



Kickstarter Manuscript Preview #6:

Hecata

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Hecata

The Clan of Death, Necromancers, Graverobbers, The Family, Stiffs, Corpses, Devil-Kindred, Lazarenes

You feel it, don't you? Just like all Kindred, you died and came back. But when you died, your soul resisted a little longer than that of your neighbor. You felt the pull of Oblivion, and it fucked you up. You struggled with the return to the mortal shell and you're not sure you're happy to be back. You're less and more than all your undead kin. You already understand what it is to be dead, to experience the end, to know the fear of the great nothingness. Welcome to the family.

You're one of us. You're my cousin, his sister, and her daughter. We're connected not only by blood, and by vitae, but by that first-hand knowledge of death. Consider yourself awake now? When you died, you nearly stayed dead and you're terrified. But I bet you're turned on by the thrill of it too. How exciting, to feel death and evade it. It's like looping a belt around your neck and jerking off while hanging in a wardrobe, and God you want that feeling again. It's enticing, isn't it, to know now you can commune with death like its your brother, your aunt, or your father?

Mystery. It's a gorgeous word. The mystery of the missing treasure. The mysterious Mr. X. The murder mystery. The mystery of life after death. The greatest mystery of God in heaven.

You'll work on studying and solving the darkest mysteries, and forming new, forbidden ones. You belong to a family who want all the answers, because we're greedy, and once we have them, we'll use those answers against our enemies. You'll gain mastery over the dead and the living. You'll possess a power no other vampires have the balls to harness.

You're now of a family, a clan, and a religion dedicated to enriching our lives, such as they are, and those of our mortal kin. Every member of this family is determined to master death. Maybe you'll want to stave off the end for your loved ones, perhaps you'll want to become a notorious necromancer and revive your dead girlfriend, or maybe, just maybe, you'll want to feel more potent than you ever did in life.

This didn't happen by accident, okay? You were chosen. Keep that in mind when you feel isolated from other vampires. You were selected for the Embrace because we know you're capable of making your family prouder dead than you were alive.

Listen, just like every family, there's going to be those you see every week, some you see every year, and some you only hear of behind closed doors. The ones not invited to parties. The black sheep. Well to some of us, you'll be one of them. But to others, you'll be closer than a living relative.

We're going to accomplish so much together, you know? You really are going to make your family proud. Do right by us and we'll take care of you.

The rest though? All those pricks of other clans and sects?

Fuck them. Fuck anyone else breathing or not breathing, if they're not of our Blood.

[LAYOUT: TYPEWRITTEN LETTER]

This is a time of great change, mother. Our family is larger now. No less dysfunctional, but larger. Safety in numbers becomes important when the Camarilla say, "You're with us or against

us, but you? You can never be with us.” Safety in numbers becomes important when vampire killers are looking for companies, properties, and accounts made in the name of some dead Giovanni or Dunsirn. The family comes together to outlast the winter storm.

But just as the seasons change, death has many faces, as our cousins always say. Put aside your historic enmity for the Venetians, pocket your distrust for the Samedi, and recognize that death, no matter the mask it wears, is still death. We are death. We always have been, and always will be.

Remember, mother, how it feels the moment life leaves a victim. Their last gasp and rattle. Remember also how it feels to cheat fate and bestow your vitae unto another. Finally, remember how it feels when you speak with the dead, and they tell you the secrets of the Underworld. Our existences are ones of rich exploration and dark arts others fear to study.

I understand you must feel disorientated, waking up to such a changed world. Just remember that your new family will help you become acclimated, will introduce you to whichever courts you need to visit, and will protect you against any outside knives stabbing in.

We still represent all that is glorious and squalid in death. We might counsel a Sheriff on methods of execution, solve a murder through interrogation of the victim, use the dead to spy on our enemies, celebrate the passing of a legendary vampire with the proclamation of memorial secrets, or have a spectre burn a Prince’s haven to the ground while we lie safely ensconced in our tombs. We might even bind the tortured souls of fallen enemies, stuck in the Underworld.

Yes, the seasons change. It is winter for our kind. The Inquisition’s fires burn. The Gehenna War rages. Kindred fall by the hundred.

Only one clan can stand to profit, and there’s no shame in being a vulture or a rat on a battlefield. This is our age. As once-unassailable vampires and their sects decay, death dominates all.

Roger de Camden, Prince of Edinburgh, Pater of the Cult of Mithras, Wearer of the Death’s Head Mask

[LAYOUT: TYPEWRITTEN LETTER ENDS]

Who are the Hecata?

Hecata sires favor mortals either from their own mortal families, or who provide links to outside families from whom the Hecata would benefit. They prefer kine of a morbid, black-humored, or pragmatic bent, due to the clan’s death-dealing nature. They have little need for the compassionate or empathetic, unless it serves to satisfy a gap the clan — which in many ways is structured like an expanding corporation as much as it is a family — requires filled.

The Hecata Embrace those who show a resolute willingness to do what needs to be done, for the good of the family, their block, their community, or their society, ahead of their own interests. The family must always come first, whether or not your surname is Giovanni. There are no other “independents” these nights, so it’s the Hecata versus everybody else. The Necromancers describe their Embrace tradition as “gifting the truly exceptional with membership in the most exclusive of households.” Spontaneous Embraces are very much frowned upon by the wider clan, the members of which favor the ritualistic approach of observing, grooming, and voting on which mortals deserve immortality.

Kingpins, self-starters, individuals who have faced or dealt death, and those with medical or occult knowledge all appeal to the Hecata. Anyone with a true, scientific interest in death, the afterlife, and religion stands a chance of being approached for the Embrace, though academic theologians are more likely recipients of the bite than the blindly faithful. Many become vampires dedicated to serving the family, expanding its interests, and researching new mysteries associated with the cycle of life and death. Different fledglings set to work handling the living, the dying, the dead, and the rotting, in the form of nurses and carers, morticians, and of course necromancers. Each adds something to the clan.

The Hecata look for many children among miscreants of all kinds. Though they do not control any widespread mortal crime empires, the clan appreciates the practiced killer, the cold-blooded money launderer, and the charming con artist. Their roles continue on once they receive the Embrace, complementing the clan's legitimate businesses — investment banks, trading conglomerates, and private hospitals and care facilities — with a steady flow of illicit cash and bodies.

Hecata Archetypes

Champion Bullshitter

The Hecata may wave the banner of independence, but they still require vampires who can break bread with Camarilla courts and Anarch packs. This character could have been anything from a con artist to a diplomat in life, but the crucial thing is they know how to sell a deal without showing their entire hand to the outsiders. The champion bullshitter was Embraced for their ability to charm the doubters and present a believable façade for the clan's activities.

Forensic Specialist

The Clan of Death lives up to its title, with a great many of its members schooled in the passage of life to death. In the last century there's been an upsurge in nurses, surgeons, and laboratory staff being Embraced, with a special place set for medically trained individuals in law enforcement. This character was always one of the first to crime scenes, and was able to alter evidence, misfile reports, or spin a narrative of death that protects the family, all while coming face-to-face with death on a regular basis.

