

CODEx OF THE NEW EARTH

**THE CULT
OF THE
WRAITH**

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When the Scream washed over Terra's psychics in 2665 unnumbered thousands died in torment. Their brains baked within their skulls as impossible surges of metadimensional energy poured through flesh that could not hope to endure. Nine out of every ten psychics were dispatched within seconds as vital autonomic processes were scorched into cerebral ash. Hearts stopped, thoughts stopped, and life stopped with them.

Of the remaining tenth, the Scream cut away sanity but not life. Filled with terrifying delusions and whipped on by uncontrollable passions, these Crazyed wrought terrible havoc on their home before they finally guttered out in spasms of incoherent suffering. The greater part of them were too weak or too crippled in reason to survive more than a few weeks of the wasteland that their madness had made of Old Terra.

Yet of these Crazyed, a handful lingered in something resembling coherence. Their madness was not so incompatible with life, and their power was too great to be overcome by the chaos of the New Earth. They could exist, after a fashion, and they could continue to press their delusional goals on the few and wretched survivors of their shattered homeworld.

Five of the Crazyed are known to persist even now, two hundred years after the fall of Terra. Four of them act visibly through their minions and cultists, obeyed by those who serve them out of a fear of their anger or a hope for their dubious shelter. They roam like a curse upon the land, going where their strange dreams lead them and leaving fresh ruin in their wake.

The fifth, however, has no such visible cult. The fifth is a hidden hand unseen by the wider world, operating in secret to spread his influence through the New Earth. He offers safety to the psychic outcasts of the human survivors, training for those cursed with the gift of psionic powers. He offers refuge for those who have been cast out by their people and those who live by what they know that others do not. He is called the Wraith, He Who Sees, and his history is known to few.

THE INVISIBLE HAND

The precise details of Solomon Nkwame's birth were erased from Mandate databanks centuries before the Scream. His original identity, birthplace, family, and even his gender were long ago reduced to rumor and myth- and what systematic data wiping did not obscure, advanced Mandate DNA therapy effaced. The Wraith has been many men, women, and stranger things over the course of his centuries of existence, and it is only his most recent incarnation that has earned him his current pronoun.

What all sources agree upon is that the Wraith has been active since 2320, since the earliest decades of controlled psionic research. He must have been among the first generations of psychics to fully develop their powers, and his incredible grasp of metapsionic powers must have been integral to the early development of the discipline. Later Mandate scholars were known to privately argue over which of the critical figures of the early Psionic Authority were actually incarnations of Nkwame.

The source of the Wraith's longevity have never been clear. Early Mandate anagathic treatments were impressive, but maximum lifespans in the 2300s were two centuries at the most. Later nanite-based treatments advanced that maximum to as much as a thousand years of functional health, but such treatments were not available even to elite Mandate bureaucrats until 2580. Some argue that this seeming longevity is proof that the Yukiko Matsumoto, the "Wraith" that involved herself in the founding of the anti-maltech Perimeter organization in 2380 must have been a progenitor or namesake of the Wraith now known as Solomon Nkwame.

Others have darker suspicions. Quiet speculation by contemporaries suggested that the Wraith may have been among the first beneficiaries of the maltech research behind ghoulish immortality. With a sufficient supply of gene-suitable donor bodies, a ghoul can survive indefinitely on patchwork replacements and tissue implants. The rate of necessary consumption accelerates over time and the genetic component mismatch leaves the ghoul unable to benefit from nanite-based anagathic frameworks, but even now in the post-Silence era there remain despots and desperate revenants willing to trade the lives of a hundred victims for every stolen year of vigor.

Such speculations appear preposterous considering the Wraith's involvement in creating the Perimeter, and no conclusive proof was ever produced. Despite this, the sheer improbability of Nkwame's longevity has left questions that have no easy answers.

A WATCHFUL WARDING

One of the few points in wide agreement is that the Wraith was one of the masterminds behind the creation of the Perimeter, the arm of the Mandate dedicated to tracking and extirpating maltech outbreaks before they could metastasize into something capable of threatening humanity. Unbraked AIs, genetic slavery protocols, ghoul immortality, eugenics cults, and devices of planetary destruction were all to be contained and eliminated by this pan-stellar intelligence agency.

