

I stand in awe of my body; this matter to which I am bound has become so strange to me.  
I fear not spirits, ghosts, of which I am one,--that my body might,--but I fear bodies,  
I tremble to meet them. What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries!  
Think of our life in nature,--daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it,--rocks,  
trees, wind on our cheek! the solid earth! the actual world! the common sense!  
Contact! Contact! Who are we?

- Henry David Thoreau, The Maine Woods

# UNDER THE SKIN

An adventure for the Hunter: The Vigil  
using the Storytelling Adventure System

Written by Martin Henley    Developed by Eddy Webb    Edited by Genevieve Podleski  
Layout by Jessica Mullins    Art: Sam Araya, Trevor Claxton, Clint Langley, Efreem Palacios,  
Juan Serrano and Andrea Sorrentino

## STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

MENTAL	●●●●○
PHYSICAL	●●●●○
SOCIAL	●●●●○

WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING, INC.  
2075 WEST PARK PLACE  
BLDG SUITE C  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

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STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM		
SCENES 7	MENTAL PHYSICAL SOCIAL	●●●○○ ●●●○○ ●●●○○
		XP LEVEL 25-59



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*Something is inside my skin. Shifting, itching and scrabbling for purchase. It takes me over, pushing me down to darkness. My voice is not my voice; my steps are not my steps. I see my friends... it sees my friends. I cannot scream. I cannot warn them. I am powerless and small in my own body.*

*Help. Please. Someone help me, before it's too late.*

*I am all alone.*

*Fading to nothing.*

## Introduction

Spirit possession, having *something* slide under our skin and take control of our muscles and flesh, dates back to the dawn of time. The idea that through corruption or force any of us could become passive observers in our own bodies is a horror that affects not only our bodies, but our *souls*. Is it as terrifying for the spirit thrust into an alien environment?

## What's Inside?

**Under The Skin** is broken into three sections. This introduction contains a full breakdown of the scenario, complete with backstory, motivations and descriptions of what to expect. Next are scenes, where the story is broken down with scene-specific information, challenges and Storyteller advice on how to make the scenes work for you. Last are the scene cards, meant as a quick resource for you (as the Storyteller) to print and use as place holders and reminders of the principal actions and flow between scenes. As always, the story belongs to you and your troupe, but these cards and other game resources can serve as a touchstone once the characters leave the beaten path.

**Under The Skin** is designed as a one-shot adventure for Storytellers to introduce new or experienced players to **Hunter: The Vigil** and/or the new **Spirit Slayers** supplement (which isn't required for the use of this SAS, but it helps). **Under The Skin** can be a "one-shot" adventure, a piece of an ongoing chronicle or the beginning of one. The experience point level should be appropriate for characters to whom the Vigil isn't new, but who haven't quite become grizzled veterans either.

### ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the free **SAS Guide**, found at the SAS website:

[www.white-wolf.com/sas](http://www.white-wolf.com/sas)

Here are some of the features available in **Under The Skin**:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in green will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It may also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

## Treatment

**Under The Skin** uses an innocent stolen by a spirit as the launch pad for a story of powerlessness and fear in the face of the unknown. Gabriel Roques, a member of Les Mystères (a new conspiracy introduced in **Spirit Slayers**) attempts to bargain with a powerful spirit but loses control.

The story begins shortly after Sarah Schuman is forced into the backseat of her own body when Gabriel's experiment goes horribly wrong. The filth spirit, Wastes of Civilization, is dragged through the curtain between worlds into an alien and unforgiving reality, and instead of riding Gabriel, it latches onto the nearest sympathetic body it can find – Sarah. The sympathy it senses in Sarah is the cancer she has just been diagnosed with. The disease, coupled with the horror and disgust she feels at her body's betrayal, make her a suitable host.

The hunters become aware of the situation when Sarah interrupts a local interest story on the morning news, shambling through the shot. They watch the reporter scream while vermin swarm the scene, shortly before the live-feed dies.

During their subsequent investigation, the cell encounters Curtis Anthony, the cameraman who captured the incident, and Gabriel Roques, the Mystère responsible for the errant possession. With a little



coercion, Gabriel can explain the situation as much as needed, including run-downs on spirits, Loci and other information the characters will need. The clock is ticking, and the cell must hurry to track Sarah down in the big city before it's too late.

Depending on the sense of urgency you want to create, the cell may pick up the trail immediately, or retire to research the information provided by Gabriel. Through the library, Internet or old-fashioned word of mouth, the cell pursues the trail in the hopes of saving Sarah from the strange life form piloting her body. Can the cell put it all together in time? Gabriel might offer some assistance, but his price will be the return of the spirit to him, a task not easily accomplished. If the cell takes too long, Sarah will be lost forever.

The cell's path leads through a disused sewage treatment plant to the long-abandoned PennTech industrial complex. The empty industrial park marks one of the strange intersections between the mundane world and the world of spirits. The cell will have to work their way through the impossibly labyrinthine PennTech factory floor to catch Sarah before she's gone forever. Once there, they do their best to negotiate the situation until they're interrupted by two of the spirit world's border guard: werewolves.

They might try to enlist the aid of the werewolves, or they can shoot their way out. Here lies the real crossroads of the adventure, as the characters must decide what's best for Sarah while time runs down and werewolves loom. Sarah might permanently become a passenger in her own body if they don't act fast, but will the decision they make be the right one?

Hard decisions have to be made, and quickly. Once the cell has committed to a course of action, it's up to them to take care of it while Sarah can still be saved. At the last, when and if the cell is successful, Sarah may be safe, but she shares her terrible revelation: her fight with cancer is only beginning.

## Theme: Nothing is What it Seems

In **Under The Skin**, players are confronted by several events meant to challenge their assumptions about the Vigil. The situation is caused when a hunter loses a mad spirit into the body of an unwitting victim. The spirit itself is innocent in its own way: lost, cornered and lashing out. It remains a danger to its host and her surroundings, but it only

wants to go home. Werewolves appear to be a looming threat, but they might have the means to solve the problem. The characters (and their players) should be challenged at every turn with their concept of "the right thing."

## Mood: Desperation

**Under The Skin** is designed as a game of escalation against the backdrop of a ticking clock. Each scene is another chunk of time gone, every hour the characters stand in indecision is another hour they can't afford. For every hurdle they overcome, two more await.

Some players don't thrive under tight conditions. They might linger long or prolong the investigatory portion of the adventure. You should try to drive things forward, but keep the ticking clock close to the vest until the characters learn more about Sarah's condition. The clock starts whenever you wish. If twelve hours doesn't work, make it twelve days with more red herrings and the madness of *Wastes of Civilization* increasing with each passing day it can't get home. Maybe *Wastes of Civilization* grows to like its new body and decides more of its spirit brethren should have them, too—and takes to abducting people and dragging them to the Locus. Desperation can take other forms that aren't driven by the clock.

## A Chapter in Your Chronicle

Whether you're beginning a **Hunter** chronicle or are running a long-seeded story reaching back to the original **World of Darkness Rulebook**, **Under The Skin** is designed to fit any setting with any character set.

Optimally, adding **Under The Skin** to an existing story will add context and depth to the situations presented herein. Sarah won't be some anonymous innocent or tacked-on relation, but an established ally or loved one of the characters. If none of the characters have any Storyteller characters that fit the bill, a family member of an Ally or Mentor can also work. Simply having the boss call the cell and dole this story out mission-like runs the risk of the characters – and players – resenting Sarah more than feeling engaged by the shared narrative.

With a few minor tweaks, the setting and characters can be tailored to fit any ongoing chronicle. Pre-existing werewolf antagonists, parts of town or other Storyteller characters can add dimension to the simple skeleton offered in **Under the Skin**. Gabriel Roques should be new in town, his presence potentially interfering with hard-won treaties.

Under the Skin

Introduction

## A Story By Itself

**Under The Skin** is designed to be played out of the box as-is using only the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Hunter: The Vigil**. This SAS also dovetails with the content of **Spirit Slayers** as an introduction to that material or to distill the wealth of information contained in the book into a single-session test drive. No prerequisites for character creation are provided outside the experience guidelines found at the beginning of this text; sample motivations highlighting various compacts and conspiracies are outlined below. Characters can be as fleshed out as individual players desire, or you may want to supply a handful of pre-generated characters based on what she wants to achieve during play; either way, it helps if at least one member of the cell knows of or is related to Sarah.

With the presumed urban setting and abandoned factories, **Under The Skin** begs to be cast on the backdrop of America's Rust Belt. Thus the story is presented with Philadelphia in mind as outlined in **Hunter: The Vigil** and expanded upon in various supplements. As fitting as that setting is, it's in no way required. Most cities in the world have areas fallen to disuse and neglect, their once-booming industries long dried up. It's easy to imagine werewolves as urban barbarians, patrolling the borders without drawing attention to themselves. Suburban or rural settings aren't off-limits either; abandoned industrial parks, railroad hubs, hospitals or old wooden sawmills could readily serve as an alienating backdrop. While requiring more work from you, it is no less rewarding.

## Backstory and Set-up

**Under The Skin** doesn't require much in the way of backstory or setup. Below are a few crucial pieces of the puzzle to be placed before beginning the adventure. These are especially important the further you take the story away from the Philadelphia area.

### Backstory

Before the start of game, a few assumed truths should be in place:

- A historic shutdown of industry plagues the area. In Philadelphia, steel and shipbuilding moved on, leaving the skeletal remains of factories throughout swathes of the city. This is similar to logging cities throughout the American Northwest, dried-up silver towns and waning industrial complexes near London or Berlin.



- Gabriel Roques has only recently moved to the city, displaced from the Les Mystères stronghold of New Orleans.
- Sarah Schuman has just been diagnosed with cancer at an early morning meeting with her doctor. She was on her way home, feeling betrayed to the core by her own body when Wastes of Civilization came crashing in, looking for a host.

### Fitting Into Your Chronicle

Fitting **Under The Skin** into your already-running chronicle should be easy enough: just replace Sarah with a character important to the players, pick a burnt out area of town and go. You can replace Lily and Grimm with pre-existing werewolf antagonists in the area, or add them as a contrast to standing allies.

If you're looking to get a few more miles out of the product, consider Gabriel's introduction as the tip of an iceberg: a hitherto unknown cult of Les Mystères in the cell's backyard. Curtis is a Network Zero member waiting to happen; can the cell vet the young man properly, or will he learn all the wrong lessons from the hunt? What are the long-term consequences of negotiating with the werewolves – or starting a war with them?





## Set-up

If the troupe creates characters for this adventure or an entirely new chronicle, the questions of which tier to play at and whether to play as a single conspiracy or compact arise. **Under The Skin** is presented in such a way that all options have their strengths and weaknesses, so it's up to you and your troupe to decide what works best for everyone.

One of the benefits of characters belonging to any of the conspiracies and compacts is the chain of command. The tried-and-true method of having a patron call and thrust the mission upon the characters is always viable. However, having the characters see their friend, colleague, sister or wife interrupting a news broadcast creates more urgency than a call from the higher-ups.

If the design is to use **Under The Skin** as a one-shot SAS, the players are less likely to create a character with an abundance of connections or story seeds to slip Sarah into their backstory. If that's the case, consider mining an available Merit (players might still think it's worth sinking points in Allies or Contacts) as a relation to Sarah. If a buddy or informant calls about his missing sister, it has more immediacy and creates a stronger personal connection. Regardless, as long as the end result gets the characters out of the safehouse and everyone has a good time, we've all done our job.

### MEET SARAH SCHUMAN

How do you include Sarah into the characters' lives? A few ways are suggested above, but instead of waiting for the players to create characters and cherry-picking Sarah Schuman from a Merit, try making a game out of Sarah herself.

Have everyone create a character that must include one sentence about Sarah Schuman without any previous knowledge of who she is (such as "Sarah Schuman is my wife's friend" or "Sarah Schuman is the reason I didn't go to college"). The players then discuss their facts, and you can pick some or all of them to develop a custom version of Sarah Schuman. Letting the characters define their connection to this unknown woman gives you a chance to tailor-make Sarah for the adventure, and the players are already invested in the victim.

An increased stake in the possessed could make all the difference between a good game and a great game. Certainly a detached cell forced to make decisions regarding the life of a relative unknown has plenty of meat on its bones, but if even one of those hunters knows Sarah Schuman you can watch your table light up with new conflicts.

## The Vigil at a Glance

Below are examples of sample motivations for how the compacts and conspiracies (including those introduced within **Spirit Slayers**) might approach the problems presented within **Under The Skin**. These guidelines can help set up players for **Under The Skin**, or help build a larger setting around this story. Even major cities aren't likely to have representatives of every conspiracy and compact, so any of the below should be ignored or tweaked to serve the your specific ends.