Natural Necromancer

Necromancers are pretty uncommon among the ranks of mortals, even those with blood connections to Clan Hecata. When a vampire from the Clan of Death finds a mortal with a genuine interest in, and aptitude for, death magic — whether through practice of seances, ghost hunting on vlogs, exorcisms, or study of occult rituals — they rarely go without long-term observation and the potential for an Embrace. These individuals sometimes harbor deviant practices, or an ethical remove when it comes to handling corpses and treating with the dead. The Hecata see this kind of behavior as ripe blackmail material, so if the necromancer is unfit for the Embrace, they'll serve as a mortal retainer.

Prodigal Child

The Hecata have a blind spot when it comes to their mortal descendants, sometimes Embracing inept family members simply because they share the same name. However, characters such as this one stand out, prove themselves to the clan, and end up with multiple prospective sires fighting for the right to Embrace. The prodigal child is often seen as a rising star, fit for

important responsibilities within the family and clan. Growing up in such a twisted family has a way of fucking up such a mortal's sensibilities and boundaries, however.

Unscrupulous Banker

As far as the rest of Kindred society is concerned, the Giovanni — and more broadly, the Hecata — are the bank. They're Switzerland. They act as the neutral party, perfect for mediation and guaranteed to protect assets due to their unswerving dedication to non-involvement in the Jihad. This character would be targeted for their willingness to do anything to cut a profit, whether that means investing in unethical concerns, accepting laundered funds, or playing guard to investments most banks wouldn't touch — including blood, special kine, or torpid Kindred.

Disciplines

Auspex: The power to receive visions of fate's intentions and speak without moving one's lips. The Hecata believe fate has grand plans for their clan, and they do so enjoy meddling in the fates of others. They might predict a mortal's death and prevent it, or they might hasten someone's departure. The Hecata use Auspex to plan their moves — for this clan is cautious, and rarely strikes on impulse — and to catch glimpses of the restless dead, enabling the dread arts for which the clan is known.

Fortitude: The ability to resist blows, bullets and fire. The Hecata believe they are closer to death than any other clan, and the way in which they manifest this Discipline may lend credence to that claim. They absorb injuries as a corpse might, without feeling or consideration. As fists and blades rain down on them, the Necromancers shrug off such harm, inexorably approaching their target. Their minds are likewise resistant to meddling, detached in a sense from mortal fragility.

Oblivion: The ability to commune with, manipulate, and control the energies of death and the dead. This power is among the most mysterious of Disciplines, as it reaches into the occult territory of the afterlife. Through its use, the Hecata might interrogate a spectre or set it to attack a rival. They might rot a mortal's flesh with a touch or practice a foul ceremony designed to drive a meddling kine to their just reward. Oblivion stains the user's soul, but the Hecata see it as a necessary evil for understanding the mysteries of life, death, and undeath.

Shifts in the Blood

The Hecata have long been interested in the malleability of the Blood, and how their favored Disciplines in these nights differ from those of their ancestors, and their ancestors before them. While they speculate it may be due to the formation of the Hecata and destruction of many Giovanni elders in recent years, Necromancers still guess at why some Giovanni favor forceful Disciplines, with Dominate often in the place of Auspex, and Samedi favor subterfuge, with Obfuscate in its place instead. Why the ability for heightened senses is the power so often lost, even the most accomplished Necromancers cannot say.

At the Storyteller's discretion, Hecata of the Giovanni line may replace Auspex with Dominate, Samedi may replace Auspex with Obfuscate, Lamiae may replace Fortitude with Potence, and Nagaraja may replace Fortitude with Dominate. Note that making this choice may nullify benefits from some loresheets found in this

book, so the default treatment and amalgams common to the Clan of Death treat Auspex, Fortitude, and Oblivion as their clan Disciplines.

Compulsion

Hecata: *Morbidity*

The Hecata are possessed of a peculiar curiosity paired with detachment from compassion and empathy, likely due to their frequent dealings with corpses and the wraiths of those who died tragic deaths. Their Blood urges them to study the individuals around them for signs of illness, frailty, or impending death. Until they have either predicted a death or solved the cause of a local one, the vampire suffers a three-dice penalty to other rolls. Note that their conclusions do not need to be absolutely correct, but should stay within the boundaries of the possible.

Bane

Steeped in death, the fangs of the Hecata bring not bliss, but agony. Victims caught unawares will violently resist unless restrained, and few people submit willingly to the torture that is the Hecata Kiss.

The pain from the Hecata bite varies depending on the Hecata's Bane Severity. When drinking directly from a victim, Hecata cause additional Superficial Health damage equal to their Bane Severity for each level of Hunger slaked. Unwilling mortals not restrained will try to escape, and even those coerced or willing must succeed in a Stamina + Resolve test against Difficulty 3 in order not to recoil. Vampire victims of the Hecata bite must make a Frenzy test against Difficulty 3 to avoid falling into a terror frenzy.

Feeding Methods

To circumvent their bane, some Hecata feed from blood bags and fresh corpses. Others develop methods of extracting blood from their vessels without the need to use their fangs, such as with a needle, or through bloodletting, neither of which are guaranteed to be pain-free. The Hecata habit of feeding on herds formed from members of their own family breeds a great deal of resentment and fear between vessel and drinker.

In recent years, the Hecata have formed a special bond with the Circulatory System — a network of human traffickers servicing Kindred appetites — and commissions the delivery of mute or comatose vessels so they can't cry out in pain during the feed.

Oblivion

Lia wasn't an accomplished practitioner of her clan's art, by any means, but she knew a master when she saw one. Delivering the brown parcel to Ambrogino, the elder Hecata stared blankly at the young Milliner and stroked the parcel before speaking. "You didn't open it, did you?"

Lia shook her head. She knew better. While she considered herself above the role of messenger, she wasn't going to steal a look at this Giovanni's mail. "No, it's exactly as Josette left it when it came to me."

"And are you curious about its contents?" The fingers on Ambrogino's twisted and decayed left hand tapped on the heavy, wooden desk, creating a rhythmic drumming.

Was this a test? Should she express curiosity or respect for her elder? Again, honesty among family seemed the best course. "I would be interested to find out what I've traveled across the world to hand deliver, yes."

Ambrogino slid a knife into the edge of the parcel, parting the seams. His healthy hand extracted a small clay sculpture. Though far from an expert, to Lia it looked Egyptian. Ambrogino held the sculpture in the light. "This is what's known as a fetter. It binds a spirit to this mortal plane. If I were to destroy it, it might destroy the spirit. If I were to lock it away in a vault, the spirit might choose to owe me something in the future. If I were to threaten it, however..."

The Necromancer cut his thumb, and ran his own vitae over the sculpture, chanting in a dead language. He snuffed out the lights in the room with the press of a button. Lia stood there, awaiting some grand arrival. Instead, she heard a shaky, frail voice emerge into the room.

