out was a bit more comfortable this time. I was still chained, but the manacles were attached to these feather-light, symbolic things, and no one in particular was holding my leash. I was free to wander around the deck, though I was advised that any attempts to throw myself over the side would get my sorry Corpus harpooned. As there were rows of barbed spears stacked like cordwood on board, I took the threat seriously and stayed away from the rails.

My baby-sitter was an older gent in the gray armor of an Iron Legion Marshal. He looked to be about 70 or so, but energetic, with wiry arms and strong hands marked with calluses. There wasn't much hair on his Corpus, but what there was streamed along in the breeze as the ship we were on — I think it was the *Gran Grin* — cruised down the River of Death. He was grinning himself, enjoying the moment and glancing over at me occasionally.

"Albert," was how he'd introduced himself when I'd asked his name, and he seemed good-humored enough. He wasn't exactly talkative, but then again, he wasn't hitting me in the face with a gun barrel, either.

"So, how much further?" he asked casually, as the swampland on the side of the Byway sped by faster than it had any right to. "Or do you know?"

"I don't," I confessed, and leaned out on the railing at the prow. "I just know where we have to go, probably because of something Severus did to me. I have no idea of how far, or what's in the neighborhood, or anything else, really. I just know when we're on the right track, and when we're not."

"And right now?"

"We're on the right track," I said, with a note of finality.

Albert turned to the water and shrugged. "If'n you say so. It's your funeral."

I looked at him and blinked. "My what?"

Albert quirked a humorless smile at me. "Oh, it's real simple. If you're spot on with this, son, we turn around and go home, and everything works out just fine. And if you're not, and we don't find this place, well, I've got orders to drop you into the Tempest and forget you ever existed." He leaned over and gently patted me between the shoulder blades in comradely fashion. "But as long as you're sure, I'm certain neither of us has anything to worry about. Right, son?"

"Right..." I replied with a sinking feeling. Why was it that the Deathlords were insisting on being such, well, such assholes? I mean, the Legionnaires I'd dealt with had pretty much run the gamut, from being real sadists to being pretty nice guys. If circumstances had been different, I could see myself sitting down with Albert and just chatting for a few hours about the places he'd been. He seemed really nice, for lack of a better word, and the rest of the crew — Iron Legion to a man — went about their business with a quiet and confident efficiency. *This is what Stygia must have been like in*



the old days, I thought to myself, back when Chanon actually had the Deathlords in line. Too bad it all had to go to hell.

Ah, well. There were still good bits to Stygia, not that I wanted any part of them at the moment. It's just that none of them have much to do with the Deathlords. It seemed like the closer you got to the top of the Isle, the nastier things got. Down in the trenches with the grunts — guys like Albert, or that poor son of a bitch Ollie — the company's pretty good. It's just up at the top things were rotten, and anyone aspiring to get to the top, like that idiot Marshal who transported me to Stygia, had to make himself rotten as well.

"We're heading out into open water," Albert noted, breaking my train of thought. It was true. The banks had been steadily pulling away now, and we were cruising before a stiff breeze into uncharted waters. "Let me take you back by the helm. They want you there."

We sailed on for three days. Every few hours I'd catch Albert

checking the Stygian water clock on board, and I'd ask him, "How much longer?"

"Long enough, I hope," was his response every time. Meanwhile, around us the crew carried on with admirable speed and decorum.

On the fourth day, we saw it. Albert was half-dozing against the rails when I saw the first hint of that black spire poking up above the waves. He'd just checked the water clock with an air of disturbing finality, so as soon as I saw *anything* out there, anything at all, I started hollering.

Albert woke with a snuffling start. "Hurm," he said when I pointed out the black speck on the horizon. "You sure that's it?"

I nodded, even as around us the troops surged into battle stations. "Yeah. There's this little feeling in the pit of my stomach screaming at me to get out of here, and for once it isn't my Shadow. You ever get that feeling?"

Albert nodded his head solemnly. "Yep. Always listened to it, too. That's why I lived a lot longer than you did, son."

"So does that mean we're going to turn around now?"

"Hell, no. What makes you think I care about *your* gut? Mine's doing just fine."

I laughed. He grinned back at me. The black fortress drew closer even as riflemen and archers scrambled for the rigging.

It could be worse. I said to myself as the trained observers scaled their way up to the crow's nest. *It could be a lot worse.*

Albert tapped me on the shoulder. "We need to take you below," he said, and gestured to the squad of Legionnaires standing behind him. "It's for your own safekeeping."

It's worse, said my Shadow. *Man, is it ever getting worse.*

Amid shouted orders and the clank of chains, I followed the soldiers below.





The Iron Legion

*Take a good look at these crows' feet
Sitting on the prettiest eyes
— Beautiful South, "Prettiest Eyes"*



I was so weary. Every bone in my body creaked and popped with age, every muscle groaned at even the simplest of tasks. So much left to do, yet the carcass I was trapped within tormented me. Age chained me, its rigors the greatest prison for the active mind. Why do the years that give us such richness and joy take away our strength? Why do we all grow old and feeble, living with willing spirits in bodies too useless to carry out our plans?

My life's work was so far from complete, yet the demands of my failing flesh sapped my will further and further with each passing night. I went to my laboratory each day, though my hands shook too much for me to carry out my experiments myself. I saw the looks my assistants shot at me when they thought I wasn't looking. I saw pity in their eyes, and that was worse pain than the cancer that gnawed at me. That final day on earth, I wept, knowing all too well what undiscovered vistas my weaknesses kept from me. I feared the end, yet somehow I knew to welcome it. When

the sun sank below the horizon, my wearied lungs breathed their last and my heart stopped. For every creature on this earth there comes a time. I accepted mine with grace.

Although I was quite bewildered as I crossed to the other side, my death senses intrigued me. Gone were the aches. No more did I feel the tiny pangs that had accompanied each movement, each breath! I hardly noticed what was happening to me, so amazed was I that not only did I still exist, but that I had been freed from the prison of my body.

The Reapers of the Iron Legion claimed me that evening, and I was brought to the Seat of Shadows to continue my work in the laboratories of the Salon. Although I feared death while living, for I knew nothing of this afterlife, I now see my errors and wish that I'd sought death far sooner. I am liberated in this state, and my work and progress continue at a remarkable pace. The experiences I accrued during my breathing days have proven invaluable, and I now look forward to centuries of experimentation and research.

— Memoirs of Albert Canarvan



Components of the Legion

So you think we're a bunch of pansy old people, do you? Well, let me tell you sonny boy, the Iron Legion has the best damned souls in the Underworld. We're people who died of old age, yes, but do you have any idea what it takes to survive to old age? Guess not — you weren't very successful at it.

— Disgruntled Centurion at a Necropolis town meeting

The Iron Legion is composed of wraiths who died of, or during, old age. Long ago the Legion laid claim to all who died in the last phase of life, whether the actual immediate cause of death was disease, malnutrition or the simple failing of the body. Persons of the proper age who are victims of “unnatural” deaths are disputed, yet currently the ranks of the Iron Legion are sufficient that the Legion chooses not to haggle over a few scattered souls. The Ashen Lady's followers also include those who died prematurely because they wore out their bodies. Sufferers of long-term diseases such as emphysema are claimed by the Iron Legion, as well as individuals who destroyed their livers through alcohol abuse and consequently died of liver failure. The Iron Legion explains these inclusions by broadly defining its authority as being over all who have used up the life flow given them at birth and died as a direct result. Hard living makes for quicker deaths, as the peasants of the Middle Ages could well attest. Other Legions contest individuals included in these broad categories, and a running feud with the Skeletal Legion has bubbled up over those who have died of disease while in their twilight years. The Skeletal Legion claims that they always resolve such matters peacefully.

The Iron Legion knows better.

Deathmarks

Although details of the designs sported by members of the Iron Legion vary somewhat depending upon the exact cause of death, Iron Legionnaires all bear gray bands about their arms and legs. The number of bands relates to experiences in life; wraiths who lived especially difficult existences sport more marks as a sign of their struggles. Such marks are considered a sign of valor among the Legion, for they symbolize the depth of experience endured in life.

In addition, Legionnaires may bear marks of special distinction for service earned, which are Molated onto their Corpora. Members of the Lady's Salon have a tattoolike design encircling their left eye. The mark resembles eyeliner, yet the lines extend and curl up to the temples where they form the symbol of the Salon. Advocates have their left palms entirely blackened, though many joke that this is not a mark of distinction but the result of swearing on too many Bibles while alive.

Strengths of Iron

The advantages of age lend strength to the Iron Legion. While younger wraiths might boast of energy and passion, it is the slow, cunning patience of age that is surer proof against any foe.

Old mob bosses never die, they just join the Iron Legion. It makes perfect sense, really — some of the grandest schemes of all time involve the founding of personal dynasties. And of course these family leaders usually die in their old age, bringing them into our fold. Medicis were plentiful around here in their day, and quite helpful with the reorganization plans that took place a few centuries ago. You can still find a few of the founding fathers of the great houses of Europe out here in the Shadowlands, though most have gone to live in Stygia to be part of the Council of Ministers. And of course, those live-fast, burn-out zillionaire computer types are starting to fall under our aegis as well.

One of the advantages of having so many tycoons around is that we have excellent connections in the Skinlands. Do you have any idea how much easier it is to influence the major powers of the Western world when you can have their ancestors speak to them directly? Those who still respect their families, that is. It's such a shame the younger generations have become so bloody independent. Still, for the older families, those ties are an invaluable tool. So many of our plans are carried out by the direct descendants of some of this Legion's finest. When we want to encourage donations to medical research, we nudge at the wealthy New England families. If we need a Fetter destroyed, Vincenzo Marinelli's family can remove it from existence within hours. Of course, the Marinellis might not know where the orders are coming from, but then again, neither do the other Legions. Capiche?

And let's not forget the impact we can have upon the economies of the world, not to mention the Underworld. We're just waiting for Donald Trump to keel over; he'll be a nice addition to our Economic Strategists corps. How do the other Legions survive without this kind of advice? Well, I guess that's why we're a bit better off financially than they are.

— Simon Moreville, Centurion in Manchester, Introductory Session for New Recruits

The Seat of Shadows is just one of the many buildings redesigned by the great Italian architects of the Renaissance. Its domes and spires represent the pinnacle of architectural fashion of that era. No place on Earth could rival its majesty, save perhaps the Duomo of Milan. Our team of architects has been working ceaselessly for centuries, restoring and rebuilding the damage done by the Maelstroms. Of course, with the increase in population in the Shadowlands, our engineering and architectural teams have been kept very busy with new additions to existing Necropoli. We are indeed fortunate that most architects and engineers die peacefully in their sleep after long lives of service. It gives us a great advantage over the other Legions. Have you seen the pitiful roads the Skeletal Legion has been putting up? You'd think they knew nothing of the latest paving technologies.

Our technical skills extend beyond construction. All of the great scientists of the Underworld belong to our Salon. What we do with them I'm not quite sure, but I've heard that they've been able to make some impressive advancements in the weapons technology arena. What a boon for us! Maybe the scientists who developed nuclear energy in the Skinlands will be able to devise a more efficient use for the soulfuel that we currently use to power our machines.

— Woody Peterson, tour guide, public areas of the Seat of Shadows

What is life without art, without beauty? How could I ever survive this miserable existence if my dear Patroness did not graciously support my work and my habits? I am the finest painter in all of Stygia — nay, in all of the Underworld. For three centuries I have bestowed my talents upon the richest and most powerful souls Stygia has to offer — a fresco here, a portrait there — and it makes existence worth enduring. People are no less vain in the afterlife, the demand for the finer things is still high. It is simply more of a luxury now, since all of my paints and canvases must be formed from human souls. Yet there is a delicate drama in all of this, for what higher honor could these poor fools hope to achieve than to be the essential ingredients in another of my masterpieces?

You, my dearest friend, should consider joining us in the Salon. Your writing talents would certainly be appreciated. My Lady loves to have new poetry read at every opportunity. You would be the darling of the court! Not only that, but we have all of the best talent residing here. I have found my work has improved dramatically with the assistance of my brethren of the Salon. Where better to carry on your work than in the company of your peers, people who can appreciate you for the genius you are? Stop hiding in that dingy Necropolis and join us in the City. Greatness and honor await you.

—Pietro Avanzazia to Joshua Cooper

A Day in the Death

Woke up, fell out of bed,
Then remembered that I was dead.

— M.V., Court Jester

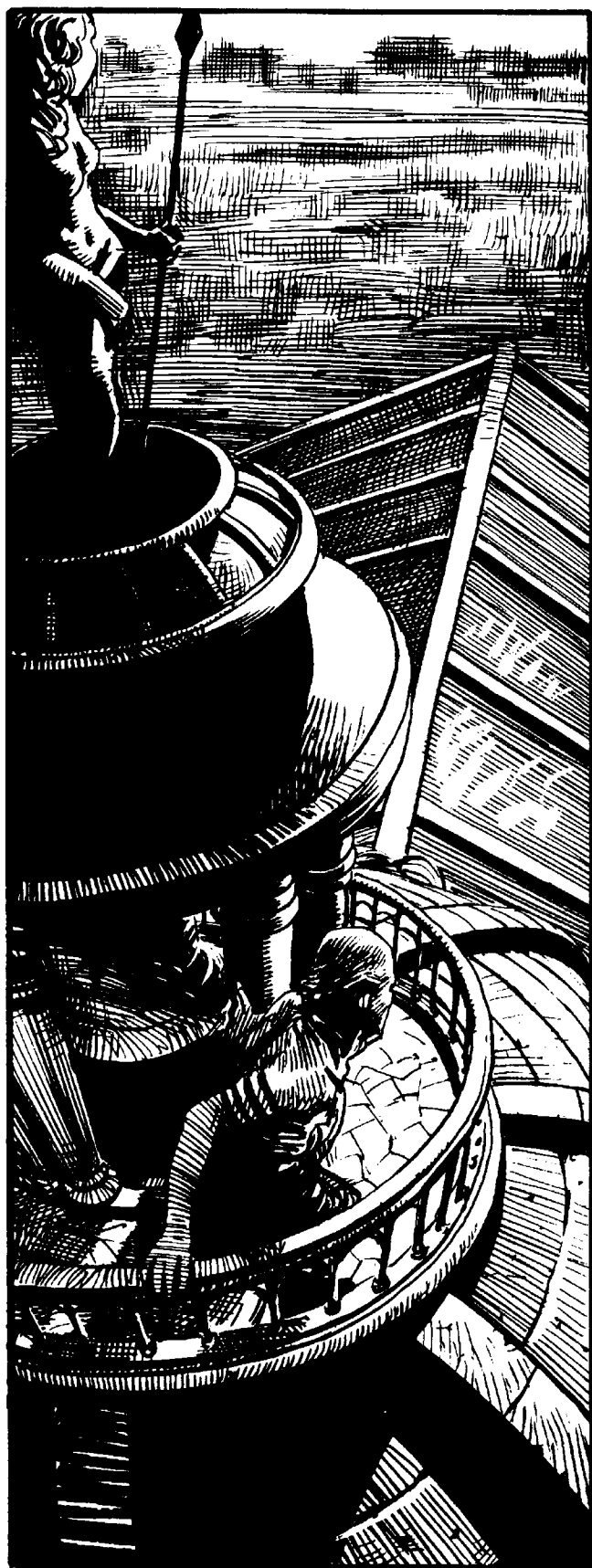
Organization:

Efficiency, Order, Patience.

— The Three Virtues of the Iron Legion

Few bureaucracies run as smoothly as does the Iron Legion. But of course, few governments have the combined skills of hundreds of well-seasoned officials with centuries upon centuries of experience. Everything the Legion does is planned very carefully in advance, with maneuvers and movements plotted down to the tiniest details. There are no such things as unexpected events, only





unprepared planners — that's the Legion's philosophy. The Iron Legion expects perfection from its troops, and rewards good service generously through commendation, reparation and promotion.

The Iron Legion spends a great deal of time training each recruit, time considered excessive by some other Legions. Yet the leaders of Iron insist that patience — and repetition — produce excellent results. Once a member of the Iron Legion graduates from his training courses, he is ready to face the most challenging tasks with ease and grace, wasting no time with indecision or doubt. At least, that's the plan, and more often than not it works reasonably well.

Construction & Resources Planning

One of the specialties of the Iron Legion is the construction and fortification of Necropoli. Citadels don't just happen, after all — the best ones are carefully planned and constructed from the wreckage of the cities around them. And, for whatever reason, the best architects and fortifications engineers always seem to fall into the lap of the Iron Legion. As such, the Iron Legion has a near-monopoly on the best construction and fortification techniques of the Underworld. If given a choice, nine Anacreons out of 10 will choose to have the Iron Legion fortify their Citadels — and the 10th is probably a suck-up to his Deathlord.

Furthermore, any number of Roman engineers make up the overseers of the Construction division, meaning that roads the Legion lays down are straight, solid and built to last. There have even been proposals made of aqueducts, a sort of artificial Byway, but to date there's been no implementation of these daring ideas.

Special Forces

No matter how fierce the politicking gets in Stygia (and the forges get fed well on political casualties, rest assured), Oblivion and its servants remain the ultimate enemy. As the majority of soldiers of the Iron Legion lived long, full lives, they have no intention of having their afterlives cut short, either. With that in mind, the Legion has an active and energetic anti-Spectre imperative. Research goes on around the clock in an effort to ferret out and exploit any weaknesses that the Shadow-eaten possess, and new theories are constantly tested in the field.