### Compacts

**Ashwood Abbey:** Humans being ridden by spirits and wrestling for control of their identity? Sounds like a rush. Abbey members won't be without compassion for the innocent stuck in the middle, but might still seek to exploit the situation in strange ways, perhaps even offering themselves as an alternative host just to see what it's like.

**Bear Lodge (Spirit Slayers, pp. 87-91):** Sarah isn't much of a trophy kill, but information leading to a werewolf den is something else entirely. Members might even have some foreknowledge of some areas explored, which would certainly be a benefit until the werewolves show up. At that point, they are likely to be antagonistic against the unwilling hosts.

**Illuminated Brotherhood (Spirit Slayers, pp. 92-96):** The Brotherhood is likely to seize onto the situation in pursuit of their Holy Grail. Tracking, observation and emulation – in that order – become the likeliest responses from most members. Their excitement and unpredictable behavior is likely to distract the cell, as well as potentially draw the ire of werewolves who encounter such spirit-fetishists. Illuminated Brothers might hamper the investigation in many ways, but they're just as likely to offer their bodies as a replacement for Sarah.

**Long Night:** If anything can be done to save the poor creature Sarah has become, than surely it is God's will the cell do it. If it becomes evident she can't be saved or the price of her soul becomes too much (making deals with devils), then it will be a mercy to put her out of her misery.

**Loyalists of Thule:** With their extensive libraries and grasp of the supernatural, Loyalists have the widest base of knowledge to



draw from, which might help determine Sarah's fate. That isn't to say the Loyalists' solution ends well for Sarah, but it will be a solution.

**Network Zero:** Network Zero wants documentation, but would a member of the secret frequency prolong a possession in order to capture more of the experience on film? Their equipment certainly isn't going to be very welcome around werewolves or their holy place. Is it worth endangering the cell to try and sneak in a camera phone?

**Null Mysteriis:** The victim is clearly hysterical or under some deep hypnosis. The delusion of possession itself is enough to draw out the Null Mysteriis, who will suggest simple solutions to simple problems (there's no reason to take advice from so-called wolfmen when a psychiatric facility and anti-psychotics are likely to work just fine). The average member will take exception to the cell's insistence on feeding the delusion rather than solving the problem.

**Talbot Group (Spirit Slayers, pp. 97-103):** The Talbot Group won't need to be told twice what's at stake, or the part they have to play. If no one else in the cell recognizes the urgency, any member of the Talbot Group can assure them that time runs out quickly in these matters. They will push and fight for Sarah, not wanting to lose another to the spirits. However, members of the group might make negotiations with the "wolf people" difficult when they insist on trying to save everyone... forcibly if necessary. When it comes to how best to save Sarah, they have their own ideas, but if the cell can do so successfully, it gives the member something concrete to bring back to the Group.

**Union:** The Union want Sarah safe in her bed ASAP, and are willing to negotiate any price or broker any deal to meet that end. Pragmatism tends to rule the Union, but some members might not be so keen to learn of wolves so close to their neighborhood, especially if there have been any recent unsolved animal attacks.

## Conspiracies

**Aegis Kai Doru:** The average Aegis member will choose any option that doesn't involve negotiating with werewolves. Most Guardians are likely to at least attempt to drive an unreason-

ably hard bargain with their ancestral enemy – surely the wolves have some item of interest to the Aegis. If the deal sours and violence erupts, it's obviously the fault of those unruly animals, not the Guardians.

**Ascending Ones:** All but the most atheistic member of the Southern Temple within the Cult of the Phoenix take matters of the soul very seriously indeed. Those gifted in *Sulha* will have some experience in negotiation and will favor peaceful resolution with the werewolves, and might even appear to take their side.

**The Cheiron Group:** The bosses at TCG will be quite clear: they want the sample (Sarah) bagged and tagged. Apparently the endocrinal system has an extraordinary reaction to spirit possession, one that the company believes provides startling breakthroughs. Not to make more medical Frankensteins or ectocrine glands, but to treat and cure *cancer*. Is the potential breakthrough worth Sarah's life?

**Les Mystères (Spirit Slayers, pp. 104-117):** Put simply, they believe they can put the lid on a can of worms. They want the spirit back. If Gabriel can't manage it, others within the conspiracy may be more seasoned at bartering with the alien forces of the spirit world. Can the characters trust anyone within the ranks of this strange new cult?

**Lucifuge:** Milan has no opinion on this matter, but an individual Lucifuge certainly does. An innocent in danger of having her soul taken by darkness she did not ask for and cannot control will resonate with many of the Seventh Generation. Whether that sympathy turns to compassion or disgust and resentment is yet to be seen.

**Malleus Maleficarum:** The Shadow Congregation claims specialty in this sort of thing, although they must admit exorcisms aren't in high demand these days. Members of the Malleus will be strong proponents of taking Sarah to hallowed ground and taking care of this possession the right way.

**Task Force: VALKYRIE:** TF:V wants this bug hunt over, done with and swept under the carpet with minimal collateral damage or civilian witnesses. *Now*. Somewhere between pragmatism and urgency, most ranking members of the Men in Black will support whatever the path of least resistance — and potential bystanders — appears to be.

# The Cast

## Sarah Schuman, Possessed Victim

**Quotes:** (*Inarticulate snarling*)

“Wh— where am I?”

“No, I’m not safe now, it’s not okay...” (*sobbing*)

**Virtue:** Charity. Sarah never thinks of herself first, instead finding worth in the gratitude of others.

**Vice:** Envy. Thinking always of others has a flip side, and Sarah dwells in the dark of her heart on what she doesn’t have.

**Background:** Sarah should be the kind of girl that the world is worse off without, regardless of the potential resentment that might engender in some characters. Sarah is a young professional with nowhere to go but up, helps out within the local community and universally described as a nice girl who doesn’t deserve whatever *this* is. The best suggestion is to make her something of a celebrity in the neighborhood, city or local news: a face the characters recognize.

**Description:** Sarah is an unassuming sort. She’s remarkably plain in appearance, but with a quiet dignity. She’s in decent shape, suggesting a history in some form of collegiate level sport or an otherwise active lifestyle. The day of her abduction she’s dressed business casual: slacks, button-down shirt and hair pulled out of her face.

### MAKING YOUR OWN SARAH SCHUMAN

Sarah is intentionally a blank slate, which you and the players can define with their backstory. For the purposes of dropping a ready-made innocent into the game, descriptions and general demeanor are provided.

**Storytelling Hints:** By herself, Sarah is a kind-hearted person; possessed by Wastes of Civilization, none of that comes through. She behaves more like a feral rat than a human being: sniffing, scratching, snuffling and hissing at strangers. Preferring to flee or enable her own escape over confrontation, it won’t be until the last that she turns to attack, a potent force in its own right.

As an added point, Wastes of Civilization is an innocent in its own way. It doesn’t do these things to be unkind or cruel; it does them simply because that’s what it does. It knows no other way.

**Note:** While possessed, Sarah is simply the human shield of Wastes of Civilization. Sarah has access to all of the filth spirit’s Numina, influences and traits and all her own values (initiative, willpower, etc) are replaced during this time. The only exceptions are her defense (though it’s enhanced as described by the Swarm Numen below) and that any physical attacks made against the spirit while in possession of Sarah will be done to her body. It’s possible to drive Wastes of Civilization out of her body in this way but not easy – and certainly not in any way that benefits Sarah.

## Wastes of Civilization, Lord of the Filth Spirits

**Quote:** (*Hissing*)

**Background:** Wastes of Civilization began as a filth spirit and gestated within the urban environment of its inception, festering and growing strong in the excess-laden garbage of the city. Slowly gaining self-awareness and absorbing weaker spirits over the past century, the modern creature grew fat and happy in the age of over-packaging and waste. In fact, Wastes of Civilization is doing so well for itself that it began to show up on the spiritual radar of Les Mystères.





**Description:** Manifested in the real world or seen as it is in the spirit world, Wastes of Civilization appears as an oily smear on reality, like a heat distortion. The hazy silhouette formed by its presence is that of a shambling vagrant, hunched over and leering with coal black eyes.

**Storytelling Hints:** When first summoned, Wastes of Civilization is confused and only capable of lashing out if it feels cornered or followed. It knows only an urge to get someplace comfortable and familiar, leading it close to the Locus within the abandoned Penn Tech factory. If through a good bounce of the dice (or your needs as Storyteller) the cell catches up with Wastes of Civilization earlier in the adventure than the end, it will do its best to fight to escape and continue its journey.

#### WASTES' NUMINA

**Ill Wind:** By spending 3 Essence and rolling Finesse + Power, Wastes of Civilization breathes out a noxious fume which causes all within its area of effect double over wracked with pain (unless they resist with a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll), taking bashing damage equal to the amount of successes rolled in the form of retching and vomiting.

**Festering Touch:** Wastes of Civilization must make physical contact (using its own or Sarah's body) with the item it wishes to affect with Corrosive Touch, spend two Essence and roll Resistance + Power. Success causes metal to rust, clothes to become threadbare and skin to rash or age. If successes equal or exceed an item's structure, that item is destroyed or otherwise rendered unusable. In contact with skin, the target takes half the successes rounded down in lethal damage.

**Swarm:** Wastes of Civilization is accompanied by a swarm of rats, mice, cockroaches, lice and other pests and vermin (in both the physical and spiritual realm). These creatures swarm around their spirit master, granting +3 to the defense of the possessed target. While the swarm doesn't attack outright, once per turn the swarm may target a member of the cell or their allies in an attempt to hamper her efforts. Roll four dice, and successes translate to minuses to any action performed by the target for that turn. Attacking the swarm directly may cause it to dissipate for a turn (thus removing the defense bonus or hampering penalty) but will do no damage or remove them from the fight.

## Minor Filth Spirits

**Quote:** (*Squealing*)

**Background:** Filth spirits breed in every city in the world, finding places in alleyways, sewers, landfills and tenements. Filth spirits in the local area acknowledge Wastes of Civilization as something of a paragon to them, and hope to follow in its footsteps and achieve a higher form.



**Description:** Filth spirits come in as many varieties as filth itself, ranging from furry molds with ooze-spewing mouths to rolled-up garbage bags with broken glass for teeth. A few more powerful forms might resemble pigs without faces or floating noxious clouds. For all their variety of forms, they amount to the same thing: disgusting little brutes.

**Storytelling Hints:** Spread your influence and protect Wastes of Civilization to the best of your ability.

#### MINOR FILTH SPIRITS' NUMINA

**Manifest:** Filth spirits can make minor forays into the physical world while near a Locus or extreme concentrations of its aspect. By spending two Essence and succeeding on a Power + Finesse roll, the spirit materializes within the world of flesh and blood for ten minutes per success.

**Claim:** The spirit can attach itself to a person, anchoring itself to them after entering the material realm. With a living anchor, the spirit avoids the pull of the spirit world, hiding from spiritual pursuers—and can subtly steer its host to achieve the spirit's ends. The spirit spends a point of Essence to Claim a living creature within five yards. The spirit must beat the target at a contested roll of Power + Finesse against Resolve + Composure before taking root. The spirit remains attached to the person until he dies or the spirit is exorcised. The spirit does not have to expend Essence to remain in the physical world. A spirit must remain in contact with a Claimed individual at all times.

## Gabriel Roques, Overreaching Apprentice



**Quotes:** “It is not my fault.”

“Of course I can undo it; you get me the girl and I’ll make this whole thing go away.”

“It would be a mistake to believe me helpless. The spirits are invisible to you, but they’re my allies. Would you like to see what we can do?”

**Virtue:** Faith. All of life has a pattern of meaning – and by extension, a design for Gabriel personally. He

views the arcane movements of the spirit world as proof.

**Vice:** Greed. The universe owes Gabriel one. He wants it delivered to him, and he wants it now.

**Background:** What Gabriel won’t admit is that he was an outsider in New Orleans, largely reviled by his peers. He was too hasty and prone to shortcuts, never showing the proper reverence. The other *bokor* and spirit talkers kept him under careful observation, hoping to prevent him from overreaching. Since the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, the *Mystères* have been scattered throughout the country, and Gabriel finds himself with significantly less supervision.

He has only been in the area a little while, but already he has his eyes on a few spirits to experiment with, hoping for a major breakthrough to propel him upward in the conspiracy of outsiders.

**Description:** Most people come away describing something “off” about Gabriel from the moment they lay eyes on him. He walks with a severe limp and smells like he doesn’t wash often. His race is a mystery, as he has chalky skin tones and hair color that matches his skin seamlessly. His hair is short and coarse, and his cheeks are speckled with pockmarks.

