

THE Secrets OF Cats



Richard Bellingham

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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THE SECRETS OF CATS

A WORLD OF
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FATE[™]
CORE SYSTEM

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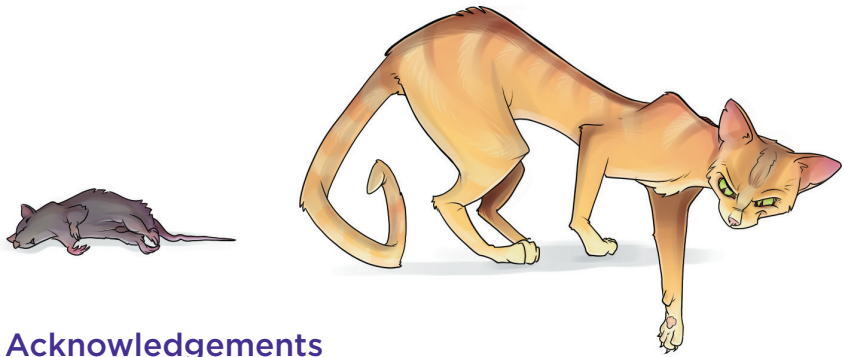
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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this
work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, haunting spirits, vermin, or
magical talking shapeshifting cats is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

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And last but not least, thanks to my wonderful partner Blake for his patience in putting up with me talking about this thing *constantly* for the last few months.

Using This Supplement

In *The Secrets of Cats* you'll play magical cats whose duty is to protect their poor, vulnerable humans—whom they call **Burdens**—from the many threats that lurk in the night.

Part I focuses on the duty of cats and the world they inhabit, while *Part II* gives you everything you need to create and play an empowered feline. *Part III* describes an old mining town called Silver Ford and *Part IV* outlines a story set there called **Black Silver**. When kids exploring the old silver mine one Halloween unleash a terrible evil upon the town, can your cats save the day? Finally, *Part V* suggests complications and threats for your cats to deal with in Silver Ford or your own corner of the world.



PART I: THE DUTY OF CATS: INTRODUCTION

“Settle down now,” Jezzabella says, peering down at you from her lofty perch. Chastened, you try to sit still and ignore the bug you’d been hunting. She nods slightly and then looks from kitten to kitten, each of them quieting as swiftly as you did under her searchlight gaze. Silence falls and she draws out the moment, her tail switching lazily back and forth as she inspects you. You crane your neck to see her and try not to fidget.

“I’m here to speak with you today about every cat’s sacred duty,” she says at last, her voice a soft, husky purr. “A duty to the Burdens in our lives.

“They seem big and powerful, don’t they? They make and control clever machines. They tame dogs and other dangerous animals. But the truth is that humans, without our help, are as helpless as suckling kittens.

“It is our duty to protect them from things they don’t understand, things they don’t believe exist; evil things that come for them in the night. Things that will hurt them if we fail.

“You will never be thanked, because your Burdens can never know what you do for them. But you and your magic will save them, time after time.”

Jezzabella pauses, looking down at each of you as you sit taller, practically glowing with purpose.

At last she narrows her eyes in satisfaction and nods. “If you’re sitting comfortably, then I’ll begin.”

The Hidden World

We occupy a different world from our Burdens, a world filled with sapient animals and all manner of spirits, creatures, and monsters. Not everything in this hidden world is hostile, but it’s difficult to tell a harmless pixie from a needle-toothed monster with a taste for human noses—and it’s better to be safe than sorry.

Most human myths contain a grain of truth. There really is a faerie realm that touches ours in the wild places, and horned hermits sometime emerge from the woods to snatch up careless campers. Ghosts of people and sapient animals exist, as do malevolent spirits that inspire stories about demons. Whatever you can imagine, it’s out there, somewhere.

But we must also look closer to home; the most insidious evil of all is a rogue cat willing to sacrifice sapient animals—including other cats—in their quest for ultimate power.

Sapient Animals

A sapient animal is one capable of true thought, not driven by mere instinct. The capacity for sapience varies by species: cats, crows, and ravens are almost always gifted, while dogs, squirrels, and mice rarely are. All sapient animals can speak with one another, and—though we often clash—many of us also have allies of other species. Such relationships are usually based on mutual self-interest rather than friendship, but there are exceptions. Ungifted animals greatly respect sapient members of their species and often obey them without hesitation.

The Duty of Cats

The world is not as simple as humans pretend. They like to believe in the illusions of cause and effect, action and reaction, but the reality they acknowledge is only a fraction of all that is. Some people, especially children, leave their minds open to the possibility of the supernatural and thus see the monsters hiding in the darkness.

We cats know better, too—a fortunate truth for our Burdens. While humans scurry about their workaday lives, we nap in the sunlight and wait for night to fall. Then we stand vigil while they sleep, ready to protect them with tooth and claw and a legacy of ancient magic.

Your duty is to protect your Burdens from the dark forces that would do them harm. Fortunately, you won't have to do it alone.

The Parliament of Cats

As brave and magical as you are, many threats we face are far more powerful. To vanquish such horrors we must work together, but we cats are territorial and difficult to organize. Thus we have our Parliament of Cats, a democratic council of the region's felines. Each Parliament meets at least monthly to discuss important matters and to deal with disciplinary issues and disputes among its members.

If you're going to play **The Secrets of Cats** as a campaign, rather than just the adventure we've provided, you'll need current and impending issues. Here's our suggestion:

Current Issue: *Literally Herding Cats*. Cats try hard to work together, but doing so is very much against their nature.

Impending Issue: *Enemies in Concert*. The cats' greatest advantage is that their foes don't work together. If their adversaries formed alliances, the cats would have quite a threat to fight against.

Of course, you don't have to use these.

What Cats Do

We dedicate ourselves to protecting our Burdens, but that's not *all* we do. There's plenty to occupy the rest of our time.

Territorial Matters: To a cat every place falls into one of three categories: my territory, something else's territory, or not my territory yet—and the lines between the last two are often blurry. Very rarely will we designate a neutral ground, where those living in the area agree not to take it as our own territory...for now.

Despite the importance of our sacred duty, most of us spend much of our time jealously guarding our territory, fighting rival cats and other sapient animals in border disputes. We do this because winning and keeping large swaths of territory earns serious respect from other animals and makes it easier to find what we need.

Forewarned Is Forearmed: We must anticipate dangers and prepare to deal with them if and when they materialize. It is important to regularly consult with Seekers who can foretell the future, and we must confer often with other members of the Parliament and local sapient animals to keep abreast of impending issues. We also organize regular patrols of trouble spots, like the Blue Moon Woods here in Silver Ford. Every cat is responsible for keeping our land safe; each of us takes a turn on patrol while our own territory is watched by allies.

Training and Education: Kittens have to learn the techniques and duties of cats at some point. Ideally your parents would have taught you, but most cats are taken soon after birth and sent to homes far away. It therefore falls to experienced cats to train our juniors in small, manageable groups.

Mundane Threats: Many threats don't pose any danger to our Burdens, but do to us. Nasty children with strings of firecrackers, vicious dogs, overzealous animal catchers: these are just a few examples. They must be handled if our community is to thrive. One of the most dangerous missions we undertake is the animal shelter run, a desperate effort to free our brothers and sisters from captivity and potential death. Burglars, murderers, and arsonists threaten our Burdens, of course, so we must protect them from these threats as well as the more esoteric ones.

For more on territory, see the Territory skill on page 12.

HOW BIG IS A REGION?

The region over which your Parliament presides can vary a lot. The entire town of Silver Ford is managed by just one Parliament, but in New York City each Parliament only handles a region a few blocks wide. Cats have no reliable means of communicating across great distances, especially in urban areas where busy roads and other obstacles make it impractical for messengers to travel widely.

Feline Politics: A Parliament of Cats is, as the name implies, a political organization. The leader of each Parliament can heavily influence the group's overall strategy, but it's still a democracy... more or less. Every cat has an opinion on how things ought to be done, and those cats most involved in the Parliament spend much time lobbying other members and maneuvering for power to make their opinions count more than others'.

Legal matters are also of great importance, as each Parliament arbitrates disputes between its members and disciplines cats who break the rules.

Each Parliament has its own bylaws, but common to all is the First Rule:

Don't let the humans find out what we can do.

Our ancestors were revered as gods in ancient Egypt, and the word "feline" is related to the Latin word for "lucky," but in medieval times we were viewed as symbols of evil or vanity and thousands of us were burned alive.

We're not taking any chances.

COMMON PARLIAMENTARY RULES

Your Parliament may have different rules, but these ones are common:

- Don't spy on each other from the astral plane
- Don't maim or kill another member of the Parliament except in self-defense
- Never sacrifice a sapient being to power your magic



Feline Magic

Human magicians use the principle of sympathy to cast spells on a subject through a picture or effigy. Similarly, feline magic uses the link between something's name and the thing itself. Knowing the True Name of your target will make your magic easier to perform and more powerful.

Discovering the True Names of our enemies is a critical part of our work. This is an easy task for most humans because their True Names are the same as their given names. They're careless and often speak their full names aloud or leave them lying around on pieces of paper for those of us with Seeking to find.

Sapient animals and supernatural creatures are much more cautious with their True Names—finding them out can be arduous indeed. Even spirits that were once human learn to adopt new names or titles. You might find their True Names written on tombstones or old papers. Otherwise, you may have to befriend the target, trick them, eavesdrop on them, or interrogate them or their allies.

Our most potent magics must be fueled by blood sacrifice. To lengthen and empower our spells, we will kill a small animal like a bird, mouse, frog, or rat and pour its life force into our spells. Of course, no decent feline would sacrifice a sapient animal.

There are four schools of magic. Each of us can only ever master one school and unlock its most powerful abilities, but experienced cats usually have some ability with all four.

- **Warding** is the school of protection and defense. A master of the art is accorded the title of **Warden**.
- **Naming** is the school of manipulation and control. A master of this school is known as a **Namer**.
- **Shaping** is the school of self-transformation, and a master is called a **Shaper**.
- **Seeking** is the school of seers and oracles. A master is known as a **Seeker**.

For more, see "Magic Skills" on page 13.

PART II: THE NAMING OF CATS: CHARACTER CREATION

Quick Reference

Creating a cat in *The Secrets of Cats* is very similar to creating a character in the *Fate Core System*:

- **Refresh:** 3—up to two points can be spent on additional magic or normal stunts.
- **Aspects:** High Concept, Trouble, Burdens, True Name, Free Aspect.
- **Skills:** One Great (+4), two Good (+3), three Fair (+2), four Average (+1). The skill options are Athletics, Burglary, Deceive, Empathy, Fight, Investigate, Lore, Notice, Physique, Provoke, Rapport, Stealth, Territory, and Will, as well as the magic skills: Warding, Naming, Shaping, and Seeking.
- **Magic Stunts:** Pick 3. Exclusive stunts require the high concept to contain the relevant title (Warden, Namer, Shaper, Seeker).
- **Normal Stunts:** Pick 3.
- **Stress:** 2 mental boxes, 2 physical boxes. Will and Physique increase stress as normal.
- **Consequences:** 1 mild, 1 moderate, and 1 severe. Superb Will and Physique provide extra mild consequences as normal.



On Being a Cat

A lot of the fun in *The Secrets of Cats* comes from cats being very different protagonists than human beings.

Nature: While the cats in this game are sapient and possessed of great magical powers, they're still cats. They are easily distracted by laser pointers or pieces of string, and their predatory instincts can make it difficult for them to keep prey alive for interrogation. They aren't generally fond of water and tend to poke their noses into places where they shouldn't. These tendencies are fertile ground for compels on a cat's high concept. Similarly, cats can invoke their high concepts to be good at things like balancing on a narrow rail or surviving a fall.

Senses: Cats have excellent night vision and can see in color, but struggle to distinguish between colors near the red end of the spectrum. They can't see if there's no light at all and can't hold flashlights, so in totally dark environments they must rely on magic or their other senses. Fortunately, their sense of smell is more than ten times better than humans', and they have a preternatural ability to sense air currents, objects, and spaces around them with their whiskers. Cats hear low-pitched sounds about as well as humans, but they can detect sounds at much higher pitches—higher than even dogs can sense.