That, of course, leaves the problem of who exactly gets to do that testing. That "honor" falls to the so-called Spectre Brigades, wraiths who constantly get thrown into the front lines in order to test the latest pet theory from the skinny geeks back in R&D. Of course, the Spectre Brigades also get to test new weapons (which they like) and

new tactics (which they abhor) on occasion as well. Plus, wraiths in the Spectre Brigades get double bounty on any Spectre Corpora they bring in, making a turn in the Brigades a risky yet profitable proposition.

Spectre Brigades are usually assigned to Byway way stations or ships that patrol relatively calm areas of the Sea of Shadows. Most Brigades have at least one Harbinger, to make for fast transport to trouble spots, and all are occasionally called upon for counterstrike duty. When it's just a matter of getting to a spot Spectres have hit and following them back into the Tempest, most Brigadiers are ready to go in an instant. It's just those moments when they have to chase Spectres armed with R&D's latest brainchild that causes nervous breakdowns and Catharsis in the ranks.

Reconnaissance

The members of the Iron Legion pride themselves on their powers of reconnaissance, infiltration and sabotage. Information is power, especially among the Dead, and the Iron Legion aims to be powerful indeed. With that in mind, the Ashen Lady's coffers have purchased spies and saboteurs throughout the Underworld — in other Dark Kingdoms as well as in the other Legions. While drunken boasts that the Iron Legion could bring the whole house of cards down with a word are exaggerated, to say the least, the other Legions are aware and wary of the Iron Legion's pervasive influence.

The best sources of information the Legion has, however, are its own members. They are, to a man, survivors, experienced at blending in. They understand the value of accomplishment, as opposed to glory, and as such they get the information they need and get out without worrying about bruised egos or recognition for their work. And as for the young bucks who feel free to yammer in front of "the old guys," well, Iron Legionnaires outlasted them in life; every day it's more likely they'll outlast the whisper-snappers in death as well.

Family Ties

The Iron Legion recognizes the strength of family ties, particularly among mortals who have lived to see several generations of their offspring. Because so many new wraiths are desperate to contact their loved ones, each new recruit is allowed time off to search for news of her dead relatives. Although this practice seems indulgent to some, the Iron Legion's policy is that no recruit can function to her fullest potential while her mind is focused on other things — like whether or not Grandma Keely has been turned into a nightstand. Once a new member has successfully established communication with the deceased branch of her family, she will be able to return to the task at hand with fewer distractions.

Behind the Mask

Deathlords are never seen in public without their masks. In fact, only a sparse handful of wraiths know what even one Deathlord looks like, or could identify a single Deathlord's voice. For over a thousand years the Senate and rulers of Stygia have remained enshrouded in mystery, cloaked in anonymous garments and isolated from the *hot pollot* by bodyguards and functionaries. The Ashen Lady is no exception to this policy of solitude. Indeed, the only way to identify her is by the exquisite silver mask she wears to all public ceremonies.

Four or five centuries ago, the Ashen Lady experienced a radical change of personality. The official story was that she had been engaged in ever-fiercer disagreement with Charon for decades. The matter finally came to a head after weeks of intense, private debate in the Onyx Tower. The Ashen Lady emerged from Charon's chambers, broken and humbled. She claimed to have seen the error of her ways and pledged her support to all of Charon's ideals and policies. In the ensuing nights, persons close to the Iron Legion began to note a marked change in the policies and practices of the Lady, a change that was whispered to be the result of Charon's breaking of her spirit. Of course, no one knows if the wraith who entered the Onyx Tower wearing the Ashen Lady's mask is the same wraith who left wearing it.

The Ashen Lady



Descended from a long line of kings of the Celtic peoples, Andriana spent her life as queen and matriarch to a large tribe in the southern part of Britannia. After her death, she continued to communicate with her people, advising them on the movements of enemy tribes and passing on the wisdom that only experience can bring. Her goodness was noted throughout the Underworld; her compassion became legendary. Centuries ago, Charon selected her to become a senator in his new Roman-style government, and ever since, she has served the Hierarchy with unwavering devotion.

Charity, philosophy and endurance are the Ashen Lady's highest ideals. She is always looking out for new ways to help the average soul, whether by aiding them in obtaining a fair trial or by administering some of her priceless wisdom. She believes that the study of philosophy and art are the highest pinnacles of human achievement, and that only through the understanding of the soul can we ever hope to end the wars among peoples both living and dead. Her goals include maintaining and improving the strong foundations of her Legion, to ensure that in the centuries to come her ideals will be upheld throughout the Underworld.

— Official Biography of the Ashen Lady

Oh, sure, the other Deathlords may be great military leaders, but the time has long since passed for the Hierarchy to be ruled by the laws of war. What other Deathlord has her political savvy? Who can challenge the Iron Legion's powers of strategy? No, if anyone is to replace Charon, it should be the Ashen Lady. At least we won't be running off into battles at the drop of a hat. We'll have some peace and civility for a change.

— Silus Martinus, Anacreon of Gaeta

Of course the Ashen Lady would prefer that she be the next supreme ruler of the Hierarchy. At this time, however, she takes only small steps toward the goal. Instead of constantly puffing about her talents to the other Deathlords, she quietly builds her resources and undermines the credibility of her rivals. Ashes, ashes, they all fall down. By sealing compacts with high-ranking officials in other Legions, she hopes to topple the other Deathlords by undercutting their internal support. When the time is right, the Ashen Lady will tug on those strings, and the support structures of the other Legions will come tumbling down. Only the Iron Legion will remain standing, and only those who swear fealty to the Ashen Lady will be permitted to rise from the dust.

The Seat of Shadows

The word "opulent" does not adequately describe the Seat of Shadows. At the walls of the compound, towers of black stone adorned with white spindles pierce the air, giving the entire structure the appearance of some massive insect that might rise and shake itself free of the ashy Stygian earth. Reconstructed in the 1700s by the brightest architects of the Italian Renaissance, the Seat of Shadows mixes centuries, styles and visions in such a way that all are fused into a seamless, monstrous whole. It is conventional wisdom that any number of sackings of major cities in the Skinlands had the Ashen Lady's fingerprints on them, so that she might have more building materials for her palace. Needless to say, the Iron Legion denies the allegations, and the Smiling Lord (whose ranks were swelled by those conquests) offers his support to the Ashen Lady's denials.

Over a thousand souls are housed within the compound, and there are temporary quarters for several hundred more. Permanent residents include the Ashen Lady and her council, as well as her Salon and corps of personal bodyguards. Significant features include a vast private library, an art gallery, several ornate fountains, a state-of-the-art research laboratory and a reliquary in which are housed thousands of precious relics.

Visitors may tour the main courtyard, escorted by a guide. Daily tours also allow tourists to view the majestic ballroom, the military drilling grounds and two of the grand baroque fountains. Other areas of the Seat have been glimpsed by lucky visitors, but the Ashen Lady is very particular about which sections of her home she is willing to show off to visitors.

My dear Beggar Lord,

The time has come for action. Why do we waste decades looking for Charon to return as if we were errant children and he our stern but loving father? Charon is gone. You know that as well as I. Let us put an end to the charade, shall we, and rule as we should. Are we not the Lords of Death, answering to no man? Charon was merely first among equals in the days of our youth, and I would charge you not to forget that.

Stand fast with me in this suit, my friend. Let us no longer be the humble and obedient servants of Charon's vision, but rather his rightful and ascendant heirs. The reins of power have fallen slack. Join with me in taking them up once again, for the good of Stygia and our greater glory. And when we have made Stygia ours, instead of holding it in custodianship for a ghost of a ghost, then perhaps you shall need to beg no more.

Consider my words.

Yours in respect,

Andriana

The Ashen Lady

Political Structure

If you want something done right, hire a specialist.

— Sheilagh O'Donnel, Minister of Research and Development

The Iron Legion's chain of command begins with the Ashen Lady and her High Council. Although every person on her Council of Ministers is accountable to the Lady, each has almost complete authority over her own areas of responsibility. Some units, such as the Salon and the Advocates, operate independently outside of the Council, but all basic Legion functions are controlled by one or more of the Ministers. Each Minister has a staff of generals, and from there the chains of command follow the standard Stygian model.

Council of Ministers

The 11 Ministers on the High Council are responsible for the major functions of the Legion. The identities of only a few are known. The Ministers, in no particular order, are:

Minister of Economics (Haym Solomon): This wraith oversees all financial transactions and economic strategy. He produces annual reports on the trends in the Stygian economy and sets the Legion's budget.

Minister of Defense: The Minister of Defense oversees research and development of tactics, devices and Arcanoi which relate directly to combating Spectres. She also has jurisdiction over Byway patrols and counterstrike units.

Minister of Construction: This wraith heads the Construction Division, which is responsible for all building, paving and fortification projects, both in Stygia and the Shadowlands.

Minister of Research and Development (Sheilagh O'Donnel): The Minister of R&D coordinates all research programs, save those specifically claimed by other Ministers. Her bailiwick includes the MPPU, engineering research, weapons development and so on. Although individual projects do fall under the duties of other Ministers, R&D is still responsible for assigning the appropriate staff to that project and ensuring that all laboratories are properly equipped and managed.

Minister of Recruiting: He oversees the harvesting and recruiting of new wraiths, including everything up to indoctrination. The Reaper corps reports to him, and he also has final say (which he rarely exercises) on which new recruits are forge fodder.

Minister of Training: She designs, develops and implements training programs for all of the Legion's other divisions. This includes skill testing, recruit placement and Maelstrom response programs.

Minister of Planning: This wraith is responsible for the development of new Necropoli and resource allocation.

Minister of the Military General (Hugh of Lusignan): Oversees all fighting battalions, and is second in command of the Legion in times of war.

Minster of Legion Relations (Adam Orleton, late bishop of Hereford, Worcester and Winchester): Essentially the master diplomat of the Legion, he oversees relations with the other Legions and deals with Stygian political issues.

Minister of Intelligence (Tobias Smeck): Sabotage, intelligence and counterintelligence programs (including efforts to infiltrate the Labyrinth) are in this minister's purview.

Minister of Special Projects (Charles Proteus Steinmetz): The Minister develops new programs and oversees miscellaneous units, including the Communiqués. He also serves as a liaison with the Salon, on those rare occasions when the Lady doesn't feel like dealing with the creative types directly.

Turnover of the Ministers is steady but not rapid, and most have good runs of several decades, if not centuries. On the other hand, the creep of progress is inevitable, and not one of the original Ministers remains. The Ashen Lady, in some of her more forthcoming moments, notes that this gives younger wraiths "something to shoot for."

The Rest of the Menagerie

From the earliest days, the Iron Legion has been friendly toward the fae. 'Tis odd, I know, for in the Skinlands Iron has always been said to be fatal to the Fair Folk, but things change when you cross the Shroud, it seems. Apparently, she had a fondness for faeries when she was a child. The whole thing seems silly



now, for it's not as though they're very useful to us. But women being what they are, she's always had a soft spot for the little buggers, even commissioning songs and poems in their honor.

Lately, she's developed a keen interest in werewolves. Every so often she mumbles something about them being tied to the land and preserving the Great Mother. Been going on about them for a few centuries, at least. She's always hounding the Salon to discover new ways to contact the spirits of the wolves. As if they'd want to talk to her!

One thing's for certain, though: She loathes vampires. Can't stand the bloodsuckers. Oh, you should see it when someone offers her a dead Leech for her Salon. Wails like a banshee, she does. (I'd wager that banshees are but children compared to the Lady — her wails are more terrifying than a sound any earthly critter could howl up.) Oh, no, no vampires are welcome here. She'd as soon smelt them into shoe leather as look at them. I've even heard that she goes out of her way to make trouble for them in the Skinlands as well, but that'd be a Dictum violation, so I can't countenance those stories.

Mages and mummies and the like she has little use for. There may be a few dead sorcerers lingering at the Salon, but the Legion has no official policy on these types, nor do I see one coming any time soon. She's got no interest in their games, and as such pretends they don't exist. It must be working; they've not bothered her in years.

— M.V., court jester

Favorites


The Salon

When the fashionable ladies of Europe began surrounding themselves with the most intelligent and learned men they could find, the Ashen Lady determined that she would have no less than the best for herself. Collecting the most talented poets, scientists and philosophers she could find in her ranks, her coterie of intellectuals keeps her amused and in good humor even during the worst of times.

Legionnaires in the field resent the lush life of the members of the Lady's Salon, living as they do in relative ease at the Seat of Shadows, but any grumbles the grunts air fall on deaf ears. Reapers for the Iron Legion are paid special bonuses for "discovering" suitable candidates for the Salon, which has led to some comical scenes of Reapers trying frantically to preserve the lives of potential Salon members long enough for these "great" men and women to fall under the Legion's purview.

Few Salon members are ever seen again outside the walls of the Seat of Shadows, and no one knows what happens to Salon members who lose their seats; the popular rumor is that such unfortunates become the next round of seating





themselves. The actual membership of this group is unknown, but the rumors persist that Albert Einstein and Arthur Rimbaud are among the stars. Shamans, scholars, philosophers and all manner of wise men and women surround the Ashen Lady, advising her on important matters as well as entertaining her with the arts.

The Ashen Lady sets great store by her menagerie of minds. Her detractors claim that this Circle is nothing more than her private zoo of pets, kept for her pleasure when they could be working for the good of the Empire. To no one's surprise, the Lady's supporters sing quite a different tale. They speak in glowing terms of the greatest collection of thought to be found in Stygia. The more paranoid among Stygia's conspiracy-theory community suggest that the Legion collects scientists to keep them working for the Lady's own ends; Iron Legion doctors are furiously working on cures for cancers and other illnesses so that the Legion may claim millions of souls that would otherwise belong to the Skeletal Lord.

It is undisputed fact that the Lady's favor can make or break artists who are attempting to establish themselves in the Underworld. As such, membership has become something of a prize for up-and-coming artists in the Hierarchy. More than a few Lemures have crossed Legion boundaries to join the Salon, disregarding their deathmarks for a chance at the Lady's favor. Surprisingly enough, the other Deathlords have chosen to ignore these miniscule losses. Indeed, on occasion a Deathlord seeking a favor presents the Ashen Lady with a choice soul to add to her collection. The souls bartered thus, of course, have no say in the matter.

Maelstrom Prediction and Preparation Unit

The Maelstrom Preparation and Prediction Unit (MPPU) is a highly specialized division of the Salon. Comprised mainly of scientists, the MPPU has been charged with discovering everything there is to know about Maelstrom protection, prediction and diversion.

All Iron Legion members are specially trained in Maelstrom Emergency Procedures. In particular, the MPPU designs and administers courses in coping techniques, teaching Legionnaires to steel their courage in the midst of the storm-borne chaos. Word is that the training will eventually be extended to the Hierarchy as a whole, as a gesture of good faith from the Ashen Lady to her fellow Deathlords.

The MPPU also employs engineers and architects to buttress existing Shadowlands structures and to design new construction methods to ensure that future buildings are as stable as possible; too many Citadels have been battered into rubble by Maelstrom winds in the past. The procedures MPPU engineers use are similar to those employed in earthquake retrofitting in the Skinlands. If the MPPU is successful, not only will the Legions have plenty of advance notice before the next Maelstrom but also the storm's resultant destruction and chaos will be minimized. That, at least, is the MPPU's goal.

Enforcing the *Dictum Mortuum*

Every Legion prosecutes violations of the *Dictum Mortuum* to some extent, but not every Legion takes it as seriously as does the Iron Legion. Insiders see this as ironic, considering the Legion's dependence upon the Communiqués, but the fact remains that the Iron Legion is among the most zealous in Stygia when it comes to punishing the violations of unauthorized crossers of the Shroud. To combat this problem of rampant interference with the living, the Legion has set up a team of judges and lawyers to aid in the administration of justice. However, in their role as arresting officers and police protectors, these roving officials have been known to practice selective enforcement of certain aspects of the Law of the Dead. At least, that's the scuttlebutt among the other Legions, but what can you expect from them?

What is known, or at least suspected, is that the Iron Legion turns a blind eye to Skinriding by its members. Wraiths who are not members of the Legion do not gain as much immunity, yet Skinriders are rarely arrested by the Iron Legion unless there is overwhelming proof against them, not to mention evidence of harm caused in the Skinlands. Other forms of communications with the Quick are sometimes accorded similar treatment; it seems the Ashen Lady secretly approves of "benevolent" acts toward the living.

Communiqués

Prophets in the graveyard

— Indigo Girls, "Jonas and Ezekiel"

Although the use of the Embody Arcanos is officially prohibited, the Iron Legion maintains dozens of wraiths who have demonstrated a talent for manifesting across the Shroud. Communicating with the Quick is a topic of special interest to the Ashen Lady, who has been known to mumble offhand remarks about how in her mortal life she was guided by spirits of her ancestors, who came to her on the wind. As such, she would seem to have a vested interest in allowing others to benefit as she did, perhaps in the interest of helping more mortals survive to a ripe old age.

There are any number of powerful Puppeteers and Proctors in the Legion's ranks. Not all of them have offered their services willingly, though many of them prefer servitude over Molation or the other tortures that would otherwise await them if the Legion were to hand them over to the tribunals. Any Iron Legionnaire discovered in the practice of these forbidden Arcanoi is automatically made the target of a "recruitment" for the ranks of the Communiqués. More than one "young" wraith has compared the situation with that of hackers brought on board by the NSA, and in fact, many of the "recruits" do turn and become willing Iron Legion advocates.