"Please, my childe... Please. Leave me be. Please. Do not harm my link. Please. I'll serve you again."

Ambrogino smiled, his perpetually rotted teeth a mix of yellows and blacks, contrasted against his purple lips and pale skin. "If I were to threaten it, Lia Milliner, I can get the spirit to do whatever I want."

Nicknames: Obtenebration, Necromancy, Shadowboxing, Abyssal Mastery, Tenebrae Imperium, Mortis, the Dark Arts, Black Magic, Entropy

Oblivion is a mysterious, unpalatable power that most vampires rightly fear to use, witness, or fall victim to. Only vampires of Clans Lasombra and Hecata wield it with any frequency, and even they do so tentatively. Oblivion requires cautious masters who know the power's risks, as no other Discipline reaches into the Underworld and allows its manipulator to extract tangible darkness or furious spectres. Oblivion is the darkest of arts.

Notably, while the Lasombra are prone to expanding their repertoire of Oblivion powers, the Hecata focus their energies on developing Ceremonies (see p. XX). Ceremonies take longer, but are required for communing with and making passage through to the lands of the dead.

Characteristics

Oblivion allows for the manipulation of creatures and substances originating from the Underworld. When the Hecata use this Discipline, they tend to channel the entropic nature of the Underworld and its surroundings, decaying flesh, calling forth spirits, and posing a dangerous risk to the living.

Oblivion projections and spirits sustain damage from fire and sunlight, counting as vampires with Blood Potency 1 in this regard. They also take one level of Aggravated Health damage per round from bright, direct lights, and may also be damaged (Superficially or Aggravated) from blessed weapons and artifacts, depending on the strength of the blessing and whether the wielder has True Faith.

Oblivion's powers are ineffective in brightly lit areas. Daylight and rooms without shadows are prohibitive, preventing the Discipline's successful function, though ultraviolet light and infrared light place no restriction on the Discipline's use. Moderately lit rooms add one to the Difficulty of the Discipline roll involved.

The use of Oblivion negatively affects the necromancer's psyche, with many powers causing Stains as the vampire finds themselves performing increasingly macabre acts in service to this Discipline.

Type: Mental

Masquerade threat: Medium-High. Spirits rarely show up well on cameras but are obviously unnatural if witnessed in person.

Blood Resonance: Psychopaths and the emotionally detached. Blood empty of Resonance.

Note: When making a Rouse check for an Oblivion power, a result of "1" or "10" results in a Stain, in addition to any Hunger gained. If the user's Blood Potency allows for a re-roll on the Rouse check, they can pick either of the two results.

Level 1

Ashes to Ashes

Destroying evidence of feeding is a common necessity among vampires who leave screaming, resisting vessels, especially when those same vessels end up dead. This power enables a vampire to destroy a corpse — fresh or long dead — by introducing their vitae to its body. This power does not work on vampires, but does work on animated cadavers.

Cost: One Rouse Check

Dice Pools: Stamina + Oblivion (vs. Stamina + Medicine if the corpse is animated, with Fortitude added if the animated corpse possesses it)

System: The vampire makes a Rouse Check to expend vitae, and introduces the vitae to the corpse. After rolling Stamina + Oblivion (Difficulty 2, unless the corpse is animated as mentioned above) the corpse disintegrates in a number of turns equal to five minus the number of successes rolled. On a critical win, the corpse disintegrates immediately. On a total failure, the corpse putrefies but does not disintegrate, and is subsequently immune to this power from any user.

Duration: Variable (see Difficulty effects)

The Binding Fetter

Amalgam: Auspex 1

The vampire can identify objects and locations important to ghosts. These "fetters" act as icons that bind the dead to their existence. Knowing if an object is a fetter allows a necromancer to better manipulate the ghost. Fetters emanate variable auras, some bursting with vitality and glowing gold light, others radiating decay, or odors important to the bound wraith, such as the smell of freshly baked bread, gasoline, or cigarette smoke.

Cost: Free

Dice Pools: Wits + Oblivion

System: After rolling Wits + Oblivion (Difficulty 3), a fetter emanates an aura for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled. While this power is in use, the necromancer is distracted from other activity around them, conveying a -2 penalty to Dexterity and Wits rolls.

Duration: Variable (see Difficulty effects)

Level 2

Fatal Precognition

Amalgam: Auspex 2

It is said by many necromancers that the Lady of Fate rules the Underworld through her Stygian servants, and through communion with her certain death-dealers have learned this power. Fatal precognition allows a vampire to scry any non-vampire and experience a vision of their impending death, whether it's due a minute from now or several decades away. The Kindred's eyes turn black and they stand, sit, or lie completely still as the fate plays out in their mind. Fate can of course be cheated, though there's a cost for doing so.

Cost: One Rouse Check

Dice Pools: Resolve + Oblivion

System: The vampire must be able to see or hear their target when they use this power. After rolling Resolve + Oblivion (Difficulty 3 or more at the Storyteller's discretion), the vampire becomes paralyzed in place as the vision plays out, preventing them from any form of physical or social interaction for that turn. The more successes rolled, the clearer the vision. One success provides abstract clues, two successes allows sight of the corpse, but not the method by which the individual dies, three successes reveals the manner by which the person dies, and four successes and above allow perception of the time and place of death. A critical win on this roll grants the vampire a vision of crystal clarity, along with a sense of the motive, if the target is intentionally killed. A total failure renders the vampire blind for the remainder of the scene, and unable to use this power on the same target again.

If anyone attempts to subvert the fate observed in this way, they find everything working against their hubristic ambition. Add one to all Difficulties while working to directly circumvent the precognition as cars break down, storms erupt from nowhere, and people become hostile for no reason. This penalty applies until the prophecy is fulfilled or avoided, or the current story ends.

Duration: Until fulfilled, avoided, or the story ends.

Where the Shroud Thins

Vampires with an affinity for Oblivion can sense locations where the Shroud between the world of the living and the Shadowlands thins. Though this Discipline doesn't directly tell a vampire *why* the Shroud between worlds is thin in a certain place, it may be due to a grisly murder that took place there many years before, or because necromancers have frequently used the location to summon spirits, or it might be a location of holy or unholy resonance, among other reasons. In locations where the Shroud is thinnest, mortal health suffers and use of the Oblivion Discipline becomes easier, if the vampire knows how to harness the gap in the Shroud.

Cost: One Rouse Check

Dice Pools: Wits + Oblivion

System: Following a Rouse Check, the player rolls Wits + Oblivion (Difficulty 4) and on a success, can determine the Shroud's density, from thick all the way to completely absent. The power affects a 10 x 10 yard/meter diameter, centered on the vampire. On a critical win, this roll

reveals whether the Shroud's density recently changed. On a total failure, the power backfires and gives a false reading. Without use of this power, Oblivion users cannot benefit from a thinning of the Shroud.