The enormous dispersion of the Perimeter over the frontiers of Second Wave humanity made it almost impossible to direct the Perimeter as a cohesive whole, but these individual outposts and duty stations were still able to act as tripwires. They were able to stamp out small maltech outbreaks and slow down the larger ones long enough for the Mandate Fleet to respond to the situation. Mandate records are notoriously unreliable, but what little remains suggests that the Perimeter was highly effective.

Even today, there remain isolated planets where fragments of Perimeter cells still survive. Not every sector even had a Perimeter base in the first place, but on those worlds where they were fortunate enough to survive the downfall, they often formed the nucleus of later revival. Their self-sustaining technological base and superb intelligence-gathering skills positioned them to turn chaos into a means of survival.

While the Perimeter remained true to its duties, Solomon Nkwame did not. It is clear that at some point during his involvement with the Perimeter, Nkwame turned on the Mandate. Their trusted watcher had gone rogue.

A REBEL REASON

The cause of this disaffection has never been firmly established, but six major theories existed before the Scream and the Mandate's collapse. Only one of them was ever publicly accepted by the Mandate's bureaucracy, but even the threat of the Bureau of Harmony was not able to completely squelch contrary speculation.

The first and Mandate-approved theory for his rebellion was that he had finally gone feral. The metapsionic research he had pioneered had finally taken its toll of his already-tenuous sanity, and the Wraith was no longer in his right mind. As with all resistance to the serene prosperity of the Terran Mandate, his very choice to defy them was proof positive of serious mental imbalance.

A different theory was that of corruption. Nkwame had found something in the stars, some secret or some source of power that the Mandate would never permit him to exploit. Some said it was the fear of mortality and the promise of ghoulish maltech that seduced him into rebellion. Others say that it was an ancient alien artifact that required sacrifices unacceptable to the Mandate bureaucracy. A few claimed that it was an entire alien species that he had somehow suborned through his manipulation of their psychic hive-mind. Whatever the specifics, the assumption of this theory was that the Wraith wanted what the Mandate would never allow him to have.

A third theory was that of righteous revolution. To these whisperers, the Wraith was not a rebel- he was a paladin in the cause of the true Mandate, the defiant upholder of humanity's ancient virtues and old faith. The corruption of the Bureau of Harmony, the vicious self-absorption of the Directorate, and the ceaseless press of brightly-inviting tyranny were things the Wraith was sworn to end.

A fourth motive was simple self-defense. These believers said that Nkwame had never wished to rebel against the Directorate or defy Mandate forces. He was forced to it, compelled to act or be assassinated by corrupt officials who understood that the Wraith knew too much. Nkwame held the foulest secrets of half the galaxy in his head- these men and women would never be truly safe until he was dead. And so it was that he was forced to fight back, to deal with them before they could work their bloody will upon him.

A fifth surmise claimed that the entire dispute was nothing but a false flag, a trick by the Wraith to lure rebels and malcontents into his service. By setting himself up as a mighty bulwark against the Mandate he could gather in countless lesser rebels, seducing them with the promise of his aid. Once a sufficient number of traitors to the Mandate were gathered together, the Bureau of Harmony could conveniently liquidate the problem.

The sixth and final theory was perhaps the most fanciful. According to these thinkers, the Wraith never existed at all. It was simply a name attached to a particular Mandate operative set upon a particular mission. There were dozens of "Wraiths" in the Mandate, and when a few of them went rogue, they began sharing the identity with their new rebel comrades. To these theorists, the Wraith was scores of different malcontent operatives.

The truth was never provably established before the Scream, but it was only a matter of time- for in 2652, the Wraith was finally captured.

AN OPEN MIND

For centuries, the Wraith had eluded his pursuers. His precognitive talents, when combined with his unique mastery of metapsionic "invisibility" to those same powers, ensured that the conventional means of tracking down rebels could not possibly fix him. For generations, Mandate agents had struggled to trap a man who knew their every plan and was imperceptible to all their own seers.

How exactly the Wraith was finally trapped is unclear. Some blame a treacherous woman, while others credit a treacherous man. Some say it was a combination of precognitive scanning with AI-augmented metapsionic cryptanalysis, while a few aver that it was just dumb luck. Even fewer suggest that it was all part of the Wraith's plan, a conscious or unconscious exercise of his precognitive powers to ensure that he would survive the disaster to come.