Fully fledged Communiqués are at the beck and call of the Ministers, who use them to transmit messages all over the Western world. There's no rhyme or reason to the messages the Ministers send, save that they must be transmitted immediately and without question. A Communiqué who delves too deeply into his work is encouraged to take a vacation, and discouraged gently from being too inquisitive upon his return.

As a reward for excellent service, the Legion sometimes permits Communiqués to perform missions of their own. Generally these bonuses are limited to contacting the wraith's own family and friends; after all, who else does the wraith have any business speaking to? There is one exception to this policy: For purposes of amusement, the Ashen Lady occasionally permits Communiqués to speak through charlatan mediums and fake psychics, exposing the fraud while greatly disturbing the host's mental state. Many a Victorian séance was "enlivened" by the harmless and casual interference of off-duty Communiqués.

Advocates

The only difference between Grand Larceny and a legal fee is a law degree.

— conventional wisdom

Fairness and justice are important concepts in the Iron Legion. The Iron Legion wishes to ensure that everyone gets what they deserve but more importantly, that no innocent person is

punished for a crime he did not commit. To aid in the quest for truth, the Legion established a corps of Advocates from the ranks of the attorneys and judges that have entered the Legion. (What else could you do with hundreds upon hundreds of lawyers?) As often as possible, defendants being tried by members of the Iron Legion are provided with an attorney from the corps of Advocates. Furthermore, the Legion often loans out their lawyers to persons accused of any crime within Stygia itself.

Advocates are generally stationed in Necropoli and serve at the local courts. Sometimes these wraiths hold the positions of magistrates and other court officials. Members of the Advocates corps often were attorneys, judges, officers of court or other learned legal scholars during their lifetimes. Those who have been deemed honest enough are allowed to continue in their work after crossing the Shroud. Advocates caught cheating or accepting bribes are promptly carted off to be melted down into something more useful to society — like paperweights.

No one is entirely certain of why the Legion chooses to expend so much energy on the legal system. Many suggest that it is a way to promote the good name of the Iron Legion and to demonstrate goodwill from the Legion to the other loyal members of the Hierarchy. Enemies claim that this is just another attempt by the Iron Legion to control an important Hierarchy function by loading it up with loyal supporters of the Ashen Lady. After all, in Stygia the graveyards may not vote, but they do show up in court.

Old Pros

Tobias Smeck

Smeck wasn't much of anything while he was alive, and for a long time he wasn't much of anything after he was dead. A small-time thief and pickpocket on the streets of London's East End, he managed to avoid the gallows and the gaol long enough to pass away peacefully in a flophouse. Of course, he wasn't much of a thief, but perhaps that's what enabled him to live as long as he did — moderation in all things, including theft.

For decades after his Reaping, Toby was just a minor functionary in the Iron Legion. Then, one day in the Agora, Toby overheard snatches of a conversation that was just too tantalizing to ignore. Throwing caution to the winds, he ducked into the crowd after the two Iron Legionnaires he'd heard speaking treason. He followed them for as long as he dared, committing the details of their plot to memory before turning at a dead run to the Seat of Shadows. There, both Smeck's information and Smeck himself were welcomed.

Over the centuries, Smeck has risen from humble clerk to Minister of Intelligence, though occasionally his old thieving instincts take over and he swipes the odd relic or two from his peers. Toby has the longest tenure of any of the current Ministers, and aims to hang onto his seat for a good two

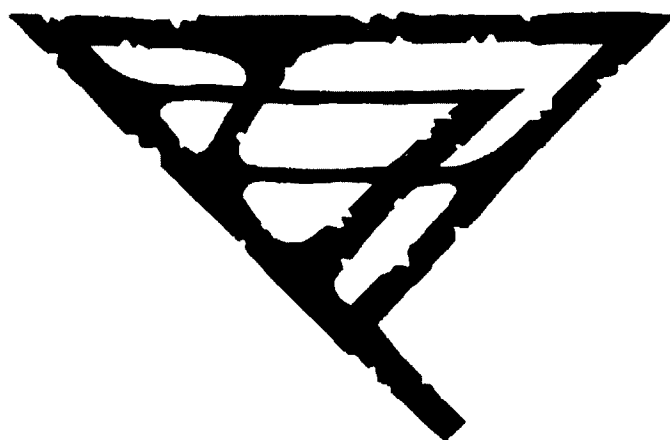
or three centuries more. He's privy to many of the Ashen Lady's plans, not to mention a few things that go on in the Legion that not even she's aware of.

Smeck always wears a mask when appearing as himself. Forged in two pieces crudely welded together, the simple piece is comprised of the two souls who started Toby on his road to greatness. Toby claims he wears it in public to remind himself of his origins. The real reason is that, even now, no one remembers what poor little Toby Smeck looks like, so if he needs to go undercover — or flee — his identity is still safe.

Eleanor

The wraith known as Eleanor may or may not be the legendary Eleanor of Aquitaine; she refuses to confirm or deny when the question is put to her. What is known is that Eleanor is the undisputed mistress of the Salon, and has more of the Ashen Lady's ear than all 11 Ministers combined.

A wraith of stunning beauty, Eleanor actually has final say as to which of the artists, poets and philosophers of the Dead are allowed into the Salon's ranks. Anyone incurring her displeasure (as opposed to her annoyance, which is quick to flare and equally quick to subside) is removed from the Salon with all due haste, while wraiths on the outside who attract her attention are brought in with equal speed. In all the centuries during which Eleanor has led the Salon, it has never, ever grown dull, which may be why the Ashen Lady grants its mistress the autonomy she does.



Aspiring Salon Artist

Quote: *I see where you're coming from. I just don't like that space, and that's why I left it behind 40 years ago.*

Prelude: It isn't your fault that fame found Kerouac and Bukowski and avoided you. After all, you went down the same roads they did, shared a lot of the same experiences, felt the same miseries and wrote down your feelings in the same way. But the Academy discovered those other guys, not you, and you ended up eking out a feeble existence reciting your verse on street corners for change and the occasional crumpled dollar bill. It was a miserable existence financially speaking, but you were doing what you wanted and you figured that every day on the street would be more fodder for the creative mill. One of these days, you were going to see or hear or experience something that you could crystallize in a poem, and then you'd be on your way to the top.

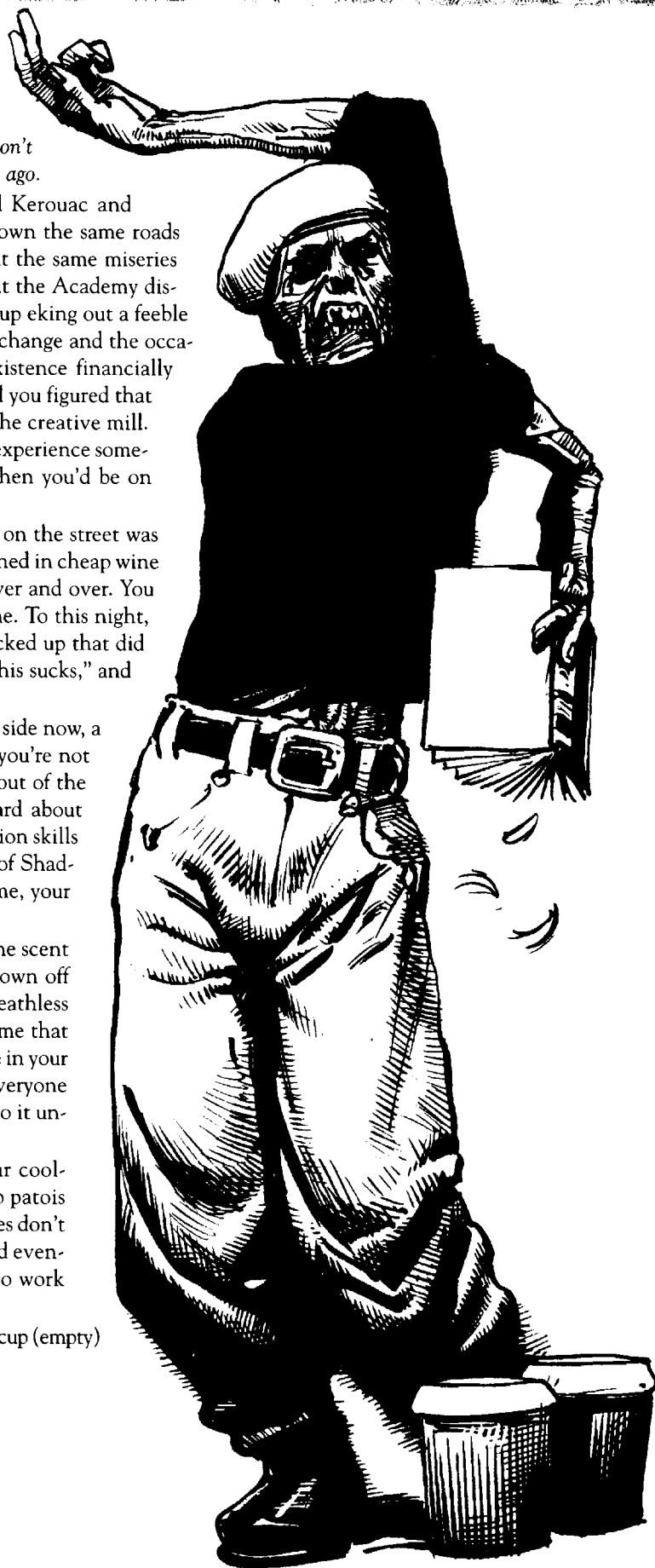
Sad to say, it didn't work like that. Every day on the street was just another day on the street. Inspiration got drowned in cheap wine and too many recitals of the same damn words, over and over. You got older and older, and things stayed just the same. To this night, you're not sure if it was the hacking cough you picked up that did you in, or if your body just looked around, said "This sucks," and decided to pack in.

Regardless, it's irrelevant. You're on the other side now, a new recruit in the Iron Legion's army. Mind you, you're not much one for military life, so you'll take any way out of the grind that you can uncover. Recently you've heard about the Lady's Salon, so you're brushing off your recitation skills and praying for a shot at an audience in the Seat of Shadows. If you get that chance, you know that this time, your genius will be recognized — and for all eternity.

Concept: You're a glory hound who's caught the scent of fame, and this time you're not going to get thrown off the trail. You're convinced that you've written deathless poetry, and you want your shot at the immortal fame that should come with it. You've got supreme confidence in your ART (if not your Arcanos arts), and are sure that everyone will recognize your genius if they just get exposed to it under the proper circumstances.

Roleplaying Hints: Impress upon others your coolness by whatever means are necessary, from bebop patois to impromptu recitations of your work. If the squares don't get it at first, try again later on. They'll come 'round eventually. And you've got all the time in the world to work on them....

Relics: Notebooks full of poems, beret, shades, tin cup (empty)



THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Name: _____ Nature: Avant-garde Life: Street corner poet
 Player: _____ Demeanor: Jester Death: Faded away
 Chronicle: _____ Shadow: The Pusher Regret: Not having burned brighter

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		Passions		Fetters	
Allies	●●●●●	Get work recognized (Pride)	●●●●●	Coffee shop	●●●●●
Haunt	●●○○○	Find talent in others (Ego)	●●●●●	Poetry collection	●●●●●
Mentor	●○○○○	Live the life of luxury	○○○○○	Bottle in the gutter	●○○○○
Memoriam	●○○○○	(Greed)	●●●●●	Old beret	●○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Arcanos		Corpus		Angst	
Keening	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		
Embody	●●○○○		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Phantasm	●○○○○				
	○○○○○				
	○○○○○				
	○○○○○				

Experience		Willpower		Thorns	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Freudian Slip	Pact of Doom	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Shadow Trait (Performance)		

Pathos		Dark Passions	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Destroy other poets	○○○○○	
	(Hate)	●●●●●	
	Slander the Lady (fear)	●●○○○	
		○○○○○	

Resolutions

"So it's real?"

"It's real."

"And hostile?"

"The *Gran Grin* was lost with nearly all hands aboard. I expect reparations to be made." The Ashen Lady leaned forward across the table, her anger palpable from behind her mask. "Those were some of my best; I want recompense."

The Smiling Lord leaned back in his ornately carved relic chair and yawned hugely. "Perhaps," he said with an audible smirk, "you should not have risked them. Or, failing that, not ordered them to sail quite so close to the city's walls."

"Irrelevant." That was the voice of the Beggar Lord, thin and reedy and echoing in the vast chamber that all the Deathlords sat in. "None of us have souls to spare, particularly not trained and trusted ones. Now, if I had any Legionnaires I could spare, I would be happy to donate them to the Ashen Lady to show my appreciation for her dedication to Stygia, but as things stand, I am hardly in a position to make good her losses. Perhaps one of you two gentlemen?" he queried, wagging a pale finger back and forth between the Skeletal and Smiling Lords.

The Skeletal Lord stared across the table for a long moment, then shook his head. "It is our — my feeling that before this is over, the loss of a single ship with its crew will be counted irrelevant," he said, motioning to the scribe who stood behind him to come closer. None of the other Deathlords had brought attendants into the chamber; indeed, by long tradition none were allowed here. But the others recognized the Skeletal Lord's... eccentricities, and made allowances. It was a small enough concession to keep him happy and focused on the matter at hand.

Outside, the wind whistled coldly. It was what the common wraiths of Stygia called a Maelstrom wind, low and dirty and stinking of rot, and more often than not it presaged a storm rolling in off the Sea of Shadows. There was no lightning yet, for which the gathered Deathlords were grateful. The chamber in which they met was near the top of the Onyx Tower, below only Charon's personal apartments. For two millennia the Deathlords had gathered in this chamber to debate and argue, wheedle and cajole. It had been a place of pride in the old days, symbolic of their rank just below Charon in the grand and glorious Empire he had created. That had been a long time ago, though, and now the room held all the charm and ambience of a tomb. The furniture dated back

to the 14th century; the tapestries and carpets even further, and the heavy candelabra that hung from the ceiling had been crafted by Nhudri himself. None of it meant anything anymore. The Senate Chamber, as Charon himself had dubbed it, was a place of business these dark nights, and nothing more.

Outside, the Great Clock tolled nine. From the chamber's lone window, the re-outfitting of the Stygian fleet was visible, and the smoke from Embers' hidden forges boiled out in a hundred wind-whipped plumes. No one spoke.

It was only reluctantly that the Smiling Lord stood, pushing his chair back and striding over to the window. "Many of those ships," he murmured, "are mine. Many of the souls that have gone into refurbishing them are mine as well. I'd hate to waste them."

"Are we so convinced that this city is a threat, then, that we would risk your precious toys?" That was the Laughing Lady, who'd remained silent until now. "I know insanity, and I'm looking at it right now. We've successfully ignored this place for how long? Why the sudden compulsion to kick over the anthill?"

"Because the Ferryman are mixed up in it," the Smiling Lord rumbled. "And because this place is stale."

"Stale?"

"Stale," he replied flatly. "Look at us. We circle each other like wolves, poaching a soul here and a soul there,



and for what? Nothing! None of us will ever replace Charon — anyone who tries will be dragged down by the rest of us. We can't move on any of the other Kingdoms — you all know my feelings on that — and we're certainly in no shape to mount an expeditionary force into the Labyrinth."

"The Guilds are," purred the sole Lady of Fate who had deigned to attend. Behind her, the scribe stood idle. Only his master's words were worth recording, it seemed.

"Screw the Guilds. If they were worth worrying about, it would be Ember and Midian and that lot sitting in here debating, not us. Let them lose their spelunkers. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that the Empire is going to hell."

"Duly noted. So why does this mean we need to attack a semi-mythical city full of vampires? And why did we have to manufacture an incident?" The Laughing Lady's tone was hard and suspicious.

"Omelets and eggs, my dear Lady." The Smiling Lord turned back out to face the window. "The Empire is tearing itself apart. We need something to unify it, and an enemy is the easiest way to do that. So we build up the threat in the populace's minds, then release word that the evil vampires and their slaves have sunk the peaceful *Gran Grin* — complete with that idiot boy aboard, so we can try to

siphon a few more Renegades into helping with the effort — and before long the masses will be demanding war. All of them. With one voice."

"And what happens if we're attacked by Yu Huang, or Coldheart, or any of the others while our troops are off storming the castle?" The Beggar Lord was indignant. "I'd love to come home to find the Dragon's ass on Charon's throne!"

"Oh, calm down," the Smiling Lord said dismissively. "For one thing, it's just one city. There can't be too much resistance, not against the strength of the combined Legions. For another, if worst comes to worst, I have the resources to end this quickly. We'll mount a few frontal assaults, settle in for a siege, and if things don't end quickly enough to suit us, well, the hammer comes down."

"The... hammer?" There was a note of curious fear there, unusual from the Skeletal Lord.

His counterpart nodded. "While the rest of you sent that expedition to Nippon to poke at Pika Don, I did a little research. Oh, and I had my troops stay a little closer to home. Los Alamos."

"You've got a nuke." It was a statement, not a question.

"One, several, let's not quibble on numbers. Let's just say that I'm sitting on some fairly awesome destructive ca-

pability, which I am willing to put to use for the good of Stygia."