The following table expresses the different degrees of Shroud density, and the effects they have:

[THIS IS A TABLE]

Shroud Density	Possible Cause	Effect
Impenetrable	No deaths took place here, consecrated land	Vampires and wraiths cannot cross the Shroud here
Thick	Long ago a death took place here, a place of joy	No effect
Thin	A death recently took place here, melancholic mortals often pass through this place	-1 Difficulty on all Oblivion rolls
Frayed	A series of deaths took place here, necromancers practice their craft here	-2 Difficulty on all Oblivion rolls
Absent	A necromancer sacrificed an innocent here, spectres regularly pass through this part of the Shroud	-2 Difficulty on all Oblivion rolls, wraiths can freely pass to and from the Shadowlands, mortals suffer two Superficial Health damage in this area that cannot be healed until they depart

[END TABLE]

Duration: One turn

Level 3

Aura of Decay

Kindred with a strong connection to Oblivion find the Discipline affecting the world around them, making plants wilt, animals and humans grow sick, and food go bad. Some harness this aura as a power, polluting vitality with rot, and speeding up the erosion of life. This power does not speed up the decay of dead bodies.

Cost: One Rouse Check

Dice Pools: Stamina + Oblivion (vs. Stamina + Medicine if used on mortals, with Fortitude added if the mortal is a ghoul or other supernatural creature that possesses it)

System: The vampire makes a Rouse Check. Following a Stamina + Oblivion roll (Difficulty 3), unintelligent organic and inorganic material within 5 yards/meters of them suffers — plants turn black and die, food rots in its packaging, and even bricks start crumbling. Material affected in this way can become toxic to ingest, if for instance this power is used in a kitchen or a water supply. Such toxic food and drink, if consumed, can be expected to inflict two Superficial Health damage in the following scene to the individual who eats it, and for each scene thereafter until treated with an Intelligence + Medicine roll (Difficulty 3).

If anything living is caught in the aura, it makes a Stamina + Medicine (+ Fortitude, if the creature possesses the Discipline) roll. For every success the vampire obtained above the victim's resistance, they suffer one level of Superficial Health damage. This damage is slowly

applied throughout the scene, and repeated applications of the power in the same scene have no effect.

The power is an aura that lasts for an entire scene or until deactivated, before it fades away. Anyone with a sense of smell can detect a rotting odor emanating from the vampire during the time the power is active, adding +2 to the Difficulty of any rolls the vampire's player makes in a socially positive or diplomatic context, if doing so in person.

Duration: One scene

Passion Feast

Amalgam: Fortitude 2

The relationship between vampires and their need for blood as sustenance is well known, but when a vampire needs to spend an extended period in the Shadowlands, or wishes to torment a spirit, this Oblivion power allows them to subsist on the passions of wraiths.

Wraiths have no bodies, nor do they have blood. Instead, their raw emotions drive them. Love, hatred, greed, or even a need for vengeance might keep a wraith around after their former body's death. An accomplished necromancer can feed on these passions for a time, enabling them to survive without blood for longer than their fellow Kindred. The feeding manifests as a swirling vortex of power between the wraith and the vampire's maw, as the vampire doesn't need to actually bite down on anything to consume passions.

Cost: Free

System: A vampire with this power can drain a wraith of their passion, through close proximity (three yards/meters or closer) to the wraith. The drain inflicts one Aggravated Willpower damage to the wraith and reduces the vampire's Hunger by one step for the remainder of the night. That Hunger returns on the following night regardless of Rouse Checks, as the feeding is only a reprieve to dull the vampire's hungry urges. Feeding from a wraith may merit a Stain, as the consumed passion dulls the wraith's reason for being, likely sending them down a path to self-destructive acts. The Storyteller determines the number of passions a wraith possesses, and may deem that the wraith becomes an uncontrollable, murderous spectre once all passions have been consumed.

Duration: Passive

Level 4

Necrotic Plague

Kindred scholars claim Oblivion pollutes everything it touches, with this power as a prime example. Through touch alone, a vampire might poison a mortal victim's blood, imbuing them with a disease that wracks and ravages their body. Most dangerously of all, this disease runs the risk of being contagious, and might inflict the same harm to other mortals.

Necromancers schooled in medicine have enough talent to make this power appear in the form of specific illnesses, sometimes including those that died out in decades or centuries past.

Regardless of how it manifests, the symptoms will eventually disappear even without medical treatment, whether or not the victim survives.

Cost: One Rouse Check, Two Stains

Dice Pools: Intelligence + Oblivion (vs. Stamina + Medicine if used on healthy mortals, with Fortitude added if the mortal is a ghoul or other supernatural creature that possesses it)

System: The user makes a Rouse Check and then rolls Intelligence + Oblivion while touching their victim. If the victim is weak (a baby, elderly, unwell, recovering from an illness, dying, or with Health at 3 or lower), they are automatically infected. If the victim is healthy, they roll Stamina + Medicine (+ Fortitude, if they possess it), resisting the disease if they roll more successes than the vampire. The vampire incurs two Stains for using this power. This power cannot be used on vampires.

Victims of the disease take one Aggravated Health damage at the start of every scene following their infection. The victim suffers from the disease for a number of scenes equal to the number of successes the vampire's player rolled. The sickness cannot be medically treated, as it is supernatural in origin, but it is healed through drinking vitae.

If the player rolls a critical win when activating this power, they can choose to make the disease communicable via touch, with subsequent recipients suffering the disease for one turn fewer than the victim by whom they were infected. If the player rolls a total failure, the vampire's own vitae convulses as if poisoned. They suffer three Aggravated Health damage as the infected blood pours out of them and must make a Rouse Check.

Duration: One turn to activate, variable length of condition

Level 5

Skuld Fulfilled

Necromancers can be described as fate's greatest meddlers, as they have a way of interfering with the destined paths of lives and spirits. Occasionally, however, necromancers may seek to serve fate by punishing those who cheat it. This power enables a vampire to reintroduce illnesses to victims who recovered from them, break bones long-since healed, and eliminate the immunity to aging ghouls experience. While this power doesn't work on vampires, it is an effective way of cutting through their servants and ensuring debts to fate are repaid, without having to come into contact with the recipient.

Cost: Two Rouse Checks

Dice Pools: Stamina + Oblivion (vs. Stamina + Medicine, with Fortitude added if the victim possesses it)

System: The vampire makes two Rouse Checks as they expend sufficient vitae to coat both their palms and their face with blood as they recall the faces of their victims. After rolling Stamina + Oblivion vs. the victim's Stamina + Medicine (+ Fortitude, if they possess it) the targeted individual is affected by a serious condition they've historically suffered and recovered from, such as treated cancer, a broken bone, or a disease — including one gained through Necrotic Plague (p. XX) — with any debilitating effects from this condition occurring immediately. The condition's effects are for the Storyteller to determine, but they should be severe. If the victim is a ghoul, this power removes their immunity to aging and eliminates any vitae in their system, potentially resulting in older ghouls dying or even disintegrating where they stand. On a critical win, this power kills the victim by stopping their heart completely. On a total failure, the vampire cannot use this power against that individual again.