However he came to be imprisoned, the Wraith was sealed into a facility custom-built to contain a man who could not be held. Aside from conventional psionic shielding fields and a holding cell buried five kilometers beneath the surface of the Earth, the containment site was designed to disperse the prisoner's physical presence through multiple layers of quantum dislocation. The Wraith would cease to be a single man and would instead be a series of superimposed states, thin slices of flesh and bone spread through multiple phases of being. In a very real sense, the Wraith would cease to exist as a human being save when the different states were synchronized for study.

It was this study that kept him alive. Some among the Directorate demanded his immediate execution, but others insisted that he be preserved and studied so that his powers could be effectively replicated. This tenuous, semi-existence was as much as the Mandate dared allow for fear that he could somehow escape even this facility.

When the Scream came, this very provisionality saved the Wraith. Because his brain did not actually exist during the surge of meta-dimensional energies that killed or maddened every other psychic in human space, Nkwame was unaffected by the murderous flux. The security systems failed in the chaos, and with nine-tenths of the psychic staff of the facility dead and the other ten percent violently insane, there was little effective effort to retain the Wraith in custody. Solomon Nkwame was free to act in a world seared by the light of a fresh apocalypse.

THE SERVANTS OF SHADOW

As with the other Crazed, the Wraith has developed a significant number of cults and servant cells in the two hundred years since the Scream. These servitors are known as Watchers, and number among them the outcasts, renegades, and unwanted of the New Earth. The Wraith accepts all who come to his service, and these acolytes live to prosper by his aid.

Unlike the visible and coherent cults of the other Crazed, the Wraith's servants are organized as covert cells. Each cell is composed of a leader and up to a dozen subordinates, with the leader first recruited by a member of a "parent" cell. The leader is the only one who makes direct contact with higher echelons of the cult, but all members know of dead drops and emergency signals that can be sent to alert their parent cell of trouble. Aside from these local cells, itinerant "Overseers" are familiar with all the cells in a

region and make irregular visits for status updates and inspection. These Overseers are invariably psychics skilled in counterintelligence and evasion, and they are expected to die before capture. When an Overseer is compromised an entire region's cells may be forced to move or be slaughtered by fearful locals or enemy cults.

Aside from the covert cells, psychic academies are established in relatively secure zones to allow for the training of potential psychics and the organization of plans too large for an individual cell to accomplish. Lines of cell communication all lead upward to one of these schools, and the Wraith's personal agents keep the academies in touch with one another. Concealment is of utmost importance to an academy; actions are never staged directly out of them, but always from a single-use site at a safe distance from the faculty and students. Many Watchers who are crippled or retired from their work return to the academies to live out the rest of their days as caretakers and teachers to the acolytes.

Watchers are most interested in recruiting from the natural psychics that are still born to wasteland populations. Perhaps one in a thousand locals is born with the potential for psychic powers. Almost all the societies of the wasteland still nurse a horror of the Crazyed and their unholy powers, and most nascent psychics have enough sense to conceal their abilities as long as possible. Some go their entire lives without ever exercising their abilities more than once or twice, the neural burns of untrained psychic use passed off as brain fevers or wasting diseases.

Almost all psychic Watchers are trained to detect the presence of psionic potential in a subject with basic metapsionic techniques. Once these potential candidates are identified, a different Watcher from the same cell approaches the subject and offers to help them control their powers and save them from the madness and death that their people claim is inevitable. Most cells will permit reluctant candidates to refuse the offer rather than take the risk of an unwilling recruit, but psychics of all stripes are prized by the Watchers, and inducements of various kinds are not unknown.

Because such psychic recruits are so rare in the sparsely-populated badlands, the Watchers also enlist more conventional renegades and exiles. Some of these outcasts are incapable of functioning in a group, and the cell is forced to kill them off. Those who show potential are escorted to one of the academies by an Overseer, where they will later be assigned to cells safely distant from their former life. Those who prove incapable of dealing with the disciplined life of a Watcher never emerge alive from their schooling.

THE WRAITH AND THE CRAZED

In the two centuries since the Scream, the Wraith has been a constant obstacle to the mad schemes of the other Crazyed. His precognitive invisibility combined with his own powers of foresight leave him unpredictable in a way that infuriates and frustrates his peers. None of their usual means of oracular vision are sufficient to locate him or his more capable lieutenants, and so their actions can be detected only by skilled human minions. The Crazyed are not overly gifted with capable counterintelligence servitors.