Literacy: Cats have no written language and generally can't read human languages. They can however leave simple messages for each other such as "Stay away!" or "Danger here!" with scent markings, and can understand similar messages left by other animals.

Naiveté: Cats, clever as they are, know a lot about the human world. However, being outsiders, they are often baffled by the things that humans do or use. Most cats can't read pictographic signs, so they can't benefit from human books and histories. Rather than using their own experience, cats often have to piece together clues to understand human behaviors and tools. GMs, you can describe clues and events from this outsider's perspective and require Lore or Investigate rolls for cats to know even relatively basic things about the way humans do things. As a part of the cat's high concept, this is also rich fodder for compels.

Richard describes how the group finds a shoeprint outside the old mine that's relatively small and has an animal footprint on top of it. It's obvious to Peter that the impression was made by a kid's sneaker with a decal on the sole, but his cat Swift thinks it must be a small human being followed by an unknown animal.

Aspects

Cats have the following aspects:

High Concept

As for humans, this aspect describes who you are and what you do. Specializing in one of the schools of magic means that you must add the relevant title—Warden, Namer, Shaper, or Seeker (page 13).

Tack's high concept is ***Greedy Seeker***.

Trouble

Your trouble causes drama in your life. You might be curious to a fault, bad-tempered, or a sucker for flattery. Perhaps your Burdens won't let you leave the house, you're haunted by an old enemy, or you live with a mean dog. Or maybe there's a fear or habit that you struggle to overcome.

Jezebella's trouble is ***Youth Is Wasted on the Young***, representing her impatience with the young cats she works with. This often leads her to do things herself that she really ought to delegate to younger felines.

Burdens

This aspect details the Burdens in your life. In less cat-centric terms, Burdens are the people your cat is dedicated to protecting, whether an entire neighborhood or a single homeless person. If you're a stray, pick a person or people whom you sometimes visit and think are worthy of protection. Describe them in an interesting way that suggests invokes or compels—cats call people Burdens for a reason! While you might accumulate more Burdens throughout your life, you begin with a Burden of one person or group of people.

Jezebella's Burden is ***Witchy Widow Haggerty***, a frail old lady who the local children think is a witch. Tack's Burden is ***Everyone on My Street*** because he lives from house to house and considers all of the street's residents to be under his protection.

True Name

You learned your **True Name** in a dream soon after you became an adult. You earned your True Name from your actions—it might be *Brave Warrior* or *Silent Hunter*—and it's part of your core identity. To share your True Name is a sign of great trust and respect, because someone who knows it has enormous power over you.

Your True Name might relate to an adventure shared with another PC during early adulthood. If you're struggling to come up with a True Name, discuss your character's history and coming of age with the other players.

Rod is struggling to come up with a True Name for his Warden, Black Paw, so he discusses his character's early life with the group. He describes that Black Paw was forced to sacrifice his brother's life in order to save his Burden. Black Paw upheld his duty over his own sibling's life, so Rod chooses a True Name of *Oath-Keeper*.

A CAT HAS THREE NAMES

Your True Name is your third and final name, but you have two others. First is your **everyday name**, chosen by the humans in your life. You're unlikely to answer to this name, and you'll probably be gravely offended if it's used by anyone who should know better.

Your **kitten name** was a physical characteristic or personality trait, like "Clumsy" or "Brown Ear." On the day you became an adult, you shed that name and replaced it with your own **chosen name**, though you may have decided to keep your kitten name or a variation of it.

Free Aspect

This aspect can be anything you'd like. For example, you could establish a relationship with another PC and invent some shared backstory, but you don't have to if nothing comes to mind. Write this aspect in the "Other Aspects" category of your character sheet.

Swift once protected Black Paw's Burden, Lily, while Black Paw was busy elsewhere. Because of this mutually beneficial relationship, Swift chooses *I'll Scratch Your Back If You Scratch Mine* as her free aspect.

Skills

Your cat gets one Great (+4) skill, two Good (+3) skills, three Fair (+2) skills, and four Average (+1) skills.

Regular Skills: These skills work the same as in Fate Core: Athletics, Burglary, Deceive, Empathy, Fight, Investigate, Lore, Notice, Physique, Provoke, Rapport, Stealth, and Will.

Contacts and Resources: These skills are replaced by **Territory**, which reflects how much space you control. Maintaining a large territory will make other cats and animals respect you and means you have more resources at your disposal. It also makes you a target for those who want to expand their own turf.

Want to find an albino squirrel for a rare ritual needed to fend off a hungry wendigo? Roll Territory to know where you can find one on your land. Want to find out what's being whispered behind your back? Roll Territory to find a cat impressed enough with you to spill it. Involved in a pissing contest with another cat for the deputy leadership of your Parliament of Cats? Roll Territory to create an advantage related to how big, powerful, and well known you are.

Defeating an animal with Territory in a conflict lets you steal some of his turf. When this happens, the winner and loser each writes down a situation aspect that persists until the loser persuades the winner to give his turf back or beats the winner in a conflict. You can't be saddled with more negative Territory aspects than the rating of your Territory skill.

Tack defeats a malevolent rabbit called The Lop in a fight and opts to steal part of his territory. Tack writes down ***Stole the Area in Back of The Lop's Hutch*** and The Lop writes down ***Tack Stole the Area in Back of My Hutch***. These aspects stay in play until The Lop wins his turf back.

THE FULL SKILL LIST

Athletics	Investigate	Provoke	Territory
Burglary	Lore	Rapport	Warding*
Deceive	Naming*	Seeking*	Will
Empathy	Notice	Shaping*	
Fight	Physique	Stealth	

** Skills marked with an asterisk are magic skills, covered on the following pages.*

Magic Skills

The four magic skills are Warding, Naming, Seeking, and Shaping.

If you try to use a magical skill rated at Mediocre (+0) or below, you must pay a serious cost (*Fate Core System*, page 189) regardless of whether you succeed, tie, or fail. You also can't buy any of its stunts.

If you have a magical skill rated at Average (+1) or above, you can use it to accomplish the actions listed for that school and may buy any of its stunts not listed as **exclusive**.

To buy a school's exclusive stunts, you must master that school. When you master a magical school, add Warden, Namer, Seeker, or Shaper to your high concept as appropriate. You can only ever master one school, and your choice is final. No other magical skill may be higher than the skill you have mastered.

If you don't master a school at character creation, then the most powerful magic won't be available to you, but you'll keep your options open for later. You can master a school at any milestone, adding its title to your high concept.

You have three points to spend on magical stunts, but you can buy more by spending points of refresh as normal.

The lists of magical stunts in this chapter are not exhaustive. When designing new stunts, make them appropriate to the relevant school of magic and be sure to highlight the importance of sacrifice and True Names. Any magical effect that involves another target is easier, cheaper, or more powerful if you know the target's True Name.

GMs, if a stunt requires a sacrifice, talk with the players about whether hunting for the prey needs to be played out. Usually it's only warranted if the characters are limited by time or are handicapped. Hunting for prey is a challenge involving Stealth and Fight with a base time of one sleep.

CAT TIMEKEEPING

The smallest time interval recognized by cats is the **nap**—about 15 minutes, the length of an average cat nap. A **sleep** is about an hour long. Longer periods are measured in half days, days, weeks, months, and years.

Warding

Practitioners of this school of magic are a bulwark against the forces of evil.



Overcome: You can use Warding to overcome a ward set up against you specifically or cats in general.



Create an Advantage: By sacrificing a small animal and leaving its corpse as an offering to Death, you raise a powerful magical barrier around a place. Left untampered, this ward lasts until the sacrificial offering is nothing but bones, but humans tend to remove them long before that stage. To prevent interference, you may need to find ingenious hiding places for your offerings. The corpse must be fresh when you create the ward—one sleep old or less—but it doesn't have to be complete; you might like to bite the head and front parts off for a tasty snack before you get to work.

You can ward any place with a defined boundary like a wall, fence, or hedge. The opposition to creating the ward starts at Average (+1) for an area of up to two rooms, Fair (+2) for a house or area of similar size, or Great (+4) for anything up to half a mile in diameter. For each general or specific threat you want to block with the ward, increase the opposition by one. If you know a foe's True Name, then adding her to the ward won't increase the opposition. A ward cannot be altered once created; if you wish to defend against new threats, you must raise a new ward.

Succeeding with style when creating a ward gives you an extra free invoke. For every two additional shifts, you get another free invoke.

When a magical threat tries to enter a warded area, he will encounter what seems to be a solid, transparent dome that blocks his progress. A mundane threat will instead find that "luck" conspires against her to deny entry—lockpicks break, doors jam, windows refuse to shatter, and so on. If the ward's boundary is intangible—like the edge of a clearing—then stones trip her, roots entangle her, branches jab her in the eye, or she simply gets confused and turned around. You immediately sense any attempt to breach your ward, and you can roll Warding to actively oppose the intrusion, regardless of where you are. If your ward is breached, it remains intact and will block the target again if the foe leaves the warded area and tries to return. You may choose to override the ward and allow a threat to enter.

You can raise as many wards as you like, but an area can only be protected by one ward at a time. This is sometimes abused by cat troublemakers who deliberately over-extend their wards through an entire neighborhood, making it impossible for fellow felines to create their own wards.



Jezzabella wants to create a ward around Witchy Widow Haggerty's home that will keep out rats and one human she knows by sight. The base opposition to the Warding roll is Fair (+2); adding "rats" (+1) and "that creepy human guy" (+1) as designated threats increases the opposition to Great (+4). If she knew the human's True Name, then adding him as a designated threat wouldn't increase the opposition, meaning the final opposition would be Good (+3). Starting with Average (+1) Warding, she rolls and gets **++++**, for a total of Superb (+5). She succeeds and gets one free invoke on the ward.

Wardens can lead a chorus of cats to improve an existing ward. Each cat in the chorus must have Warding at Average (+1) or better, but need not be a Warden. Every cat in the chorus must sing for at least one sleep. If interrupted, you must begin again from the start. When you finish the song, the ward gains an extra free invoke per cat in the chorus. Regardless of the ward's designated threats, any cat in the chorus can enter or exit the warded area and can extend this permission to anyone they choose.



Attack: Warding isn't used to attack.



Defend: You can use Warding to defend someone inside your ward against attacks from a designated threat, even if you aren't there. If you fail, then you become the target of the attack, taking your choice of mental or physical stress.

Warding Stunts

These stunts do not require a sacrifice.

Invisibility: You whisper your True Name backward to create an inverted ward around you, making you *Invisible* until the end of the scene. Roll Warding against passive opposition from the environment: it might be Superb (+5) if you're a dark grey cat trying to hide in a bright white corridor, but Average (+1) if you're in a dark alleyway. If you're a Warden, you can make multiple targets invisible by hiding everyone in a zone (+2 opposition) or by splitting your shifts among the targets chosen. Success with style grants an extra free invoke as normal.

Shadow Armor (Exclusive): You gather the surrounding shadows to armor your body, turning your fur black and your eyes into empty holes touched with faint glimmers of starlight. Gain Armor equal to your Warding for the rest of the scene and fill your lowest mental consequence. You can only use this power after nightfall or in dark places. This power can reduce the physical stress transferred to you from an active ward or by Absorb, but doesn't protect against attacks based on fire or light. While in this unnatural form, you can use Fight to attack spirits and vice versa.

Absorb (Exclusive): You whisper your and an ally's True Names to a pebble, linking you until the next sunrise or sunset. While you touch the pebble, any stress your ally would take is halved (rounded down), and the remainder you take as your choice of mental or physical stress. You can drop the pebble at any time, except when dice are being rolled against your ally. Anyone else who touches the pebble while this stunt is active shares a *Strong Link* with you and your ally (see Seeking on page 22). You can only protect one ally with this stunt at a time.

Cat Walk (Exclusive): By whispering your True Name to the air, you create wards set against yourself that are shaped in cunning ways. You can manifest temporary bridges, gantries, or ramps of pure force that let you climb to otherwise inaccessible places. You can use this power to overcome relevant obstacles or to create advantages related to being in a weird or unexpected position. The First Rule of the Parliament of Cats means this power mustn't be used in sight of humans; it has led to some embarrassing incidents for cats seen atop trees with no way down.