Duration: Variable, dependent on whether the condition is treatable

Withering Spirit

This power channels raw entropy via rapid spiritual decay, affecting vampires as well as kine by targeting the victim's spirit. A vampire using this power risks Stains, as it can completely obliterate the victim's spirit, preventing return as a wraith.

Cost: Two Rouse Checks, Stains (variable amount)

Dice Pools: Resolve + Oblivion (vs. Resolve + Occult, with Fortitude added if the victim possesses it)

System: The vampire makes two Rouse Checks to expend sufficient vitae to coat both hands, and touches the victim. After rolling Resolve + Oblivion vs. the victim's Resolve + Occult (+ Fortitude, if they possess it), the victim suffers two Aggravated Willpower damage for every one of the attacker's successes. The attack erodes the victim's spirit until they're a broken husk.

Use of this power may incur one to three Stains for the attacker, unless they have Convictions to mitigate the cost.

Duration: One turn

Underworld Nomenclature

The lands of the dead go by many names, with terms such as “the Shadowlands,” “the Underworld,” “the Abyss,” and “Oblivion” used frequently among wraiths and necromancers. The Shadowlands are the deepest level of the Underworld vampires can enter using the Ceremonies in this book. The Shadowlands are layered over (or under) the world of the living — sometimes called the Skinlands — and reflect a distorted version of our reality, with locations of spiritual and passionate resonance grander or more imposing, the opposite being true for places of no real importance to anyone alive or dead.

The Underworld is where wraiths make their realms, known as necropoli. Vampires cannot enter the true Underworld (though they often refer to the Shadowlands as such) without incredibly advanced Ceremonies and wraith sponsorship. It's a place few return from, with Augustus Giovanni — the family patriarch — last known to have ventured into the Underworld before disappearing.

Oblivion, the Abyss, the Void, the Labyrinth, and other such warm epithets are given to the absence of life that exists beneath and around the Underworld. Necromancers believe they harness their entropic powers from this realm of nothingness, but nobody knows for sure, as to enter Oblivion is to vanish from existence.

Oblivion Ceremonies

Oblivion Ceremonies follow rules for casting similar to Blood Sorcery Rituals, as found in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 275. For Oblivion Ceremonies, the caster rolls their Resolve instead of Intelligence, as Oblivion pulls hard on the mental fortitude of the caster, who must often make a sacrifice for the Ceremony to work. Ceremonies each have a prerequisite Oblivion power. This requirement acts as a gateway for necromancers that blood sorcerers need not pass

through. As with Blood Sorcery, at character creation a player can choose one Level 1 Ceremony if they have at least one Oblivion power noted as a prerequisite for that Ceremony. Characters can buy new Ceremonies at the cost of the Ceremony's level x 3 experience points, providing they meet the power prerequisite as well. Learning new Ceremonies during play requires both experience and time, as well as a teacher who knows the Ceremony already. Expect a Ceremony to take at least the square of its rating in weeks to learn.

Level 1

The Gift of False Life

Through use of this Ceremony, a vampire can raise a corpse or group of corpses to perform simple, single or repetitive tasks.

Prerequisite Power: Ashes to Ashes

Ingredients: A human body (or multiple bodies), a small concoction of blood, phlegm, and bile.

Process: After applying the concoction to the corpse or corpses and performing the Ceremony, the affected bodies animate into a form of false life. They follow a single command from the vampire, providing it's simple and the corpse is physically capable of performing it, such as "sweep the floor," "hold this door shut," or "walk around the house perimeter." They have no ability to think or calculate, so more complicated commands such as "attack the next person to walk through this archway," "drive this car," or "build a shack" do not work.

System: The player makes their Ceremony roll and the number of successes rolled results in that number of corpses animating. The mindless corpse's animation ends when it is destroyed or it concludes its task. These corpses do not defend themselves from attacks, and decay as normal; the Ceremony does not grant them any form of immunity to the elements or time.

Mindless Corpse

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 2, Social 0, Mental 0

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 0

Exceptional Dice Pools: Intimidation 4

Special: Mindless corpses take Superficial and Aggravated damage in the same way as vampires, except they are immune to sunlight. They cannot heal or mend damage. They cannot be mentally dominated or influenced as they are bound to their master. They do not react to motion, words, or interference from anyone but their creator.

Summon Spirit

This Ceremony enables a vampire to summon a spirit from the Underworld.

Prerequisite Power: The Binding Fetter

Ingredients: One of the targeted wraith's fetters, a photo or other visual depiction of the wraith or their signed name, the caster's vitae.

Process: The necromancer pours their vitae over a wraith's fetter, and studying the picture or signature, calls out the wraith's name. The wraith feels their fetter's call, and begins a journey from their location in the Underworld to that of the caster. Though geography has differing scales in the Underworld, a journey may still take several nights if the spirit is on the other side

of the world. If the Shroud is thin enough in the summoning location, the wraith is pulled through the veil between worlds by the fetter's strength. The summoned wraith is under no obligation to serve the vampire upon being called and may act with hostility if they feel the vampire is threatening their fetter, which may be an object, a building, or even a person. Alternatively, the wraith may be grateful for the summoning and the possibility of companionship.

Wraiths summoned in this way do not manifest physically, but as shadows on the walls, quavering silhouettes of their living selves, from which voices might emerge. Wraiths speak the same languages they did in life, unless they've gone to the trouble of learning new ones in the Underworld.

System: The caster daubs the fetter with their vitae and makes an Oblivion Ceremony roll. The wraith cannot pass through the Shroud if it's impenetrable in the Ceremony location (see p. XX), and moving the fetter after the Ceremony doesn't help, as the wraith's ability to pass through the Shroud disappears if the fetter leaves the Ceremony site. The wraith disappears at the end of the scene unless a separate Ceremony is used to compel or bind them.

Calling the Dead

If all it takes to get a wraith's attention is to interfere with their fetter, why learn a Ceremony to call it? Wraiths cannot pass through the Shroud without a Ceremony pulling them through, or without one of their own powers allowing the same. In some rare cases, wraiths are grateful for the summoning as it enables them to escape aggressors on their side of the Shroud. Just as in vampire society, wraiths do not always make for best friends just because they've shared a communal experience of death.

Level 2

Awaken the Homuncular Servant

Necromancers use this Ceremony to create spies and stalkers out of body parts such as hands or skulls, or small dead animals like rats or foxes.

Prerequisite Power: Where the Shroud Thins

Ingredients: The required body part or animal carcass, the weapon used to sever/kill it, a small concoction of urine, fecal matter, and semen.

Process: The caster coats a blade (or other device suited to the task) in a gross cocktail of bodily fluids, and uses it to cut the targeted appendage off its root limb or body, or kills the small animal (which cannot be larger than a small dog and cannot fly, regardless of whether it has wings). After massaging vitae into the target, it comes to life as a homuncular servant, unfailingly loyal to its master. The homunculus can scale walls, hop (even if it lacks the limbs to do so), and hide effectively. While it cannot speak or perform tasks requiring deep thought, it can telepathically communicate single images to its creator.