The Usurper is the greatest threat to the Wraith, as his legions of mercilessly subordinated thralls are more capable of coordinated action than the servants of most other Crazyed. Even so, this psychic tyrant's attention is too often split between expanding his own domain and fending off the other, more perceptible threats that undermine his rule. His attention on the Wraith is an afterthought.

The Dancer is one of the least coherent of the arch-psychics, obsessed with her own path through the myriad distortions of space. Her servants are almost an afterthought to her, and her plans do not extend beyond the next step in her dance. Were she susceptible to being pinned down by an enemy, she might be the easiest of the Crazyed to kill, but her mastery of translocation in all its forms makes her all but impossible to fix in place.

The Defiler hates the Wraith and his interference with her cults of change. Fortunately for her, her minions are often so deeply twisted by her teratogenic arts that it is all but impossible to infiltrate their numbers. Any Watcher who managed to penetrate the outer cult would soon be warped into a being incapable of anything but worshipful terror of its god-mistress. Even so, the Wraith's servants are sometimes able to warn locals in time to drive off raiding bands or "missionary" cultists.

The Bender is utterly consumed by paranoia, and her attitude toward the Wraith is no exception. He is a servant of the AIs and an agent of ruinous scientific lore. He and all his servants must be wiped out, or they will surely bring about a new nightmare of synthetic gods and global destruction. This paranoia makes it difficult for Watcher agents to get close to her, but their interference helps to keep the remaining Maestros "alive" even under the constant pressure of the Bender's nanocoded assassins.

THE WRAITH IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Wraith is meant to serve as a convenient way to introduce psychic PCs into an *Other Dust* campaign. If a player really does want to play a character cursed with the gift of psychic power, they can use the Psychic class from the *Stars Without Number* rulebook and justify it with training provided by the Watchers. As with all such novelties, final approval for such a character would rest with the GM.

Not all such PCs should be obligated to be deeply involved in the Wraith's plans, both for reasons of character freedom and for other reasons to be discussed. Such characters might be novices freshly released from the academy, sent out into the world to found a new cell in an area- and their fellow PCs make excellent potential recruits. Optionally, they might be the last survivor of a cell that died in action, now unable to contact the rest of the cult until an Overseer comes to investigate the cell's silence. In both cases their dedication to the particular goals of the cult can vary at the convenience of the group as a whole.

Aside from this, it's important that the PC not be too utterly tied to the Wraith because the Wraith is not necessarily a good guy. In fact, he might possibly be the most monstrously dangerous Crazyed of them all. Forcing a player to build a PC dedicated to a cause that turns out to be abominable is unlikely to be appealing to a great many players.

TAILORING THE WRAITH TO YOUR GAME

Before adding Solomon Nkwame to a campaign, it's up to the GM to determine the Wraith's actual back story and motivation. The earlier pages offer six potential reasons for the Wraith's rebellion against the Mandate. The GM should pick one of them to be true or fabricate their own rationale for the Nkwame's defiance.

Next, the GM needs to decide whether or not the Wraith was rendered feral by the Scream. People *think* that he was left untouched due to the quantum translocation of his body during the Scream. Whether or not they are right is up to the GM. The Wraith does not have to be a feral psychic in order to be a terribly malevolent person, but a feral Wraith will have complete and unlimited access to his psychic powers without any concern for power points.

As far as the New Earth is concerned, the Crazyed are the Crazyed. The Wraith is as much a figure of horror to them as any of the others, a corrupter and bringer of psychic horror to the unwitting. In truth, the GM needs to choose the Wraith's actual motivation in the present day. Six potential choices are given below, or the GM can fashion their own.

1d6 MOTIVATION

1

The Wraith actually is a ghoul, and requires psionic "donors" to continue his existence. Captured servants of the other Crazyed are preferred, but expendable minions of his own will do if necessary.

2

The Wraith seeks the destruction of all the other Crazyed except for one, because (50%) they were a lover before the Scream and he imagines they can be cured, or (50%) he plans to assassinate them after their triumph and seize control of their minions through impersonation.

3

The Wraith desires to revive the Mandate and its sleeping fabricators in order to (50%) empower humanity to rebuild the ruined world or (50%) become the unquestioned ruler of the New Earth, served by loyal minions.

4

The Wraith wants to reclaim control of the Highshine nanite system in order to (50%) use it to cleanse the poisoned New Earth or (50%) exterminate 99% of all non-psychic humanity in order for psychics to rule the rest as a divine caste of leaders.