Naming

This school of magic lets you exert terrifying and direct control over a foe by using his True Name. Masters of this art are respected and feared in equal measure because a proficient Namer can do almost anything to a victim whose True Name she knows. Giving your True Name to a master of Naming is either incredibly foolhardy, a sign of great trust, or both.



Overcome: You can use your power over your own True Name to remove aspects related to mental domination or caused by hostile applications of Naming.



Create an Advantage: You can sacrifice a small animal and whisper a target's name to bless or curse it, wherever it is. Targets can defend themselves with Will or Naming. The aspect created must be specific and lasts until the next sunrise or sunset. If you don't know the target's True Name, your magic is weaker—the target gets +2 to defend, and success with style confers no additional benefit. You can only apply one blessing or curse to a given target at a time. Examples: *Blessed with Luck in the Fight Against Black Heart*, *Cursed with Severe Nausea*.



Attack: Naming isn't used to attack without a relevant stunt.



Defend: You can use your mastery of your own True Name to defend against Naming used on you.



Naming Stunts

Harm: You're proficient enough with Naming to directly harm an enemy within one zone of you. Speaking your foe's True Name to a small animal in your paws, you wound the animal to inflict identical but larger injuries on your target. This is a Naming attack, defended with Will or Naming. Scale does not apply to this stunt (page 20). The small animal won't die unless you inflict a consequence on your target, and you may limit attacks made with this power to one shift of stress. You can be disarmed if a compel or an advantage created makes you accidentally kill the animal or let it escape.

DIRECT CONTROL

Animate and Control both let you assume direct control over a target—an object or being, respectively. Once you assume control of a target, you can control it from any distance, but you must take an action to enter or leave direct control. While directly controlling a target, you experience the world from its perspective and can use their body as if it were your own, using its skills for physical actions and your own for mental actions. This level of control requires complete concentration and prevents you from using your own body—including defending yourself or perceiving your surroundings. You will sense any physical interference, though, and can return to your body on your turn in the next exchange.

Animate (Exclusive): By sacrificing a small animal and whispering your True Name to an inanimate object—including corpses—you imbue it with life until the next sunrise or sunset. The opposition depends on the size of the object, starting at Average (+1) for insect-sized objects and increasing by two per rung on the scale ladder (page 20). Animated objects can only move as their construction allows: a rope can slither, an action figure can walk around, but an inflexible statue can only judder on its base. Things you animate will follow simple instructions, but won't fight. You can also assume direct control of the object, letting you perform any actions you wish. An animated object has one Good (+3) skill and one Poor (–1) skill. Animated objects can see and hear, even if they don't have eyes or ears. The animating magic is quite fragile; it can be destroyed by attacking the animating energy directly from the astral plane or by attacking the physical object. Animated objects have one stress box. If you succeeded with style while animating the object, it gains a mild consequence. You can only animate one object at a time, unless you have the Multitasking stunt.





Control (Exclusive): This terrifying power lets you enter a mental conflict with an opponent up to one zone away whose True Name you know. In this conflict, you roll Naming opposed by your opponent's Will. Consequences inflicted during this conflict can be compelled to represent brief moments of control. If you take out your victim, you gain complete control over him until the next sunrise or sunset. When you aren't in direct control, the victim behaves like a shambling zombie that follows simple instructions but won't fight or act independently. You can only control one victim at a time, unless you have the Multitasking stunt.


Multitasking (Exclusive): This stunt lets you control up to two beings and two animated objects at the same time.


Shaping

Those who learn Shaping know that the body can be changed from within. By whispering your True Name to yourself, you can shape your body to make it better suited to the task at hand for the rest of the scene. Dabblers in the art can make minor alterations, but Shapers can effect more dramatic changes.

 **Overcome:** You can use Shaping to overcome an obstacle for which a minor change in your form would be useful. For example, you could try to escape from being *Tied Up* by shaping yourself to be more flexible.

 **Create an Advantage:** Roll Shaping to change your physical form for the rest of the scene. The opposition is Average (+1) for minor changes (like *Razor Claws* or *A Coat as Black as Night*) and higher for more extreme changes (like *Musclebound* or *Unnaturally Huge Grin*). You can't change your size by more than about a quarter—meaning you can't change your place on the scale ladder—or have more than one Shaping advantage active at a time.

 **Attack:** Shaping isn't used to attack.

 **Defend:** As a practitioner of Shaping, you know yourself inside out. You can use Shaping to defend against attempts to magically change your body. This includes the Harm power of the Naming school.

Scale Rules

The scale ladder has the following rungs:

Insect < Mouse < Rat < Cat < Dog < Human < Tiger < Horse

When attacking or defending creatures of different scale, apply the following bonuses:

Size	Attacker	Defender
Larger	Weapon:+2	Armor:+2
Smaller	Attack +1	Defend +1

If you're a cat attacking a mouse, then you're two rungs higher on the scale ladder. The mouse gets +2 to his defense roll, but you get +4 to your Weapon rating if you hit him. If the mouse counterattacks, he gets +2 to his attack roll, but you get +4 to your Armor rating if he hits you.

Shaping Stunts

A Knack for Change: You're more experienced at changing your physical form. Each time you purchase this stunt, you can maintain another simultaneous Shaping aspect.

Change Size (Exclusive): You can use Shaping to radically change your size for the rest of the scene, letting you move along the scale ladder. The opposition increases by two per rung along the scale ladder you want to transform.

Swift wants to grow to the size of a tiger. That's three rungs up the scale ladder, so the opposition is Fantastic (+6).

Disguise (Exclusive): This stunt lets you change your physical appearance to exactly match that of any other cat, including coat pattern, scars, and deformities. To adopt a disguise, create an advantage using Shaping with passive opposition based on how well you know the other cat:

Familiarity	Opposition
You're working from a description	Legendary (+8)
You saw them once at a distance	Epic (+7)
You met them once	Fantastic (+6)
You've met them a few times	Superb (+5)
You see them around all the time	Great (+4)
You meet with them regularly	Good (+3)
You're good friends	Fair (+2)
They're right in front of you	Average (+1)


If you know the target's True Name, then you automatically succeed with style. If you succeed at a cost, the details of the disguise are somehow imperfect—modify the disguise aspect to reflect this—but the disguise is otherwise perfect. To fool anyone who knows the target, you'll still need to roll Deceive.

You can also use this power to create a disguise based on an imaginary cat. In this case, the opposition is based on how much the disguise looks different from you, starting at Average (+1) and increasing by one per difference in appearance.

Shadow Form (Exclusive): Whispering your name to the darkness, you transform yourself into a shadow, gaining *Shadow Form* for the rest of the scene. To attempt to transform, use Shaping with Fair (+2) opposition. If you fail the roll, you still become a shadow, but the transformation warps your mind; you gain a negative aspect—like *Cruel Streak*—for the rest of the scene. In this form you can see in total darkness, you're completely invulnerable to physical sources of harm, and you can attack spirits (with Fight). Because you exist in two dimensions, you can slip through the narrowest crack and travel almost anywhere. However, you can't travel outside of shadows or darkness, can't attack or interact with anything physical, and can be hurt by spirits and light. Though you're a shadow in a shadow, you aren't invisible; you're darker than your surroundings, and your eyes still shine with reflected light. You may, however, invoke *Shadow Form* to aid your Stealth rolls.

Seeking

Cats are curious and are always finding trouble. The truth is, if you're skilled in Seeking, you can find almost anything—so long as you know what you're looking for. Experienced users of this art can find their way into a sleeper's dreams, and Seekers can even leave their physical vessels to journey on the astral plane or dream of future portents.


 **Overcome:** Using Seeking, you can become aware of the direction and distance of any specific place, object, or being for the rest of the scene.


When you use Seeking to look for a place or object, the passive opposition depends on how well hidden the target is. If you only have a picture or description of the object, you have a **Poor Link**, which can be invoked against you. If you've seen the target, no aspect applies. If you have a piece of it, you have a **Strong Link**, which you can invoke.


When you use Seeking to find a being, they actively oppose you with Will or Seeking. If your target succeeds with style while defending, she realizes someone is seeking her and will know your direction and distance for the rest of the scene. If you're working from a description or picture, you have a **Poor Link**. If you've seen your target before or know her name, then no aspect applies. If you have a piece of your target, such as a hair, you have a **Strong Link**. If you know your target's True Name, you automatically succeed without a roll.

You can also use Seeking to remove aspects related to being lost or navigating through a maze-like environment.

If you succeed with style, you also gain a feel for the target itself. This reveals one of the target's aspects to you and gives you a free invoke on it. You can only ever gain this benefit once per target.

 **Create an Advantage:** Seeking lets you find optimal routes when you're chasing prey, trying to escape, or otherwise moving through an environment. You can create aspects like **Shortcut** or **"I know exactly where I am."** You can also create advantages related to finding things you need, as long as it's plausible. For example, in the woods you might create an advantage called **Abandoned Camping Stove**.

 **Attack:** Seeking isn't used to attack.

 **Defend:** You can use Seeking to defend against magical attempts to locate you or things you've deliberately hidden as well as attempts to inflict aspects on you like **Lost in the Wilderness**.

The Time Ladder

For a full description of time increments, see *Fate Core System* (page 197). The relevant time increments for Psychometry (page 25) are as follows:

A month → a few months → half a year → a year → a few years → half a decade → a decade

Seeking Stunts

Dreamwalking: You attune yourself to a sleeping being by inhaling some of his breath, letting you visit his dream when you fall asleep yourself. In the dream you can speak with the dreamer, even if he's human, and you can use your magic to shape his dreams. You can use this power to transform a nightmare into a pleasant dream, but you can also nefariously implant a belief or instruction into the dreamer's subconscious. Some cats use this power just to speak and bond with their human companions and to enjoy the wondrous dreamscapes of their imagination.

Fighting a nightmare to calm the sleeper is mentally taxing. Resolve it as a mental conflict of Seeking, opposed by the nightmare's **intensity**. A mild anxiety dream has Average (+1) intensity and no stress boxes, while a guilt-stricken nightmare of terror and loss has Superb (+5) intensity, three stress boxes, and three consequences. Losing this conflict can leave you feeling very drained when you wake; you may even suffer from a new phobia or other psychological problem. If you defeat the nightmare, you can apply a positive aspect to the dreamer or completely cure a mental consequence related to the root of the bad dream.

You can converse with the dreamer with complete fluency. You can also use your access to the dreamer's subconscious mind to begin a mental conflict. If you take him out in this conflict, you can dictate a belief that afflicts him until he's convinced otherwise or you can implant a single instruction he must carry out during the next day. This is not something that should be trifled with, however—many a cat has been rendered permanently catatonic after a dream conflict gone wrong.

Because dreams are so malleable, everyone experiencing it can declare story details without spending fate points. You can shape the dream to create advantages by using Seeking, opposed by the dreamer's Will. For example, you might create the aspect *Nightmarish Chase* to soften up the target for a Provoke attack. Be wary of lucid dreamers, however, who can turn the tables by creating their own advantages.

If you know True Name of a participant in the dream, create a situation aspect related to the participant's name. You can invoke this aspect on any roll made against her, even if she isn't the dreamer.

Multiple Dreamwalkers can visit the same dream, which may explain that time you woke under a pile of cats after a night of vivid dreams. Dreamwalkers can bring other cats with them, but strictly as invisible observers who can't interact with the dreamer or the dream. GMs, if any players aren't involved in the dream scene as Dreamwalkers or observers, ask if they want to play figments of the dreamer's imagination.

Prognostication (Exclusive): You can delve into your own dreams and return with knowledge of what is yet to be. Once per session, after you've slept, make a Seeking roll against Average (+1) opposition.

If you fail, you get a single-word aspect hinting at a future event.

If you succeed, you get a single-word aspect hinting at a future event and a timeframe of several days in which it will happen. You can spend shifts, one at a time, to reduce the timeframe by one increment (*Fate Core System*, page 197) or to add a word to the prophetic aspect, not counting linking words.

If you still have at least three shifts once you stop refining the prophecy, you succeed with style as normal.

To determine the nature of the prophecy, roll a separate/distinctly colored die:

Result	The prophecy hints at...
☹	Something horrible (<i>Betrayed, Killed</i>).
☺	Something beneficial (<i>Answers, Ally</i>).
☹☺	A complication (<i>Promise, Doubts</i>).