"And for the sake of your Legion," the Beggar Lord laughed. "Moving upstairs, are we?"

"Not at all. Let's just say that I'm a concerned Imperial citizen."

"If you do this thing," came Fate's voice from the end of the table, "you know the consequences. All of them."

"A new Maelstrom perhaps, perhaps the destruction of our besieging troops — you could even crack the Labyrinth wide open! You should be one of mine!" The Laughing Lady retreated to the door.

"Calm down. It's only a last resort. I fully expect that our troops, led, of course, by your pet Liamh, will carry the day without my needing to haul out what I keep in my basement. I'm sure using the device won't be necessary. And the benefits of this little action are incalculable. Think on it. A unified Stygia. A potential enemy destroyed. And a demonstration of our strength to anyone — including the Neverborn — who might even think of attacking us. Think."

Outside, the wind howled. And wraiths walking the streets of Stygia, gazing up at the single light shining in the Onyx Tower saw it suddenly wink out.





The Grim Legion

"SIR: I have the honor to report, with regard to the action of the 19th inst., that owing to the enemy's withdrawal from my front to reinforce his beaten left, my command was not seriously engaged. My loss was as follows: Killed, one officer, one man."

— Ambrose Bierce, "One Officer, One Man"



Violence is an endless cycle, perhaps the only true self-perpetuating force that exists in the universe. Hatred generates more hatred. Spilled blood almost always whets the world's thirst for more. Death is inevitable, true enough, but the deaths experi-


enced by those who serve the Grim Legion are never timely and seldom take place after a long life well spent in the pursuit of happiness. The Grim Legion is peopled solely by the ghosts who've been killed by violent means, and to say that they have a bunker mentality is to be guilty of gross understatement. Simply put, outsiders are not welcome.

People are murdered every day. Bullets, knives, poison, even violent beatings — all of these provide the proverbial one-way ticket. Wars, gang activities, armed robberies, intoxicated drivers and the ever-more-popular sexual crimes send people into the Legion's arms every day. And so, with every violent death, the Legion of the Grim grows that much stronger. With every violent death, another enemy is added to the Grim Legion's roster of future victims.

The Grim Legion is a vast army of wraiths, and most of them are filled with an overwhelming hatred for at least one of the living. Comprised of the victims of Violence, as a rule these wraiths tend to hold a grudge for a long, long time. If the actual target of the wraith's ire dies, more often than not the wraith's hatred is passed down like an inheritance of malice. Some Grim Legionnaires have been haunting particular families of mortals for centuries, and show no signs of being willing to let the matter drop.

As with all of the Legions, there is a great deal of recruiting going on under the banner of the Smiling Lord. One of the major differences between the Grim and other Legions is simply that there are few members of the Grim Legion who aren't thrilled to be there, at least, not once they see the alternatives. That's because the Smiling Lord makes each and every new recruit an offer neither she nor her Shadow can refuse.

The Smiling Lord promises retribution for past crimes, a chance for revenge. With so little for most wraiths to look forward to in the Shadowlands, that promise is a powerful tool. More importantly, the Smiling Lord always keeps his vows to



the best of his ability — which means that regardless of the *Dictum Mortuum*, every wraith gets at least one shot. What the wraith does with it is up to him, but if there's any way to arrange it, each Legionnaire gets at least one chance to even his personal ledger.

Perhaps more than any other Legion, the Grim Host actively seeks its enemies among the ranks of the Hierarchy. Some members of the Grim Legion spend the majority of their existences seeking out the murderers who've found their way into the other Legions, seeking to locate them and confirm their guilt or innocence. These sleeper agents don't take retribution personally for the deeds the target committed. Instead, they make reports to their superiors, and the matter is handed over to a group of specially trained hunters called Retrievers, whose sole task is to hunt down and capture the accused for trial. If circumstances make capturing the accused impossible, the Retrievers then arrange for the victims of their target to have a chance for a one-on-one "discussion." These little chats normally end with one of the wraiths finding out the truth about what lies beyond the Shadowlands. Most of the membership of the Grim Legion makes it a point to know how to fight in the hopes that, one day, each will meet her murderer.

Ironically, few wraiths seem to truly comprehend just how powerful the Legion is, because much of the recruiting that takes place for the followers of the Grim Lord waits until the after the members have been accepted into another Legion. Some claim the leader of the Grim Legion is always smiling because he knows the darkest secrets of his enemies; with the elaborate spy network he's established over the centuries, they just might be right.

The Smiling Lord's network of spies doesn't care about hidden treasures or secret trysts between lovers who've promised themselves to someone else. Money is not important to them, nor is gaining political power high on their agenda. The Grim care only about the secrets behind the deaths of their own. Who killed their ranks, and why? The Smiling Lord's soldiers may not always know the answer when they're Reaped, but the Grim Legion does all it can to find the answers to any unsolved murders in their ranks. When the mysteries stand revealed, the guilty — among both the Quick and the Dead — often come to regret the choices they've made. That is, if the Grim allow them the time.

Politics

It's fair to say the Grim Legion treads the line between formal behavior and going the way of the Heretics. When dealing with the other Legions, those in command of the Grim Legion are normally formal and polite, at least in public. When dealing with matters of importance to the Hierarchy as a whole, the Grim normally abstain from voting or side with the arguments that offer the most benefits to the general welfare of the Hierarchy as a whole. When dealing with Spectres and Renegades, Grim Legionnaires are among some of the most ruthless, vicious fighters in existence, never taking prisoners unless the soulforgers need more fuel.

In truth, there have been numerous acts of out-and-out violence committed on the other Legions with the Grim Legion's fingerprints all over them. These sudden attacks normally target particular individuals who did the one thing that truly enrages a Grim Legionnaire — kill someone violently while they were alive. Even among the Heretics and the Renegades, there are huge numbers of murder victims, and they too seek revenge. With the aid of the Grim Legion, even these outlaw wraiths get their chance. All it costs is a little assistance from time to time, and the willingness to attack a few select targets in any skirmishes.

Murderers often come to violent ends, in which case finding them is easy enough. Those who've lived and died by the sword are Reaped by the Grim Legion and brought before a tribunal comprised of three judges and, if possible, accusers who were the *Enfant's* victims. The new wraiths are given no time to prepare, merely told to justify the violent ends they perpetrated upon others. Should the judges decide the new wraith has the right to continued existence, the victims of the newly dead soul still have the right to claim retribution. These situations are normally resolved in ritual combat. In such situations, the victims have distinct advantages over their murderers, especially if they've been among the Dead for a while and had time to learn any Arcanoi. Should the victim of a murder in turn destroy her enemy, all is forgiven. Vengeance is far more important than the laws, even those dictated by the Grim Legion. Should a murderer manage to kill his victim a second, final time, he is judged again, silently. If he is found wanting, his fate is sealed: As soon as he has claimed his vengeance on the persons responsible for his death, he is escorted to the soulforgers and made a useful element in society, if not exactly a sentient one. If the killer's actions in bringing about his victim's second death seem inoffensive enough, he is allowed to continue his existence as a wraith instead of as a tool.

The Grim Legion tends to turn deaf ears and blind eyes in the direction of wraiths who violate the *Dictum Mortuum*, provided the cause of the violation is vengeance against the living. This policy is frowned upon by the rest of the Hierarchy, but little can be done about the situation. Punishment within the Grim Legion is meted out by members of the Grim Legion, and the most any of the ranks has ever suffered for this gross dereliction of duty is an occasional slap on the wrist, followed by a surreptitious pat on the back. There are many in the Grim Legion who openly encourage retribution against the Quick, and a great number of the Reapers within the Legion take a special pleasure in capturing the souls of those guilty of murder. The soulforgers under the Legion's control seldom lack for raw materials.

The Renegades and Heretics — those who have been murdered as their entrance to the Shadowlands — have a quiet ally in the Grim Legion. While the Legion officially condemns Heretics and Renegades, the posturing of politics can often take a back burner to the need for revenge. Vengeance makes for strange bedfellows, and that's especially true in the case of the Grim Legion. Heretics and Renegades who

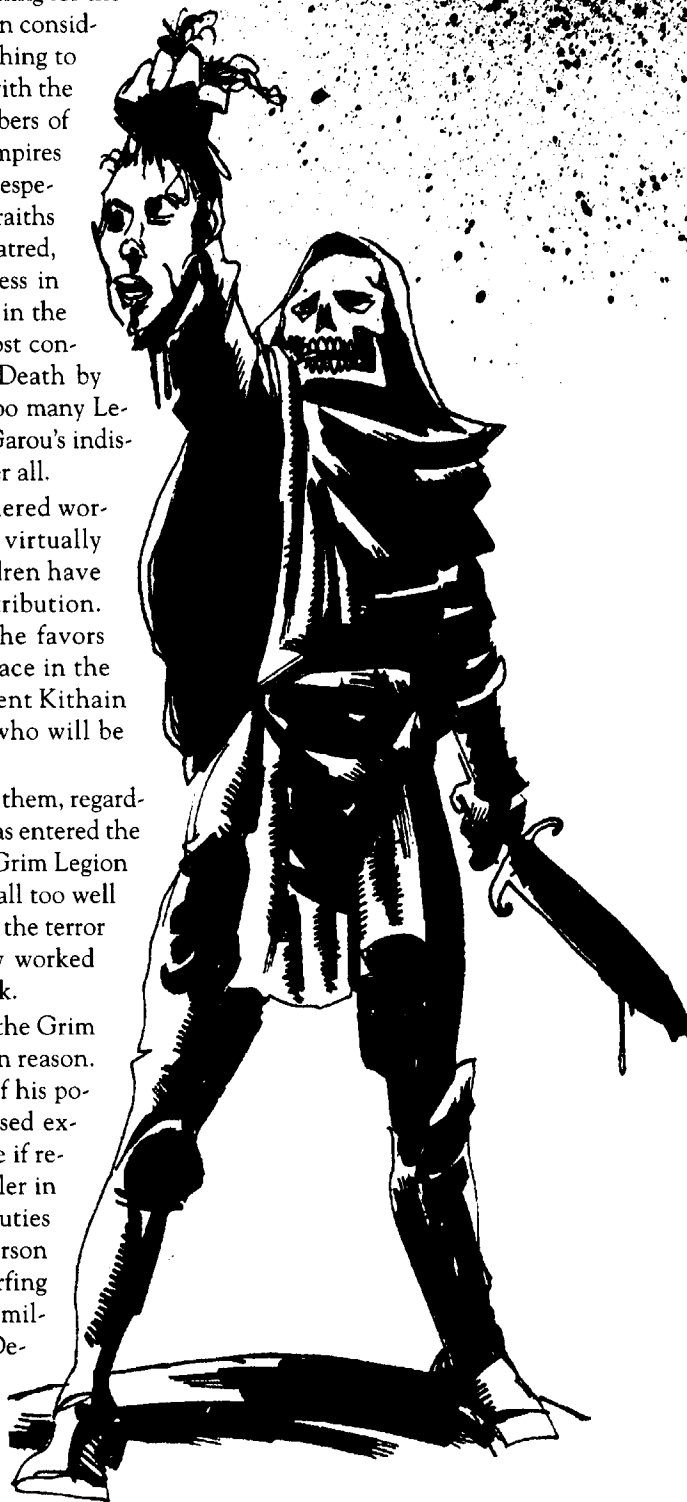
met their ends by foul means are aided by the Grim if they seek revenge, The only stipulation is that they in turn must aid the Grim Legion in seeking justice.

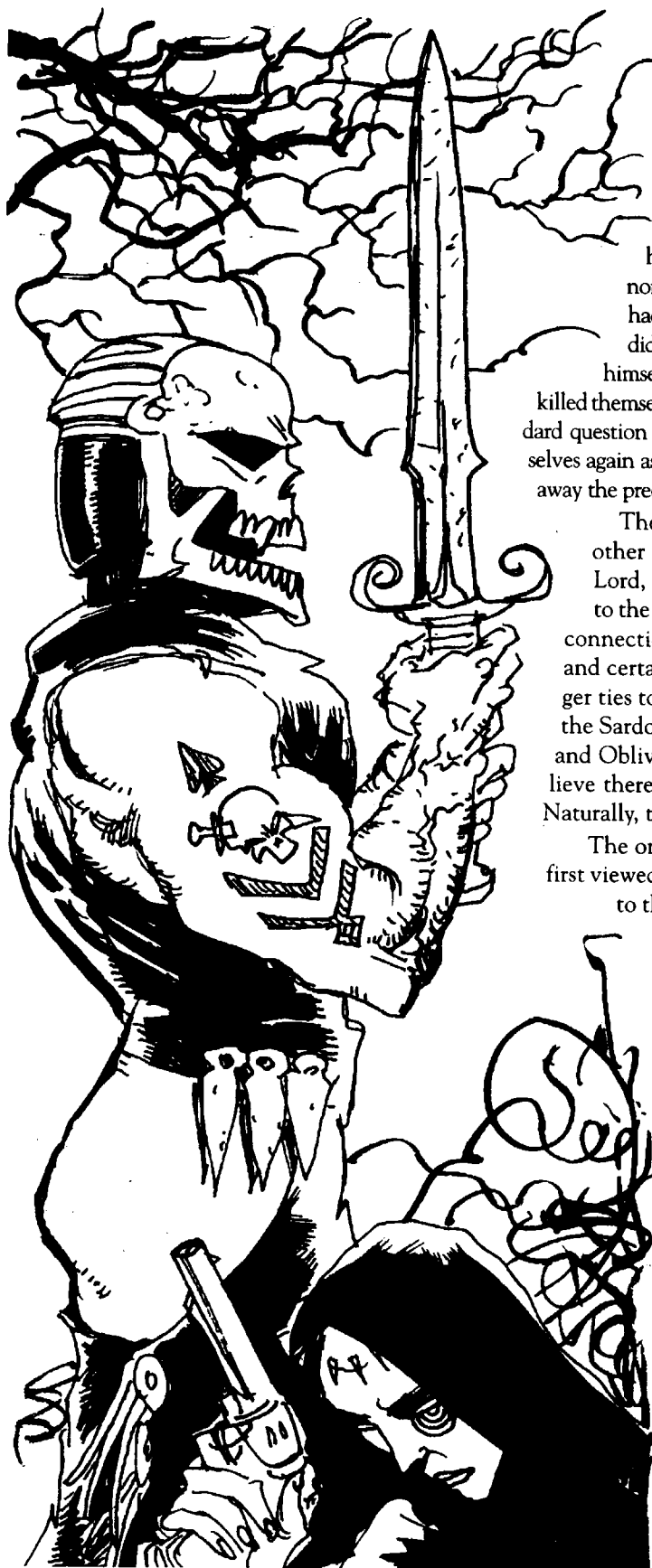
For the most part, the Grim Legion dislikes the supernatural entities who charge through the Skinlands. Too many Legionnaires know intimately the pain that vampires, werewolves and other so-called supernaturals can blithely inflict. Many find the mages, those foul reality-warper of the Meat World, moderately appalling, and have a special loathing for the Euthanatos. The Hollow Ones, on the other hand, are often considered friends by the Legion. Even if the Goth mages do nothing to aid the Legion as a whole, they're at least willing to speak with the occasional wraith, and some have even aided a few members of the Smiling Lord's troops in their efforts to find justice. Vampires are, by and large, considered a threat by the Grim Legion, especially the Tremere and Giovanni, who often make use of wraiths against their will. Only the Samedi are spared the Grim's hatred, for only the Samedi go out of their way to aid the Restless in seeking their vengeance against the Quick. Though some in the Legion actually have dealings with the Silent Striders, most consider the Garou a threat which should be eradicated. Death by werewolf bite or slash is never a pleasant thing, and all too many Legionnaires have found themselves on the wrong end of a Garou's indiscriminate assault. The Veil doesn't apply to the Dead, after all.

Among the changelings, only the sluagh are considered worthy of notice. With their network of information about virtually everything, the whispering nightmares of Russian children have become a valuable tool in the Grim's quest to gain retribution. The Grim Legion is only too willing to reciprocate the favors the sluagh perform for them. Redcaps have a special place in the hate-filled hearts of the Grim Legion. Many of the violent Kithain are already on the ever-growing list of living entities who will be punished when the Grim come into their own.

In short, the Grim seek to punish anyone who offends them, regardless of power or species. More than one of the Awakened has entered the Shadowlands to find a welcome party comprised of crack Grim Legion troops waiting for him. Samuel Haight learned his lesson all too well when he passed from the Skinlands into the Shadowlands; the terror of the Skindancers is now an attractive and cunningly worked soulforged ashtray on a minor Hierarchy functionary's desk.

When it comes to the other Legions, the attitude of the Grim Legion is simple: Let the punishment fit the crime, within reason. Each individual is regarded as an individual, regardless of his position... within reason. The Grim Legion is not comprised exclusively of fanatics, and the Legion will forgo vengeance if revenge goes hand in hand with catastrophe. A known killer in a seat of power is still a known killer, but the title and duties carried out by the individual are respected, even if the person wielding that power is considered an enemy. When surfing the political tides in Stygia and the Shadowlands, the Smiling Lord insists on proper decorum from his underlings. Despite the official neutrality of the Grim, the Smiling Lord understands that making the wrong enemies could well lead to disaster for the entire Legion under his command. Personal vendettas are set aside for reasons of





state... at least until the time for retribution is properly arranged. There is always time for vengeance away from the Machiavellian arena.