5

The Wraith wants to bring down the Bright Mirror system defense grid that seals off the Sol system in order to (50%) return Terran humanity to interstellar flight or (50%) let in the waiting powers who are trying to come and aid his dreams of conquest.

6

The Wraith wants to convince a large number of normal humans that psychics can be valiant defenders of their people in order to (50%) form an alliance against the Crazyed or (50%) to use carefully-selected minions to take control of the leadership of normal communities.

THE MOTIVATION IN PLAY

If a motive is actively malevolent, it's best that this evil be expressed with sufficient subtlety that a PC psychic could go through training without getting any obvious warning that they're enlisting with a psychopath. The Wraith might claim a more benevolent motive, and reserve the truth for the Overseers and his own trusted lieutenants. A blatantly wicked ambition takes the interest of ambiguity out of the Wraith and makes it hard to explain why a PC trained in such a way would ever associate cooperatively with more ordinary PC types.

As the campaign progresses, let the PCs discover as much about the Wraith's true goals as they're willing to excavate. The facts might be hidden in the possession of renegade Watchers, hidden data caches, the knowledge of surviving Maestros, or the smoking wreckage of lost academies. A group that's willing to simply take the Watchers' word for it might never learn the underlying truth or falsity of their claims, but a group that cares enough to make a point of questioning the facts should be able to find out something concrete.

For some players, this will be important. It will matter a great deal to them whether or not they're actually serving a monster with the missions they're asked to do or the favors they're asked to performed. For others, it simply won't be as important. Let the interest of the group determine how heavily the Wraith's plans fall upon a particular campaign.

THE WORD FROM ABOVE

Missions for individual cells are usually self-directed. Leaders have overall goals given by the regional Overseer, and the accomplishing of those goals is up to them. Overseers don't spend enough time in any single location to understand the situation as well as a cell leader, and they trust their people to do the best job they can.

Individual missions tend to be requests to recover salvage for the cult, assassination jobs on problematic raiders or dangerous local leaders, or the collection of psychic candidates who cannot safely make it to the pickup point for transit to a training academy. More capable cells might be tasked with larger goals, such as establishing new academies or eliminating regional incursions of rival Crazyed cults. It is understood that efforts on this scale can take time to accomplish.

This is not to say that success is not rewarded. Cells that accomplish nothing toward the goals given by an Overseer are not punished, but they receive little or no assistance from their peers and no resources from the Overseer. Such wealth is directed toward the groups that show results, because they clearly are capable of using it more effectively.

Such rewards usually take the shape of salvage gathered by other cells, or access to special skills or facilities possessed by other members of the cult. Pretech workshops and advanced pretech engineering skills can be employed by cells in favor with the cult. Sometimes the assistance takes the form of recon missions performed by other cells, with information gathered and transmitted through the Overseer. The cult lacks the swarms of foot soldiers and brute force possessed by the other Crazyed, but its resources still run deep.

THE DISCIPLINE OF ABNEGATION

The psionic discipline of Abnegation is a complex and demanding science, one requiring a remarkable degree of self-discipline from the adept. Abnegation involves techniques of suppression, abstention, and nullification of both psychic power and more conventional forces. The expert “nullifier” becomes a black hole of imperceptible emptiness, impervious to conventional psychic powers and all but undetectable by ordinary means.

Those who would master Abnegation must make great sacrifices. The initiation process into the art requires extensive meditation and certain adjustments of the standard psychic training canons. These alterations allow the nullifier to create psychic “sinks” in their own neural tissue, gates through which undesired energies can be poured back into metadimensional space. Such capacity comes at a price- with so much brain tissue occupied by these sinks, there is less available neural capacity for other use... at least, if the practitioner is to pursue such popular activities as breathing, maintaining a pulse, and retaining a coherent identity.

A PC who chooses to learn Abnegation automatically suffers three points of attribute loss from the lower of their Wisdom or Constitution scores. The brain damage caused by the discipline takes its toll on the user’s body and mind, and persistent phantom sense inputs, heartbeat irregularities, and distracting ideation are common among its practitioners.

The meditations and training canons are highly advantageous in gaining mastery of certain skills, however. Both Stealth and Security become class skills for a nullifier, and the PC’s Stealth skill is automatically raised to the highest level allowed for the PC’s character level. Thus, a first level nullifier always starts with Stealth-1, which becomes Stealth-2 automatically when they reach 3rd level. No skill points need be spent to gain this boost.