System: The necromancer's player makes an Oblivion Ceremony roll, and after doing so, gains a homuncular servant that will spy, follow, or intimidate at the necromancer's command. If it strays farther than 100 yards/meters from the vampire, it falls inert, only awakening again once the vampire enters that range. Otherwise, it remains active for a number of nights equal to the

number of successes rolled. A critical win on the roll keeps the servant active forever, while a total failure destroys all components involved in the Ceremony.

Homuncular Servant

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 0, Mental 1

Secondary Attributes: Health 3, Willpower 1

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 4, Stealth 6; Intimidation 4

Special: Homuncular servants take Superficial and Aggravated damage in the same way as vampires, except they are immune to sunlight. They cannot heal or mend damage. They cannot be mentally dominated or influenced as they are bound to their master. They do not need eyes or ears to perceive everything around them as someone with unimpeded vision and hearing might. They can telepathically broadcast a single image per night to their master.

Compel Spirit

This Ceremony allows a vampire to bend a wraith to their will.

Prerequisite Power: Where the Shroud Thins

Ingredients: A wraith's fetter, the caster's vitae, an item (or threat) sufficient to damage the fetter.

Process: The vampire must be in close proximity to a wraith in order to use this power, typically through use of Summon Spirit (see p. XX). The necromancer casts a handful of their own vitae in the wraith's direction as they hold a destructive item to the fetter (a knife, a hammer, a gun, or potentially holding the fetter over a fire) or speak threatening words that the wraith believes. The vampire and wraith engage in a contest of wills. If the vampire gains domination over the wraith, the wraith must serve as the vampire decrees, at least temporarily. If the opposite occurs, the vampire is left mentally debilitated and the fetter disappears from their grasp.

System: The vampire's player makes an Oblivion Ceremony roll vs. the wraith's Resolve + Composure. If they have no way of physically threatening the fetter, the player must also make a Manipulation + Intimidation roll (Difficulty equal to the wraith's Resolve + Composure).

If the player rolls more successes than the wraith's resistance roll on their Oblivion Ceremony roll, the vampire can command the wraith to perform a number of moderately difficulty tasks (spying, research, answering questions truthfully, etc.) equal to the number of successes rolled. For every two successes, the vampire can instead command the wraith to perform a difficult task (such as attacking someone, doing something repugnant to the wraith's sensibilities, etc.). On a critical win, the vampire can demand any action from the wraith, and it will try its best to complete the task. The wraith remains in the vampire's service until the end of the chronicle or until it has fulfilled its master's commands, at which point it returns to the Underworld with an eternal enmity for the necromancer.

If the wraith rolls more successes on their Resolve + Composure roll, the vampire loses one Willpower for every success the wraith rolled more than the vampire's player. The wraith then re-enters the Underworld.

The compulsion placed on the wraith ends immediately if the vampire attacks them. If the vampire harms the threatened fetter, the wraith suffers between one and three Aggravated

Willpower damage (depending on the importance of the fetter) and the wraith is sent back to the Underworld to be tormented by, and possibly converted into, a murderous spectre (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 377).

Level 3

Host Spirit

This Ceremony allows a vampire to open their body to possession by a ghost.

Prerequisite Power: Aura of Decay

Ingredients: A gift to be made as tribute to a wraith (whether the wraith values it depends on the individual), a parasitic bug, two teeth extracted from the vampire's mouth

Process: The vampire must be in close proximity to a wraith in order to use this power, typically through use of Summon Spirit (see p. XX). The necromancer presents a tribute to the wraith, sometimes in the form of alcohol poured on the wraith's gravesite, or a bag of coins to be buried in the earth, or even the freshly decapitated head of one of the wraith's until-recently living enemies. The vampire then pulls two teeth from their mouth, usually with pliers, and bites into a parasite with their remaining teeth. The vampire then opens their mouth and the wraith can choose to jump inside, inhabiting the vampire's body.

The benefits of having a wraith ride one's body come in the form of an enhanced physique, access to whichever memories the wraith chooses to share, and the wraith's voice offering the vampire advice. The wraith *can* take complete possession of the vampire if they wish to, which some necromancers view as a blessing to be experienced, and others deem the main reason not to use this power. Allowing a wraith to control one's actions for a night is an effective way of confusing and mollifying the Beast, as well as demonstrating physical prowess and knowledges the vampire may not usually possess.

System: The vampire's player makes a successful Oblivion Ceremony roll. If the wraith agrees to the proposition, it then enters the vampire's body and can remain for a number of scenes equal to the successes rolled on the Oblivion Ceremony roll. With the wraith inside them, the vampire gains +2 dice to all Physical Attribute rolls and +2 Health until the wraith departs. The vampire can hear the wraith in their head, with its advice, cajoling, or supportive words provided by the Storyteller.

A wraith can choose to assert its possession instead of acting as a passenger. If the vampire resists, they make a Resolve + Composure roll vs. the wraith's Resolve + Composure. If successful, the wraith's influence is rejected. If failed, the wraith steers the vampire until the end of the scene, though it can't make the vampire do anything self-destructive. On a critical win, the wraith is ejected entirely and returns to the Underworld. On a total failure, the wraith can make a vampire harm themselves, but returns to the Underworld after the first injury is sustained.

A vampire whose body succumbs or is voluntarily opened to the possession attempt finds all Willpower damage healed once the wraith departs, as the spirit subdues the Beast for as long as it is present.

Shambling Hordes

This Ceremony enables a necromancer to raise a group of aggressive, walking dead minions.

Prerequisite Power: Aura of Decay

Ingredients: A human corpse (or multiple human corpses), a fresh human sacrifice.

Process: The vampire must have a separate corpse in addition to a human prepared for sacrifice. The vampire murders the sacrificial victim, spilling their blood on the corpse or corpses intended for animation. If the Ceremony is successful, the corpses stand (the recent sacrifice does not), revived with the fresh blood, and serve the vampire's commands, even moderately complex orders such as "kill everyone who enters," "groan if you see anyone pass this way," or "terrorize that neighborhood." Unlike the corpses raised using the Gift of False Life (see p. XX), these animated dead do not sit idle if left without commands, instead attacking anyone around them except for their master.

System: The player makes their Ceremony roll, most likely incurring Stains depending on the Chronicle Tenets. Due to the amount of blood spilled in this Ceremony, the caster must roll to resist hunger frenzy. For every success rolled on the Ceremony roll, one aggressive dead receives the gift of animation. Corpses animated this way do not decay and only enter repose if commanded to by the vampire, if the vampire meets final death, or if they are destroyed.

Aggressive Corpse

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 0, Mental 0

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 0

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 6; Intimidation 5

Special: Aggressive corpses take Superficial and Aggravated damage in the same way as vampires, except they are immune to sunlight. They cannot heal or mend damage. They cannot be mentally dominated or influenced as they are bound to their master. They do not need eyes or ears to perceive everything around them as someone with unimpeded vision and hearing might. Bites from the aggressive dead inflict +2 Aggravated Health damage to mortals.