In the eyes of the Grim, the Skeletal Legion, the Emerald Legion and the Paupers Legion are generally regarded more highly than the other Legions, while the Penitent Legion is often frowned upon. Madness is not an excuse for murder in the eyes of the Grim Legion, or surely Stalin would have to be forgiven his transgressions. The Silent Legion is ignored. Any fool stupid enough to throw away his life because he had a bad day, or several bad days, is beneath contempt. Not only did the fool get stuck in the Shadowlands, he also managed to get himself wrangled into a group of maudlin, depressed losers who also killed themselves because life wasn't treating them nicely enough. The standard question among the Grim Legion is: "Do they plan on killing themselves again as soon as death starts shitting on them?" Anyone who throws away the precious gift of life is little better than a murderer.

The current Smiling Lord seems to favor contact with the other Dark Kingdoms. Several representatives of the Smiling Lord, referred to as the Sardonicai, are used as "ambassadors" to the other Dark Kingdoms. While progress is often slow, strong connections have been made with most of the Dark Kingdoms, and certain transactions have been made to produce even stronger ties to the Obsidian Kingdom and the Jade Empire. Officially, the Sardonicai work toward a union of forces against the Spectres and Oblivion. Most of the Lords of the other Legions tend to believe there is far more going on than the Smiling Lord will admit. Naturally, they are correct in their assumptions.

The organization of the Grim Legion appears haphazard when first viewed from the outside. To no one's surprise, there is a method to the Smiling Lord's madness. The Legion follows the basic Hierarchy setup throughout Stygia and the Shadowlands. Legionnaires make up the ranks of the military forces held by the Smiling Lord, and over an entire Citadel is set an Anacreon. Beyond that point, however, the Smiling Lord's unique thoughts on management can be seen expressed to their fullest.

In truth, Grim Anacreons hold almost complete autonomy over their Citadels, though each is expected to make a weekly report to the Smiling Lord via courier in order to receive tithings. Should the Deathlord of the Grim Legion find an Anacreon wanting, someone is sent to take that wraith's place, and is enforced by 100 of the Smiling Lord's personal shock troops, the Executioners (also known as the Grim Guard). How each Anacreon arranges matters is entirely her affair, provided she continues to serve the primary purpose of the Grim Legion — vengeance.

Anacreons are expected to serve the Hierarchy to the best of their ability, and they are expected to keep careful records of precisely how well the battle goes against Spectres, Heretics, Renegades and other Legions in their Citadels.

Deathmarks

The deathmarks of the Grim are obvious to even the untrained eye. Most members of the Legion bear the wounds that killed them proudly, often wearing garments that accentuate the fatal slash or deadly bullet. Beyond that, Grim wraiths have deathmarks akin to the discoloration caused by heavy bruising, giving the Smiling Lord's servants a blotched and mottled appearance.

Non-Military Duties



Only a fraction of the Grim Legion actually works within the military. The vast majority work in far more mundane jobs, ranging from book keeping to Reaping. For the most part, there are no set hours during which the wraiths of the Grim Legion must perform their duties. The Smiling Lord understands the need to handle personal matters all too well.

The only expectation is that each individual wraith performs her duties in their entirety every day. Those who fall behind in their assigned tasks are often replaced by someone more capable. This is not a punishment, but rather a recognition of the fact that the wraith in question is obviously preoccupied with other matters. Just the same, once a soul has been removed from a position of rank, he must go through the entire process of seeking promotion again — from the bottom. When a wraith gets demoted, any rank achieved to that point is removed, along with any special privileges that rank might carry. The Smiling Lord maintains a policy of lenience, but still expects the work he assigns to be accomplished.

One of the most important assignments anyone in the Hierarchy can receive is that of an Infiltrator. Infiltrators are expected to work harder than most of their counterparts, because their task is to discover the truth behind how members of the Legion died. These detectives often interact with the supernatural entities moving through the Skinlands, exchanging information and seeking out the parties guilty of murder. Though the Infiltrators once carried the title Requiers, they have long since adopted the name given to them by the masses in Stygia. The Infiltrators changed their name to suit the truth of the matter; as often as not, the very supernaturals they deal with are on the list of those the Grim Legion means to punish. That being the case, the Infiltrators often work to gain the trust of the entities in question, even as they are working out the details of that individual's demise. While their work is exceedingly important to the Grim Legion, few Infiltrators are well-liked or trusted by their counterparts. Any group which regularly works as judge, jury and executioner as often as the Infiltrators does is certain to


develop a dark reputation. Frighteningly enough, most of these wraiths seem to thrive on the subtle fear they generate in other Restless.

Reapers in the Grim Legion do not work in quite the same way as many of their peers. In addition to Reaping the souls of murder victims, they are also responsible for gathering those responsible for the murders. The Grim Legion considers any wraith guilty of murder as "fair game," despite the protests of the other Legions. Numerous skirmishes have broken out as a result of this policy, though the tendency of some Anacreons to return the discorporated remains of wraiths accused of murder to the other Legions claiming them is often considered an appropriate act of appeasement. Most Grim Legionnaires seem to accept that the discorporation of the guilty wretch is punishment enough for the crimes committed, but there are always exceptions.

One duty that must be performed by all members of the Legion, regardless of their rank, is the "fingering" of guilty souls. Any wraith accused of Flesh-Murder is an instant enemy of the Grim Legion, unless he can defend his actions. Murderers captured by the Grim Legion can request a hearing to decide whether or not they should be punished outright or given the chance to face their accusers in a court of law. The Grim Legion fully acknowledges the fact that its courts are not fair. Grim Legionnaires also point out that murdering someone isn't very fair, either.

While the Grim Legion doesn't believe in openly snatching the accused from the Shadowlands for instant punishment — unless the Legionnaires are certain they won't get the blame — they do believe in trying to remove any such blights from the Shadowlands. Every Citadel has a veritable army of arbiters whose sole purpose is to make public the accusations of the "guilty," and to seek their punishment through Stygian law. Many of the other Legions have been forced to come up with their own advocates in order to combat the number of legal eagles employed by the Grim Legion. Even in the Shadowlands, lawyers are a blight on society. The Smiling Lord fully accepts that this particular curse is entirely his fault.

The last great task kept by the Grim Legion is the continuing work in progress they simply call the Great Ledger. This massive tome comprises the truths about the vast majority of murders committed in the Skinlands, and gives eyewitness accounts more often than not. While the work is unavoidably biased, the Great Ledger holds far more in the way of truth than it does lies. After a tale of a murder is told, the Smiling Lord sends out his special investigators to study the facts of the case. Any discrepancies between a wraith's story and what the facts seem to show is carefully noted. Most of the Legions consider this a wasted effort, a futile attempt to make records of facts that are simply not important anymore. The Grim Legion believes otherwise. The very act of keeping the manuscript up to date is very cathartic for many of the murdered Dead. For that reason alone it's a job worth the immense effort it takes, at least in the eyes of the Grim Legion.



The Great Ledger is kept in a vault in the depths of Stygia, guarded by a veritable army of proficient soldiers who self-deprecatingly refer to themselves as the Librarian's Guild. These guards take their duties very seriously, as numerous attempts have been made to destroy the text. In addition to the guards, there are hundreds of scribes whose sole duty is to write down the stories of the victims of Violence and meticulously file the pages. The Smiling Lord is known to visit the offices of the Great Ledger regularly, and often spends a few hours out of every day reading over the files which contain the truth about more cases than most minds could ever hope to comprehend.

Military Life

When it comes to battle, the Grim Legion has earned its title. Over the centuries, countless thousands of soldiers have died violently, and the military tacticians who met their deaths on the battlefield number in the thousands. Many innocent victims of war also end up in the Grim Legion, eager for a chance to one day meet with and destroy those who ended their mortal lives. From the first, the armies of the Grim have been dedicated to a singular purpose. They seek revenge against those who slew them. What better assurance of vengeance than a chance to train in combat situations while waiting for the right time?

The Grim Legion willingly battles Spectres and spends countless time guarding the Byways against the minions of Oblivion. What better testing ground is there for soldiers of Stygia than the Tempest? And so the Grim Lord pushes his troops to the limit here.

All Grim soldiers dress alike, with little to distinguish them save their rank. Bodies are covered by heavy gray clothes, which are in turn covered by armor not unlike that worn by the legions of Rome centuries ago. Over this armor the soldiers wear black mantles that seem to absorb any light that comes their way. Though each soldier may chose a different weapon, and many choose to add their own touches to their uniforms, all wear the same masks — heavy helmets designed in imitation of the human skull. Though stylized, these masks have been known to strike fear into the enemies of the Grim Legion, especially when one considers the silence with which the Smiling Lord's soldiers fight. There are no war cries from the Grim Legion, no screams of rage or sorrow. Instead there is a silence that hides a tide of awesome rage.

The Grim Legion believes in discipline on the field of combat. Each move made by a warrior of the Grim Legion should be as a note in a symphony of destruction. Soldiers who tend to swing wildly in combat are seldom around long enough to become a true nuisance. More often than not, their own cohorts destroy them. Wild acts of random violence are not tolerated in the Grim army, as they often lead to injuring the wrong targets.

Perhaps more so than any other Legion, the Grim warriors understand the art of war. Many of their greatest commanders created the combat maneuvers taken for granted by modern-day sol-

diers, and death has not slowed these innovators' minds. Unique methods for fighting off overwhelming odds are one of the Legion's specialties. Tight phalanx formations to stave off Spectral rushes are another favorite, and a Grim Legion "turtle" is often the spearhead that punches through enemy lines during local Maelstroms.

Enemies of the Grim Legion

Spectres are the first and foremost enemies of the Grim Legion, just as they are the scourge of all the Legions. Battling against the Spectres is a duty that all of the Legions' soldiers take seriously. But when called upon, Grim warriors consider anyone a fair target once they've been given the official word. There are a few zealots within the ranks who consider anyone who is not a murder victim to be a potential murderer. Fortunately, such inclusionists are few and far between, and normally watched carefully. That sort of unbridled fanaticism leads too often down the path to Oblivion if unchecked.

Special Orders

Perhaps the most notorious of the Grim Legion's special orders is the Executioners. Members of the Smiling Lord's special guard are renowned for their fighting skills and fanatical tendencies. No fool he, the Smiling Lord is never seen away from his stronghold without 50 or more of his bodyguards surrounding him. While other wraiths in the Legion tend to their own business at the end of their shifts, no one can honestly say they've ever seen an Executioner relax. Some claim there is more to the Executioners than anyone really knows. Certainly there are rumors enough about them. One of the longest standing rumors is that the Executioners take turns bearing the mask of the Smiling Lord. This notion is usually ridiculed, as the Smiling Lord's voice never changes, and he only seldom leaves the Seat of Burning Waters, placed as it is in the center of a lake of disincorporated souls. Besides, the Smiling Lord's policies seldom change, and his benevolent rule — so far as his own Legion goes — remains unaltered.

The Executioners' actual numbers are unknown to any but the Smiling Lord. While at least 50 surround him at all times, it's well-known that large companies of the Executioners leave Stygia regularly to enforce the Smiling Lord's orders in Citadels throughout the Shadowlands. Though they are often seen, the Executioners are seldom heard, save in combat when they often make use of Keening. To date, the only words spoken by the Executioners in public have been commands to attack and exhortations never to retreat.

Sardonikai

The Sardonikai are the elite of the Smiling Lord's Marshals. These highly decorated individuals take phenomenal risks, venturing to other Dark Kingdoms in an effort to improve the Legion's relations with the wraiths of the world. While they officially have little authority, Sardonikai are always treated with respect and deference by the Grim Legion's Anacreons when they visit various Citadels and Necropoli. The Sardonikai often take large entourages with them wherever they go, and usually bring Artifacts of incredible beauty and power as offerings in other Kingdoms. Many return bearing gifts for the Smiling Lord, and most carry tokens from other Kingdoms with them. Exactly how successful these wraiths have been is unknown, but the Grim Legion has recently made clear that it will not take part in conflicts against the Yellow Springs or the so-called Dark Kingdom of Obsidian.

Infiltrators

The Infiltrators are generally hated by those who discover their identities. While most wraiths have no reason to be afraid, for many there is always the fear that they will be fingered for a crime they didn't commit — and that an Infil-

trator will be the one shouting "J'accuse!" Infiltrators officially only work to point out the guilty, allowing the Strygian chain of command and judicial powers to handle actual matters of prosecution and whatnot. However, no one really believes that's all Infiltrators do. Too many wraiths disappear every day for that. Certainly some of the missing are taken by the Infiltrators — at least, according to the would-be prophets in the Agora.

Retrievers and Arbiters

Officially referred to as the Retrievers, this group specializes in getting their hands on the parties publicly accused by the Grim Legion. The Retrievers make public the crimes of those they seek, and offer evidence to anyone who cares to listen. Along with the Infiltrators, the Retrievers are the highest-profile non-military faction of the Grim Legion. Retrievers prefer to use the legal methods set up within Stygia as their *modus operandi*, but that doesn't mean they won't break the law if it suits their needs. More than one a Retriever has made the same claim as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: "We always get our man." Some notice the double meaning in their words and smile, as the Retrievers are comprised almost entirely of the ghosts of murdered women.





Black Masks

The Black Masks are a group of wraiths who, if rumor can be believed, actually work as assassins for the Smiling Lord. Their duties supposedly include hits on wraiths the Legion can't get their hands on through normal means and the permanent disposal of any Restless Dead who don't agree with the agendas of the Smiling Lord. The claims as to what this alleged group has accomplished include removing at least one previous Smiling Lord, arranging for the abdication of the previous Laughing Lady and the destruction of numerous bothersome Anacreons over the past 30 or so decades since they first became a part of the rumor mill.

If such a group existed, they'd doubtlessly be the very best of the Grim Legion's warriors, and answer only to the Deathlord of the Grim Legion. Naturally, no organization like this exists at the current time. Just ask the Smiling Lord. He'll tell you.

Notable Wraiths Within the Grim Legion

Contrary to what many might think likely, most of the best remembered murder victims, military and otherwise, have never come to light as figures of influence within the Grim Legion. Indeed, it seems that many of the Legions best only come to shine in their own right after they've passed away.

The Smiling Lord

The Smiling Lord is normally seen sitting on his Seat of Burning Waters where it rests on a small island within a lake of fiery liquid. (There is no doubt that the Burning Waters are actually the souls of those he's decided to punish. The poor unfortunates can be heard screaming faintly, even after they've been rendered into their present state.) One small stone bridge leads to the Seat, and around that simple arch stands an army of Executioners, as has always been the case.

That's about all that is as it used to be. Whoever now wears the skeletal mask of the Smiling Lord has taken a decidedly different angle on how best to run the Legion. The past few decades have shown massive improvements in efficiency and contentment for the masses of the Grim Legion. Where once all opposition was met with assault, the Grim Legion these days is now more likely to negotiate, albeit from a position of strength. Where Anacreons of the Smiling Lord once feared his wrath and ruled with threats of punishment, they now offer rewards for services rendered and loyalty.

It seems there's a kinder, gentler soul behind the mask of the Smiling Lord. His soldiers fight with renewed vigor in the ever-growing battle against Oblivion. The Scribes of the Great Ledger allegedly work with a nearly fanatical need to get as much done as possible, as if every day might be the last chance they have to finish the great work. The Sardonicai are making leaps and bounds in their efforts across the Tempest in distant lands. Why, then, is everyone so afraid? No one knows, or if they do, they aren't willing to speak about it.

Hiram, the Master Scribe

Just what inspired Hiram to write down his death story is anyone's guess. Most likely, it was simply the need to understand why he'd been murdered. That was centuries ago. The second death story Hiram wrote down was that of the first Smiling Lord, who wanted someone to record his method of passing. Emboldened by this confidence, Hiram then spoke to the Deathlord of the Grim and asked permission to collect more death stories. "Someone should remember us, even after we've gone on to our final rewards, whatever they might be." Hiram's words almost fell on deaf ears, until he added a final statement: "Someone should also remember those who killed us, and just perhaps they can get revenge for those of us who cannot."

The Smiling Lord agreed, granting Hiram the title "Master Scribe," and ordering that all of the Grim pass down the tales of how they died. Those who couldn't write were sent to Hiram and a growing army of assistants. That was the start of the Great Ledger. Hiram still works alongside the other Scribes, writing down the details of how each individual met his end. Along with a select handful of other wraiths, Hiram even takes notes from members of other Legions, the Heretics and the Renegades for inclusion in the Ledger's appendices. Hiram and his Scribes do more than merely file papers away, though. They actively venture forth from the Great Library and seek out the cases of individual wraiths throughout the Shadowlands.

Hiram's goal is to transcribe the truth, not just the perceptions of victims everywhere. His small army of investigators research any cases that pique outsiders' interest. Hiram has no concern for who the victims whose tales he transcribes are. He just wants the truth, and for his own reasons.

It's Hiram's secret belief that the time will come when Christ will return and the Great Ledger will be used to seal the fates of many souls come Judgment Day. Hiram hides this heretical belief and drowns out his prayers with the scratching of pens, but deep inside, he prays that Judgment Day comes soon.