GMs, if you wish to give players more control over the process, let them choose the prophecy type before rolling.

You can't seek a second prophecy until the first has come to pass or been averted.

Nameless naps and decides to get a glimpse of the future. Laurie rolls Seeking, rated Great (+4), and gets ☹☺☺☺ for a total of Fantastic (+6), giving him five shifts. To determine the nature of the prophecy, he rolls and gets ☹, so it'll be about something horrible. Nameless gets the prophecy **"Die six to ten days from now."** Laurie spends a shift to narrow the timeframe, so Richard amends the prophecy to **"Die seven days from now."** Laurie spends another shift to add a word to the prophecy, hoping to find out *who* will die. Richard gives him **"Tack will die seven days from now."** Laurie decides to stop there. With three shifts remaining, he succeeds with style, gaining a second free invoke on the prophetic aspect.

Astral Projection (Exclusive): While your body sleeps, you can send your soul traveling and take an *Astral Form*. In this form, no ordinary door or wall can stop you, you can see in complete darkness, and you can fly at great speeds. However, you can't pass through natural rock, earth, or living things. The astral realm is home to many anchor-less spirits that will take exception to you entering their domain, but just as many are useful sources of information. If you're within a few yards of a cat or another psychically aware being, it can see your ghostly presence with Notice, opposed by your Stealth. You can invoke *Astral Form* to help you on this roll. Your spiritual form can be harmed by spirits, creatures in both the astral and physical realms, and other astral travelers.

Conflicts in the astral realm look like ordinary battles, but one's fighting ability is irrelevant compared to sheer force of personality. Astral conflicts are resolved by rolling Provoke opposed by Will, and all stress suffered is mental. While you travel in the astral realm, your physical body is completely vulnerable, but you will sense any physical interference and can return to your body on your turn in the next exchange.

For details on spirits and anchors, see page 46.

Psychometry (Exclusive): All events of emotional significance leave a psychic residue on the place and objects involved. By whispering your True Name to the place or object, you create a temporary resonance between your spirit and the subject of the event. Through this connection, you experience fragmentary memories of an emotional event in the subject's history. Use this ability with caution—some events can take a toll on the mind.

An object or place can hold only one psychic impression; it takes an equally significant event to overwrite the existing one. A knife used to murder will carry that residue until it's used to kill again.

To read the subject, use Seeking opposed by the time passed since the event, starting at Fair (+2) for a month or less and increasing by one per rung on the time ladder. If the object is imprinted with a particularly intense residue—for example, feelings of terror or homicidal rage—then it has an aspect like **Murder Weapon**. GMs, when a player begins to use this power on such an object, tell them that they sense a strong emotion but don't reveal the aspect. This allows them to invoke the aspect for a fate point to gain an advantage on their Psychometry roll. If they wish to investigate the object in advance, they can create an advantage.

Tack the Seeker is trying to read a knife connected to a multiple murder a few years ago. That's four rungs above "a month" on the time ladder, so the opposition is Fantastic (+6), but he can invoke the **Multiple Murder Weapon** aspect if he knows about it.

On a success, you see a fractured vision of the event from the perspective of the object or place. If you succeed with style, you can also ask one question, which will be answered clearly. If you succeed at a cost, then you still receive the vision, but you also take a mental consequence from the psychic feedback.

Tack sees from the perspective of the knife as it's repeatedly lifted and thrust into the victim, giving him a good look. He doesn't see much of the murderer from this angle, but he can see a man's hand gripping the knife hilt and a pair of Wellington boots on his feet. If he'd succeeded with style, he could have asked "What did the murderer look like?" and received an answer.

Viewing an event with very strong emotions inflicts a Great (+4) mental attack against you, which you can defend against with your Will.

Normal Stunts

You have three points to spend on normal stunts, but you can buy additional stunts by spending points of refresh. As normal you can't go below one point of refresh.

You don't need to build stunts related to normal feline abilities, such as having claws, excellent night vision, always landing on your feet, or being able to walk along narrow rails. These are either narrative truths or invokes on your character's high concept.

Of course, you can build a stunt based on a cat trait if it is particularly important to your character or so you don't need to invoke an aspect to take advantage of it.

Some example stunts follow, but you can build your own using the rules from page 88 of *Fate Core System*.

General Stunts

Nine Lives: Cats have nine lives, or so the legends say. When you are taken out of a physical conflict, you can give your opponent a fate point to concede instead. You don't get any of the fate points you'd get for conceding normally.

I'm Not... Dead... Yet: If you're taken out of a continuing conflict—or have conceded—but are still physically present, you can spend a fate point to take a single action. You can use this stunt even if you died, taking a last gasp at life. You can only use this stunt once per conflict.

Athletics

Leaper: You're very good at jumping obstacles. +2 to Athletics when leaping onto or over things.

Death from Above: You can use Athletics instead of Fight when you jump to attack your foe from above.

Offensive Defense: Carefully positioning yourself, you make your opponents injure themselves as you dodge away. When you defend with Athletics and succeed with style, you can forgo your boost to deal two stress to your attacker.

Burglary

Cat Burglar: +2 to Burglary to move by rooftops, chimneys, or other high places.

Getaway Cat: You can use Burglary instead of Athletics when you're fleeing pursuit with ill-gotten gains.

Invisible Pockets: You can carry one or two small items, up to the size of a chicken egg, without holding them in your mouth. Nobody is quite sure where you hide them or how you get them back, and you can't make them reappear if you know anyone is watching.

Deceive

Ventriloquist: You're good at throwing your voice. +2 to Deceive rolls to create advantages that make others think your voice is coming from a zone adjacent to your actual location.

Method Actor: No matter how unlikable you usually are, when you adopt a guise you ooze charisma. You can use Deceive instead of Rapport when you interact with someone under a false identity in a friendly way.

Lying to Myself: Your psyche is armored in a sheath of lies. Use Deceit rather than Will to determine your extra mental stress boxes.

Empathy

Psychopomp: You know when someone is ill or dying. +2 to Empathy when detecting an illness or injury, even if it's hidden, and when determining whether a visible death, injury, or illness is feigned or real.

False Friend: You use your relationship with a target to deceive her. You can use Empathy instead of Deceive against someone when one of you has an aspect defining a positive relationship with the other.

I Feel Your Pain: Once per session, you can transfer someone's mental consequence to yourself.

Fight

Pounce: You're an expert at pouncing from concealment. +2 to your Fight roll when you make your first attack of a conflict from ambush.

Dangerous Moves: Your every movement telegraphs your martial prowess. You can use Fight instead of Provoke to intimidate.

Scrapper: You're used to punching above your weight. Once per scene, after a successful attack against something larger than you on the scale ladder (page 20), you can spend a fate point. If you do, your target must absorb your attack with a mild or moderate consequence, if it has any remaining.

Investigate

Reconstruction: Unlike most cats, you're great at working out what humans did and why. If they've left behind clues, +2 on Investigate rolls.

I've Already Won: If you've watched an opponent for a few minutes, you can plan where to strike them most effectively. You can use Investigate instead of Fight to attack that target in your next conflict with them.

We're a Lot Alike: To put your foe off balance, you point out that the two of you are very similar. Roll Investigate opposed by their Will. If you succeed, each of you gains one of the other's aspects until the end of the scene, and you get a free invoke on both. If you succeed with style, gain a second free invoke on one of those two aspects.

Lore

Literate: Unlike most cats, you can read written text. +2 to Lore when reading could help.

I've Seen Your Moves Before: You're a student of feline movement, considered a formal expert by other cats. You can use Lore instead of Athletics when defending by moving your body.

Many Lives: You've lived in the same area through successive reincarnations. Once per session, without spending a fate point you can declare a story detail related to your home area's history. For example, "Oh, sure there's a hidden shaft that leads into the old mine. It was blocked up some 85 years ago, but there's enough of a gap for bats to get through..."

Notice

Preternatural Awareness: Your sense of the *other* is particularly strong. +2 on rolls to notice invisible beings, astral travelers, and other subtle supernatural weirdness.

Look Before You Leap: You're an expert at judging distances, gaps, and other leaping hazards. If you have an aspect related to having appraised an area, you can use Notice instead of Athletics when jumping.

Skittish: You're so paranoid and nervous that you react very quickly to any perceived threat. Even if you're ambushed, you always act first in a conflict.

Physique

Iron Constitution: +2 on Physique rolls to resist poisons and diseases.

Not Skin and Bones: You're better padded than your average mouser. You can use Physique to defend against Fight attacks.

Size Advantage: If you're attacking something smaller than you on the scale ladder (page 20) and succeed with style, you can reduce your damage by one to create an advantage like *Pinned* rather than gaining a boost.

Provoke

Night Terror: You're a much scarier cat by night than by day. +2 to Provoke rolls to induce fear at night.

Bravo Cat: You have a reputation in the neighborhood for being a bully. You can use Provoke rather than Territory to obtain information or favors from other cats in the region. Any cat you bully this way gains a situation aspect to reflect resentment.

Caaaaaaaat!: You're an expert at jumping out and inspiring terror. Once per session, during a tense scene in which your victim can't see you, use Provoke as a Weapon:2 mental attack, opposed by Will.

Rapport

Top Cat: +2 to Rapport when persuading cats who see you as a leader.

Totally Lovable: You're so sweet and loveable that it's almost impossible to lie to you. You can roll Rapport instead of Empathy to detect lies, except white lies.

Snazzy Cat: When you create an aspect related to your looks, like *Well Groomed*, you get an extra free invoke.

Stealth

Prowl: Your ability to move silently is legendary. +2 to Stealth when hearing is the most likely sense to give you away.

Stalk: You can use Stealth instead of Fight to launch your first attack during a conflict, if you've been stalking your prey from concealment.

Surprise!: Once per session, you can reveal your hidden presence in a scene you weren't in. You immediately gain a boost called *Surprise!*, which only lasts for one exchange.

Territory

Mysterious: No matter when the crime took place, you weren't there! +2 on Territory rolls to convince other animals to offer false alibis for you.

It's Not What You Know: You never bothered to learn much—you've got others for that. You can use Territory instead of Lore to know stuff you heard from others.

Iron Grip: You're good at holding on to your turf. You can never have more than two negative Territory situation aspects, regardless of your Territory rating (page 12).

Will

Insatiable Curiosity: +2 on Will rolls when opposing attempts to persuade or bully you out of satisfying your curiosity.

Stubborn: Once you've set your mind on something, you won't be swayed. You can use Will to defend against Rapport.

Iron Will: You gain another mild mental consequence.

PART III: SILVER FORD

Between 1878 and 1892, Maine experienced a silver boom and became home to more than a dozen small mines. The quality of the ore was overstated, though, and the lack of local smelters drove expenses too high for mining to become profitable. Silver Ford was one of several towns that sprang up during the boom to service the mines.

Nestled on the shore of Lake Murkitt in the heart of breathtaking hill country, Silver Ford survives today as a tourist destination. Starting on Labor Day the population of the town begins to swell, until the out-of-towners outnumber the locals by almost three to one as fall begins.

Silver Ford has more than its fair share of ghost stories. A draw for tourists, they've enlivened many a campfire cookout in the hills above the town, but the residents speak of these stories with caution. Though the town enjoys very little crime, over the years a few people have gone missing in the woods and mountains, not to be found until the next spring—if at all.

As a feline living in the town, you're well aware that every ghost story contains a grain of truth. Your Parliament keeps tabs on the known spirits, but most of you agree it's wise to leave them alone unless they threaten the people of Silver Ford.

Most of the time, you work to protect your Burdens against other people or the sometimes-unnatural creatures that venture into the town from the surrounding wilderness. But every now and again, something far more sinister raises its head.



Issues in Silver Ford

Current Issue—*Tourists Are a Blessing... and a Curse:* While the town survives wholly on tourism, the yearly influx of out-of-towners also brings trouble of a criminal and, sometimes, supernatural nature—for example, **The Red Leaf Killer**. When the leaves start turning red and gold, you know to be extra vigilant around young humans. Every fall for the last five years, a nearly grown human has “run away” from Silver Ford, never to be seen again. Seekers have found the victims’ cremated remains buried in seemingly random wilderness spots, but the killer remains elusive.