Level 4

Bind the Spirit

Vampires with access to this Ceremony have the ability to bind wraiths to specified locations and people.

Prerequisite Power: Necrotic Plague

Ingredients: A wraith's fetter, the caster's vitae, the sacrifice of an innocent human, sufficient salt to surround a property or individual. If the target for haunting is an individual, the necromancer must possess something of their body, such as fingernails, hair, blood, or skin.

Process: The vampire must already have a wraith under their control using Compel Spirit (see p. XX). The vampire kills an innocent human (though innocence is subjective, this tends to apply to the young, caregivers, and genuinely pious individuals) in or close to a location or person they want their wraith to haunt. Subsequently, they mix their vitae with sufficient salt to surround the target for haunting, and paint a circle with the mixture. The wraith's fetter is placed somewhere within the location or the target's possession. From this point, the wraith is forever bound to the target, unless the vampire cancels the Ceremony, the fetter ever moves from the location or individual's possession, or the wraith is destroyed. Binding also ends if the necromancer attacks the wraith. Most wraiths bound in this way are furious or melancholic about their plight, and

their mood affects the area around them. Many necromancers use this method to defend their havens or haunt their enemies.

System: Following the steps of the Ceremony, the vampire incurs at least three Stains from the murder of an innocent, unless Convictions allow otherwise. They make an Oblivion Ceremony roll that cannot be resisted, as the wraith must already be compelled for this power to work.

The wraith is bound in perpetuity to the location or individual targeted, with no duration applied to this Ceremony's effects. Any emotion the wraith feels intensely during its binding affects the inhabitants of the location or the individual to whom it's bound, with each person affected suffering -2 dice to all rolls made to resist acting or feeling the way the wraith feels. Therefore, an angry wraith may make vampires more inclined to frenzy, while a depressed wraith might make a mortal more likely to stop self-care. Bound wraiths have the same powers as spectres (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 377).

Split the Shroud

This Ceremony allows a vampire to create a tear in the Shroud through which wraiths can pass and vampires with the correct Ceremonies can physically enter the Shadowlands.

Prerequisite Power: Necrotic Plague

Ingredients: A scalpel that's been used to cut into someone living, chalk or charcoal, a silk sheet, a human sacrifice.

Process: The vampire hangs a silk sheet over a wall in a place where the Shroud density (see p. XX) is standard, thin, or frayed. They then murder a human sacrifice against the sheet, usually via some manner of bloodletting, and as blood coats the sheet, cut it open with a scalpel. The Ceremony widens the portal between the world of the living — which wraiths call the Skinlands — and the Shadowlands. Wraiths who enter the Skinlands via this method take to haunting locations and people, indulging in their passions, and possess humans if their powers allow for it. Some treat the vampire with gratitude for splitting the Shroud, while others enjoy harassing the necromancer responsible.

System: The caster kills the human sacrifice, which may result in acquiring Stains depending on the necromancer's Convictions. When cutting the silk sheet with a scalpel, their player makes the Ceremony roll (with -1 Difficulty if the scalpel was used in the human sacrifice). Due to the amount of blood spilled in this Ceremony, the caster must roll to resist falling into hunger frenzy. For every success on the Ceremony roll, the Shroud's density reduces by a level, down to being absent.

Following this Ceremony, vampires can access the Shadowlands with Ex Nihilo (see p. XX) more easily, but importantly, if the Shroud rating is reduced to absent, wraiths can spill into the Skinlands as they see fit for the remainder of the chapter. Once the chapter concludes, a Shroud density of absent increases to frayed and the gateway for wraiths closes.

Level 5

Ex Nihilo

This Ceremony enables a vampire and their coterie to migrate into the Shadowlands, though doing so comes at great risk.

Prerequisite Power: Withering Spirit

Ingredients: Masks for each participant, a bowl containing sufficient quantity of the caster's vitae so each participant might coat the soles of their feet in it, two coins of any value per participant.

Process: Few Ceremonies of Oblivion come with as much doubt and fear as Ex Nihilo, the ability to migrate into the Shadowlands. This Ceremony enables a physical crossing into the lands of entropy. Vampires who physically enter the Shadowlands may interact with wraiths as if they were solid, but cannot carry objects with them, other than the clothes they wear. Vampires destroyed in the Shadowlands disappear in a vortex of blood and ash, sucked into the false earth beneath their feet.

Ex Nihilo appeals to a great many necromancers and mystics who want to study the Shadowlands without the impediment of a time limit. It's an unmatched method for interviewing ghosts and exploring the necropoli — the cities spirits inhabit. It's also incredibly dangerous, as many wraiths — especially spectres — seek to destroy vampires, draining them of their Willpower, and there's always the risk of meeting the ghost of someone the vampire slew years earlier. Such wraiths tend to hold a grudge.

The vampire must have used the Split the Shroud Ceremony within this chapter, in the location they're currently occupying, in order for Ex Nihilo to function. If the Shroud density is reduced to absent, the caster and any companions may enter the Shadowlands from that point, if they don masks to cover their faces, dip or paint their feet in the vampire's vitae, and carry a coin in each hand.

System: The user makes three Rouse Checks (sufficient to expend the required vitae) and spends a turn concentrating, expending a Willpower point to prepare for the crossing. They then make their Ceremony roll. If successful, the vampire, a number of companions equal to the number of successes rolled, and any objects on their person may then enter the Shadowlands.

The Shadowlands follows several rules that do not exist in the world of the living:

- Wraiths are capable of physical attacks on vampires (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 377 for an average spectre's stat block) but some are also capable of attacking a vampire's Willpower specifically, as they drain a vampire's passion. Defense pools against Willpower drain, which a wraith can attempt up to 3 yards/meters from the vampire, are made up from the vampire's Resolve + Composure, vs. the attacking wraith's Strength + Brawl. This attack inflicts Aggravated Willpower damage.
- Though there is no sun (and therefore no daytime) in the Shadowlands, the vampire must still Rouse the Blood every 24 hours. With no sunlight, they are able to operate without rest.
- Vampires in the Shadowlands cannot interact with the world of the living in a meaningful way. They can only touch or speak with living creatures by ending this Ceremony, which takes the expenditure of a Willpower point and another Rouse Check in a place where the Shroud isn't impenetrable. They can see snatches of motion through the Shroud, and a Discipline such as Auspex may enable them to spy from beyond the veil, but for the most part, anything viewed has a Difficulty 4 or more to perceive.
- Vampires can use their Disciplines in the Shadowlands just as they can in the land of the living.

- If a vampire is compelled to feed in the Shadowlands, they cannot obtain sustenance from wraiths without the Passion Feast power (see p. XX), but can feed from mortals or other vampires with them.
- Oblivion absorbs individuals who lose all Health or Willpower in the Shadowlands. They leave no wraiths if destroyed.
- Vampires cannot bring wraiths out of the Shadowlands without a Ceremony such as Summon Spirit (see p. XX), which must be used in the land of the living to have this effect.