Infiltrator

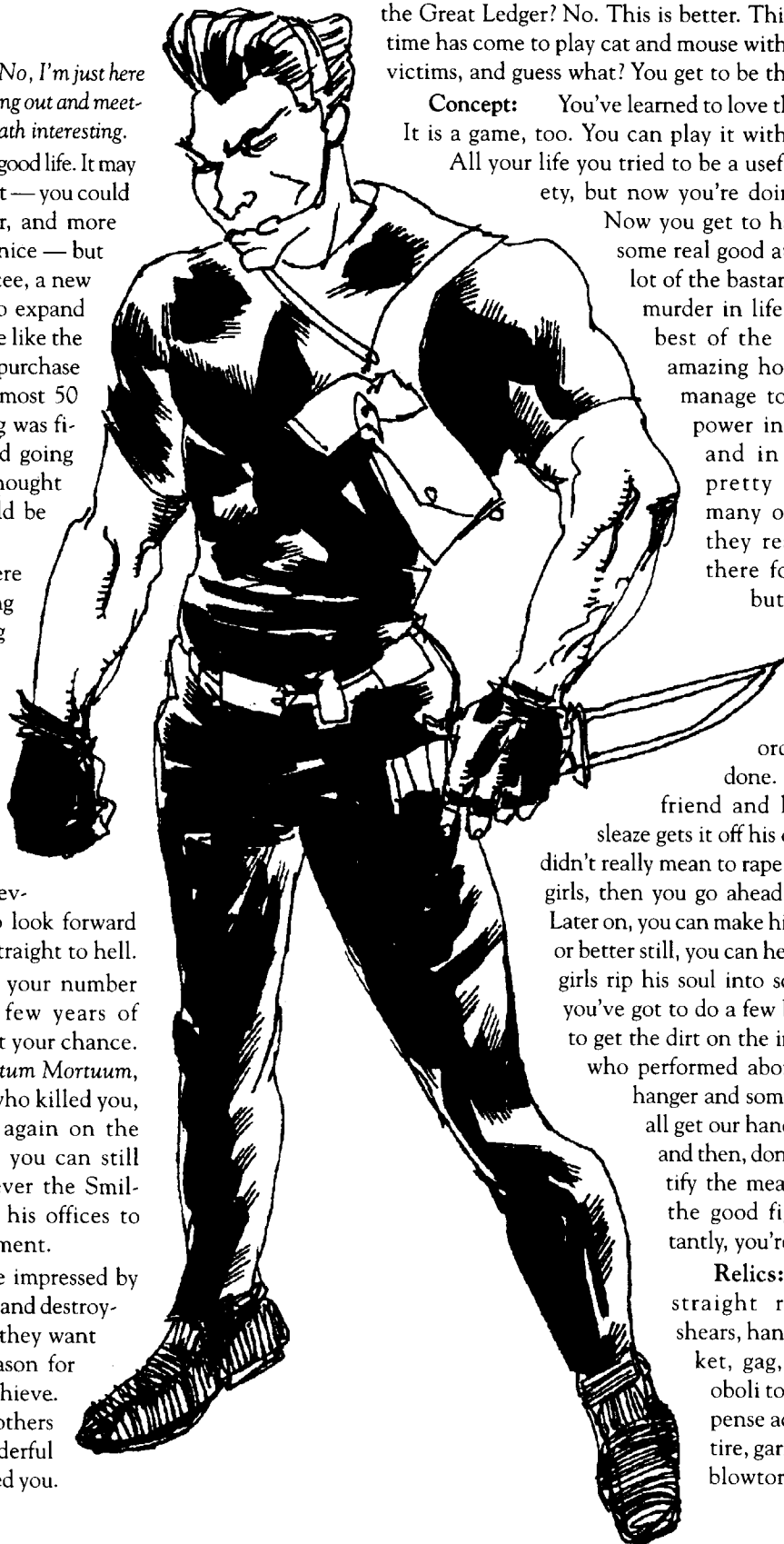
Quote: *Who? Me? No, I'm just here for the atmosphere. I like going out and meeting new people. It keeps death interesting.*

Prelude: You had a good life. It may not have been the greatest — you could have been more popular, and more money would have been nice — but it was a good life. A fiancée, a new job with a real chance to expand your horizons, and a house like the one you'd been trying to purchase for the last 15 years. Almost 50 years old, and everything was finally turning around and going your way. Who'd have thought starting over again would be so much fun?

It was while you were thinking about everything that was finally going right in your life that everything suddenly went so horribly wrong. You saw the mugger's face, you saw the knife, and then you saw your own blood washing across the brick walls of the parking garage. You had everything in the world to look forward to, and then it all went straight to hell.

Vengeance became your number one goal, and after a few years of searching, you finally got your chance. It took breaking the *Dictum Mortuum*, but you got the bastard who killed you, and then you got him again on the other side. You'd swear you can still hear his screams whenever the Smiling Lord calls you into his offices to discuss your next assignment.

The higher-ups were impressed by how you handled finding and destroying your murderer. Now they want you to have another reason for going on, a new goal to achieve. They want you to help others get revenge. It felt wonderful to kill the punk who gutted you.



Why not continue to get even for all of those who can't quite manage it on their own? What else would you do? Write for the Great Ledger? No. This is better. This is... sweeter. The time has come to play cat and mouse with a whole new set of victims, and guess what? You get to be the cat.

Concept: You've learned to love the game of revenge. It is a game, too. You can play it with the best of them.

All your life you tried to be a useful member of society, but now you're doing so much more!

Now you get to have a blast and do some real good at the same time. A lot of the bastards who committed murder in life want to have the best of the afterlife, too. It's amazing how many scumbags manage to take positions of power in the Shadowlands and in Stygia. It's also pretty incredible how many of them beg when they realize what you're there for. Life was good, but Death? Death is wonderful.

Roleplaying

Hints: Be whatever you have to in order to get the job done. If you need to be a friend and listen while some sleaze gets it off his chest about how he didn't really mean to rape and kill three little girls, then you go ahead and be his friend. Later on, you can make him pay for his deeds, or better still, you can help those three little girls rip his soul into screaming shreds. If you've got to do a few bad things in order to get the dirt on the incompetent doctor who performed abortions with a coat hanger and some whiskey, well, we all get our hands a little dirty now and then, don't we? The ends justify the means. You're fighting the good fight. More importantly, you're winning.

Relics: Brass knuckles, straight razor, gardening shears, handcuffs, straightjacket, gag, business clothes, oboli to spare (Stygian expense account), formal attire, garrote, thumbscrews, blowtorch....

THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Name:

Nature: *Survivor*

Life: *Business man*

Player:

Demeanor: *Visionary*

Death: *Murdered*

Chronicle:

Shadow: *Monster*

Regret: *Life cut short*

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		Passions		Fetters	
Status	●●○○○	Make the guilty pay (Rage)	●●●●○	Engagement ring	●●○○○
Status (Hierarchy)	●○○○○	Make the guilty suffer (Sadist)	○○○○○	House	●●○○○
Memoriam	●●○○○	Protect fiancee (Love)	●●○○○	BMW	●○○○○
Haunt	●●○○○	Help other murder victims (Pride)	●●○○○	Gravesite	●●○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Arcanos	
Flux	●○○○○
Moliate	●●○○○
Argos	●○○○○
Pandemonium	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Corpus	
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	

Willpower	
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○	
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	

Angst	
● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	

Thorns	
Shadow Life Trick of the Light	
Spectre Prestige (2)	

Experience	

Pathos	
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	

Dark Passions	
Protect fiancee (Greed)	●●●●○
Punish intruders in house (Selfishness)	○○○○○
Torment police (Rage)	●●○○○

Appendix

Notional Legions



These Legions don't really exist; they are conversational shorthand, used in the same way one might claim to be a member of the Immoral Minority, or the International Brotherhood of Househusbands. As with the real Legions, inclusion is usually a matter of how one died.

The Legion of Fools

Membership is reserved for those who died through their own stupidity.

"Hey, did you hear about Alex's ex-Quick ex-girlfriend? OD'd on cheap smack."

"Sheesh. More fodder for the Legion of Fools."

The Legion in Red

This hallowed organization is for those whose deaths were embarrassing beyond belief. The term was coined after the 1919 Boston Molasses Flood killed 11.

"So, how'd you buy it?"

"Err, I caught rabies from a mad poodle."

"Heh! You can sign up for the Legion in Red down the street."

The Rhythmic Legion

This Legion is for those whose deaths were somehow connected to sex. The Rhythmic Legion is less a "joke" Legion than a cynical commentary on the Quick's obsession with intercourse.

The Legion of the Worthy

The members of this Legion are those who received the death penalty as determined by law; i.e., those who the state decided "deserved" to die. The term is rarely used to the wraith's face. People struck by lightning are also sometimes included; victims of the divine death penalty, if you will.

The Shivering Legion

A modern invention, this term is reserved for those who had their bodies cryogenically frozen. It is used only in supreme derision.

For an Obolus a Day

Small-Unit Tactics for Legionnaires



The Hierarchy portrays its Legions as monolithic entities that comprise all of “civilized” wraith society. Everyone belongs to a Legion, and theoretically all wraiths can be recruited into military service. That’s a frightening concept if you’re a Heretic or Renegade.

The Hierarchy’s awesome military machine is in part a product of propaganda. The army is huge, certainly, but it’s ultimately composed of individual wraiths, and those wraiths are assigned to individual units that must face the enemies of the age-old Empire one-on-one. When the Legions are defined in these terms, they’re not so ominous in the eyes of the Hierarchy’s foes. Renegade and Heretic groups are comprised of individual souls, too, and that means they can hold their own against the Underworld behemoth. (Meanwhile, Spectres are the monolithic force that the Hierarchy would like to be, which is one of the myriad reasons Oblivion is terrifying to all wraiths.)

Military units of Legionnaires are posted throughout Stygia, its related Shadowlands, on the frontiers of Oblivion, on Byways through the Tempest and even, secretly, in the Skinlands with the help of Embodiment. Legionnaire units are the sword hand of the Hierarchy, dispatched to all reaches of the Empire and beyond to maintain order and to carry out the Deathlords’ policies and secret agendas.

For the most part Legionnaires’ duties are nonthreatening, or at least as harmless as existence in the Underworld can get. They involve patrolling haunts, maintaining the peace, policing Necropoli and keeping an eye out for the ever-constant threat of Spectre attack. Such duties can be extremely boring. By contrast, Legionnaires’ other assignments can result in destruction or subsumption into Oblivion at any moment. Rooting out Renegades and Heretics, striking subtly against rival Legions and Necropoli, staging raids on or defending against other Dark Kingdoms, and stalking Spectres and other phantasies of Oblivion are all deadly, even for the Dead.

Recruiting

Given all the dangers that a Legionnaire faces, it’s difficult to imagine why a wraith would willingly fight on behalf of the Hierarchy. Membership in a Legion is mandatory, but not all Legion positions are military. So why would any wraith want to put his soul on the line? The Hierarchy makes it appealing.

Pay for Legionnaires is low — about an obolus a month before cuts for arming, outfitting and Pathos — but the fringe benefits are compelling. Duty as a military Legionnaire provides





a wraith with a measure of authority and respect in the Hierarchy. Without the front-line Legionnaires, the Restless masses would be consumed by Oblivion's servants as soon as they shed their Cauls, and the Legions are quick to remind troublesome or unruly souls of this. Having authority and winning respect is therefore important to continued existence in the Underworld, where people can be turned into ashtrays and floor tiles, and where the souls of those centuries dead fight for space and liberties. Furthermore, the pride of place that comes from being part of Stygia's best line of defense often translates into a Passion for dedicated soldiers, and the job becomes its own reward.

The Hierarchy also attracts military Legionnaires with promises of protecting the wraiths' Fetters. Arcanoi are used to strengthen those anchors, helping Legionnaires protect their existences. Indeed, high-ranking Legionnaires even arrange to have their Fetters gathered and protected in the Skinlands. That's a pretty good benefit in a realm where life is cheap because it's already over.

Military duty is also an authorized means by which to use Arcanoi. With the Guilds disbanded and freewraiths in hiding, a certain amount of independence comes with being able to use one's powers openly, and with the backing of the government itself. Certainly Arcanoi have to be used according to the Hierarchy's dictates, but an Overlord isn't always around to make sure that those rules are obeyed.

For the more venal, military service promises plunder. Relics and Stygian steel don't grow on trees, not even dead ones. Legionnaires can hope to get their hands on the possessions of their enemies, and gain some wealth in the Underworld. (Whether the Hierarchy allows lowly Legionnaires to keep such items is another matter — but Sarge doesn't have to know about *everything* the privates find....) There is no official plunder policy among the Legions; Marshals are allowed to grant the right to their soldiers, or to take it away as they see fit. More lofty Hierarchy officials may intervene to confiscate any plunder only when word of its possession filters upward, and only if an item is specifically sought after by a bureaucrat or if a prize seems too powerful or dangerous to be in the hands of a grunt.

Legionnaires are recruited from the Shadowlands whenever possible. That makes them useful throughout the Underworld, not just in Stygia and related areas. New souls are also most useful in the Shadowlands given their familiarity with the Skinlands. That knowledge makes for versatile soldiers who are capable of dealing with the Shadowlands' reflection of the modern world. Old souls simply can't keep up with the ever-changing worlds of the living and the newly Dead, and find solace and usefulness in the lumbering, time-worn feudal system of Stygia. If and when Legionnaires lose their Fetters, positions are inevitably found for them in the Stygian order. The Agora, the Tower and the other sights of Stygia all need defending, too.

Postings

Join the Legions and see the Underworld!

The marketing slogans are true. A Legionnaire can be posted in a relatively safe place, such as a Necropolis, or in some remote and dangerous place, such as a Byway in the Tempest or on a warship sailing to the Jade Kingdom, but odds are that sooner or later a Hierarchy soldier will find himself someplace interesting.

There is a method to the Hierarchy's bureaucratic madness when it comes to postings. Wraiths in the Shadowlands are assigned to places relatively close to their Fetters. This allows Legionnaires to Slumber, use their Arcanoi more effectively and maintain a certain quality of "life" that makes soldiering bearable. On the other hand, soldiers whose Shadows have shown signs of getting uppity are often posted far from home, so as to protect Fetters from Shadowy incursions.

Legionnaires who have several Fetters are also candidates for long-distance tours of duty. Such soldiers are considered more stable than wraiths with few Fetters; those with multiple Fetters have several places in which to Slumber, and their grip on the Shadowlands is stronger than that of soldiers with few Fetters. The Fetters of Legionnaires assigned to the far reaches of the Empire are often collected and protected by the Hierarchy, like some high-ranking officers'. (That's what the bureaucrats promise, anyway.) Tours in the Tempest, even along Byway way stations, are short, in order

to keep Legionnaires intact and to avoid feeding Oblivion any more than is necessary.


Legionnaires who are assigned to distant posts are often the recently deceased. Horrific encounters with Spectres and other creatures are enough to make such soldiers appreciate the harsh, somber — but protected — existence offered within the walls of Hierarchy society. Long-distance tours of duty therefore produce "good citizens" among the survivors

Assignments

Military Legionnaires are frequently given assignments and postings based on their Passions. Wraiths with **Rage**, **Anger** or **Revenge** Passions make good soldiers because they feed their need for emotion through their martial duties. Legionnaires with **Calm** or **Restraint** Passions make good Marshals and higher-ranking leaders, as they have the reason required of command (and survival), assuming they know when to be composed and when to cast reserve aside.

Military Legionnaires' greatest fear is Harrowing through loss of Corpus and, to a lesser extent, Willpower. A Legionnaire's strength in these traits determines the assignments he receives. A soldier who is robust and hardy is sure to find himself on the front lines against Renegades or Heretics. A strong-willed soldier will find himself opposing Spectres and the lure of Oblivion. Sadly, the best defense that the Hierarchy can offer its soldiers against these threats is soulforged armor, and that protects only their Corpora, not their souls.





If a unit is sent on a suicide mission, or some kind of personal sacrifice is required of Legionnaires, wraiths with high Willpower scores or Eidolon are "volunteered" for such duties. The Hierarchy reasons that these Legionnaires have a better chance of surviving a Harrowing than the weak-willed do, as cold as that consolation that might be. These willful or specially powered soldiers are also considered ideal for missions against Spectres, for the same reasons that they're suited for suicide runs.

Unit assignments can vary from sending a team to a site, staging the assault required, and transporting the Legionnaires back again, to assigning special members to a unit and leaving the agents to their own devices from there. Raids on troublesome Heretic or Renegade hideouts exemplify typical hit-and-run attacks; such assaults keep enemies of the Hierarchy destabilized and wary — too disorganized to coordinate a counterattack. Legionnaire units that are assigned particular agents and that are left to their own devices typically face specialized missions, such as the wiping out the leaders of a Renegade group in one stroke.

The type of mission that a unit is sent on depends on the nature of the threat confronted, and the motives of the Hierarchy officials who issue the commands. Duty on the edge of the Labyrinth might simply require a Legionnaire unit that fights with its own skills and powers. A covert operation to assassinate the supposedly Shadow-eaten Anacreon of another Necropolis might involve a unit and the Arcanoi of two special agents who are assigned to the group. The Legionnaires might know exactly what they're getting into, or might not have a clue and must grudgingly go blind into their potential destruction. No one said the Hierarchy was kind.

Small-Unit Strategies

Facing the Hierarchy's enemies demands that units of Legionnaires develop tactics and strategies to improve their odds of surviving and maybe even winning battles. The typical Legionnaire unit consists of anywhere from five to 20 soldiers, and a Centurion or two. Given units' small size, any advantage they can cultivate can save souls.