Pending Issue—*Ancient Evil Spirits:* The town is becoming a magnet for a variety of disquieting and unquiet spirits, some seemingly waking from generations-long slumbers. Among them might be **The Shriveled One**, an unnatural creature who hasn’t been seen for years, but used to appear as a walking corpse with a noose around its neck. Nobody knows what causes it to appear and torment its victims—driving many of them mad—but its murderous hatred of cats is common knowledge.

Places & Faces

The places and faces for Silver Ford are detailed in *Part IV—Black Silver*.

The Meeting Place (The Milly Ross Play Park): Neutral ground where the cats of Silver Ford meet. Its faces are Jezzabella (page 36) and Sable (page 37).

The Burnt Place (The Old Mining Museum): A burnt-out, boarded-up shell of a building. Its faces are a very bad cat named Scarlet (page 40) and a spirit named The Burning Ghost who has a talent for local history (page 41).

Blue Moon Woods: An ancient wood of oak and pine trees. A popular haunt for young lovers by day, by night it’s an eerie borderlands between realms. Its face is Hieronymous Screech, a wise owl (page 38).

The House Across the River (Longman’s Covered Bridge): A warped and twisted bridge across the river from the old mine. Its face is Fuscus, a large brown bat who guards the bridge against evil (page 34).

The Dark Place (The Old Silver Mine): The mine has been boarded up for decades, and rumor says something evil is trapped inside. No living cat has gone in there, so nobody knows what it’s like inside or what the rumored evil might be—for now (page 43).

PART IV: BLACK SILVER

It's the day after Halloween, and something evil is stirring in Silver Ford. Can our feline heroes put an end to the menace before townsfolk start disappearing?

Adventure Overview

During the height of the silver boom, a man called Ezekiel Morton killed his three partners, stealing the silver nuggets they were keeping as proof of a new claim. He was caught by the friends and family of his victims, who sealed him up in a mineshaft with his ill-begotten silver and left him to starve to death. There his spirit has rested ever since.

Last night, four kids tore through the boarded-up entrance to the mine and went down the shaft. Breaking through a crumbling wall, they found Morton's rat-gnawed skeleton clutching the four nuggets. This was unbelievably cool, so they each took a nugget as a souvenir. This woke Morton's spirit from its slumber, angered by their theft of "his" silver. The ghost possessed a horde of large and cannibalistic albino rats living in the mine, forming a Rat King to hold its consciousness and magnify its powers.

Now it sends its rat minions into the town on a mission: find the nuggets and take revenge on the thieves and his murderers' descendants. Each of the players' Burdens is one of these potential victims.



The Beginning

Yesterday our heroes were dealing with strange, unpleasant beasts that took advantage of the shallow border between worlds to cross over and pursue their malevolent agendas. To break the ice and get the players thinking in character, spend a few minutes discussing the threat each dealt with last night.

Blake decides Tack was dealing with the obligatory pumpkin-headed man, while Peter says Swift was ridding the town of a living flame. Taking a different tack, Rod says that Black Paw was guarding his little girl, Lily, from creepy guys while she was trick-or-treating.

At around 11 pm, one gigantic albino rat with a hunched back and tiny vestigial eyes comes scurrying into each player's neighborhood. If not intercepted, the rats get into the PCs' homes and start to poke their noses into everything, making a hell of a mess and freaking out anyone who sees them.

They mutter to themselves about "the shinies," and search through laundry, under carpets, and so forth until they're interrupted.

If attacked they'll put up token resistance and then flee—for now.

Albino Giant Rat

Other Aspects: *Nearly Blind, Big and Strong*

Skills

Great (+4): Fight

Fair (+2): Athletics, Investigate

Poor (-1): Notice

Stress

Mental: no consequences

Physical: no consequences

Notes

These animals are cat-sized. They're barely sapient on their own, but they become smarter as they gather.

Questioning or Following the Rats

If the PCs capture a rat, they can interrogate it. Unfortunately, it isn't too bright. It's looking for "the shinies," which it needs to return to "the master" in "the deep place." After a while, it will stop talking and revert to behaving like an unintelligent animal.

If the PCs follow the rats and get noticed, the rats will turn and fight. If the PCs remain undetected—which is easy if they follow from a distance using Seeking—they can follow the rats as far as the House Across the River, where Fuscus and the bats let the huge rats pass unchallenged. This is very out of character for him.

The House Across the River (Longman's Covered Bridge)

The PCs must cross the Black River to get to the old mine from the town. The Longman's Covered Bridge is the only way across without getting wet. The bridge's timbers are badly warped and the whole thing tilts to one side, but it's stable enough for a cat to pad across.

Inside the covered bridge the air smells strongly of dry mold and bat droppings—almost enough to choke a cat on a windless day. The floorboards are sprung in places, revealing the long drop to the rocks below. The PCs could easily fit through some of the gaps, but they aren't too hard to avoid.

The face of the bridge is a bat named Fuscus, one of the few sapient bats in the area.

Fuscus

High Concept: *Guardian Bat*

Trouble: *Pacifist*

Other Aspects: *A Fine Specimen, I Command Many, Manners Matter*

Skills

Great (+4): Notice

Good (+3): Flight, Provoke, Empathy

Fair (+2): Rapport, Investigate, Deceive

Average (+1): Will, Physique, Stealth, Lore

Stunts

Shriek (Notice): Fuscus emits a near-deafening, high-pitched sound that can knock a nearby target unconscious if they can hear it, which cats can. He can use Notice to attack a target in the same zone. He can choose to attack multiple targets in the zone by splitting his shifts among them.

Ultrasound (Notice): Fuscus can see in absolute darkness using echolocation. This also lets him detect heartbeats and other physiological signs, giving him +2 to Empathy when detecting emotional states and +2 to Lore when diagnosing injuries (2 stunts).

Stress

Mental:

Physical:

Notes

Fuscus is a particularly large brown bat with silky fur and powerful wings. His eyes gleam red in the darkness, and he always looks like he's wrinkling his nose up at something. He's polite and conducts himself with a sense of brittle dignity, wrapping his wings around himself like a martial cloak. He'll happily talk with those approaching the entrance to the House Across the River, but won't let anyone pass under normal circumstances. The other bats, all non-sapient, obey him without question. If he orders them to attack, treat them as an environmental hazard that attacks everyone in up to two zones once per exchange with Good (+3) Fight. It's impossible to take out the swarm without using an attack that affects their whole zone, though they can be driven away with fire.

WHAT'S UP WITH FUSCUS?

He's being controlled by the Rat King (page 43). He lets servants of evil pass in both directions, but bars their enemies. A Seeker using Astral Projection sees this control as a black malaise around the bat's head. Those in the astral plane can attempt to break the Rat King's control over Fuscus, engaging in a contest of Will opposed by the Rat King's Clever. If the evil wins, the astral traveler takes a moderate mental consequence. The PCs can also get around Fuscus by beating him in a fight, sneaking across the top of the bridge, or finding other routes—which probably involve swimming.

Investigating the Dark Place

When the PCs investigate the mine entrance, they find that the boards sealing it off have been broken apart, leaving a three-foot square hole into the mine. Toolmarks and footprints suggest that a group of young humans was responsible.

Inside the mine, the PCs find a previously walled-off tunnel. The skeleton of Ezekiel rests within, along with evidence that the wall was freshly broken down and the body tampered with. The sound of scurrying rodents begins to fill the mine, as the albino rats move up from their low cave to investigate the sounds of movement above. Hundreds of rats emerge from a crack in the tunnel floor, moving with scary coordination. It's obvious that fighting would be suicidal. If the PCs choose stay and fight anyway, see *"Fighting the Rat King"* on page 42.

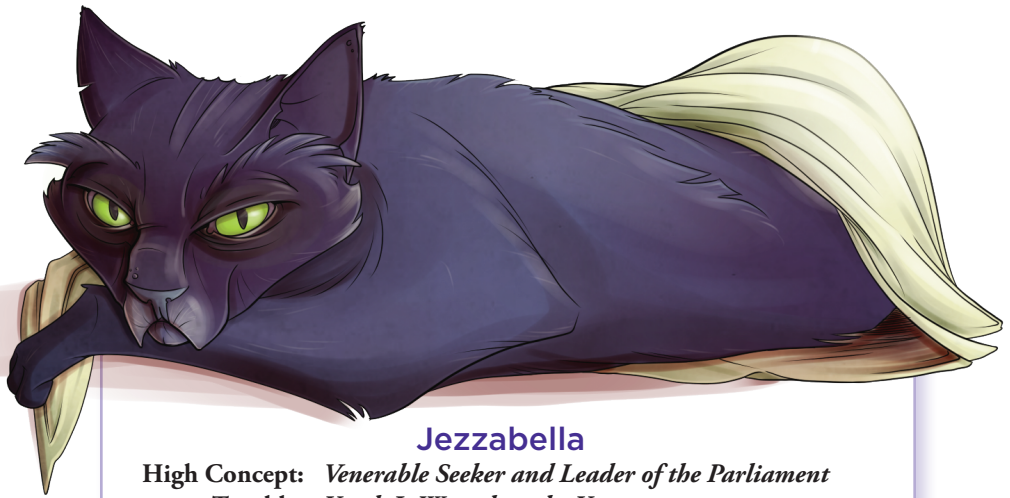
The Next Morning...

The next morning, Jezzabella calls the Parliament to gather at the Meeting Place to discuss the albino rat menace—apparently they were all over town.

The Meeting Place (The Milly Ross Play Park)

Considered neutral ground by the cats of Silver Ford, this grassy space is lined with flowers around its edges. Off to one side there is a large pit of sand, perfect for taking care of your ablutions, and in the middle there is a delightful array of framework climbing structures and ingenious moving things, each surrounded by bark chips that are lovely and soft on the paws. During the day the cats of Silver Ford graciously allow children to play here, but at night this is where they meet to discuss business.

The face of The Meeting Place is Jezzabella. An old black Seeker, she's too infirm for active work but directs the town's younger cats as the leader of the Parliament. She lives with an ancient human woman named Mrs. Haggerty, whom the town's children like to pretend is a witch. Jezzabella doesn't guard Mrs. Haggerty by herself, though. She's helped by a much younger cat named Sable, an arrogant Namer who lives with her.



Jezzabella

High Concept: *Venerable Seeker and Leader of the Parliament*

Trouble: *Youth Is Wasted on the Young*

Burden: *Witchy Old Widow Haggerty*

True Name: *Lie Dancer*

Other Aspects: *Impossible to Surprise*

Skills

Great (+4): Seeking, Territory

Good (+3): Will, Lore, Deceive

Fair (+2): Investigate, Notice, Provoke, Naming

Average (+1): Rapport, Warding, Burglary, Stealth, Empathy

Stunts

Prognostication (Seeking): See glimpses of future events.

Psychometry (Seeking): See past events related to a place or object.

Invisibility (Warding): Become invisible, allowing stealth even when it would be impossible.

Harm (Naming): Wound a small animal to hurt a foe whose True Name you know.

I've Seen Your Moves Before (Lore): Substitute Lore for Athletics when dodging attacks.

Well Organized (General): When you provide a teamwork bonus, give +2 rather than +1.

Literate (Lore): You can read. +2 to Lore rolls when you have access to appropriate texts.

Stress

Mental: Physical:

Notes

A scrawny old black cat, Jezzabella maintains a sense of prickly dignity and refuses to allow her great age and increasing frailty to afford her any special treatment from other cats. She enjoys the company of younger cats, but their lack of wisdom often frustrates her quickly. She enjoys affecting an air of mystery and will never give a straight answer unless straits are particularly dire.

Sable

High Concept: *Arrogant Namer*

Trouble: *Lying to Myself*

Burden: *Witchy Old Widow Haggerty*

True Name: *Black Heart*—relates to Sable's utter ruthlessness.

Other Aspects: *For the Greater Good*
Skills

Great (+4): Deceive

Good (+3): Naming, Provoke

Fair (+2): Rapport, Physique, Territory

Average (+1): Warding, Stealth, Will, Shaping

Stunts

Cipher (Naming): A rite on your True Name makes you immune to Seeking powers used against you. However, you are completely unable to use Seeking magic yourself.