For purposes of activating and using psitech, levels of Abnegation count as levels of Metapsionics where necessary.

INCOGNITO

LEVEL 1

The nullifier is intuitively aware when some power or examination risks exposing their nature as a psychic. By activating this power, the character reads as a normal, untalented human to all forms of scanning, including Metapsionic investigation, psitech scanners, or medical investigation. The power’s cloaking benefits last for 5 minutes or one scanning process. If mastered, this power can remain constantly in effect.

ANOMALOUS EXISTENCE

LEVEL 2

When some psitech or psychic ability is about to detect the nullifier or her immediate future activities, she may trigger this power to pass unnoticed. This psychic invisibility lasts for five minutes per activation and also applies to up to a half-dozen of the nullifier’s close companions. While under this effect, precognition will not detect a planned ambush or otherwise reveal the nullifier’s plans, and telepathic scanning technology will not detect the nullifier’s mind. This will not deflect a telepathic probe used directly on the

nullifier, but it will negate telepathic scans or detection abilities applied to a general area. If this ability is mastered the psychic and their close companions are constantly invisible to precognition or other psychic scans.

FADE

LEVEL 3

At this level the nullifier begins to learn techniques for dissipating conventional forces. Light and heat are the first to be touched, allowing the nullifier to partially negate his own existence for purposes of allowing light to pass through himself. This faded, translucent appearance allows for all Stealth checks to be rolled twice, with the better result used.

Those without augmented vision of some kind will not be able to detect the nullifier at all at distances of more than thirty meters, and at anything more than ten meters the nullifier can choose to attempt a Stealth check each round to slip out of sight.

An activation of this power lasts for five minutes, and applies to the full spectrum of standard visual, infrared, and ultraviolet sensors. Pretech scanners work on too many different levels for this power to overcome them.

ENERGY SINK

LEVEL 4

The cerebral voids the nullifier has cultivated are now powerful enough to absorb hostile energies. The nullifier may now trigger this ability as a defensive power, trading 1 power point to eliminate 1 hit point of incoming energy damage, whether it is a laser, open flame, plasma, sonic blast, or any other intangible force. The user may choose to use this ability after the damage is rolled, and may absorb partial amounts of an injury as desired.

Once this power is triggered, incoming damage may be converted at the nullifier’s discretion for up to five minutes afterwards. Feral psychics who learn this power become effectively immune to energy-based damage and are capable of absorbing anything short of plasma siege cannons.

DEVOURING MIND

LEVEL 5

The nullifier begins to use her cerebral voids to silently absorb psionic forces directed against her. After activating this power, the nullifier may spend power points equal to the cost of the power used against her to immediately negate its effects on her.

For most abilities, this “feels” to the user as if the target had simply made their saving throw or otherwise resisted the power in a conventional way- it is not obviously an anomalous psychic defense.

The nullifier may choose to use this power after failing a normal saving throw. This ability is only effective against powers used directly on the nullifier; the user could parry a psychic probe, for example, but could do nothing to halt a telekinetically-thrown knife. As feral psychics have unlimited power points, those who obtain this power become immune to the direct application of psychic powers.

PERSONAL EXCISION

LEVEL 6

The nullifier can very briefly cease to exist when necessary, bodily translating their existence into a metadimensional pocket. Activating this power causes the nullifier to simply vanish. While nonexistent, the nullifier is aware of their surroundings but can neither move nor perform any actions. The nullifier can remain safely absent for a number of rounds equal to their character level; for every round after that, the character suffers 1d6 damage until they either die or coalesce from the metadimensional void.

ABSTENTION

LEVEL 7

The nullifier now has finer control over their existence and non-being, and can partially dismiss their own substance so as to confuse nearby creatures on a subconscious level. To bystanders, the sense that the nullifier isn't there is so strong that they will prefer to ignore their presence unless forced to acknowledge it.

For the five-minute duration of this effect, the nullifier will be completely ignored by any person without a direct interest in noticing them. Guards at an entrance would notice them as they tried to enter, for example, as would a person they were about to attack, but ordinary soldiers on a military base or alien urbanites would never think to confront them.