Since the Breaking of the Guilds, the Hierarchy has incorporated wraiths with Arcanoi into the Legions. The result is special agents and ordinary Legionnaires who use their powers in the fight against the Hierarchy's enemies. Arcanoi are the best weapons with which Legionnaires can fight and protect themselves. These powers can be used in a variety of ways to make a unit a threat to be reckoned with.

Argos: Harbingers are instrumental to Legionnaire units posted on Byways, to units that stage raids on Spectres and to those that must travel the Tempest. Argos is especially useful for making surprise raids on enemy locations, with units springing out of the Tempest, attacking, and retreating the way they came. Units that stage such raids often have two soldiers with Argos — insurance in case one is lost in an attack. If both are lost, the unit is chalked up as a loss as it's undoubtedly some distance away from home and at the mercy of the enemy, or is lost somewhere in the Tempest.

Castigate: Pardoners are rarely assigned to individual units, but practice their craft in barracks or even across Necropoli as a whole. Pardoners help keep the Shadows of soldiers under control, though if numbers of troops in an area are high, or there are few Pardoners on hand to attend to many Legionnaires, individual Shadows can overwhelm their counterparts.

Barghests

These unfortunate, Moliated souls are used extensively by Legionnaire units for tracking, for ferreting out enemies and hiding wraiths, and as shock troops. A smart Centurion always orders barghests to be released into unknown or believed-dangerous territory before putting Legionnaires at risk.

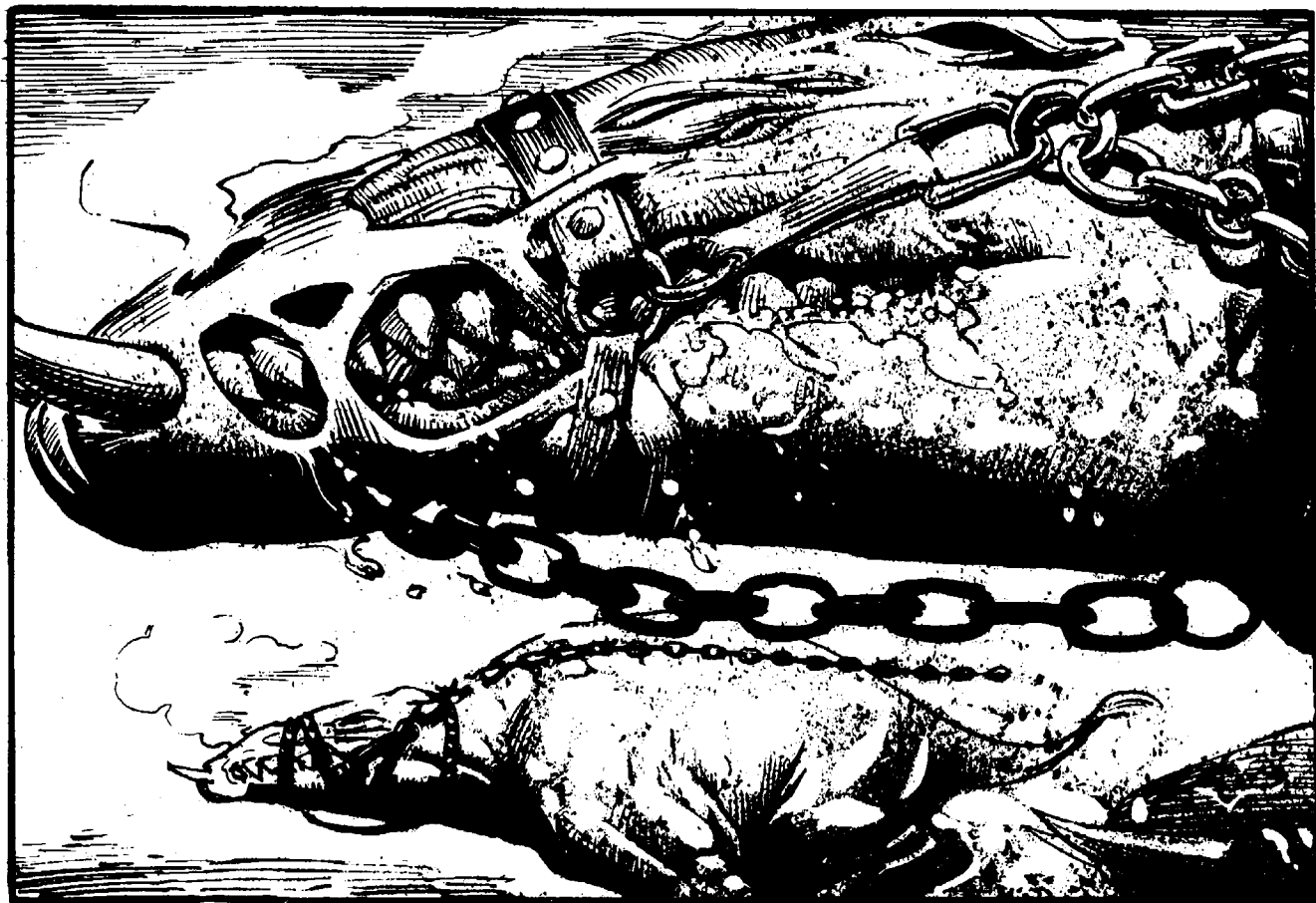
There is a limit to what can be done with barghests, though. Their low intelligence makes them virtual killing machines to those they're turned on. Barghests can't be unleashed if a quarry is wanted "alive."

Nor are barghests completely expendable. They have to be Moliated into shape, and specially made muzzles must be grafted onto each one. An investment of time and expense is made in the creation of each muzzle, and a Marshal who loses barghests repeatedly must answer to her Overlord eventually — not unlike how a rebellious policeman who keeps

wrecking patrol cars is called into his captain's office. When a barghest is destroyed, Legionnaires do their best to recover its muzzle. That, after all, has had some time and effort invested in it, as opposed to the Moliated Corpus of the beast, which is expendable.

If a barghest is destroyed, its muzzle should be recovered at the least. Barghest handlers who let their charges' muzzles be destroyed are often disciplined, if not demoted or pressed into the ranks themselves.

There have been increasing reports of attacks staged by packs of Spectres that bear an appearance disturbingly similar to barghests'. The nature of these incidents supports the theory that Harrowed barghests have been muzzled into the service of Oblivion. Legionnaires known to have abused barghests in the past have been torn to shreds of plasm by packs of such beasts.



Orders to see a Pardoner are dreaded by Legionnaires, in part for the perceived indignity of allowing one's Shadow to grow strong, but also for the discomfort of close scrutiny by one who deals with Oblivion on a regular basis (perhaps the Underworld equivalent of being asked to drop your pants and cough, or hearing the snap of a rubber glove).

If a unit is being sent to attack or perform surveillance on Spectres, a Pardoner may be assigned to the group to make sure that influence of Oblivion is kept to a minimum. (Soulsight allows Pardoners to keep an eye on soldiers' Shadows, and Purify can be used to literally beat those dark sides back.) Pardoners may also be assigned to units sent on long missions or on ones far from Stygia, to protect Legionnaires from their Shadows when Fetters are distant.

Embody: Officially speaking, there are no Proctors among the Legions. Only the Deathlords have authority to tamper with the living world. Yet there are individuals employed by the Deathlords who act as proxies in the Skinlands, and it is that "official" status that makes Legionnaire Proctors' activities "acceptable" (though don't expect an Overlord or Anacreon to admit to condoning such activities).

Legionnaires given orders to work with Proctors can be compared to Skinland police detectives who are ordered to work with the Department of Internal Affairs. Legionnaires fear being subjected to inquests on their activities with a

Proctor, and, more importantly, dread the dangers of being dragged into missions in the Skinlands (not to mention the anguish that comes with facing the living lands and not being able to return to them). Fortunately, the typical mission involving a Proctor simply requires that a unit deliver him or her to a specific locale in the Shadowlands, and the Proctor takes things from there. Legionnaires and their Marshals don't ask questions, and no information is volunteered. Everyone prefers it that way.

Fatalism: Legionnaires are a very superstitious lot. Fear pervades all aspects of a soldier's existence, especially on a day-to-day basis. For example, unspoken tradition demands that a Legionnaire never earn a whole obolus for any single-term soldiering, for fear that his soul will be forged into the next full coin paid. Legionnaires will go so far as to destroy equipment or tools to ensure that they don't receive the pay that they're due.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Oracles are considered bad luck by Legionnaires who reside and fight on the lines. No wraith wants to know when she will be lost to Oblivion, and abusing Oracles' connection to Fate is believed to bring destiny crashing down on a soldier. Whether this is true or not doesn't matter. Oracles who are assigned to units for any reason are shunned universally and can expect rough, if polite, treatment.



Ironically, Legionnaires are wary of Oracles for superstitious reasons, but Oracles have everything to do with luck. If an Oracle can prove his worth to a unit, he can raise morale. Legionnaires might equate him to a rabbit's foot, and protect him at all costs. And for good reason: Oracles' ability to anticipate danger and perhaps even change fortunes for good or ill can mean the difference between a "living" unit of Legionnaires and a big puddle of plasm.

Flux: Alchemists are capable of affecting only the Skinlands with their Arcanos. As such they have a very specialized application in a unit of Legionnaires: When an enemy's Fetters can be determined, an Alchemist can locate and destroy them, plummeting that foe into a Harrowing and ultimately the Tempest (assuming she isn't consumed by Oblivion along the way). Barring someone from the Shadowlands by destroying her Fetters is an effective way of getting an enemy out of the picture, and is generally considered fair play according to Underworld law. (The wraith is not necessarily destroyed, though, and will remember who cut her ties to the Shadowlands; this form of elimination has only short-term value.)

On a broader scope, Alchemists are valued by their fellow Legionnaires for being able to strengthen the Fetters of the unit. The Hierarchy employs Alchemists to reinforce soldiers' Fetters on the whole, too.

Otherwise, Alchemists can deliver messages in the Skinlands, and can torment or protect the living. Officially, such activities are performed under a wraith or unit's own

recognizance — an Overlord, Anacreon or Deathlord would never give the order to perform such duties....

Inhabit: Artificers are indispensable to the Legions, mainly for their manufacture of soulforged weapons and Stygian steel. (The latter is more commonly found in the hands of Centurions than it is in those of lowly soldiers).

It's uncommon for Artificers to be assigned to units on the front because they are most useful to units when they're at their forges. Yet the Inhabit Arcanos has wide application in the field and makes an Artificer away from his workshop an effective ally. Artificers, especially young ones who understand modern technology, can use their skills to enter and control computers and machinery, using them as weapons against a unit's enemies. There's a lot to be said for an ally who can take control of a Shadowlands bulldozer and use it against firmly entrenched Renegades.

Artificers who can Ride the Electron Highway, transporting themselves over long distances instantaneously, also make useful agents. How better to get the drop on a group of Heretics that uses computers to undermine the Hierarchy? Unfortunately, use of such a power precludes taking other Legionnaires with the Artificer. However, special units composed solely of Artificer Legionnaires have been assembled to make use of their unique abilities to stage attacks. Gremlinized and Claimed objects and devices are ideal vehicles (sometimes literally) for invading places. Necropoli and Citadels are particularly vulnerable to this form of sneak attack.

Intimation: This Arcanos is outlawed by the Hierarchy, and no Solicitor is permitted among the Legions.

Keening: It's rare to encounter Chanteurs among Legionnaire units that patrol Byways and fight Spectres, or at least Chanteurs who carry musical instruments as their "weapons." Duty as a Legionnaire forces a Chanteur to adapt his calling to the art of war. Emotions are inspired among troops during the many hours of downtime that come with military life, and playing instruments is certainly plausible at these times. The powers Ballad and Muse have application in battle itself, to inspire fellow Legionnaires by fueling their Passions, and to break the spirits of the enemy by instilling doubt and despair. However, if those abilities have no effect, all but the most powerful Chanteurs must raise different instruments — soulforged swords, axes and spears.


Deathlords insist on including Chanteurs among their Legionnaires simply for the morale support the wraiths lend. When times are tough and soldiers are far from home, there's nothing like a Chanteur's song to pick up troops' spirits. Indeed, Chanteurs are often hand-picked to join units, to ensure the units' loyalty to the Hierarchy, and to ensure that Chanteurs' songs are never sung to sow discontent or rebellion. (A Chanteur who convinces his fellow Legionnaires to rebel on the front may actually doom himself and his comrades to Oblivion; Spectres could take advantage of such dissent among the ranks and attack.)

Powerful Chanteurs are sometimes called upon to partake in particularly dangerous missions into Spectre territory, where their ability to control emotions can literally weaken or undo the agents of Oblivion. Chanteurs can manipulate even the emotions of Spectres, giving soldiers a chance to strike with advantage.

Lifeweb: Monitors tend to support Legionnaires in general, and so are rarely assigned to specific units. Monitors' activities on behalf of the Hierarchy make joining the ranks appealing; even when Legionnaires go to the front lines, they can feel relatively secure that their Fetters are protected back home. Whether that is a practical belief is another matter; there are only so many Monitors in the employ of the Deathlords, and the Hierarchy maintains large numbers of Legionnaires.

Monitors can, however, be instrumental to specific missions, often assassinations of other wraiths. If a Legionnaire unit can gain a Monitor access to a target, the special agent might be able to sever the target's ties to her Fetters, effectively destroying the wraith's access to the Shadowlands. Units of Legionnaires might even specialize in such "termination" missions, and could make a tidy profit from these operations if they went independent (assuming the groups could survive their resulting persecution as Renegades).





Working with a Monitor is akin to working with an Oracle, Proctor or Pardoner for most Legionnaires. Monitors have the power to sever a wraith's connection to the Skinlands. The axiom "Don't bother them, and they won't bother you" is often applied by Legionnaires with regard to Monitors. Thus Legionnaires are typically cool but polite toward the Monitors with whom they must work.

Mnemosynis: Mnemoi are banned from the Legions, and are not allowed among units (though for reasons that many in the Underworld can't quite recall).

Moliate: Masquers can be invaluable to Legionnaire units, assuming these powerful wraiths can gain the trust of their fellow soldiers. The most obvious application of Moliate is to turn a wraith into a walking arsenal. Corpus can be manipulated into armor, spikes, blades and horns. A unit of transformed Legionnaires is virtually unstoppable. Of course, to alter his fellows at all, a Masquer must convince other Legionnaires that he will change them back to normal once a fight is over.

Masquers also make ideal secret weapons within units, providing an ace in the hole should a team be captured or lost behind enemy lines. Masquers' ability to become living weapons and to assume the appearances of others allows them to surprise and deceive enemies, giving their fellow soldiers a chance to strike.

Furthermore, Masquers, like Monitors, are ideal for getting access to and eliminating specific enemies, such as the leaders of Necropoli or the leaders of Heretic or Renegade groups. They can appear as friends or agents of the targets, and can be harmless one moment and armed the next. Masters of Moliate make the best assassins and agents of the Deathlords, being able to destroy targets in moments — and even take victims' places!

Special Legionnaire strike teams are assembled to accompany Masquers into the lairs of their targets. It's rare for such a team to be composed entirely of Masquers, but not impossible. Such a team could perform a mission and disappear immediately.

Outrage: Spooks are unappreciated by Legionnaires as much as they're unappreciated by wraiths at large. They make horrible companions in the trenches, where soldiers have to face the horrors of their enemies every day, let alone the horrors of their allies. That doesn't mean Spooks are bad fighters, though. Spooks' anger makes them formidable opponents, unleashing raw force on victims and starting fires; fellow Legionnaires are quick to step aside once a Spook flies into fury on the battlefield. If nothing else, Spooks can create good diversions while the remainder of a unit strikes at its target.

Spooks also make ideal special agents when the lords of the Shadowlands want to affect the Skinlands in some way. (Of course, such missions are always secret, and the masters of the Shadowlands always deny involvement.) A Spook may be assigned to get a message across the Shroud by some means,

to harass a living person from beyond the grave or to destroy something in the Skinlands. Legionnaire teams that accompany Spooks on such missions invariably do so with reservations, and often don't know what their real mission is (protect the Spook), even when they're performing it.

Of course only a foolish commander would send a unit with a Spook up against Spectres. The wielders of Outrage edge a little too close to Oblivion as it is.

Pandemonium: Legionnaires are loath to admit their admiration for the abilities of Haunters. As unnerving, irritating and distracting as a Haunter can be to her fellow soldiers, she is without equal when it comes to staging an attack. Renegades, Heretics and rival Legions are particularly susceptible to the powers of Pandemonium. These opponents can be confused, frightened, distracted or even stopped in their tracks. Meanwhile, the Haunter's fellows pour out of the shadowy woodwork, laying into their victims.

Haunters are also useful members of units sent against Spectral packs. The wraiths' abilities to sense the touch and presence of Shadows and Spectres allows them to track enemies from the Labyrinth. Unfortunately many Spectres and creatures of Oblivion can more than match Haunters' knack for chaos, terror and befuddlement.

Haunters, like Spooks, are assigned to Legionnaire units occasionally for unofficial assignments to affect the Skinlands. Legionnaires rarely, if ever, learn the purpose of such missions, and are advised to remain tight-lipped about them afterward.