**Storytelling Hints:** It’s never Gabriel’s fault. Despite his many quirks, he carries himself with a tremendous sense of arrogance. He squints when he talks, like someone accustomed to wearing glasses he has only recently shed.

## Curtis Anthony



**Quotes:** “Come on, you guys have got to tell me what’s going on. I didn’t just get covered in bugs for nothing, man.”

“This is amazing!”

“Man this sucks, I totally have to stay with the van. But you dudes can call me or whatever, if you need... I dunno, man, anything. Here’s my card – I made it with Photoshop. That’s my direct line.”

**Profession:** Journalist

**Virtue:** Fortitude. Slow and steady wins the race, or more importantly gets the shot.

**Vice:** Pride. Of course he’s the best at what he does.

**Background:** Curtis is a local boy who went to school in the area, got hooked into A/V club in middle school and discovered a life-long love affair for film. He sees the lens as creating microcosms, cutting out all the background noise and focusing on a single moment, action or truth. Unfortunately, no one pays for single moments of truth, at least not as much as they do for droning 30 second segments of lies and mediocrity.

**Description:** Curtis is a slightly doughy guy in his mid to late 20’s. He wears his hair long despite his hairline’s inevitable march backwards (due to male pattern baldness). Curtis won’t be caught dead outside without a black T-shirt proclaiming his allegiance to some guitar-driven band or another.

**Storytelling Hints:** Curtis is earnest and fearless. He’s not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but he doesn’t let that hold him back. He smokes too much (doubly so when nervous) and talks with his hands.



# Lily By-Foot, Voice of Reason



**Quotes:** “You’re a long way from home. A lot longer than you think.”

“The difference being, we didn’t just drag your enemy into your living room, now did we?”

“We can help you, but only if everybody seriously shuts the fuck up.”

**Virtue:** Prudence. Lily is the very model of restraint in the most antagonistic situations. She believes her-

self above her bestial nature and struggles daily to not let it rule her.

**Vice:** Pride. Lily is young and untested, but holds the reins of command in her pack. She can’t let anyone see weakness in her. Beyond that, Lily desperately wants to prove that her way works.

**Background:** Lily is the youngest member of her pack and the current Alpha. She won the title after she warned the previous Alpha that his plan to bring a neighboring pack to heel was doomed from the start, an outburst which pushed her to Omega and caused the leader to leave her behind with the promise she’d be dealt with later. She tried to follow, but arrived too late. The surviving half of the pack made the unanimous decision to make her their leader. Now she’s doing her best to convince her pack that their animal instincts aren’t always correct, a task not easily accomplished when the subject of revenge hangs in the air.

**Description:** Lily gives the impression of being tiny, but this is an illusion and she stands eye to eye with all but the most giant of characters. Dark skinned with short hair and dressed practically in light but thick-fibered clothing (like denim) for added environmental protection. Lily puzzles away at every problem with a scowl that could easily be mistaken for anger, but as a solution becomes clear, her features soften and reveal an attractive young woman.

**Storytelling Hints:** Lily is levelheaded, but not a bottomless well of patience and grace. To the characters’ benefit, she desperately wants to prove that a peaceful solution to this (or any) confrontation is not only possible, but plausible. At the end of the day, she has a caged beast beating inside her breastbone the same as Grimm, she just happens to have a stronger cage.

# Grimm (Joshua Van Dyne), Bad Cop

**Quotes:** “This is taking too long; we should just eat them and be done with it.”

“I say we cut the thing out of her and ship her body to you through UPS. How you like that plan? No? Then I’d listen to the lady.”

“If you so much as inch a finger toward a weapon, it’ll be the last thing you do.”

**Virtue:** Justice. Grimm is a believer in eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth reckoning.

**Vice:** Wrath. Grimm’s always had a temper. It’s brought him his share of troubles, but it’s solved a few problems for him too.

**Background:** Grimm’s best friend is dead. The previous pack Alpha and he had a real connection, *simpatico* they call it. Like a good Beta, he supported the decision to go show those little punks by the river the meaning of respect. They hit the road that night despite Lily’s squawking about how the kids weren’t going to fall in line by barking at them or putting them in traction. Sure enough, the little shits were cornered and scared – they brought a bigger gun. By the time Lily showed up bleeding from the run in bare feet, Grimm’s was the last dissenting vote. Seeing her determination and rage at having failed, he threw in with the rest of the pack on naming her as successor.



Under the Skin

The Cast



Now he serves as Beta to a little girl that he doesn't see eye to eye with, literally or figuratively. Best he can tell she's the only thing that stands between him and bringing the hammer down on those cheating river shits for what they've done. Still, she's the Alpha, and that's how things are. He wouldn't say he's waiting for her to fall on her face, but he's definitely watching her closely.

**Description:** Grimm is a colossus, his muscular body standing well over six and a half feet tall. Unshaven, unwashed and unkempt, Grimm takes little care for what people think of him or whether he looks like a vagrant. Dressed in an old army jacket with large pockets and grimy jeans that often serve as a napkin, Grimm looks right at home on the burnt-out factory floor of PennTech.

**Storytelling Hints:** Joshua growls his words and talks deep in his throat. He doesn't like people, and he *really* doesn't like people in his territory and chasing some spirit-ridden bitch. He doesn't seem to take Lily very seriously, sometimes openly snorting at her words, sometimes talking over her. However, he is even less tolerant of anyone else questioning her or not showing the proper respect. He will act as her enforcer, but seems anxious to get to the enforcing.

## Scenes

The scenes presented in **Under The Skin** are designed to be played right out of the box, but should also be seen as part of the larger toolbox. Mix and match, add and subtract, due what thou wilt. If everyone in your group created social characters, the physi-

cal challenges presented throughout this SAS aren't going to work quite as well, but with careful planning and a switch of priorities, **Under The Skin** can become a game about negotiating with the strange protectors and denizens of the spirit world for the return of Sarah Schuman.

## The Ticking Clock

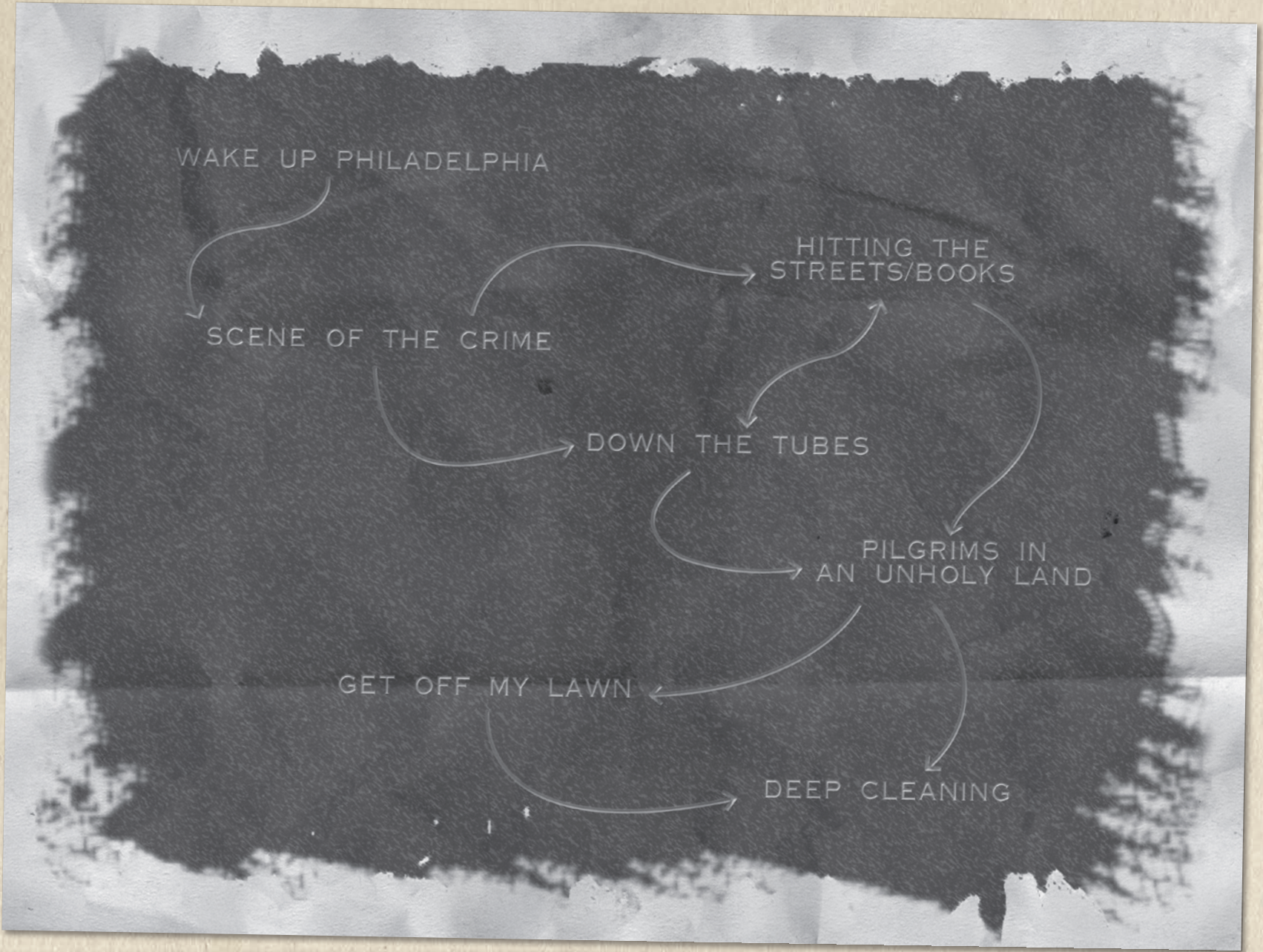
Starting from the prelude, the characters have twelve hours to find Sarah and drive the spirit out of her before the process becomes irreversible. If the characters don't save Sarah in time the spirit will retain possession of her permanently, kill her or maybe even return to the spirit world with Sarah's soul in tow.

A good way to really turn the screws is to not make anything easy on the characters. Emphasize how long every action takes them and how much longer a lead Sarah has with every passing minute. To turn them even tighter, have Gabriel shave time off the clock when he indicates the time limit: "*– twelve hours at most, more like ten, now.*"

Keeping track of every minute can be a recipe for boring you and your players to death. Instead consider the time limit in the abstract, bringing it up only now and then for punctuation. If the characters stay above the streets, mention a glance at the clock or the tolling of a nearby church bell. Indicate the time on a character's watch or read the time off a character's cell phone after they put a call into a contact. Remember, you control the flow of time and all things should move at "the speed of plot." Bring it up when dramatically appropriate to spur the players forward or make them sweat.

Under the Skin

Scene Flowchart





# Wake Up Philadelphia

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •

## Overview

What starts as an exceedingly mundane local interest piece on the morning news program “Wake Up Philadelphia” becomes vastly more interesting when the live shot is interrupted by Sarah Schuman shambling into frame amid a swarm of rodents, insects and pests. The scene erupts in screams and the reporter flees in panic. The cameraman remains in place, holding the shot and zooming in on Sarah. A cockroach inches onto the camera lens before the feed cuts out.

The characters will have to converge on the location, getting out of work, class or pre-existing appointments to take up the Vigil during daylight hours. Characters needing extra incentive have superiors, acquaintances or colleagues who may press the matter.

## Description

The characters should be starting their day normally. If a character is getting ready for work or school, a TV plays in the background as she begins her morning routine. If a character finds himself at a diner eating his breakfast, the story appears on a TV behind the counter, which another patron asks to be turned up once the commotion begins. The video could be streamed on the Internet and a character called over to watch it by a coworker. Use whatever method feels most natural for the characters involved.

*“Keith Matthews here at the grand opening of the local community center art project, turning graffiti into beauty. Northeast Philadelphia has seen its share of graffiti, but now the city is paying for it.”*

*The stock smile and droning voice of the reporter fade into the background of your morning, at least until a flurry of raised voices and activity draw you back to the screen. The reporter excuses the commotion behind him as people draw their attention away from the community project to a figure stumbling into the scene. The camera focuses on the figure. It looks like Sarah Schuman.*

[Note: If you have not already established ties between Sarah and the player characters, describe her per the character description above.]

*The camera centers on her, and she appears to be covered by rats and bugs. The camera then zooms out, and the street around her is similarly infested with dozens of vermin scurrying toward her. “I don’t know quite what we’re seeing here, guys. It seems as if there’s a woman and she — ohmigod! Get’ em off of me!” The camera swivels and the reporter swats at his pant leg, screaming, before he drops the microphone and runs out of the picture. The lens returns to the woman, closer now. It’s clearly Sarah, but she seems distant, shambling like a zombie covered with mice and bugs.*

*A dark blur appears in the lower left hand corner of the screen and ventures across the camera lens. The blob swims into focus, and a cockroach seems to regard the audience. A half-formed “Oh shi—” can be heard off-screen before the feed cuts out.*

The feed cuts back to the newsroom where the hosts make a few mumbled excuses and a promise they’ll return to Keith Matthews as soon as they can, and quickly move on to local weather.