Duration: Until the power is deactivated or the vampire is destroyed

Lazarene Blessing

This Ceremony enables a necromancer to bring a freshly-dead body back to life, though not how its relatives and friends might remember it.

Pre-required Power: Skuld Fulfilled

Ingredients: One human sacrifice, incense, the heart of any mammal, powdered silver.

Process: The necromancer burns incense to perfume the air before performing an act of human sacrifice, cutting the heart of the victim out and replacing it with the heart of another mammal, though it doesn't need to be stitched in and working for the Ceremony to function. After pouring a bag of powdered silver over the open eyes of the dying or dead mortal, the vampire invites a wraith to take the deceased mortal as a host. Wraiths cannot be forced to possess a body, but few refuse the opportunity to walk around in semi-living shoes again.

System: Killing a mortal for this Ceremony likely incurs Stains, according to the Chronicle Tenets. If the replacement heart was likewise taken from someone the vampire murdered, that murder might also incur Stains. Following a successful Ceremony roll, a wraith can enter the freshly-dead body and live in it as if it were their own. The wraith must be present during the act of sacrifice.

The possessed corpse will wake bearing the wounds that killed it, though the replacement heart is functional (no matter its origin or placement) and the body recovers one point of Health upon possession. The remaining Health recovers with time. The body possesses the same Physical Attributes, Disciplines (if a ghoul), and Backgrounds it had in life. Social and Mental Attributes, Skills, and any form of morality rating match those of the wraith.

This possession lasts indefinitely, or until the possessed body dies again or the wraith is exorcised from the host. The body gains no special resistances to harm beyond Disciplines it might have possessed in life.

Life in the Underworld

An interstitial zone between the Underworld and the Skinlands, the Shadowlands are a place ghosts visit to spy on their loved ones and those who they wish to harm. Some also come here in the hope of being summoned, so they might experience the world of the living again. Deeper in the lands of the dead, in the Underworld and further still, wraiths have little contact with mortals or Kindred.

Most vampires have few reasons to visit the Shadowlands, but for necromancers, it's a realm of opportunity and exploration. Here, they might interrogate former friends and foes, observe secret

meetings without fear of discovery, secrete items of rare importance, and fashion alliances with the dead. The world looks similar to that of the living, except the sun never rises, the moon and stars are absent, and the buildings, natural locations, and even people here are distorted through heights of emotion. A subway station frequently used for suicides might be awash with the shadows of blood and body parts, and the captured wailing of mourning relatives, while a church where lovers unite in marriage may exist in a permanent state of heady joy and excitement. This world is alien to vampires, governed by laws they struggle to manipulate. Indeed, the Kindred who try often find the wraith population meeting their interference with a severe backlash.

As noted in the Ex Nihilo Ceremony (see p. XX), the Shadowlands make for an effective temporary sanctuary or meeting place, but vampires must always be aware they are not the top predator in such a place. Here, mostly spectres, but even ghosts who haven't fallen to consuming rage, can sap living will, leaving anyone foolish enough to remain in this place hollowed or destroyed.

Though there are as many types of wraiths in the Shadowlands as there are living in the Skinlands, the following are examples of wraiths that might act as SPCs in your chronicles, to supplement the spectre (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 377). All of these examples abide by the same rules as spectres except where noted.

Ghost in the Machine

These are wraiths who in the Skinlands prefer to possess objects, speaking through computer screens, short-circuiting electronics, and making elevators crash with mortals inside, among other activities. In the Shadowlands, they exist as quiet, almost shy wraiths, uncomfortable with being seen.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 3, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Craft 6, Drive 7, Stealth 7; Intimidation 5; Science 6, Technology 7

Special: These wraiths cannot possess people. Instead, they possess machines. They use a pool of seven dice (their exceptional Technology or Drive dice pool, depending on the machine) to influence devices from computers to cars and televisions to elevators. These wraiths can make such devices broadcast messages from the wraith (if the device is equipped to transmit), malfunction, overheat, or indeed drive or operate as per the wraith's will. If the machine is destroyed, the wraith is ejected.

Poltergeist

Poltergeists feel perpetually downtrodden. To their mind, it's amusing to make life difficult for everybody else, because it's shit enough for them being dead. They don't have the patience to inhabit items or people, preferring to launch things around aggressively, write their names on the wall in scratch-marks or whatever fluid comes to hand, and terrify the inhabitants of old houses. In the Shadowlands, they're bombastic, often hurling insults laced with self-deprecating commentary.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 3, Mental 2

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 6, Brawl 7, Larceny 6, Stealth 7; Intimidation 6

Special: These ghosts cannot possess people. Poltergeists may physically influence the environment and any objects and people in it (by marking walls, assaulting people, or launching items, as examples) a number of times per scene equal to their Willpower. If they incur Aggravated Willpower damage, their number of actions decreases to match their current Willpower. These wraiths can attack using their own form, clawing with a pool of seven dice (their exceptional Brawl dice pool), dealing non-halved Superficial damage (+2 damage modifier). They can also use the objects in the room to inflict additional or halved damage (from flung knives, television sets, etc.) though thrown weapons use six dice (their exceptional Athletics dice pool).

Puppeteer

Possession is where these wraiths specialize, enjoying the ability to enter the bodies of the weak-willed and pursue an ersatz life for a short while, before exorcism or the Shadowlands calls them back. Skilled puppeteers can imitate personality as well as controlling a flesh vessel, while wraiths newer to the calling make possessions inadvertently jerky and frightening. In the Shadowlands, puppeteers are deeply uncomfortable giving up control, and always attempt to negotiate from positions of power.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 4, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 6, Drive 7, Stealth 6; Insight 7, Intimidation 6, Performance 7, Persuasion 6, Subterfuge 7; Awareness 6

Special: As with spectres, these wraiths may use the Possession Auspex-Dominate power, rolling eight dice in the attempt to take control. They steer their host freely, though the host is able to roll Resolve + Intelligence once per scene against the puppeteer's seven dice (their exceptional Drive dice pool), with the victim ejecting the ghost if they roll more successes. Each time the victim attempts this roll and fails, they incur two points of Superficial Willpower damage that cannot heal until the puppeteer abandons the host.

Screamer

Mysterious and terrifying, the screaming dead are wraiths that manifest in the Skinlands as howls, roars, and groans, making houses weep, trees wail, and empty spaces shout insults at anyone who enters them. They aren't quite spectres, but are filled with so much anger or fear that they exude it. In the Shadowlands their screams turn to siren songs, making them among the most charming and sweet wraiths. Their warm personalities can flip on a dime, however.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 5, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Stealth 5; Intimidation 8, Performance 7, Persuasion 6, Subterfuge 6

Special: These wraiths cannot possess people. Their primary function is to terrify mortals with their screams, similar to the Dread Gaze Presence power (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 267). When a screamer uses this power, they roll eight dice (their exceptional Intimidation pool) against the victim's Composure + Resolve, with the results emulating those of Dread Gaze without the visual requirement.