Control (Naming): You can gain complete control over an opponent whose True Name you know.

A Knack for Change (Shaping): You may take two Shaping aspects rather than one.

Mysterious (Territory): +2 to Territory rolls to arrange false alibis for yourself.

Surprise! (Stealth): Once per session, you can reveal that you were hidden in the current scene all along. When you do, gain the *Surprise!* aspect, which lasts one exchange.

Lying to Myself: Use Deceit to determine extra mental stress, rather than Will.

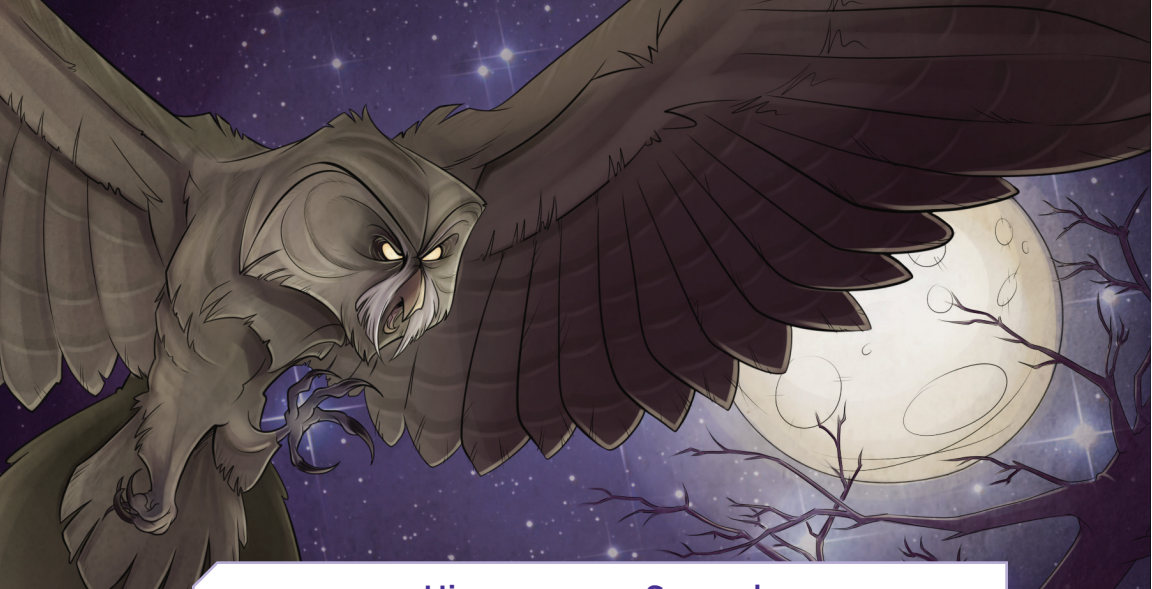
Stress

Mental: Physical:

Notes

A compact black cat with a splash of white on his chest, Sable is being groomed by Jezzabella to be her successor. The Parliament appears to respect him, but nobody has anything nice to say about him behind his back. Many felines think that Jezzabella's support of this arrogant cat is evidence of her mental decline. The more charitable cats feel she chose Sable out of practicality—because they share a home—letting her more easily pass on her wisdom and experience.





Hieronymous Screech

High Concept: *Wise and Enigmatic Owl*

Trouble: *Not from Around Here*

Other Aspects: *Quid Pro Quo, No Patience for Fools, Long Memory Skills*

Great (+4): Lore

Good (+3): Investigate, Flight

Fair (+2): Notice, Territory, Rapport

Average (+1): Empathy, Physique, Will, Provoke

Stunts

Oracle (Lore): Hieronymous can sacrifice a small animal and use Lore to know something he couldn't possibly know—for example, something happening right now in another part of the world. The information he gains in this way is always cryptically worded, though, which explains much of his reputation for being wise but enigmatic.

Death on Silent Wings (Flight): Hieronymous can use Flight rather than Stealth when he's trying to avoid notice while flying, and can use Flight rather than Fight when he dives to attack (2 stunts).

Stress

Mental: Physical:

Notes

Hieronymous is a handsome great grey owl with distinctive plumage marked with spots of darker grey. His claws are wickedly long (Weapon:1), and he is a master of the cold, unblinking stare. Some say he's a creature of the eerie mist that rises some nights in the Blue Moon Woods and that this unnatural origin is what makes him so very wise. Perhaps the cats of Silver Ford would consult with him for help more often if his favors weren't so expensive—to get something from him, you have to agree to perform a task on his behalf. His tasks are often strange, dangerous, and without any discernible logic, but presumably the owl has reasons for everything he does.

Next Steps

Jezabella asks the PCs to investigate the rats and lead the fight to put an end to their menace. If they haven't been to the mine yet, she'll suggest they visit Hieronymous Screech at the Blue Moon Woods for some help figuring out where the rats are coming from.

Blue Moon Woods

To the northeast of the town is an ancient wood of oak and pine trees. In a clearing at the center of the woods stands a broad, ancient oak that humans call The Millennium Tree. It's a pleasant place by day and a popular haunt for young lovers, many of whom carve romantic messages into the old tree's bark.

After dark, though, the woods grow eerie and threatening. On some nights an unnatural mist rises from the ground, clouding vision and muffling sound; the woods become a bridge to realms beyond our own, ushering forth faeries and nightmares to plague the town.

The face of the woods is an old owl named Hieronymous Screech, who nests in The Millennium Tree. This enigmatic bird is demanding and has little patience for fools, but can be a valuable source of advice—if you can meet his price.

Hieronymous' Price

If the PCs ask Hieronymous where the rats are coming from, he asks them to fetch a glowing fungus from the edge of the woods at twilight tonight. This seems straightforward until an eerie, glowing mist falls and an ethereal hound appears, who sets off in pursuit of the PCs. Escaping the hound is a contest of Athletics opposed by the hound's Great (+4) Hunting. Any cat the hound catches takes a consequence. After that, the hound lets them escape, lesson learned. Once the PCs return with the fungus, the owl directs them to the mine.

Local History

If the PCs have already been to the mine, Jezabella will suggest they speak with The Burning Ghost at The Burnt Place to see if he can identify the spirit in the mine from his knowledge of local history.

The Burnt Place (The Old Mining Museum)

Gutted in a fire some 50 years ago, this boarded-up shell of a building is still waiting to be rebuilt by its owners. Humans shun the place, believing it haunted by the arsonist who died in his own conflagration. The cats of Silver Ford know that the haunting is genuine. They also know the angry ghost has a long memory for town history, which makes him useful on occasion.

The face of The Burnt Place is Scarlet, a legendarily bad-tempered cat who makes the museum her permanent home despite—or perhaps because of—its ghostly resident. Scarlet claims a wide swath of territory around The Burnt Place and resents visitors unless they bring suitable gifts.

Scarlet

High Concept: *Solitary Shaper*

Trouble: *I Drive Everyone Away in the End*

Burden: *The Burning Ghost*

True Name: *Walks Alone*—relates to Scarlet's self-reliance and inability to work in a team.

Other Aspects: *One Day I'll Find a Lady Cat to Love*

Skills

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Physique, Shaping

Fair (+2): Athletics, Burglary, Stealth, Territory

Average (+1): Will, Notice, Empathy, Provoke

Stunts

Change Size (Shaping): Grow or shrink radically larger or smaller.

Shadow Form (Shaping): Take on a physically invulnerable, two-dimensional shadow form.

Disguise (Shaping): Physically disguise yourself to look exactly like another cat.

Nine Lives (General): When you would be taken out of a physical conflict, give your opponent a fate point to concede instead.

Dangerous Moves (Fight): Use Fight instead of Provoke when intimidating others.

Preternatural Awareness (Notice): +2 on rolls to notice invisible beings, astral travelers, and similar entities.

Stress

Mental: Physical:

Notes

Scarlet is a large, russet-furred tabby cat with a nasty scar over one eye. She hates being alone but drives away anyone that tries to get close to her. She's afraid they'll leave eventually, anyway. She has no interest in tomcats. She prefers lady cats, but hasn't yet found one that returns her affection, fueling her isolation. Her Burden is The Burning Ghost himself. While he's a terrifying and curmudgeonly apparition, she feels more comfortable with him than with other cats. She knows he'll never leave because he's bound to haunt the place where he died. She guards the ghost jealously from anyone looking to pump him for information, but she can be persuaded if she's in a good mood. You *could* try visiting The Burnt Place while she's out patrolling her territory, but you'd better not be caught there by her.

SPIRITS

Spirits in *The Secrets of Cats* use approaches from *Fate Accelerated Edition* rather than skills. See *Spirits* on page 46 for more details.

The Burning Ghost (Jedediah Morton)

High Concept: *Fiery Apparition*

Trouble: *Cursed to Haunt the Old Mining Museum*

Other Aspects: *50 Years Dead and Still Pissed*,
"You will show respect!", *Local History Buff*

Approaches

Careful: Mediocre (+0)

Forceful: Great (+4)

Clever: Good (+3)

Quick: Average (+1)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Sneaky: Fair (+2)

Stunts

Pyrokinesis (Forceful): Take at least one stress to ignite an object or creature.

Haunt (Flashy): Take one stress to create an aspect like **Hot Spot** or **The Sound of Flames** with Flashy for the rest of the scene.

Telekinesis (Quick): Take at least one stress to create an aspect like **Whirling Shards of Glass** on a zone. This aspect lasts for a number of exchanges equal to the stress taken.

Stress

Spiritual:

Notes

The Burning Ghost appears as a stocky man in black jeans and a black leather jacket with charred skin and a permanent scowl. A wreath of flames surrounds him at all times. He was killed by his own devices—the fire he set to burn down the museum spread faster than he'd anticipated, and he's still angry about that more than 50 years later. He's a bitter misanthrope who demands respect for his family and himself. If you ask him about the fire, he'll tell you he set the museum ablaze because an exhibition described his grandpa as a greedy murderer. While he'd never admit it, he's glad that Scarlet lives in the museum with him. She tolerates his mood swings and makes the place he's doomed to haunt feel less lonely.



Dealing with the Burning Ghost

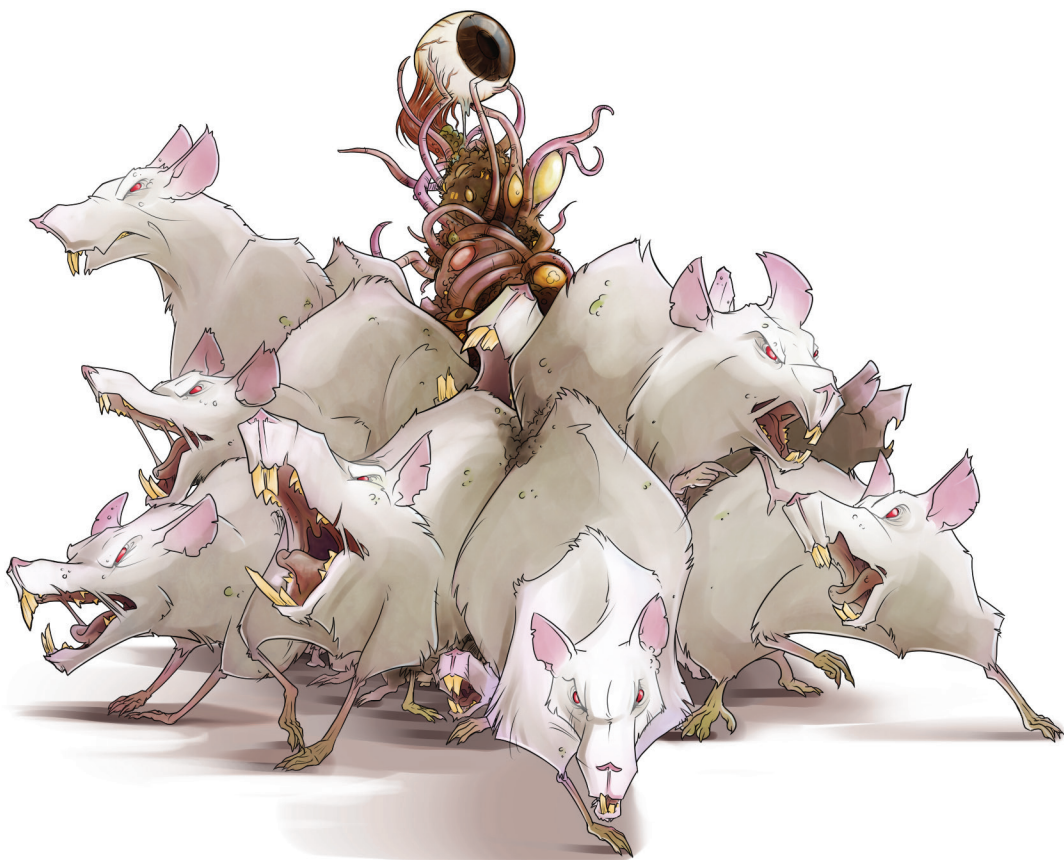
The Burning Ghost knows exactly who the body in the mine belongs to and why it's there. In fact, The Burning Ghost is Jedediah Morton, the grandson of the man in the mine, Ezekiel Morton. The Burning Ghost is loyal to his family, though, so the PCs must be careful in approaching him. If they reveal their true intentions, the ghost will obstruct them rather than help them. He tends to respond well to flattery, however.