The characters presumably will see this as a call to action, and begin rounding each other up. If the characters aren’t inspired to action, their phone should ring from a superior, colleague or an Ally or Contact who might have some relationship with Sarah instead.

## Storyteller Goals

To introduce the story and get all the players in the same location.

## Character Goals

To follow up on this bizarre occurrence as soon as possible.

## Actions

“Wake Up Philadelphia” isn’t really about any one outstanding challenge or prescribed action. However, potential challenges arise from a hunter needing to talk his way out of trouble at work, school or relationships. The sample action below pertains to long-term chronicles more than a one-shot adventure. You may want to skip it and get right to the meat of the adventure if you have no intention of playing through long term consequences.



## Calling out of Work/ Canceling Appointments

Many hunters keep day jobs and have other real world concerns that they have to maintain. The sudden appearance of Sarah and her troubling condition isn't going to accommodate such schedules. That means most characters are going to have preexisting plans they're going to have to bow out of somehow. Whether calling out of work or pushing off a lunch date, the hunter has some explaining to do.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge versus opposing Resolve + Empathy

**Action:** Contested

**Hindrances:** History of cancellation (-1 to -3), important appointment (-1 to -3)

**Help:** Self-employed/boss (+1 to +3)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character completely blows her own case by contradicting her story early and often. If she isn't fired or confronted on the spot, she can expect long-term consequences to loom.

**Failure:** The actor makes an unconvincing excuse. While technically nothing prevents her from pursuing the story, she should expect future scrutiny and consequence for her actions.

**Success:** The character makes a convincing – or unassailable – excuse to put off or cancel her day's appointments.

**Exceptional Success:** As success, and she gains sympathy, which can lay groundwork for future excuses.

## Consequences

The scene is intended as a kickoff and setup for the story at large. You may decide to hit the ground running and skip this scene in favor of moving directly to “Scene of the Crime,” “Down the Tubes” or “Pilgrims In An Unholy Land.”



# Scene of the Crime

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL .. SOCIAL ...

The cell arrives at the scene of the broadcast where they can find the cameraman Curtis Anthony and Gabriel Roques. The characters may examine the periphery of the scene, outside the police line. Interacting with either of the above characters will provide information about what happened before, during and after Sarah's eventful television debut. Finding clues without help is possible: Enough sign of Sarah's vermin-infested passing is around to be tracked by characters with the proper acumen.

## Description

*The scene before you is controlled chaos. A police officer has shut down foot traffic in front of the community center, while another interviews the superintendent. A small crowd of gawkers has formed around the periphery of the police line. The occasional rat scurries down the street as if lost, startling a few onlookers before taking off. A young guy in jeans and t-shirt of some band you've never heard of sits smoking a cigarette nearby, hanging out in the open side door of a TV news van.*

## Curtis

The police have already interviewed Curtis and he sits by the news van, smoking cigarettes and looking around distractedly. His foot constantly drums on the sidewalk while he nervously fusses with his camera equipment. Getting Curtis to talk won't be an issue; he'll talk to any character looking at him too long or hanging out around the scene for more than a few minutes. Curtis is certainly willing to join the investigation, but if the cell is already large enough or if you don't want to manage an extra character, his excuse is simple: he has to stay with the company equipment.

*(manic excitement) "That chick walks right into the live shot, right? I figured she just wants to get her face on TV, wave to her kids, whatever. That's when Keith must have noticed all the rats and shit, because he starts screaming like a girl – no offense – and ran off. I'm just trying to get it all in the shot, you know? I got bugs all over me and mouse shit on my shoes, but I got the shot. At least until they cut the feed back at the station like a bunch of pussies – no offense. Now I'm supposed to stay put, see if Keith comes back or I don't know what."*

*(pointing) "She went that-a-way, best I can tell. I mean, fuck, I just wish I wasn't hooked up to this remote shit and had a real tape of the whole thing. Seriously, can you imagine what that would do for my resume? I would have, like, a million YouTube hits by this time tomorrow. Yeah, that way. Center City."*

*(inquisitive) "So, is this, like, what you guys do? You chase after weird shit? Can you make any money doing that, or what?"*

## Examining the Scene

Aside from interviewing Curtis, hunters may poke around the scene and scan the crowd. Those with the credentials to do so may approach the sparse police presence to see what they know. There's not a heck of a lot to see or tell from their perspective; mostly they're trying to control the scene and waiting for animal control.

Assorted members of the crowd will point in a handful of directions, but it becomes apparent most of them arrived on the scene well after Sarah was already gone. Representatives from the community center will be able to point in the right direction (Center City) but lost track of her in the chaos.

Scanning the crowd or tracking the occasional rat will lead to a curious sight.

*A fat-bodied rat scurries into the crowd, leading most to lift their feet or lurch out of the way. Except one. One set of dirty feet, clad in sandals, comes down on the creature with a strangely gentle determination, ending its life with a wet crunch. A pale hand covered in mud and grime picks up the body. Following the figure upward reveals a man in non-descript clothing. His curious skin tone and matching hair color make you think of an albino, if it weren't for his dark eyes. Those eyes meet yours for a moment as he slips the rat into a canvas pouch attached to his belt. He then turns nonchalantly and begins to hobble away from the crowd.*



## Gabriel

Attempts to catch up cause Gabriel to increase his pace and head directly away from pursuers, which reveals a strong limp in his gait. He will attempt to flee and duck through the crowd while drawing as little attention to himself as possible (see below for Foot Chase rules), which isn't easy for a man covered in muck with a bad leg.

Catching Gabriel should be relatively easy, and once they have him it's time to get some answers. Under closer scrutiny, Gabriel has dark, ophidian eyes that stand in stark contrast to his pallid skin. A snake spirit is riding him in order to increase his sense of sight for the scene. Feel free to embellish his speech with sibilants and tongue flecks. Gabriel is most likely to be confused for a member of the Ascending Ones from his general appearance and strange behavior (the disconnection from using spirits is similar to how some Ascending Ones behave under the influence of their Elixirs).

Upon successful interrogation, Gabriel will impart as much direction as he can to the cell and attempt to go about his business. If pressed or asked why he isn't helping, he will indicate his obvious limp and insist he would only be an impediment. On good faith, he will offer his number and address, promising to look into the matter from the other side – the spirit side. Ultimately, he is getting the cell to clean up his mess, but will remain aloof as if he has some better way of tracking the problem. If the cell forces him to come along, he will be a liability – not just due to his disability, but because he will *make* himself a liability: pausing for breath, moaning, falling behind and so on in the hopes the cell will cut him loose.

*(explaining)* “An... experiment of mine gone awry, I'm afraid. I was attempting to barter with a spirit from beyond our dimension. I humbly regret that I failed to coerce the spirit, and it seems to have ended up in the young woman. Of course I feel awful about the whole thing, but there is nothing to be done for it now. Without her, at least.”

*(accused/defensive)* “I'm sure I don't know how it happened, and that's the truth. I offered the spirit my body, but it refused and got away from me. Next I know it's on the morning news.”

*(urging)* “I expect the spirit wants to get home; barring that, it will find a place it feels comfortable, familiar. Please understand that while the spirit might be without intent, the girl is in increasing danger. Unless it is driven out or sent home, the possession deepens with every passing minute. Eventually, it will become permanent... I'd say twelve hours at most.”

*(pressed)* “It will look for a comfortable place – as a filth spirit, I can only shudder to imagine where that would be. Beyond that, it will look for a way back to the spirit world. A crossroads of sorts: not literally, but a place of strong spiritual resonance. Haunted, you might call it, or a place history often repeats itself. I have yet to find one in the city, but rest assured they are everywhere.”

## Storyteller Goals

To put the characters on the scene and have them deduce, track and interview their way onto Sarah's broken trail. The scene starts slowly, letting your players feel out their characters. This is a good chance for brand new players to get a feel for declaring actions, rolling dice and resolution and so on. Experienced players or members of an existing cell should be able to get right down to business.

Most of the underlying answers to “what happened?” can be answered in this scene. Curtis Anthony has the most immediately useful information regarding the previous scene and which way Sarah went. He's been instructed to stay put, since his “talent” ran off screaming, but his interest is obviously piqued, and it won't take much to make a future hunter out of the young man. Gabriel Roques stands just outside the crowd, himself trying to ascertain where his spirit went and what to do about it. Either of these characters may become more involved if you wish. If you want to get right into the action, either of them can point the characters in the right direction fairly quickly.

Some groups might take a more deliberative approach to investigating the scene. Take narrative advantage of their time. If you feel it's being put to good use establishing relationships and bringing out the characters, let it play out. If the characters keep poking at dead ends or insist on running an in-depth forensic investigation, introduce Gabriel or Curtis to energize the cell with Curtis's excitement or Gabriel's mystery.

Furthermore, Gabriel has more information regarding the behavior of spirits in general, what this one wants specifically and general guidelines for where it will go. Areas of potent spirit activity are often mistaken as haunted but actually act as gateways to the world beyond the thin veil of reality. The spirit will look for one of these, or someplace it has an affinity for. The spirit has a resonance of filth, so it will likely look for someplace polluted or unclean. As to why it chose Sarah, Gabriel cannot say.





# Character Goals

To deduce what happened and which way Sarah went. This should result in the players talking with Curtis and sussing out Gabriel as they poke around. Where they go from here will depend on their sense of urgency and what kind of skills the cell rely on most.

## Actions

Taking notice and investigating the scene can be periodically resolved with Wits + Composure and Wits + Investigation rolls, respectively. More specific actions can be found below, including tracking rolls that will lead the characters into “Hitting the Streets/Books” or “Down the Tubes.”

## Foot Chase

Once Gabriel realizes he’s been discovered or that other hunters are on the scene, he’s going to move as fast as he can to avoid the usual round of persecution and blame. Full foot chase rules can be found in **The World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 65-66.

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + equipment versus Gabriel’s Stamina + Athletics -2 (due to his bad leg; this reduces his pool to a chance die)

**Action:** Extended and contested

**Hindrances:** Improper footwear (-1 to -3), fresh rain (-1)

**Help:** Sneakers (+1)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character wrenches her leg, taking one point of bashing damage and suffering a -3 penalty to Athletics rolls for the remainder of the scene.

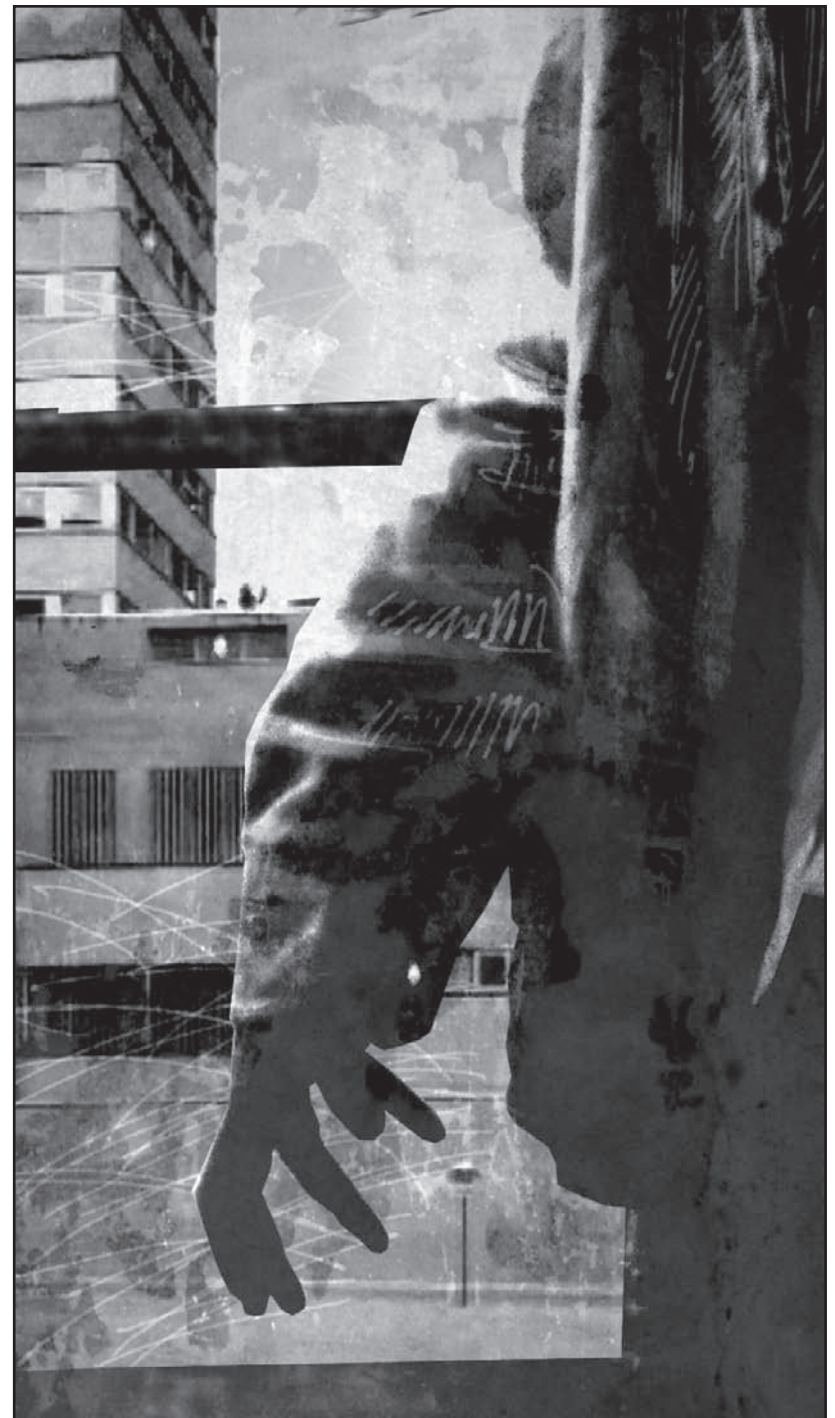
**Failure:** She fails to gain any ground on the target and the distance between them increases.