CONSUMPTION OF THE NAME

LEVEL 8

The nullifier has such a perfect control over the energies that characterize his neurological activity that he can identify and alter those patterns when he detects them in another mind. A subject affected by this power may make a Mental Effect saving throw to resist it, becoming immune to the ability for 24 hours on a successful saving throw. If failed, however, the nullifier can alter their perceptions and recollection of the user, convincing them that the nullifier is actually a completely different person- or no person at all.

The nullifier may dictate their appearance, past history with the target, and even whether or not the subject remembers them at all. Even when confronted with an obvious mismatch between their memories and what they see, the subject will continue to believe that the nullifier is what he or she has impressed upon them until the user leaves their presence. This false memory will be maintained until a psychic with at least one point of Telepathy spends a day working with the subject and succeeds in a successful Medicine skill check at difficulty 10.

THE VOID WITHIN

LEVEL 9

At the pinnacle of the disciple the nullifier becomes an inescapable zone of psionic desolation. When the void within is focused on a visible psychic, the target becomes completely unable to use their psionic abilities, including psitech that requires an active psionic gift. At the same time, the nullifier is also incapable of using any other psychic power, but must continue to maintain the resonance as long as the lockdown is desired. There is no saving throw against this ability and no psychic power can be used to negate it. While this void is shared, however, the target has an immediate and intuitive awareness of the location of the nullifier.

USING THE WRAITH IN STARS WITHOUT NUMBER

Some GMs will want to use Nkwame in a *Stars Without Number* campaign, one set centuries after the time frame of *Other Dust*. The Wraith can still prove useful in such games with just a few tweaks of his background and motivations.

First, for a *Stars Without Number* game, Solomon Nkwame was offworld when the Scream hit. He was actually being held on a remote frontier world, safely distant from Terra. The Scream wiped out the psychic personnel at the base but the quantum dissociation process took much longer to spin down.

If you want Nkwame to have been a lasting presence in the sector, the process only required a few decades, leaving him active for centuries in the sector. If you want him to be a new element in the local calculus, he may have just recently emerged from his trans-dimensional stasis and be in need of minions and allies. In either case, Nkwame's role in the campaign is as a provider of something the PCs want very badly.

The discipline of Abnegation is enormously useful in combating enemy psychics, so if your campaign has psionic villains or precognitive foes the PCs may want cover for their doings. If a PC psychic gets the chance to learn the discipline, it's best to allow them to reshuffle existing point spends rather than force them to learn it as they level; the drastic training protocols necessary to master it can justify this kind of on-the-fly change.

Alternately, Nkwame's knowledge might hold the key to some long-lost Mandate base or cache of rebel tech he stored away centuries ago. Nkwame himself might not be able to reach the treasure, but he could be willing to give the necessary information to a group of PCs who convince him of their capability- and their willingness to perform certain favors first.

Nkwame prefers to use psychic minions when possible, as the mastery of Abnegation is his trump card against the precognitive defenses of his rivals. In some cases this might result in him starting his own psychic academy, which may well be the only available source of psychic training in the sector.

As with the Nkwame of a former age, the key is to maintain ambiguity in the Wraith's motivations. If the PCs want to find out what he really wants from this fallen age, they're going to have to dig into his past and get a line on his current activities. If they care enough about this to turn their attention it, you're going to have to give them a chance to get at the lost databanks and hidden operations that might give them a reply. Of course, if they're reckless and noisy about their interference, Nkwame might have second thoughts about their usefulness, even if his ultimate motivations are not particularly malign.

They may be so desperate for aid or so greedy to get what he offers that they choose to consciously avoid looking too hard at his intentions. In some cases, they may be perfectly safe in doing so, and Nkwame's purposes might be essentially altruistic. In other cases, they might be setting their home sector up for some truly spectacular psionic catastrophe.

THE ADEPTS OF HE WHO SEES

Included here are stat blocks for the average cultist of the Wraith, along with example statistics for an Overseer, an academy leader or high cult lieutenant, and the Wraith himself. Individual equipment will vary depending on how successful a cell has been in its salvage, but Overseers and other high cult officials can be expected to have access to at least 4-6 pieces of pretech useful in their duties.