Stopping the Rat King

There are four main ways to put an end to the Rat King's menace:

1. Fighting the Rat King

If the PCs kill the Rat King in which Morton is manifested and exterminate the remaining rats, they will consign the spirit to powerlessness. This is probably the hardest option; the rats are myriad and coordinated, even if the Rat King himself stays out of the battle.



The Rat King (Ezekiel Morton)

High Concept: *Vengeful Spirit*

Trouble: *Four Cursed Nuggets*

Other Aspects: *Greed Beyond Death, The Sins of the Father, Overconfident*

Approaches

Careful: Good (+3)

Forceful: Great (+4)

Clever: Fantastic (+6)

Quick: Average (+1)

Flashy: Fair (+2)

Sneaky: Superb (+5)

Stunts

Corrupt (Clever): The Rat King can corrupt a living thing and add it to his collection of vessels. By taking one stress, he begins a mental conflict of Clever opposed by the victim's Will. If this conflict takes out the victim, he becomes the Rat King's servant. The Rat King can use his victim's senses and force it to do his bidding until its corruption is cleansed. If the Rat King is taken out during this conflict, then he falls dormant until the next sunset and can never again try to corrupt that target. The Rat King can use Corruption in his zone or in any zone holding three of his existing vessels.

Entomb (Forceful): Taking one stress, the Rat King uses Forceful to inflict a terrifying hallucination of being entombed alive on a victim, who opposes with Will. While this **Vision of Entombment** is active, the victim cannot act except for trying to overcome the hallucination with Notice, opposed by the Rat King's Forceful. The victim's allies can provide a teamwork bonus to his escape by talking him through the illusion and touching him to make him realize he isn't alone. Only one victim can be entombed at a time.

Rat Swarm (Sneaky): Rather than attacking with his own clumsy body or instructing rats to attack for him, the Rat King can take direct control of his rat swarm. They move as stealthily as possible and seem to attack out of nowhere. Costing one stress, this is a Sneaky attack with Weapon:3 that ignores scale.

Stress

Spiritual: , 1 mild, 1 moderate, and 1 severe consequence

Physical: , 2 mild, 1 moderate, and 1 severe consequence
(the Rat King's body)

Notes

The Rat King is a circular mass of twenty-some giant hunchback albino rats, their chattering teeth facing outward with tails clubbed into a filthy, tangled knot in the center. It exudes malevolence and glows with faint greenish light. Its many eyes are tiny glowing pinpricks in the darkness. These rats are the descendants of the same rats that fed on Ezekiel's flesh and gnawed on his bones. Since then, they've fed on grubs, bats, insects—and each other. Their cannibalism means every rat contains a tiny remnant of Ezekiel's body, giving him amazing control over them. The Rat King can't be attacked spiritually until Ezekiel is forced out of his corporeal vessel. As long as more rats are around him, he can take one spiritual stress to create another Rat King body in around one sleep.

2. Convince the four kids to return the nuggets

To make Morton rest, the children who took the nuggets must return them. If the PCs do it, there will be no effect. Each kid keeps a nugget for a different reason:

- One because it makes him feel like a grown-up.
- One because it's proof of their Halloween adventure.
- One because she can't persuade the others to take theirs back with her; she doesn't want to go by herself.
- One because it's part of her collection of weird and interesting things.

GMs, if you're short on time, consider letting the cats just collect and return the nuggets themselves. You can make things more challenging by requiring them to persuade the spirit to be satisfied with this and return to his slumber.

The PCs need to find the kids first. They can do the do the legwork using Investigate or Territory, and they can get help in many ways:

- Hieronymous Screech can assist with his oracular ability, but will want payment.
- If Fuscus is cured of the Rat King's influence, he'll describe the kids in enough detail for one to be found with Seeking.
- If one of the PCs' Burdens was involved in the theft, then the PCs might discover a nugget in his or her possession.

Once the PCs find the children and the nuggets, they must lead the kids back to the mine. Using Dreamwalking to persuade them is a logical approach, but more overt methods like using Control also work.

3. Collapse the mine's entrance

Trapping the Rat King's minions inside the mine will neutralize the Rat King for now because he's permanently anchored to the mine. The PCs can persuade humans in a dream to collapse the entrance, or they could try to use Animate on a large object to the same effect. Either way, they'll have to fight off rats and bats near the entrance until the collapse begins.

4. Use Morton's True Name to seal him

If the PCs handle The Burning Ghost with tact, they may discover Morton's True Name. If so, they can gain control over him using Naming or Warding. Understanding his history might give them the edge they need to defeat him in a mental conflict and get rid of him that way.

PART V: COMPLICATIONS AND THREATS

Complications

If you're running *Black Silver* as the beginning of a campaign, or if you want to stretch it over more than one session, here are some complications you can drop into the story:

Betrayal: Jezzabella's second-in-command, Sable, has come to realize that cats shouldn't be fighting monsters but rather using them to gain power. If a few humans happen to come to sticky ends, well it's all for the greater good, isn't it? Why should cats work themselves to the bone to protect ungrateful humans anyway? What he does, he does for cat kind. Once he hears of the Rat King, Sable will see the potential for a very beneficial relationship. He won't want the players to interfere, but he also won't want to give away his true nature.

The Shriveled One: (page 31) This ghost is a former warlock, executed for witchcraft, who wears a noose around his desiccated neck. He had never harmed the other villagers, but false witness was borne against him. He now appears to punish or torment those who bear false witness against others. He especially despises cats because he was betrayed by his own feline familiar. If the players lie during their investigation, he might arise to hunt them down. He can be temporarily "killed," appearing to fall to pieces and melt away, but he can only be permanently killed by someone who has never lied.

Unlucky Kid: One of the kids who stole the silver from the mine disappears with his or her nugget. The child fell prey to The Red Leaf Killer (page 31), an out-of-towner who visits Silver Ford regularly to perform the magical ritual that maintains his eternal youth. Can the players save the kid and—and retrieve the nugget if needed—before The Red Leaf Killer leaves town for another year?



Threats

Monsters are real, and they've got an appetite for humans. Whether for their flesh, souls, innocence, or something else, humans are like a walking buffet bar for creatures of darkness. Here are a few of the things lurking out there, waiting to take a bite.

Spirits

Spirit is a blanket term for ghosts, forces of nature, and other intangible entities that are essentially engines of will contained within ectoplasm shells. Rather than skills, spirits use the approaches from *Fate Accelerated Edition*. Spirits have only one stress track—**spiritual stress**—which is based on Forceful, though some may also be able to possess corporeal beings and use their bodies. Many spirits have stunts that affect the real world, but they always cost stress. If a spirit is taken out, it is dispelled and can't manifest again until the next new moon. To kill a spirit permanently, you must also destroy their **anchor**, an object or place named in one of their aspects that lets them reform in the real world. Some spirits—usually those associated with emotions or nature—don't have anchors, making them particularly vulnerable. Spirits with anchors can be seen by cats and other spiritually aware beings when they're within a few yards, but can stay hidden by rolling Sneaky opposed by Notice.

Below are some sample spirit stunts:

Haunt (Flashy): You press against the barrier between worlds to exert minor influence in the real world. By taking one stress, you can create an aspect like *Ghostly Apparition* or *Whispering Voices* with Flashy for the rest of the scene.

Pyrokinesis (Forceful): Taking at least one stress, you concentrate on a flammable object to make it burst into flame. If you attack a living target with this power, each point of stress you take after the first increases the Weapon value of the attack by one. The target of this attack defends with Physique.

The Burning Ghost tries to set Swift on fire. Marking off his fourth stress box, the Ghost attacks her with a Weapon:3 attack.

Telekinesis (Quick or Forceful): Taking at least one stress, you set a number of small objects moving in a chaotic pattern, creating an aspect like *Whirling Shards of Glass* or *Cloud of Soot* on your zone. If you whip up something dangerous like glass or metal shards, this will inflict an environmental attack on anything trying to pass through the affected zone. This aspect lasts for a number of exchanges equal to the stress you took to activate the power.

Telekinesis (Forceful): Taking at least one stress, you can psychically interact with a physical target. You can use this to break a window, shove a person or slap them with psychic force, lift a table, write with a pen, and so on. You can continue to interact with the chosen object for a number of exchanges equal to the stress you took to activate this power.

Misdirect (Clever): You can take one stress to attempt to confuse someone's sense of direction. During a conflict, if an opponent tries to move multiple zones during an exchange, she must succeed on a Will or Seeking overcome action, opposed by your Clever plus the passive opposition of any obstacles in her intended path. If you successfully oppose your opponent, you can place them in any zone you choose. Outside of conflict, you may initiate a contest of their Will or Seeking opposed by your Clever to get them hopelessly lost or force them to go to a place of your choosing. You can also use this power to create advantages like *Disoriented* or *Lost*.

Were-Creatures

The idea of a human that becomes an animal or part-animal hybrid at certain times is common throughout the world. From the were-hyenas of Africa to the *loups-garous* of French myth, there's a grain of truth in all of them. And unfortunately cats can't wield silver weapons, one of the were-creatures' only vulnerabilities.

It's rare for cats to go toe-to-toe with a were-creature in its transformed state. It's far safer to keep their Burdens inside on nights when the creature roams, searching for the fiend in human form. Ideally the transformation is caused by a curse that can be lifted—if not, more direct solutions are sometimes necessary.

To create a were-creature, start by building a main NPC as described in *Fate Core System*, page 22. Add three stunts related to animal features or powers that it gains when it transforms, and note what causes it to transform. In their transformed state, were-creatures are immune to physical damage not inflicted with a silver weapon or, in rare cases, a different metal or weapon they're vulnerable to.

Fairies

Fairies appear most commonly at the borders between inhabited areas and the wild. Most are mischievous—if not malevolent—and they cause no end of trouble with their pranks, rituals, and obsessions. Many of them can be placated with a specific offering such as bread and honey, but such gestures don't always work even if you gift the right item. Fairies sometimes steal children and often eat the dreams of mortal folk, leaving them drained and exhausted in the morning. For reasons long lost in the depths of time, most of the Fair Folk can't stand cats and will go out of their way to torment the felines they happen upon. Most faeries are supporting NPCs with one or two signature stunts related to their nature: for instance, Red Caps can make wounds bleed and Will o' the Wisps can entice people into following them. Because they're vulnerable to wrought iron, faeries must take consequences to absorb stress inflicted with this material.

Tulpas

Tulpas are a special form of physically embodied spirit that take their form from the fears and nightmares of humans. Because children have especially vivid fears, they are responsible for most tulpas.

Tulpas have both physical and mental stress tracks, but they're otherwise built as normal spirits. A tulpa's anchor is the human from which it originated. They feed on fear and can only be seen by psychically aware beings like cats, unless they choose to appear. The only way to permanently kill a tulpa—without killing the originator—is by getting the originator to stop fearing it.