**Success:** The pursuer closes the gap or Gabriel puts more distance between himself and the other hunter.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success above, with no additional benefit aside from the additional successes.

## Interrogation

Gabriel isn’t the most willing of informants, and some pressure will have to be put on him to own up to his involvement. A cowardly man, he can be pushed to breaking relatively easily, but don’t expect him to volunteer anything without proper incentive.



Scene of the Crime

Under the Skin

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation or Persuasion + equipment versus Gabriel's Resolve + Composure (5)

**Action:** Contested

**Hindrances:** Gabriel is visibly frantic (-1)

**Help:** Bribes (+1 to +3)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Gabriel is not impressed, and begins to aggressively interrogate the hunter instead. The interviewer cannot continue and might attempt to retreat. Other attempts to interrogate Gabriel (by others) suffer a -2 penalty.

**Failure:** Gabriel senses this line of questioning means more to the interrogator than it does to himself and refuses to give anything without getting something out of it.

**Success:** Gabriel is successfully cowed, and will dole out information on an as-asked basis.

**Exceptional Success:** Gabriel spills his story willingly; anything the characters want to know, he'll tell them. He even finds himself answering questions that weren't asked.

## Tracking

Tracking Sarah's path through the city streets is no easy task; it's not like there's soft earth to leave prints in or brush to disturb. It's not impossible, however: signs of her passing can be found in overturned garbage, rats and insects trailing in the area and residents' reactions to seeing a woman covered in vermin wandering down the street. Barring any input from Gabriel or Curtis, the cell can go it alone and attempt to follow Sarah's trail.

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Survival or Streetwise + equipment

**Action:** Extended (10 target successes, every roll counts as 10 minutes)

**Hindrances:** Time (-1 for every hour between the initial incident and the time of the tracking roll); running (-1); driving (-2)

**Help:** Witnesses (+1 per reliable account)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The hunter is sure Sarah went down the street toward Center City (or Downtown, Chinatown, etc., wherever is appropriate for your setting). While this is accurate enough to register as a false positive, the character completely misses where Sarah veered from that path, and hours could be wasted looking in the wrong parts of town.

**Failure:** The hunter fails to turn up any sign of Sarah's passing in any direction. Two consecutive failures erase any built up successes, and the actor will have to start over at a -1 dice penalty.

**Success:** The actor adds the successes to his overall roll. After 10 successes have been achieved, he can put together the various pieces of evidence and determine that Sarah moved toward Center City but diverted into the sewer through a nearby open manhole cover.

**Exceptional Success:** As a success above, and the actor gains a +1 bonus on subsequent attempts to track or find Sarah.

## Consequences

A number of outcomes are probable from "Scene of the Crime," including learning of Gabriel Roques's involvement, the looming time limit, background information about the spirit and its likely behavior from here. At the least with a few quick questions they should have a direction to track Sarah to the sewers ("Down the Tubes"). More research-oriented or street-savvy cells might choose to take the time out to work smart and put the clues together instead of risking their lives beneath the streets. At any time, the entire cell or individual members can hit the library or simply pound the pavement ("Hitting the Streets/Books").

Depending on the size of the troupe, Curtis can come along as a Storyteller character to help round out the cell's numbers or give you a voice within the group. Curtis is largely a non-combatant and very wet behind the ears; feel free to make him almost more trouble than he's worth. Similarly, if **Under The Skin** is intended as a chapter in an ongoing chronicle, Curtis might be someone the characters wish to revisit and invest time in outside of the parameters of this adventure.

# Hitting the Streets/Books

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ...

## Overview

Not every hunter is going to be keen on lacing up her boots and sloshing through the labyrinth beneath the city streets. In this scene, the cell investigates likely areas for the spirit to take Sarah either through footwork or old-fashioned research. This scene can take place at any time or several times if the cell doesn't find success the first time.

## Description

*(streets) Sarah can't have gotten far, even with the head start she has. Your mind reels as you consider the sheer size of the city, but there are only so many places to go. Someone in the area has to have some idea. What's in this area that would attract the possessed?*

*(contacts/allies) The more you think about the problem, the more lost you feel. This isn't your bag, but you know just who to call.*

*(library) The smells of paper, dust and glue are far more attractive than the rancid scent of the sewer. Rows of books, computer monitors and microfiche machines lie before you. A sense of vertigo washes over you as you contemplate where to begin, but you muster your determination and get to work.*

*(Internet) The browser pops up and your fingers hesitate over the keys as you suddenly feel unsure of what to search for. "Possessed Women" is likely to pull up the wrong sort of site, but you've got to start somewhere. You'll refine the search as you go.*

## Storyteller Goals

This is the best opportunity to direct the players straight to the end-game scenario or throw in a number of red herrings, depending on what your goals are. You may propose a number of likely places around the city and have the characters tick them off until they finally arrive at the right answer, or with a few quick rolls you can point them directly

to the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment plant or the PennTech factory. It all depends on how you want to pace your story.

## Character Goals

Armed with what little they know or can find out from Gabriel, the characters track down Sarah any way they possibly can. By following up on information regarding strange hauntings associated to the crossroads between the spiritual and physical worlds or the concept that the spirit will search for a place it shares a sympathy with, the characters hope to turn up some clues.

## Actions

The roads to the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant (and, by extension, the PennTech factory) are varied but similar in scope. The cell might dedicate their actions to a single avenue, or use a Tactic to attempt to uncover information leading to Wastes of Civilization's whereabouts and Sarah's rescue. Perhaps they spread out, each within their area of expertise. One member might utilize her professional contacts while another member prowls the Internet from his cube at his day job. Whatever the method, the goal is to gather information leading closer to their quarry.

## Research

Following Gabriel's interrogation (or a successful Intelligence + Occult roll), the cell has a lead to follow up on: specifically, that the spirit will look for either a crossroads between worlds or a place with which it shares a sympathy. Its use of the sewers provides another clue (several if the characters manage to penetrate the dark labyrinth even for a little bit, as seen in "Down the Tubes"). The characters may select specific leads to follow up on between themselves, or attempt a teamwork action (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134) or appropriate Tactic just the same.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + equipment

**Action:** Extended (10 successes, each roll represents a half hour)

**Hindrances:** Exhausted (-1 per day without rest); broad search terms, i.e. "haunted Philadelphia" or "filthy places" (-1 to -3)

**Help:** Access to special collections such as law libraries or Civil Planning records (+1 to +3); specific search parameters such as the tunnel number found while investigating the sewer (+1 to +3)

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** After much wasted time, the character finds herself all too sure of a bad lead. Storytellers allowing for more time





for this adventure might find this a handy opportunity to lead the cell after a red herring. If time is tight, another character can overrule the bad information with a successful Research or Interview roll.

**Failure:** The acting character fails to contribute to the ongoing roll. If the character suffers two consecutive failures, she has “hit the wall:” tired, red-eyed and frustrated, she turns up nothing of use. Information starts to repeat itself, and she gets no further in her investigation without sleep or an extended break.

**Success:** Once 10 successes have been achieved, the hunter is considered to have gathered information pertaining to the abandonment of the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant and its attendant health concerns (found at the end of “Down the Tubes”). She may also have uncovered news items regarding several workers’ plummeting to their deaths in an accident mirrored years later by several college students suffering the same fate in the now-abandoned PennTech factory. Comparing these two pieces of knowledge reveals that both of these places are within the same industrial park, only a few miles from the community center where Sarah was last seen.

**Exceptional Success:** As above, only the answers present are even clearer. The industrial row has an unrelated news item telling about a number of large dog sightings in the area or a paranormal conspiracy website indicating the factory as a local haunt, including an account of one reporter’s frustrated attempt to make it through the factory to no avail.

### Interview

Local residents or other witnesses may have seen Sarah (or an unfamiliar homeless woman covered in vermin) or heard rumors regarding the haunted factory or poisonous water treatment plant. This is a good chance for characters to use their professional Contacts or other social Merits as well. Keep in mind that not every Ally or Contact will be appropriate: players citing her character’s Allies in Big Business better have a pretty good rationale for how they think board members are going to provide information to haunted places or good sources of filth. Characters with Street People or Blue Collar Contacts will have an easier time of things.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Streetwise (or appropriate Skill) + equipment (or appropriate Merits)

**Action:** Extended (10 successes, each roll represents a half hour)

**Hindrances:** Fresh from the sewers (-1 to -5)

**Help:** Contacts/Allies (+1 per point in appropriate Merits)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** After a lot of bad conversations, the character finds herself all too sure of a bad lead. Storytellers allowing for more time for this adventure might find this a handy opportunity to lead the cell after a red herring. If time is tight, another character can overrule the bad information with a successful Research or Interview roll.

**Failure:** The acting character fails to contribute to the ongoing roll. If the character suffers two consecutive failures, she finds herself talking in circles with people. Information starts to repeat itself, and she gets no further in her investigation without sleep or an extended break.

**Success:** Once 10 successes have been achieved, the hunter is considered to have gathered information pertaining to the abandonment of the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant and its attendant health concerns (found at the end of “Down the Tubes”). She may also have uncovered gossip regarding several workers’ plummeting to their deaths in an accident mirrored years later by several college students suffering the same fate in the now-abandoned PennTech factory. Comparing these two pieces of knowledge reveals that both of these places are within the same industrial park, only a few miles from the community center where Sarah was last seen.

**Exceptional Success:** As above, only the answers present are even clearer. Workers from the industrial row talk about a number of large dog sightings in the area or a hunter contact indicates the factory as a local haunt.

### Consequences

Armed with one lead or several, the characters follow up any way they know how. If multiple attempts are made to no effect through repeated failures or interruptions, or if the players continue to follow their own hunches despite your clues, use Curtis or Gabriel to feed the characters leads from their own research.

Whether successful on their own or bailed out by a Storyteller character, the cell should ultimately turn up two key pieces of information:

- The sewer Sarah disappeared into was formerly fed by the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant, which has since been closed down due to unworkable environmental conditions (found at the end of “Down the Tubes”).
- Nearby the treatment plant is a reportedly haunted old factory with a history of mysterious accidents (“Pilgrims in an Unholy Land”).

# Down the Tubes

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL •

## Overview

Physically-oriented and more adventurous hunters won't want to waste time looking up clues or chatting up the local color. They'd rather hold their nose and follow the trail – no matter how treacherous – before it cools. It's possible to track Sarah through the sewer all the way to the end. However, without proper equipment (flashlight, boots, rope, waders), it won't be an easy haul; these are not the storm sewers commonly seen in movies, but the real offal-filled deal.

## Description

The sewers are a dangerous place even for those who make their living within them. Properly equipped, the journey may lead to Sarah's whereabouts; improperly equipped, and no one may find the cell's bodies.