WATCHERS

| | MINOR PSYCHIC | NORMAL MEMBER |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| NO. ENC. | 1d3 per cell | 2d4 per cell |
| MOVEMENT | 20' | 20' |
| ARMOR CLASS | 4/Harmony Armor | 5/Scrap Mail |
| HIT DICE | 3d4 | 2d8 |
| ATTACKS | +2/Laser Pistol | +3/Semi-auto Rifle |
| DAMAGE | 1d6 | 1d10+2 |
| SAVE | 14+ | 14+ |
| MORALE | 10 | 9 |
| LOOT TYPE | P3 | P2 |
| SKILL BONUS | +2 | +1 |

Almost all psychics in the service of the Wraith have mastered at least one level of Abnegation, if only to maintain their cover as non-psychics. Usual choices are Telepathy at 3, Abnegation at 1, and Biopsionics or Metapsionics at 2. Minor adepts lack the necessary training to teach the discipline to others, or to train untaught psychics in the safe use of their powers. At least one psychic in the group will possess Metapsionics 1 in order to identify potential recruits, and will use systematically on all whom they encounter.

| | OVERSEER | LIEUTENANT |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| NO. ENC. | 1 | 1 |
| MOVEMENT | 20' | 20' |
| ARMOR CLASS | 2/Exec. Prot. Field | 2/Exec. Prot. Field |
| HIT DICE | 7d4 | 10d4 |
| ATTACKS | +5/Thermal Pistol | +7/Shear Rifle |
| DAMAGE | 2d6 | 2d8 |
| SAVE | 12+ | 10+ |
| MORALE | 10 | 11 |
| LOOT TYPE | P9 | P10 |
| SKILL BONUS | +3 | +4 |

The usual discipline spread for Overseers is the primary discipline of Teleportation at 7, Precognition 1, Abnegation 3, Biopsionics 2, and Metapsionics 1. Lieutenants have a total of 20 points of disciplines, with at least one of them mastered to level 9. There are no more than a dozen direct lieutenants of the Wraith, and all of them are unique in their particular skills and resources. Some are expert infiltrators and assassins, but others are brilliant technicians- and some are not psychic at all.

SOLOMON NKWAME, HE WHO SEES

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| NO. ENC. | Probably Unique |
| MOVEMENT | 20' |
| ARMOR CLASS | 2/Exec. Prot. Field |
| HIT POINTS | 44 hit points |
| ATTACKS | +8/Thermal Pistol |
| DAMAGE | 2d6 |
| SAVE | 6+ |
| MORALE | 12 |
| SKILL BONUS | +6. If Nkwame is feral, he automatically fails all Wisdom-based skill checks. |

Nkwame's psychic abilities include Metapsionics 9, Abnegation 9, Precognition 9, Biopsionics 6, and Teleportation 3. He has effectively mastered all levels of Abnegation, all levels of Biopsionics, and has 45 power points remaining. If Nkwame has gone feral, he may use any of his abilities at will with no concern for power point costs.

Nkwame is incredibly hard to pin down. His invisibility to precognitive disciplines and his wide range of conventional pretech security measures makes it almost impossible to learn his location without the connivance of some traitor in his inner circles. His paranoia has been honed over centuries of running warfare against stronger forces. His instincts are always to flee any confrontation he has not engineered himself, and he always maintains at least two different ways out of any place he uses for his operations.

Nkwame generally assumes that any fight he didn't intend to happen is going to be stacked badly against him. He is perfectly willing to bargain, distract, and confuse his enemies rather than try to destroy them directly, and will sacrifice minions with varying degrees of regret if it is necessary for his own survival. Whether altruistic or malevolent, the Wraith has not survived as long as he has against the enemies he has gathered without growing somewhat callous toward the sacrifices of others.

Nkwame tries to prioritize enemies with knowledge of Abnegation, especially Watchers who have turned against him. He relies on the telepathic skills of his underlings to sniff out treachery, but is somewhat blind in this regard- the very discipline that allows him to evade his enemies allows traitors in his own rank to escape precognitive notice. He is often forced to use more conventional means for teasing out betrayal, including false information fed to suspects and tests of loyalty.

Nkwame does not stay at a particular location longer than is necessary, and does not reveal his personal sanctums to anyone outside his immediate circle of lieutenants. These sanctums are heavily supplied with salvaged weaponry, tech, and skilled pretech engineers capable of building him most of the special equipment he might require for important missions. A few of these sanctums have been overwhelmed by new dangers the wastelands have thrown up, or caught in the surge of raider hordes or expanding polities. Exploration of their depths is as hazardous as might be expected.