Sorcerers

Magic is real, and most people who can use it are evil and corrupt. Such sorcerers need copious time to enact their spells, which use complex rituals and exotic ingredients—such as eye of cat or a human sacrifice—to achieve astonishing feats of magic. Sorcerers are almost always main NPCs with access to feats similar to the schools of feline magic as well as several powerful spell effects, such as immortality, storm calling, or necromancy.



INSPIRATIONS & RELATED MEDIA

Our ancient forebears worshipped cats and, if the Internet is anything to go by, many of us still do. I drew from a long and storied tradition of cats as heroes when writing *The Secrets of Cats*, and the following is a short list of works that inspired me or which draw from the same tradition.

Cat by John Wick

“A Little Game About Little Heroes” that features housecats protecting their owners from monsters they can’t see. With a very straightforward system and a lighthearted tone suitable for younger players, *Cat* is well worth checking out. You can find the revised version at:

www.johnwickpresents.com/market/products/cat.html

The Call of Catthulhu by Joel Sparks

This recently Kickstarted tome takes the guardian cat idea in a Lovecraftian direction, focusing primarily on animalistic eldritch horrors. For more see:

www.catthulhu.com

Another Fine Mess by Gray Ghost Games

A FUDGE game featuring a band of animal companions trying to rescue their masters from danger in a high fantasy setting. See:

www.fudgerpg.com/products/fudgerpg/anotherfinemess.html

The Price by Neil Gaiman

This short story, originally published in *Smoke and Mirrors*, was one of the major inspirations for *The Secrets of Cats*. It’s very dark, and poetic in the way Gaiman’s writing is always poetic, and focuses on the terrible price paid by one cat to protect his family from the forces of evil.

Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats by TS Eliot

Another of my main inspirations. I’ve paid homage to Eliot’s deliciously quirky poems at various places throughout *The Secrets of Cats*, most obviously in *The Naming of Cats*, where I tell you that a cat has not one but three names.

Stephen King’s Cat’s Eye

This wonderful (and wonderfully strange) film from 1985 was the other major influence for *The Secrets of Cats*. If you’ve seen it, you’ll know exactly which sequence I’m talking about: the deliciously creepy scenes where the cat, General, protects a little girl from the troll that’s trying to steal her breath.

In addition to the main inspirations I’ve mentioned above, there are countless books, films, and TV series that helped form the brain-stew that led to this book, including *The Rats of NIMH*, the TV shows *Sleepy Hollow* and *Supernatural*, and the *Night Warriors* book series by Graham Masterton.

RANDOM TABLES FOR RANDOM CATS

Looking to create a cat quickly? Need some adventure hooks and all you've got is a few moments and a handful of Fate dice? You've come to the right place!

In this section you'll find a number of random tables. There are two styles:

Triangular tables like the first one below are used as follows: roll 4dF; then, starting from the upper left, count right for each **+** you roll, and down for each **=** you roll. So if you rolled **+++=** on the first table below, you'd count right twice, down once, landing on the "... Scout" result.

Rectangular tables like the second one below are used as follows: roll 2dF, then consult the Roll column for the matching result. So if you rolled a **+=** on the second table, you'd end up with the "Excitable, Dedicated, Keen, ..." result. Pick one and match it to your first roll to get your cat's True Name! (I'd go with Hopeful Scout, myself, but maybe you're more of a Grinning Scout kind of cat.)

True Name Generator

	■	+	+	+	+
■	... Cipher	... Storyteller	... Daredevil	... Oathkeeper	Hope Bringer
=	... Dancer	... Hunter	... Scout	... Finder	
=	... Chaser	... Trickster	... Haunter		
=	... Avenger	... Dreamer			
=	Doom Bringer				

If your result starts with a '...', roll below for suggestions!

Roll	Adjectives
==	Lonely, Hollow, Midnight, Lie, Fear/Fearful, Malicious
■=	Night, Dark, Moonlit, Shadow/Shadowed, Haunted, Fearful
=+	Twilight/Twilit, Solemn, Mist/Misty, Hidden, Stealthy, Gray
■■	Mystery/Mysterious, Enigma/Enigmatic, Paradox/Paradoxical, Occult/Occulted, Weird, Strange
■+	Excitable, Dedicated, Keen, Hope/Hopeful, Happy/Happiness, Grin/Grinning
++	Daylit, Bright, Exuberant, Truth/Truthful, Fearless, Joy/Joyful

Burden Generator

	■	+	+	+	+
■	... Ghost	... Priest or Rabbi	... Artist or Novelist	... Doctor or Veterinarian	... Celebrity
▬	... Taxidermist	<i>Roll an Individual (below, 1st col.)</i>	<i>Roll a Family (below, 2nd col.)</i>	... Dog Fanatic	
▬	... Professor or Scientist	<i>Roll a Group (below, 3rd col.)</i>	... Elderly Person		
▬	<i>Multiple*</i>	... Mortician			
▬	... Cat Burglar				

If your result starts with a '...', roll a Description below for suggestions!

* For Multiple: Roll a Family or Group below & then again on above table

Roll	Individual	Family	Group
▬▬	... Man	Single Parent Family	Homeless Shelter Visitors
■▬	... Teen Boy	Nuclear Family	Street Residents
▬+	... Boy	Foster Family	Sports Team
■■	... Girl	Same Sex Parent Family	Dorm Residents
■+	... Teen Girl	Large Family	Fire Station Crew
++	... Woman	Very Large Family	Retirement Home Residents

Roll	Description
▬▬	Cynical, Stingy, Jealous, Judgmental, Misanthropic, Creepy
■▬	Misunderstood, Witchy, Narcissistic, Lonely, Shunned, Devious
▬+	Pessimistic, Argumentative, Unpopular, Unpredictable, Lazy, Depressive
■■	Perfectionistic, Obsessive, Eccentric, Ingenious, Absent-Minded, Impractical
■+	Wealthy, Friendly, Generous, Optimistic, Approachable, Intuitive
++	Caring, Loving, Overprotective, Devil-May-Care, Cheerful, Wise

Cat Stunt Generator

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	General Stunts <input type="checkbox"/> Nine Lives <input type="checkbox"/> <i>You choose</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I'm Not Dead Yet	Empathy <input type="checkbox"/> Psychopomp <input type="checkbox"/> False Friend <input type="checkbox"/> I Feel Your Pain	Provoke <input type="checkbox"/> Night Terror <input type="checkbox"/> Bravo Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Caaaaaaaat!	Awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatural Awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Look Before You Leap <input type="checkbox"/> Skittish	Investigate <input type="checkbox"/> Reconstruction <input type="checkbox"/> We're a Lot Alike <input type="checkbox"/> I've Already Won
<input type="checkbox"/>	Territory <input type="checkbox"/> Mysterious <input type="checkbox"/> It's Not What You Know <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Grip	Athletics <input type="checkbox"/> Leaper <input type="checkbox"/> Death from Above <input type="checkbox"/> Offensive Defense	Stealth <input type="checkbox"/> Prowl <input type="checkbox"/> Stalk <input type="checkbox"/> Surprise!	Physique <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Constitution <input type="checkbox"/> Size Advantage <input type="checkbox"/> Not Skin and Bones	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deceive <input type="checkbox"/> Ventriloquist <input type="checkbox"/> Method Actor <input type="checkbox"/> Lying to Myself	Fight <input type="checkbox"/> Pounce <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous Moves <input type="checkbox"/> Scrapper	Rapport <input type="checkbox"/> Top Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Totally Lovable <input type="checkbox"/> Snazzy Cat		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Burglary <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Burglar <input type="checkbox"/> Getaway Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Invisible Pockets	Will <input type="checkbox"/> Insatiable Curiosity <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Will <input type="checkbox"/> Stubborn	<p>Roll three times on each table to get your stunts. For the first, after you roll your four Fate dice, roll one more—or you can roll five if one of them is a different color!</p> <p>Once you have your stunts, allocate your skill ranks to take best advantage of your cat's special abilities.</p> <p>Rolled the same stunt twice? Pick another in the same box, or roll again!</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lore <input type="checkbox"/> Literate <input type="checkbox"/> I've Seen Your Moves Before <input type="checkbox"/> Many Lives				

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prognostication* <i>(Seeking)</i>	Cat Walk* <i>(Warding)</i>	Shadow Armor* <i>(Warding)</i>	Absorb* <i>(Warding)</i>	Control* OR Multitasking* <i>(Naming)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change Size* <i>(Shaping)</i>	Harm <i>(Naming)</i>	A Knack for Change <i>(Shaping)</i>	Psychometry* <i>(Seeking)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Astral Projection* <i>(Seeking)</i>	Invisibility <i>(Warding)</i>	Dreamwalking <i>(Seeking)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disguise* <i>(Shaping)</i>	Shadow Form* <i>(Shaping)</i>	<p>Stunts marked with a * are exclusive (page 13); you can't have exclusives from more than one skill, and that (mastered) skill will need to be your highest-ranked <i>magical</i> skill.</p> <p>If you roll the same stunt twice, pick another from that same (color-coded) skill; if you roll an exclusive you can't take, pick one from your mastered skill.</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Animate* OR Multitasking* <i>(Naming)</i>				

Threat Generator

	☐	+	+	+	+
☐	Malevolent Cat	Red Cap Fairy	Sapient Mammal	Human Kidnapper	Human Arsonist
=	Pixie Fairy	Spirit (Roll type below, 4th column)	Were Creature (Roll type below, 3rd column)	Sapient Mutated Animal	
=	Sapient Reptile	Sorcerer	Tulpa		
=	Human Thief	Sapient Bird			
=	Human Murderer				

Got a Malevolent Cat? Use the stunt generator on the opposite page to work out their abilities. Sorcerers too!

Roll	Motive	Inciting Incident	Were Creature	Spirit
☐☐	Power-Mad	Someone Disappears	Cat	Demon
☐☐	Psychotic	Someone Is Hurt or Killed	Lizard	Nature Spirit
☐+	Vengeful	Physical Evidence Is Found	Wolf	Near-Human Ghost
☐☐	Hungry	Something Is Seen Or Heard	Bird	Inhuman Ghost
☐+	Greedy	Something Is Taken or Broken	Fox	Emotion Spirit
++	Misguided	A Warning Is Received	Spider	Angel

What Stupid Thing Did My Burden Do Now?

Roll	☐ Bad Ideas	☐ Mistakes	+ <th>Good Intentions</th>	Good Intentions
☐☐	Locked Me Inside	Stole Something They Shouldn't Have	+	Adopted a Stray Dog (That Turned Out to Be Evil)
☐☐	Dared to Stay the Night at a Haunted House	Fell Down a Hole	+	Let Troubled Friend Stay Over
☐+	Held a Séance	Woke a Sleeping Spirit	+	Bought a Cursed Object
☐☐	Ate a Special Mushroom	Angered Something Dangerous	+	Babysat a Terror Child
☐+	Disrespected a Sorcerer	Trespassed Somewhere	+	Went to the (Evil) Doctor
++	Shared Personal Info Online	Broke Something Important	+	Invited a Threat Inside (see above tables)

Prophecy Generator

	☐	+	+	+	+
☐	Someone Is Lost	The Enemy of My Enemy	A Happy Accident	The Right Place at the Right Time	Something Changes Forever
=	An Old Enemy Returns	A Mysterious Stranger	A Falling Out	Something Is Found	
=	A New Enemy Appears	Something Is Lost	A Horrible Mistake		
=	A Betrayal	A Terrible Accident			
=	A Death				

Location Generator

	☐	+	+	+	+
☐	School	Museum	Shack	Factory	Mansion
=	Store	Bar	House	Apartment Block	
=	Warehouse	Cemetery	Cottage		
=	Library	Hospital			
=	Prison				

Roll one or more times below to determine features of the location!

Roll	= Obstacles	☐ Condition	+ Secrets
☐☐	Haunting Spirit(s)	Falling Down	A Spirit's Anchor
☐☐	Human Criminals	Overgrown	A Summoning Circle
☐+	Territorial Sapient Animal	Abandoned	Something Missing
☐☐	Eerie Whining Noise	Ramshackle	A Hidden Body
☐+	Guard Dog	Worn	A Useful True Name
++	Cat Proof	Cared For	A Hidden Safe

If rolling more than once on the second table, you only need one Condition; if you roll another, pick a neighboring Obstacle or Secret on the same row.