*Hunched over and single file, you stand in two feet of brackish sewage. The smells are suffocating and the ambient heat is stifling. Every surface the light reveals is slick with runoff, sludge and strange algae. The sewers go on for miles in every direction and it impossible not to feel overwhelmed down here. But if Sarah is here, you have no choice but to pick a direction and look for signs of her passing.*

*Without a flashlight, you cannot see your hand in front of your face down here. The current of storm water, sewage and filth-slick surfaces make for dangerous footing; vermin, gas pockets and fluid surges from flushing and rain events are just a few of the pitfalls awaiting you in the hidden city beneath the streets.*

## Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant

The Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant historically serviced the industrial district of the city, easing the burden on the developing sewer system over the years. The combination of big industry thinning out and questionable dumping left behind by abandoned factories led the plant to close, citing unworkable conditions as the poorly ventilated air became increasingly toxic.

*Before you is a large concrete bunker style structure dominated by a large metal vat taking up the majority of the space. A narrow shaft of light can be seen coming from the exact opposite corner of the space. At first the air rushes in as a blast of relief from the smells of the sewer, but then something tickles your nose behind the scent. Something acrid and chemical.*

The air is more or less poisonous within any of the four underground treatment areas and breathing it in can cause characters to lose consciousness. Roll Stamina every turn the character continues to breathe as normal. Character may hold their breath (see **The World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 49) and explore looking for signs of Sarah's passing. A quick Wits + Composure roll can determine she passed through and swiftly out the caddy-corner steps out into the night air. If a character is overcome and passes out inside the bunker, they fall below the worst of the fumes and should be fine for the time being, provided someone gets them out of the area.

Bonuses to the Stamina roll should be applied for characters willing to crawl on all fours (+1 beneath the fumes) or wearing some form of mask (+1 for a surgeon or painter mask, +3 for rebreather or oxygen tank).

*Stepping into the night, one sight dominates the skyline: the abandoned PennTech factory just beyond the chain link gate marking the boundary of the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant.*

## Storyteller Goals

Lead the characters through the dark, sweltering maze of sewage, tracking Sarah to the end goal. Highlight the filth, grime and disease-ridden conditions throughout the tunnels. Make progress a battle won by inches, despite plentiful setbacks, precarious footholds and fluid surges. The struggle should be such that it brings the characters to the brink of giving up in frustration but with reward enough to plow forward.

The characters at any point can take what clues they have gathered beneath the streets and take them to the Internet or knowledgeable individuals as seen in "Hitting the Streets/Books" and still find their way to the PennTech Factory. The only question is whether they can afford the setback in time. More importantly, can Sarah afford it?

If the characters persevere, their reward is clear: this is the most direct route to follow Sarah's trail. The hidden benefit of this scene is that those who ford through the offal will be protected later when confronting Wastes of Civilization (see the spirit's ban on page 1).

# Character Goals

To track down and catch up with Sarah. Those with the stomach for it will follow the broken trail to the poisonous fumes of the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant and beyond to the PennTech Factory.

## Actions

### Maintaining Footing

Walking four feet on the sewer's slippery concrete is a balancing act, let alone trying to maintain footing while searching for signs of anyone's passing. Every few dice rolls (associated with the Turning Over Rocks action below), you should ask for a check to see whether the cell keeps their feet while poking around the dangerous tunnels.



You determine the frequency, depending on how difficult you intend to make this for the group. Calling for a roll every time isn't an unreasonable representation of the treacherous atmosphere in the sewers, but makes for a lot of tedious dice rolling. Every three rolls (30 minutes) or so is probably sufficient to keep everyone on their toes while not slowing progress too much.

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + equipment

**Action:** Instant (periodic checks)

**Hindrances:** Slick surfaces (-2); recent rain (-2); sneakers (-1); previous failure (-2)

**Help:** Rope line (+1); boots (+1 to +2)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Wipeout! The character loses her footing and takes two bashing damage as she wrenches her ankle and takes a dive into the effluent channel. Any characters in front or behind the klutz must succeed on another Maintaining Footing roll (with a -1 penalty) or suffer the same fate.

**Failure:** The character fails to find her footing and lands on her knees in the rushing, dirty water. Her next Maintaining Footing roll is at -2

**Success:** The character is able to trudge along through the nauseating muck, making progress through the tunnels for the time being.

**Exceptional Success:** As success, above, and the character gains a +1 bonus to subsequent rolls to traverse the sewer ways.

### Turning Over Rocks

The tunnels go on for hundreds of miles beneath the city, and tracking Sarah will require time and diligence. It is possible, however, to apply a Teamwork action (*World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 134) to this investigation.

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Investigation + equipment

**Action:** Extended (15 successes; every roll represents ten minutes)

**Hindrances:** Recent rain (-2); no flashlight (-5)

**Help:** Night vision (+2); etheric tracking devices (+1 to +3)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character inadvertently ruins his chances to pursue the trail any further, whether by smearing a valuable sign of Sarah's path or dropping the only flashlight, stranding himself and the cell in roiling blackness.



**Failure:** The hunter fails to gain any headway or add to his cumulative success. Successive failure is not prohibitive, but you should indicate the length of time without progress. How long is the character willing to stay in a cesspool without reward?

**Success:** The character adds to his cumulative successes. With an incomplete success he can still confirm Sarah passed through the underground labyrinth; finding handprints and scratches in the sludge along the walls. Underground signposts demarcate the tunnels as NE and a number (ex. NE81-0864A), which provides bonuses on later investigation rolls to turn up the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant (“Hit The Streets/Books”). When and if he achieves the 15 necessary successes, he and the cell come to the abandoned treatment plant (below).

**Exceptional Success:** As success, above, and the hunter gets an eerie chill as he notes all beetles, rats or other apparent vermin are heading the same direction toward the treatment plant.

#### SCENE COMPLICATION: RATS!

As the characters approach the end of the line (below the industrial complex and close to the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant – roughly between 12 and 14 successes on the Turning Over Rocks roll), the cell encounters a water-churning, wall-scaling swarm of mice and rats blocking the tunnel (for rules on swarms, see sidebar from **Hunter: The Vigil**, p. 188). The cell may attempt to push through and take the damage necessary to ford to the other side (approximately eight yards), backtrack and go topside where they can attempt to bypass that length of tunnel overland or search for an alternate tunnel that leads around the swarm and back to the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant.

## Do Not Enter

As the characters arrive at the plant, they see an intimidating metal door (Durability 3, Size 5, Structure 8, Damage 3) with a faded sign reading “Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant Access.” Under that a stenciled spray paint warning indicates “Do Not Enter: Hazardous Materials.” The door knob has a recent coating of grime on it, suggesting Sarah went this way but the door is jammed. Rules for breaking down doors can be found in **The World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 137.

If you’re really looking to make things hard on their sewer-weary travelers, introduce a few minor antagonists. While escaping the underground bunker, the cell comes across one or more minor apparitions. Use the generic filth spirits (p. 7) or the minor spirits from **Spirit Slayers** (p. 176) to agitate the characters while letting them know they are certainly on the right path. Any number of spirits will be attracted to the treatment plant and neighboring factory as dictated by their aspect.

## Consequences

Depending on how far within the tunnels the cell gets without giving up, they track Sarah all the way through the Northeast Water Treatment Plant and from there to the Industrial Park (“Pilgrims in an Unholy Land”). Characters with any supernatural sense or Merits immediately get a read off the adjacent industrial complex. Trackers continuing their search for signs of Sarah will turn up footprints in the dirt leading away from the treatment plant and toward a looming factory.

If they suffer from weak stomachs and take what they can get to the library, Internet or knowledgeable contacts and allies, the information highway should still lead them to this area.

# Pilgrims in an Unholy Land

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL ... SOCIAL •

## Overview

The cell tracks Sarah through unfamiliar territory to find out what she's gotten herself into. The characters must traverse challenging and dangerous landscapes before catching up with Sarah. Finally, the cell will have to figure out how to lower themselves from a precarious catwalk 20 yards above where they believe the site of the Locus to be (and where Sarah can be glimpsed).

Presuming they make it, the cell is still faced with the overarching question: "Now what?" Just as they make progress, a final challenge arises at the end of the scene.

## Description

*The old building rises from the landscape like a cathedral of rust, towering over the neighboring factories within the complex. The first floor is completely boarded over, and broken windows in skeletal frames gape everywhere. Twisting spires of interlocking pipes, struts and smokestacks stab the skyline with an overwhelming air of menace. It's no surprise locals consider this place haunted.*

Getting into the PennTech factory is as simple as prying loose a few weather-beaten boards. Though the evidence indicates Sarah reached this point, there are no signs of how she got into the factory.

## Storyteller Goals

Put the characters in a series of non-combat related danger to increase paranoia and tension as they progress further into unknown territory. Impart a feeling that the characters immediately sense they don't belong, and make them struggle and fight just to walk across the room. If the cell begins to lose its nerve or tries to backtrack, describe that how they came in is gone. Did they climb up stairs to the catwalk? Those stairs are gone, collapsed in a shriek of failing steel. Did they come

through a rusted metal door? Now it's welded shut, and it's much more solid than it was before. Indicate how the impossible factory seems to rearrange itself out of the corner of their eyes.

Keep an eye on your players and be mindful not to overdo it. It's presumably already been a harrowing journey to get this far. If your players are into it and having a good time, turn it up; if they're at the end of their rope, cherry-pick a few unique obstacles and rush them along to the next scene, where confronting a few werewolves might be a welcome change of pace.

## Character Goals

To survive the potentially deadly obstacle course of the factory floor, and hopefully to catch up with Sarah and find out what's going on. It's easy to get frustrated as the landscape seems to shift and move at the edge of their vision, but an occasional glimpse of Sarah drives them onward.

## Actions

Keep players and their characters on their toes with a variety of unexpected checks for them to keep their balance as support struts give way, or orchestrate a rush to save a member of the cell from falling straight through any of the various catwalks and rusted-out floors.

Below are a series of potential actions, traps and pitfalls for you to add or subtract depending on how arduous a task you want to make the journey. These obstacles and challenges are werewolf magic designed to keep pedestrians away from their Locus. As such, characters looking for a way around the obstacles should find no such way exists. Characters might find through extensive poking around that they always end up back at the same entrance or that the way back is blocked or gone. It's even possible that characters entering at different times would encounter a completely different set of challenges. The further in or higher up the cell is, the more they notice the factory shifting and reconstituting itself in their peripheral vision.

## Chemical Pool

*A six-foot-wide trough of slowly bubbling corrosive sludge stands in your way. Any walkway that was here previously seems to have slowly been eaten away, leaving a straight span between you and the next section of floor.*



Coming in contact with the material causes one point of bashing damage per turn (three seconds). Once out of the fluid, it continues to burn for half the turns spent in the material (rounding up). So if a foolhardy hunter dips her foot in for a turn to see what happens, she will take one bashing for the initial dip, and another bashing once she's extracted her foot as it evaporates. If the same character falls into the trough while trying to jump over it and it takes her three turns to get out, the chemical bath inflicts another two levels of bashing once she's out the other side. If you want to really turn the screws, establish the Chemical Pool as a longer jump, provide less than the 10 feet necessary for a running jump or change the damage to lethal per turn of direct contact (jumping rules are found in **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 66-67).

### The Grinder

*What was once possibly a stone grinder interrupts the path. A series of large tongue and groove teeth stand motionless before you.*

Climbing across the grinder is a simple enough task requiring an extended Dexterity + Athletics roll (requiring five successes with each roll representing one turn) to negotiate the varying heights and strange footholds. Failing even a single roll brings the gears to life as the character's foot comes down a little too heavily. The machine catches the errant foot and spins, taking him under the floor to the darkness beneath into a shallow canal with several inches of slippery ooze in it, and causing anyone else trying the gears at the same time to make an additional Dexterity + Athletics roll at a -2 penalty. The character takes one bashing for the fall. He must then navigate on all fours through the slick oil, back to a narrow gap between the gears and the floor, which he can use to get back out. A quick Wits + Survival roll orients the character in the complete darkness beneath the machinery.

The oil covering the characters incurs a -2 penalty to future climbing feats, but adds a +2 bonus to squeezing through tight spots (for example, the Locked Door action below).

### Trapped Floor

Behind some loose fencing, one of the characters (preferably one with the Greed Vice) can see an open wallet. Attempts to claim the wallet lead to the would-be finder having to get on all fours and

reach through the fence. This concentration of weight is enough to cause the floor panel to give way suddenly, dropping the character several feet. A reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll should be made: if the roll results in a success, the character lands on a clear patch of floor and takes three bashing damage from the fall, but if it fails, the character also takes one lethal damage from landing on the jagged metal at the bottom.

### Never-Ending Stairs

The cell climbs a pair of steps and crosses a small room or length of catwalk to another set of steps. Climbing up again, they find themselves in an identical room with another pair of steps, and so on, indefinitely. Any characters that haven't yet climbed the stairs appear a short distance off at the bottom of the opposing stairs. If at any time a character walks down instead of up the same pair of steps, the loop will end and they'll be able to progress normally.