Phantasm: Sandmen and their Legionnaire units are ideal for reconnoitering and communications missions. Potent Sandmen can be provided with messages from their masters that may be projected as illusions to their recipients, as if the sender delivered the message in person. (The proverb "Don't shoot the messenger" is rarely heeded under these circumstances.)

Sandmen who perform espionage and recon missions are able to create images of the objects, documents or sites that they encounter. This helps a Legionnaire unit plan its attack on a person or place, or allows a lord or officer to see "first-hand" the information he wants access to.

Sandmen can also be used on missions to send messages to the living world. A truly vengeful or pragmatic leader in the Underworld might even send a unit with a Sandman to torment a living person or group of people in their sleep. A Sandman of the Silent Legion might drive a victim to suicide, making the new soul subject to the wrath of the Quiet Lord.

Of course the simple ability of Sandmen of sufficient ability to create illusions on the battlefield cannot be overlooked. Who better to have on your side than a wraith who can make you appear where you aren't, to make your team seem invincible, or to make a sudden, overwhelming ally seem to vanish?



Puppetry: Puppeteers join Legionnaire units for only the most secret of missions. Otherwise Puppetry would not be tolerated among the Hierarchy's rank and file. Powerful figures and Deathlords send only units that they can absolutely trust on missions to possess and manipulate a living person. The unit typically knows what its duty is — to deliver a Puppeteer into the presence of a living subject and keep the wraith from being seen or harmed. Whatever else happens is between the commander and the Puppeteer. Such a mission usually comes with the understanding, "Get caught and you're on your own." Silence is of the essence.

Puppetry can be used on a more "mundane" level to Skinride a living person to gain access to a place or to get past Shadowland security. The Puppeteer rides a likely person in the Skinlands, is carried to his destination and emerges again, now in the Shadowlands reflection of where he "jumped ship." The Puppeteer can execute his mission — and perhaps a specific wraith — once he has abandoned his living host.

Usury: Usurers are helpful to Legionnaire units in the field as "medics" of sorts. They are instrumental to restoring the Corpora of soldiers who are far from their Fetters and who don't have the opportunity to Slumber. These healers have teeth, though, and can use their Arcanos to rob the enemy of Health Levels and, more insidiously, Pathos. If a member of a unit must be protected, it's the Usurer, for without her the group couldn't last for long.

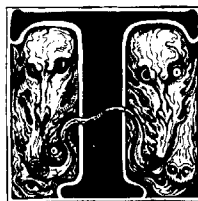
There is a danger to assigning a Usurer to a unit that is on the fringe of Oblivion. Furious battles with Spectres can exhaust a Usurer's ability to heal (and thus threatens a Harrowing). The desperation of fighting Spectral creatures can cause a Usurer Legionnaire to acquire Angst quickly, potentially making her a burden rather than a boon to her fellow soldiers as the warfare applications of Usury impose heavy Angst penalties.

Matters of Policy

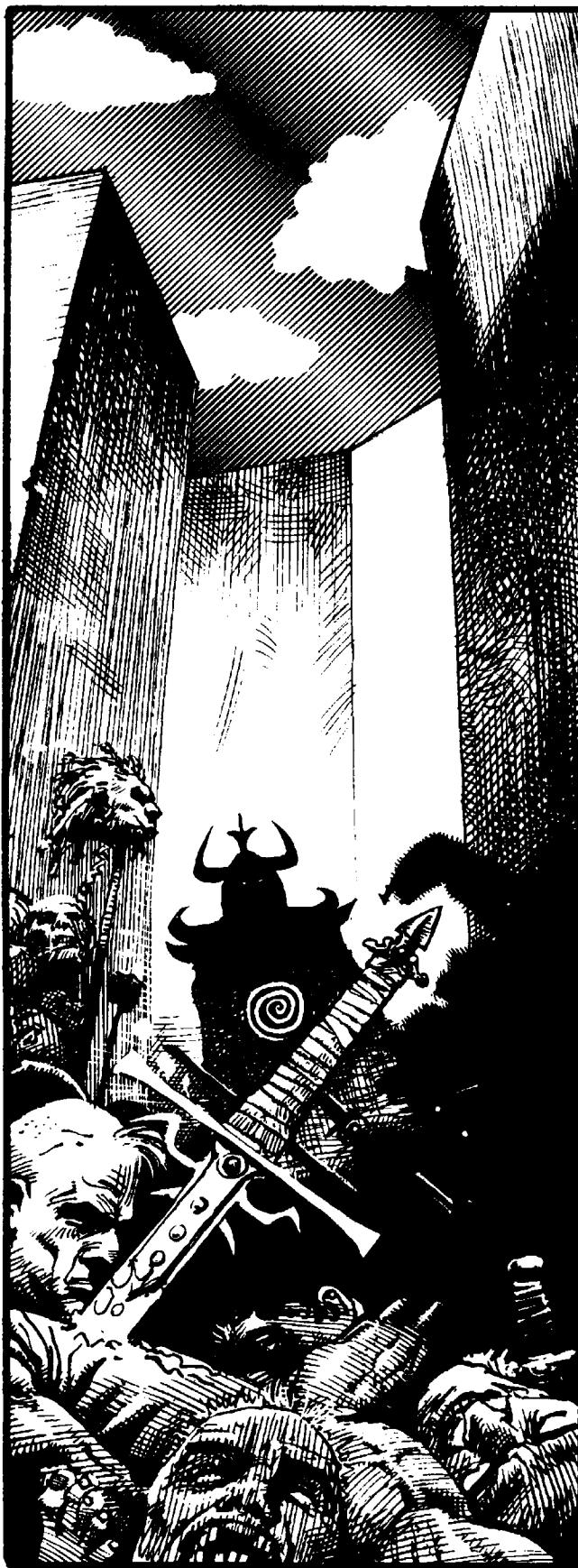
The Dictum Mortuum (and how to swing it)

I'm shocked, shocked to discover that there is gambling going on in this establishment.

— Prefect Louis, Casablanca



The Hierarchy's policy on contact with the living is simple: Don't do it, or we'll turn you into a cooking utensil. However, each Legion (as you may have noted) is willing to bend the rules for its own — all the while coming down on violators from other Legions like a ton of soulforged bricks. The trick, then, for most Legionnaires is to break the *Dictum* only when there are friendly members of one's own Legion around. In these paranoid times, accusations of *Dictum* violations fly as



fast and furious as did accusations of Communism during the McCarthyist era of US politics. A well-timed charge of *Dictum* violation, even if the target is innocent — or acquitted — can take a wraith out of his stride for days, weeks or even years. Furthermore, higher-ups in a Legion can always “allow” their subordinates to cross the Shroud — or even order them to take Skinlands missions — and then “discover” the transgression later when blackmail material is needed.

Supply Dumps & Equipment

If a living soldier loses his gun, he may catch holy hell from his sergeant, but odds are he can pop down to the quartermaster and get another one. Things are a little different in the Underworld, where equipment is dearer and more expensive. Most grunt troops don't use many soulforged items, and are instead issued scrounged relics. This gives new recruits a hodge-podge look, which doesn't help morale much. Unfortunately, soulforged goods are simply too expensive, and it defeats Stygia's purpose to turn its troops into tools for defending its troops.

Each Necropolis has a central supply house, overseen by a single quartermaster of Overlord rank who doles out equipment to the entire Citadel's garrison. Each Artifact and relic doled out is scrupulously recorded, and impartial auditors come around at least once per decade (not so very long as far as the Dead are concerned) to make sure that no particular Legion is getting more than its fair share.

Mind you, this arrangement only holds for basic arms and armor. Each Legion has crack troops that it outfits at its own expense, and without resorting to the quartermaster system. The supply houses only bring out the bare essentials for the defense of Stygia.

Bring 'Em Back Dead

Unless a unit is in the middle of a Maelstrom, Legionnaires are expected to bring Spectres, Renegades, Heretics, criminals and pretty much anyone else they go after back in chains. Ostensibly this is so the prisoners can have a fair trial, but the real reason is financial: A Spectre who goes down to Oblivion is lost forever. A Spectre who is captured and brought back in chains can become a useful pavingstone, or perhaps a girder.

With Renegades and Heretics it's even worse — cut one down and odds are he'll return from a Harrowing with blood in his eye, hell-bent for vengeance. Capturing such outlaws, however, presses them into useful service in Stygia and prevents them from ever being a problem again. That's why all Byway, Tempest and outrider units are routinely equipped with Nhudri's Embrace, and why any Necropolis worthy of the name has extensive soulforged holding pens — to keep prisoners from Harrowing themselves out of captivity. Thus, whenever possible, Legionnaires capture instead of destroying opponents, even if this sort of “mercy” places individual Legionnaires at greater risk.

Prisoner Exchange

Well, we'd managed to spunk a company of their outriders pretty good -- the nets pinned 'em down long enough for us to slam chains down on them, and we only lost three or four to Harrowings. One of the recruits got a little excessively enthusiastic and started hacking away. He's off at the Pandemon now, seeing someone about that problem.

Anyway, we processed the prisoners as usual, then word came down that the Grim Lord had struck some sort of prisoner exchange with the other side. Now, this made us kinda nervous, seeing as we'd soulforged the lot already. We were worried that the Jade Empire reps were going to see that their guys were ingots and start screaming bloody murder. On the other hand, we were pretty enthused to be getting Bravo Company's leftovers back, even if that weasel McNally was with them.

We shouldn't have worried. We showed up at the meet point with their boys in a box -- and they'd done the same thing with ours.

Marshal Dixon Lohan, Grim Legion

The Cavalry

The herds of wild horses who once ran free along the banks of the River of Death are gone now, either tamed or destroyed. New ones have not been seen in centuries, and all attempts to breed them have met with failure. With that in mind, the Hierarchy guards its cavalry jealously. The barding made for the war-horses of the Equitae is superior to anything that mere troopers wear, and if given a choice between saving a soldier or a horse, officers are under orders to save the horse, every single time.

Stygian steeds bond to a single rider, and refuse to let any other wraith mount them until such time as the original rider is destroyed. Any attempt by an unbonded rider to mount an attached Stygian steed usually results in the would-be horse-thief getting stomped into a Harrowing. These are war-horses, after all, and they know well how to fight. Furthermore, all of this breed have access to Argos •••••, enabling them to bear a rider across the Tempest faster than any Harbinger can travel.

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: N/A

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Intimidation 3

Arcanoi: Argos 5

Willpower: 10

Permanent Corpus: 20



The Unlidded Eye

There are certain groups who stand outside the Legions, orders of wraiths who reported only to Charon and who, even now, await his return. The Unlidded Eye is one such order, and no other grouping of wraiths strikes such fear into the hearts of all who dwell in Stygia's shadow. Simply put, the Unlidded Eye is the best of the best — and the worst of the worst. It is comprised of the brightest, most dedicated, most fanatical, most talented and most ruthless wraiths Stygia has to offer, and it takes and molds these wraiths into the auto-immune system of the Stygian body politic.

The Eye was empowered by Charon himself, and to date no Deathlord has dared to try to rescind that authorization. So a member of the Unlidded Eye can requisition any Artifact or troops he needs. He can give orders countermanding those of an Anacreon. He can command that prominent wraiths be soulforged, or that Thralls be raised from chains, all for the good of Stygia — and he will be obeyed.

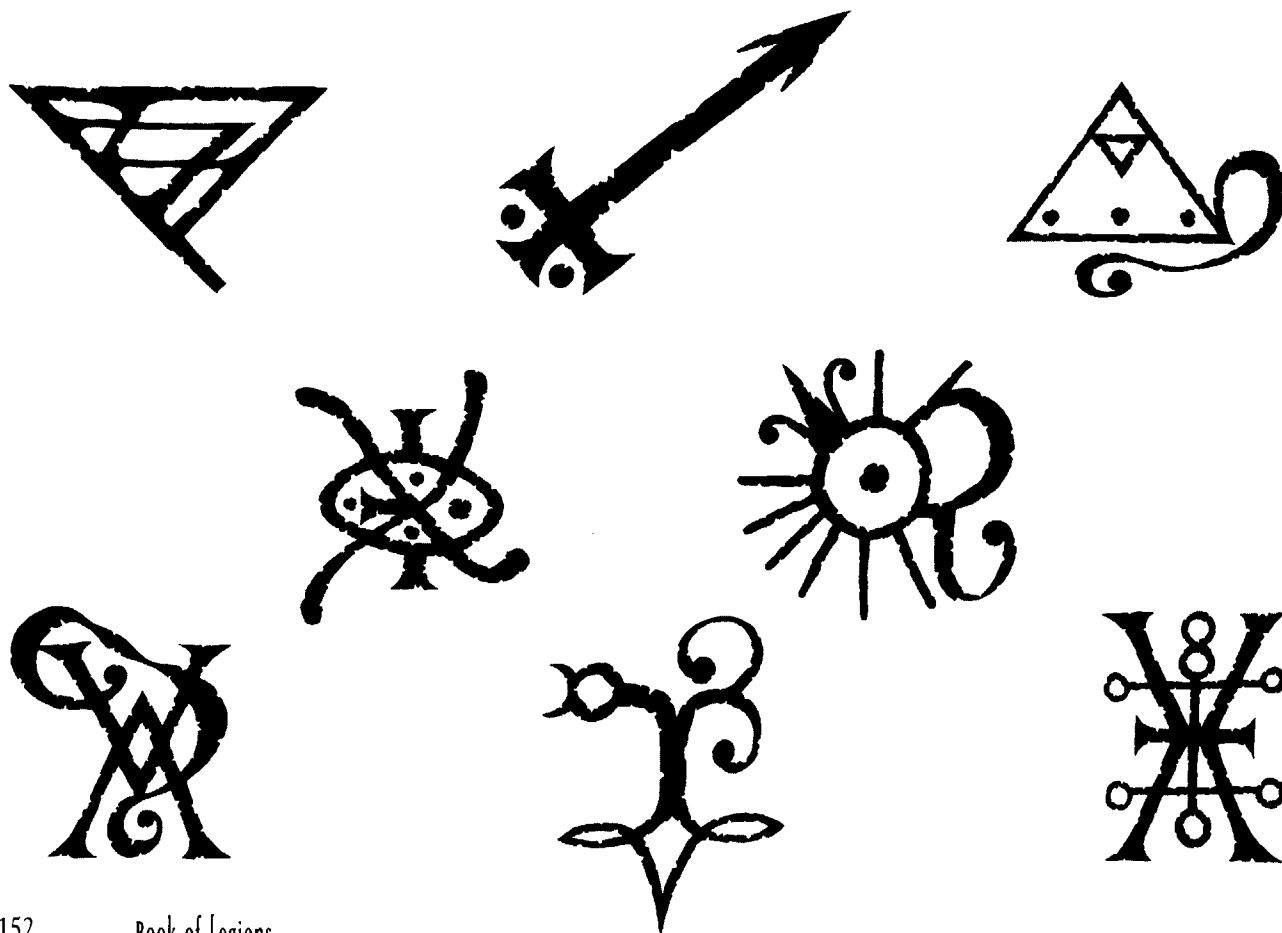
For the Unlidded Eye exists to protect Stygia from all threats, external and internal, and it does so with a ruthless efficiency that makes even Spectres sit back and take notice. Any wraith who is perceived as being a danger to the Empire by the Eye's innumerable informants and spies

is summarily dealt with. The lucky ones are soulforged. The rest — well, simply say that the torturers of Stygia have had centuries in which to get creative.

Recruitment into the Eye is secretive. Supposedly, the *creme de la creme* of each Legion is taken every so often, when the Eye feels the need for reinforcements. Some say that Renegades and Heretics have been inducted as well, brainwashed by Mnemoid and honed like blades for their new existence. There are even those who say that the Eye has a few Spectres tucked away, for what purpose they alone know.

As might be expected, representatives of the Eye do not bother to answer these accusations.

Training to become a fully fledged member of the Unlidded Eye takes between three and five decades. During that time, a new recruit is taught a host of Arcanoi, not to mention being trained in assorted weapons and unarmed combat styles. Furthermore, she is taken to other Dark Kingdoms and in some cases, into the Labyrinth itself. Years are also spent in the bureaucracy of Stygia, as the Order well knows that the hidden enemy is the more dangerous one. The faceless clerk whose Shadow has tempted him to divert needed weapons to the black market can be more dangerous to the Empire than any Spectre ravaging at the walls, and every member of the Eye needs to know how to spot — and stop — that sort of traitor.



THE BOOK OF LEGIONS

Suck it Up, Maggots! Fall In!

All right, you scum-sucking little wimps! I don't wanna hear you crying to Momma anymore, just 'cause you're dead! We're all dead here, so stop whining about it, suck in your Shadows, and stand at attention! We've got a war to fight, babies, and you've just been drafted. Stygia needs you, and the Empire ain't takin' no for an answer!

There Is No Choice

Once you die, you're inducted. There's a Reaper waiting for you on the other side with your name, rank and serial number — or at least, that's what the Deathlords would like you to believe. Unfortunately for them, the truth of the matter's in this book. From the soulforged monstrosities of the Machine Corps to the Beggar Lord's terrifying secret, from the Grim Legion's hidden war on the rest of Stygia to the origin of the power of the Unlidded Eye, it's all in here.

The Book of Legions Contains:

- Details of existence in and out of the military of all eight Stygian Legions;
- Details and statistics for the steeds of the Restless Dead;
- New weapons, tactics, Arcanos uses and more!



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