### Kindred Spirits

The cell comes across one or more minor apparitions. Use the generic filth spirits (p. 1) or the minor spirits from **Spirit Slayers** (p. 176) to agitate the characters. Any number of spirits will be attracted to the facility, as dictated by their aspect.

### Steam Pipes

The hallways grow tighter within the facility, and a series of hot metal pipes line the right side wall of the corridor. Walking closer, a jet of scouring steam erupts from one of the pipes. A second later it stops, and another jet of steam erupts from a pipe further down. Players looking to traverse the short section of hall will need to succeed on a Wits + Athletics roll or take one lethal damage from the venting steam. On the far end of the hall, a shut-off valve (requiring a Strength roll to budge) will shut down the pipes.

### Locked Door

A security door impedes the way (Durability 3, Size 5, Structure 8, Damage 3). The cell may attempt to break the door down (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p.137) as normal. However, with a quick scan of the area (and a Wits + Composure roll), any member of the cell can spot a small crawlspace that could fit a smaller, more nimble body. Crawling through (extended Dexterity + Athletics, five successes; two consecutive failures will lead to being trapped and someone will have



to help pull her back out the way she came) will lead to the other side where the door can be unlocked with a quick turn of the latch.

### Lurching Catwalk

Any length of catwalk the cell uses has the potential to lurch violently, threatening to spill any of the hunters to the metal floor below. Roll Dexterity + Athletics to hang on. A failure causes the reacting character to make an additional Dexterity + Athletics roll at -2 to grab a hold on their way down; otherwise they fall to the ground 20 yards below. If they successfully grab hold on the second roll, they can pull themselves up with help the following turn; too many cumulative failures and the catwalk might collapse completely.

### End of the Line

The cell reaches the end of a long catwalk, which leads to a set of broken and twisted stairs that only descend about three yards before ending abruptly. Twenty yards below them lies hard concrete with eight taped forensic outlines of bodies lining the floor (presumably from the accidents uncovered in "Hitting the Streets/Books"). The hunters catch sight of Sarah below on the factory floor. She sniffs at the air and scrapes at the floor with filthy, broken nails. The characters have to find a route to get down to the floor before they lose her.

Getting from the rickety catwalk to the ground below is a trial. The rusted-out stairs essentially worthless, and the full twenty-yard drop isn't an attractive option. The team will have to work in tandem to descend to the unforgiving cement floor.

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + equipment

**Action:** Extended (10 successes, each roll represents one turn)

**Hindrances:** Overweight (-1); overburdened (-1 to -2)

**Help:** Rope (+2)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character doesn't just fall; he hampers the efforts of subsequent attempts as well. This can be a result of the rope breaking, the catwalk lurching (causing those still on it to make Dexterity + Athletics rolls to keep from spilling over) or any other sort of

nastiness you can come up with. Subsequent attempts by any character are made at a -2 dice penalty.

**Failure:** The character makes no progress and suffers a -1 penalty on subsequent attempts to descend to the floor below. Two failures in a row should be treated as a dramatic failure above.

**Success:** The character adds to her cumulative successes, ultimately reaching the bottom without incident. Each success is equivalent to approximately two yards of progress.

**Exceptional Success:** The character succeeds in such a way as to pave the way for others. Either the route she takes illustrates the best way of going about it, or her effort shifts the precarious structure in such a way that it comes closer to the ground. Characters attempting the climb after her gain +2 on rolls to climb down.

#### HELLISH LANDSCAPE

As seen throughout "Pilgrims in an Unholy Land," werewolves have a ritualized version of the Devastation Dominion (**Spirit Slayers**, pp. 171-172) that draws its strength from (and is affixed to) Loci, allowing Werewolves to protect these holy areas by coercing the landscape itself to transform and twist to defend itself. What it loses in potency from Devastation, it gains in duration. This ritual requires an extended Composure + Occult + Primal Urge roll and the investment of Essence from any number of participants equal to the magnitude of the Locus (in this case 3).

Hellish Landscape works on any Locus and adapts and changes to the specific resonance and landscape. An urban pain Locus might manifest with obstacles of razor wire and broken glass, whereas a sylvan glen might throw loose logs and hornets in an interloper's path.

### Consequences

After a grueling journey through the twisted bowels of PennTech, the cell finally finds Sarah. They'll have to restrain her to take her somewhere safe to deal with, or try and drive the spirit out of her on the spot. Either way presumes they can get through the guardians of the Locus ("Get Off My Lawn").

# Get Off My Lawn

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL ... SOCIAL ...

## Overview

Grimm and Lily By-Foot come across the cell within their territory, and they're not happy about it. The characters have some explaining to do, starting with who they are and why the cell is sniffing around the pack's territory, and ending with some kind of accounting for the filthy, spirit-ridden crazy chick they've got. The cell can put their diplomacy to the test, or pull out their arsenal.

By design, only two werewolves are included to be a challenging yet manageable enemy, in case the scene devolves into violence. Depending on the size and experience of the cell, you might need to add another werewolf to balance the scales or amp up the difficulty in ensuing confrontations. If you have time, you can use the quick rules from the core book (**Hunter: The Vigil**, pp. 318-321) or the expanded rules throughout **Spirit Slayers**. If you don't have time, a handful of ready-made antagonists are available in either book (**Hunter: The Vigil**, pp. 318-321; **Spirit Slayers**, pp. 219-239).

## Description

*A short and booming cough comes from behind you. Turning, you find yourself confronted by two intimidating figures with the authority of a great predator in its den. One is a giant of a man with yellow eyes shining in the darkness, while the other is a woman dwarfed by her partner but casts just as imposing a shadow. The woman speaks. "I give you credit for getting this far. I don't know what you are, but you don't belong here. Now get out."*

## Storyteller Goals

The introduction of the werewolves should renew their sense of danger – especially if anyone gained significant wounds in the previous scene. Now they have to figure out how to get Sarah out of here and away from the watchful and disapproving eyes of werewolves.



Hashing out the situation with two werewolves should be tense. These are unbridled killing machines, barely restrained by the proud hierarchy they establish for themselves. What's more, they view Sarah as their problem, and will probably kill her to resolve that problem. Grimm in particular will continue to edge closer to Sarah with bared teeth throughout any and all negotiations.

You can use a "three strikes" rule when dealing with the werewolves. For every glib response or insinuated threat, counts as one strike; on three, Grimm will attack with or without Lily's blessing. If only one member of the cell continues to be antagonistic while the others make a genuine appeal, the majority voice of the cell will carry the most weight in the confrontation. The monsters aren't mindless killing machines – Lily isn't, at least – but they will require the squeaky wheel be removed before negotiations can continue.

Ultimately, Lily would rather get this taken care of without bloodshed. However, she also sees Sarah as more her problem than the cell's, regardless of any personal connection. Keeping spirit and flesh separate is their job: the characters can only get in the way. It will take some convincing, or the cell should expect to go around or through the wolves to take Sarah away from here.

# Character Goals

To negotiate Sarah's safety from her werewolf hosts through words or violence. At the end of a long, dirty and painful road, the characters have Sarah in their sights, only to find one more hurdle to overcome: the werewolf landlords of PennTech.

If the cell has never encountered werewolves before, they could go either way. Not knowing how deep the shit is he's in, a hunter might loom large and demand his way; on the other hand, he might recognize he's in *their* backyard. The risk and reward are defined by these extremes. The more deferential and urgent to negotiate the cell is, the more they can net from the exchange. The more confrontational or openly violent, the more they've amped up the danger they – and Sarah – are in. Most cells will probably split the difference between bravado and survival instinct.

## Actions

Players can improvise their way through most of this scene with their wits and roleplaying. However, sometimes a character is designed to be more eloquent than the player, and a few quick rolls can help settle such situations.

## Make a Deal

Whether a literal “If you do X, we'll do Y” kind of bargain or through entreating the wolves' human nature, the actor attempts to win them over and enlist their help in dealing with the Sarah problem. Even if that help comes in the form of staying out of the hunter's way.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion + equipment versus Lily's Resolve + Primal Urge (5)

**Action:** Contested

**Hindrances:** Hurt feelings (-1 per “strike,” as described in “Storyteller Goals,” above)

**Help:** Compelling argument (+1 to +3), valuable trade (+1 to +3)

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Who knows what was said – or what unspoken rule it breaches – but irreparable damage is done to the negotiating

process. If violence doesn't erupt immediately, it's soon to come. If using “strikes,” the cell goes right to three strikes.

**Failure:** The wolves are unimpressed and determine that they're better suited to deal with the problem and the hunters are no longer needed... or welcome. Unless the situation was bad to begin with or made worse from here, they are willing to make sure the hunters leave in one piece, but all said, they don't suggest pressing the issue further than that. If using “strikes,” this counts as one strike.

**Success:** The character wins Lily over and she's willing to help the cell out – or at least let them take care of the problem on their own with her supervision. The werewolves won't interfere directly, so long as the cell maintains control over the situation. If Wastes of Civilization gets the upper hand at any point, Lily or Grimm will revisit the bargain. If the characters have been particularly deferential to the wolves' claim to territory and you believe it's appropriate, they might help out more than passively observe. Just remember, this is the hunters' problem they brought to the werewolves house; any help will still be in the werewolves' self-interest.

**Exceptional Success:** The werewolves will concede to almost any measure suggested by the hunters, and will help in any way they can. Even Grimm is more or less moved, at least enough to not interfere or threaten anyone without provocation.

## Consequences

Hopefully, the characters enlist a couple of temporary allies in their struggle to subdue the spirit and free Sarah from its influence. From here they might convince the werewolves they can handle the problem through Gabriel or other means (fighting the spirit out of Sarah's body by doing enough bashing damage to fill her Health Track, performing an exorcism or using an Endowment). Leaving with Sarah will be no easy feat to negotiate, as the werewolves aren't keen on letting the possessed out of their sight, but it's not impossible. If the characters focus on battling Sarah and subduing her without taking any strident action against the werewolves, they're likely to contain the fight rather than participate or make it worse. Signs of good faith and intention are better than words in this case.



# Deep Cleaning

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL ... SOCIAL ...

## Overview

The cell has a hold of Sarah... now what?

## Description

*(exorcism) Sarah's body spasms and seizes as the power of faith and the trappings of religion battle the foul creature for her body – and quite possibly her soul. As the intensity of the ritual rises, so do the painful spasms of her muscles, bending her at an almost impossible angle. Brackish water and tar burble out of her mouth and nose like a toilet backing up. Foul scents and sensations permeate the space, stinging your eyes and nose. At the terrible last moment, a fountain of foul-smelling ichor explodes out of her, passing through her flesh up to the ceiling as if someone dumped sewage on her in reverse. Her body falls hard, but its contortions are entirely human once again.*

*(beating it out of Sarah) As Sarah's bruised body falls to the floor, a miasma like a haze of oily smoke gathers above her. Slowly it coalesces into something man-shaped but terrible. Two deep-set, coal-dark eyes smolder with hatred in its mockery of a head. Wastes of Civilization, released from his prison of flesh, looses a terrible poisonous hiss in your direction as it curses you in an alien tongue.*

## Storyteller Goals

Your job is to be ready for anything, but provide no easy answers. The cell should feel desperate. That isn't to say that you sit back and smirk as their timer runs to zero, but you want to let that feeling of disorientation that comes from not knowing where to go or what to do linger long enough to have an effect. Far more right answers exist than wrong ones, more than can possibly be written down or any Storyteller completely prepared for. Players will often come up with something you can't anticipate. You are the last line of defense between what sounds reasonable or "just crazy enough to work."

One option presented early on is to return the spirit to Gabriel and force him to deal with it. If you don't want to pursue the option, have

Gabriel leave town in the interim. If the cell locked him up for safekeeping, he may use the intercession of spirits to free himself and flee. However, returning to Gabriel and making him more of an ambiguous figure has its benefits, especially in an ongoing chronicle.

A number of new toys and tricks are available within **Spirit Slayers**, most notably the Miracle of Gadarene Benediction, the Phylactery of Commius Relic or shooting up with some Ectocrine Thaumatech and trying to talk Wastes of Civilization down. It might be possible to strike a deal and help Wastes of Civilization get back to its spiritual home in return for Sarah's body.

Adding Endowments into the mix offers a number of additional options, some established and some not. The **Hunter: The Vigil** corebook and **Spirit Slayer** sourcebook have a number of ready-made tools to deal directly with spirits. Alternately, perhaps the trials presented in **Under The Skin** make for sufficient conflicts to use the in-game R&D mechanics (**Hunter: The Vigil**, p. 196), and the cell could develop an Endowment themselves. If you have the time or inclination, you could introduce rumors of lost artifacts or esoteric abilities that might be useful in dealing with the Sarah Schuman problem. This isn't the simplest solution, and should demand as much if not more of the characters to achieve their goal.

Each conspiracy has their own unique resources for (and outlooks on) dealing with spirits:

**Aegis Kai Doru:** While spirits may not be their specialty, the Guardians are a crafty lot. A number of Relics were reportedly created by binding spirits within them, and others are designed to bind spirits. If a labyrinth is nearby, the chance of having an appropriate tool on hand increase significantly.

**Ascending Ones:** A race to collect ingredients to make a draught that poisons only the possessing spirit, or an elixir that makes the Ascending One appear a prime target for possession but battle the spirit at the last moment may be available to make. However, time continues to be the enemy here, and alchemy is more of a patient science.

**Cheiron Group:** Flesh is really more TCG's area of expertise, but they would be more than happy to take the subject off the cell's hands to perform further investigations. They have a few theories about spiritual possession they're just dying to test. Unless the hunter is in good with the boss, they shouldn't expect to ever see Sarah again. That's the bad news; the good news is they genuinely believe their research could lead to breakthroughs in cancer treatment. Is it worth the sacrifice?

**Les Mystères:** With or without Gabriel, the Mystères may barter and coerce the spirit out of Sarah. Problem is, that Wastes of Civilization



Under the Skin

Deep Cleanings

is bigger and badder than most of the spirits they deal with, and is unlikely to be content to take a back seat to anyone, especially now that it knows how flesh feels. At best, the cell should expect a battle.

**Lucifuge:** Spirits and demons are similar enough that many among the Lucifuge should feel comfortable bringing their infernal Castigations to bear in an attempt to drive the creature out. In many ways, none are better suited to deal with the creature, except perhaps the “competition” from Rome.

**Malleus Maleficarum:** One could say the Witch’s Hammer specializes in this kind of thing. With or without Vade Retro Satana, many of their membership have access to the bell, book and candle rituals of the Catholic Church. Above all else, they understand the most important ingredient is faith.

**Task Force: VALKYRIE:** They might not know a spirit from a ghost from a demon from any of a variety of noncorporeal or semi-corporeal ENEs, but what they do know is the critters don’t like their etheric rounds too much. If a cell favors simple solutions to complex problems, than TF:V will be glad to look into it, right after the cell fills out a handful of forms and hands the subject over for scrutiny. If they wish to ever see Sarah in control of Sarah’s body again, they probably don’t have time to jump through hoops. A number of so-called etheric devices are at their disposal, which might prove useful.

## Character Goals

To force Wastes of Civilization out of Sarah by any means necessary. Presuming this is a first for the characters and they are otherwise without guidance, this can lead to a frustrating clash of desperate ideas.

## Actions

Some options are covered under “Storyteller Goals,” above, but two of the more popular methods are listed below.

### Beating It Out of Her

The cell may drive the spirit out of Sarah by inflicting enough bashing damage to fill her health boxes (knocking her unconscious isn’t enough), at which time Waste of Civilization will abandon ship and manifest, suffering -2 to all of its rolls due to the sudden shock of the physical world on its unprotected ethereal body.

## Exorcism

Exorcism comes in a number of forms in the World of Darkness. Just a few examples include the traditional method (**World of Darkness**

**Rulebook**, p. 214), the Exorcism tactic (**Hunter: The Vigil**, pp. 221-222) or the Benediction Vade Retro Satana (**Hunter: The Vigil**, pp. 162-163). What affects Sarah and to what extent physical harm comes to her body while driving out the spirit is up to you.

## Consequences

Expelling the spirit from Sarah is the ultimate goal. With a little preparation and a lot of luck the cell can overcome Wastes of Civilization and get Sarah back worse for wear, but still alive. The time has come to count what meager blessings they have and return Sarah to her life where a whole new set of challenges await. Here’s where the real tragedy lies: despite the cell’s best efforts Sarah still has to deal with her aggressive cancer. The victory is short-lived as she reveals that she may die anyway, whether or not she has the necessary months of grueling treatment.

## Aftermath

The chapter closes, but the story rolls on for the characters. Trusts are broken or forged throughout the adventure, and Sarah has an uphill struggle ahead of her. If you’re looking for happier endings, you could rule that this ordeal has purged the cancer from Sarah: the World of Darkness is a dreary but exceptional place, and an occasional good bounce is its own reward.

As a potential future story seed, Wastes of Civilization is unlikely to be destroyed, but only banished back the spirit world. Now that it has a taste for the physical world, it might try to return again. The cell may also still have to deal with Gabriel, depending on his involvement throughout the story. Further, do the characters owe the werewolves as part of the deal they made for Sarah? What will they do with Curtis and his sense that he’s glimpsed part of something larger?

Last but not least, what if they fail? With all this talk of time limits and desperate measures, it’s always possible that despite their best efforts the cell simply doesn’t succeed, learning a valuable but painful lesson about the Vigil. Is their failure as permanent as Gabriel made it sound?

## Experience

- +1 Completing the story
- +1 Excellent role-playing
- +1 Making a significant sacrifice in the course of rescuing Sarah
- +1 Finding the key to getting Wastes of Civilization out of Sarah without killing her

# SCENE: Wake Up Philadelphia

12

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •

## HINDRANCES

No major hindrances but the characters might have prior commitments.

A history of absenteeism (-1 to -3).

Important appointment (-1 to -3).

## HELP

Self-employed or a ranking authority on the job (+1 to +3).

## OTHER

**STs**

Set the stage for the story.

**PCs**

Get to the scene and find out what's going on.

# SCENE: Scene of the Crime

14

MENTAL ••• PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •••

## HINDRANCES

Foot Chase: Poor choice of footwear (-1 to -3), ground is slick (-1).

Interrogate Gabriel: Visible shaken or desperate (-1).

Track Sarah: Hours passed (-1 per hour), running (-1) or driving (-2).

## HELP

Foot Chase: Sneakers or other sensible shoes (+1).

Interrogate Gabriel: Bribes (+1 to +3).

Track Sarah: Reliable witnesses (+1 per account).

## OTHER

**STs**

Get the characters pointed in the right direction with relevant information and setting the clock in motion.

**PCs**

Collect information, shake down Gabriel and get after Sarah while the trail is hot.

# SCENE: Hit the Streets/Books

18

MENTAL ••• PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •••

## HINDRANCES

Research: Days without sleep (-1), unspecific search terms (-1 to -3).

Interview: Smelling of the sewers (-1 to -5).

## HELP

Research: Access to special libraries (+1 to +3), Turning Over Rocks successes (+1 to +3).

Interview: Contacts/ Allies (+1 per dot).

## OTHER

**STs**

Provide more backstory and clues to get the characters to the abandoned PennTech factory.

**PCs**

To get to the bottom of where Wastes of Civilization is taking Sarah.

# SCENE: Down the Tubes

20

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •

## HINDRANCES

Footing: Slick footing (-2), fresh rain (-2), sneakers or flat-bottom shoes (-1), previous failure (-2).

Turning Over Rocks: Fresh rain (-2), no flashlight (-5).

Breaking down the door and holding breath to get through the Northeast Industrial Water Treatment Plant.

## HELP

Footing: Rope chain (+1), boots (+1 to +2).

Turning Over Rocks: Night vision (+2), etheric tracking devices (+1 to +3).

Tools for breaking through the door and air filtration devices to get through the water treatment plant.

## OTHER

**STs**

Turn up the gross factor and lead the characters through the filth-strewn underground.

**PCs**

Get through the dark, putrescent labyrinth and follow Sarah to PennTech.



# SCENE: Pilgrims in an Unholy Land

23

MENTAL ●●●

PHYSICAL ●●●

SOCIAL ●

## HINDRANCES

Crossing through the factory and getting to the Locus requires negotiating a hellish obstacle course.

End of the Line: Overweight (-1); overburdened (-1 to -2).

## HELP

End of the Line: Rope (+2)

## OTHER

**STs**

Put the players through Hell on the long home stretch to Sarah.

**PCs**

Survive the PennTech Factory floor and reach Sarah at the end of the line.

# SCENE: Get Off My Lawn

26

MENTAL ●●●

PHYSICAL ●●●

SOCIAL ●●●

## HINDRANCES

Dealing with the hostile and territorial werewolves.

Make a Deal: "Strikes" (-1 to -3).

## HELP

Negotiations with the werewolves will go a lot easier if the characters remember their manners.

Make a Deal: Compelling argument (+1 to +3), valuable trade (+1 to +3).

## OTHER

**STs**

Take the opposition and defend the werewolves' territory.

**PCs**

Get out of there with Sarah and their own skin intact through negotiation or violence.

# SCENE: Deep Cleaning

28

MENTAL ●●●

PHYSICAL ●●●

SOCIAL ●●●

## HINDRANCES

How does one drive a spirit out of a body? Creative solutions abound but how will the players deal with it?

## HELP

Hunters have a number of unique advantages in this situation, especially at the upper tiers.

## OTHER

**STs**

Be ready for anything and facilitate the exorcism of Wastes of Civilization.

**PCs**

Drive the spirit out of Sarah by any means necessary.

# SCENE:

○

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

## HINDRANCES

## HELP

## OTHER

**STs**

**PCs**

Name: Minor Filth Spirit  
Concept:

Virtue:  
Vice:

Power ●○○○○○○○○○	Finesse ●●○○○○○○○	Resistance ●○○○○○○○○○
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### SKILLS

- \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○
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### NUMINA Dice Pool

- Manifest 4
- Claim 4
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### CORPUS

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### WILLPOWER

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### ESSENCE

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### INFLUENCE

- Filth ●○○○
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- Morality \_\_\_\_\_
- Aspect Filth \_\_\_\_\_
- Rank 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Size 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- Speed 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Defense 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- Initiative Mod 4 \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES

**Ban:** Filth spirits share Wastes of Civilization ban.

Name: Wastes of Civilization  
Concept:

Virtue:  
Vice:

Power ●●●○○○○○○○	Finesse ●●●●●○○○○○	Resistance ●●●●●○○○○○
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### SKILLS

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### NUMINA Dice Pool

- Ill Wind 11
- Festering Touch 10
- Swarm n/a
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### CORPUS

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### WILLPOWER

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### ESSENCE

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### INFLUENCE

- Filth ●○○○
- Disease ●○○○
- Vermin ●○○○
- \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○
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- Morality \_\_\_\_\_
- Aspect Filth \_\_\_\_\_
- Rank 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- Size 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Speed 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- Defense 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Initiative Mod 13 \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES

**Ban:** Wastes of Civilization may take no action against anyone covered from head to toe in filth (specifically with living or once-living matter), and it suffers penalties when confronting anyone liberally anointed in its Influences (-1 for dry dirt or rust; -2 for oil or mud; -3 for sewage, mold or algae).









Name: Sarah Schuman    Virtue: Charity  
 Concept: Possessed Victim    Vice: Envy

Profession:  
 Compact:  
 Conspiracy:

Intelligence ●●○○○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●○○○
Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

### SKILLS

- Academics ●●○○○
- Computer ●○○○○
- Investigation ●●○○○
- Politics ●●○○○
- Science ●○○○○
- Athletics
- (Runner) ●●○○○
- Drive ●○○○○
- Stealth ●○○○○
- Empathy
- (Good Listener) ●●○○○
- Persuasion
- (Charming) ●●○○○
- Socialize ●●○○○
- Subterfuge ●○○○○
- \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○
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### MERITS

- Common Sense ●●○○○
- Fleet of Foot ●●○○○
- Fame ●●○○○
- Resources ●●○○○
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### FLAWS

### HEALTH

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### WILLPOWER

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### ESSENCE

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### TACTICS

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Morality 7

Size 5

Speed 9 (11)

Defense 2 (5)

Initiative Mod 5 (13)

Armor \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES

Numina: Ill wind, Festering Touch, Swarm.

Name: Curtis Anthony    Virtue: Fortitude    Profession: Journalist  
 Concept:    Vice: Pride    Cell:

Get The Shot ●●●●●○○○

When behind the camera, Curtis has nerves of steel and can stand his ground under the most imposing circumstances. Whether confronted by a woman on the street covered in vermin or a charging werewolf, expect Curtis to stay the course and get the shot.

Better Than The Gym ●●●●○○○○○

Curtis lugs a lot of heavy equipment around all day, and doesn't have the option of leaving it behind while doing his job. Despite his protests, he proves entirely capable of getting through tough spots with his equipment intact. He might refuse to drop the camera, but makes up for it with the conditioning at his disposal for any and all physical challenges.

Notes

Name:    Virtue:    Profession:  
 Concept:    Vice:    Cell:

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Notes