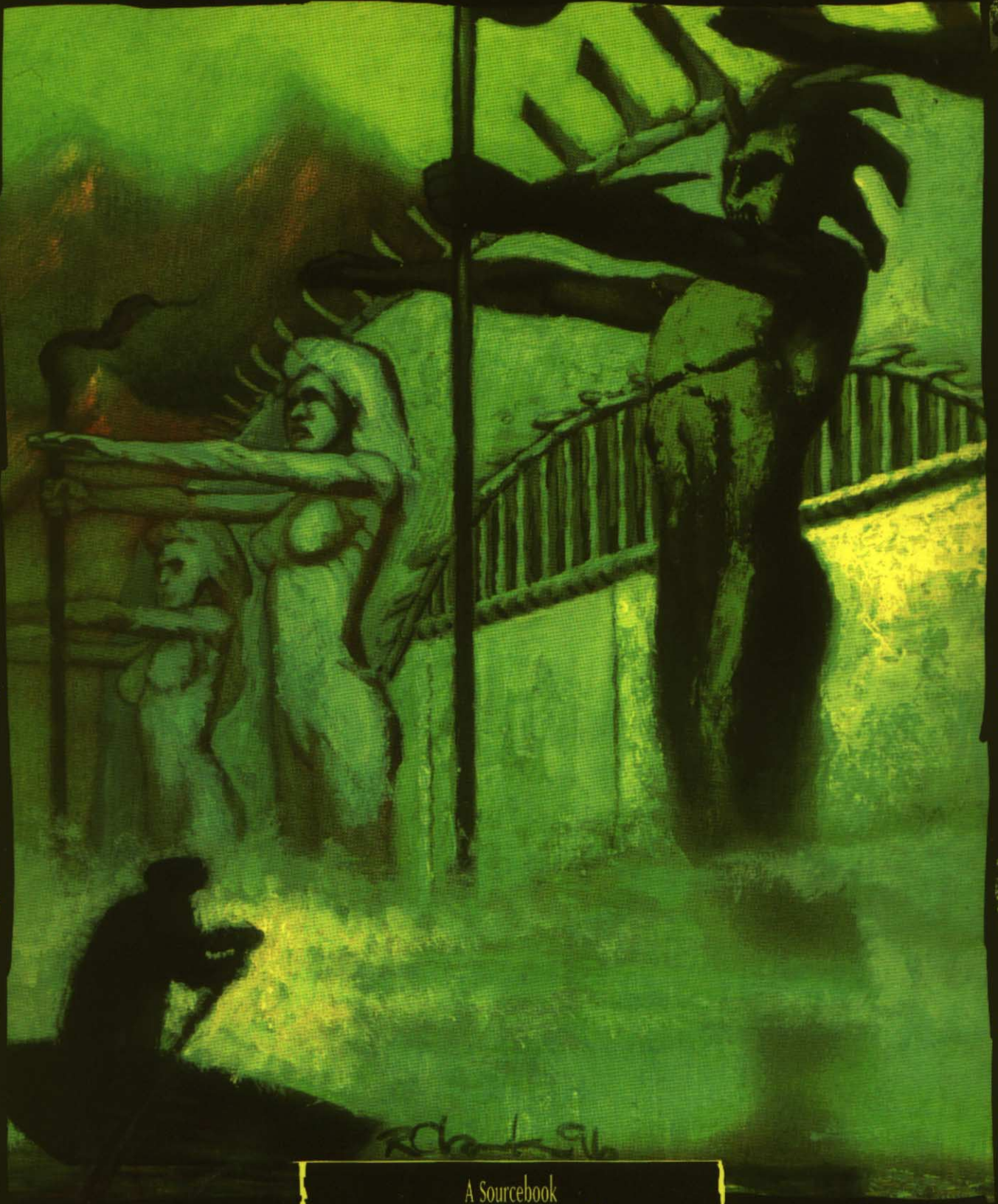


BURIED SECRETS



A Sourcebook
for Wraith: The Oblivion™

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BURIED SECRETS™

By Richard E. Dansky, Beth Fisci, James A. Moore, Ethan Skemp, Lucien Soulban
and Cynthia Summers

Credits

Written by: Richard E. Dansky, Beth Fisch, James A. Moore, Erhan Skemp, Lucien Soulban, and Cynthia Summers

Angelics and Demonic created by: Nicky Rea

Development by: Richard E. Dansky

Editing by: Cynthia Summers

Additional Editing: Ken Cliffe and Rob Hatch

Vice President in charge of Production: Richard Thomas

Art Directors: Lawrence Snelly and Aileen Miles

Screen Exterior: Lawrence Snelly & Henry Higgenbotham

Cover Art: Andrew Ritchie & Henry Higgenbotham

Front & Back Cover Design: Aileen E. Miles

Layout and typesetting : Aileen E. Miles

Art by: Richard Clark, John Cobb, Mike Danza, Pia Guerra, Leif Jones, Eric Lacombe, Chuck Regan, Andrew Ritchie, Andrew Trabbold, Drew Tucker

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SUITE 100
780 PARK NORTH BLVD.
CLARKSTON, GA 30021

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BURIED SECRETS™

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Clark

Ghost Story: Homecoming



Most of the dead men get off the train when it reaches South Station. A few remain, at least in the car that I've been riding in. I can't really vouch for what's going on in the sleepers up and down the line, as I don't think they're in the same place that I am.

Boston. Home, at least in the days when I was alive.

With a pocket full of moaning, jingling oboli, I skip up the steps into the overcast night. A wind is blowing in from the nearby harbor, carrying a scent of dead things and rot. Then again, the few Quick in the vicinity are probably picking up the same scents that I am. There aren't many where I stand, glancing left and right on the edge of the storied Financial District, but a few blocks away the so-called Combat Zone is a-bustle with prostitutes, johns, pimps and extremely lost tourists. Ever since my death, I've hated cutting through that part of town. The mark of Oblivion is just so strong on so many of the faces I see that it's unbearable. It's easier to skirt up and around, through the Financial District and across Boston Common and the Public Garden to get where I'm going. That way I see the occasional mugger and the more than oc-

casional vagrant, but most of them look to be alive for another hundred sunrises.

When you're dead, you take what you can get.

It isn't much past 10 as I edge my way through the sagging relics of swan boats in the Public Garden. I can see a wraith sitting on top of the oldest, an old woman wrapped in gauzy gray scarves with a rag tied over her eyes. I'd seen her on a few other trips and knew that she could see; she'd greeted me by name with surprisingly pointed questions about my wanderings the last time I'd been in town.

"Erik."

I stop and look up. She's staring at me... well, she would have been staring if she'd had eyes instead of a black and bloody rag. "Yes? Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Don't go back there, Erik. It's a bad place for you tonight. I'm seeing your future right now, boy, and it's full of shadows." She hops down off the swan boat and stumps right up to me, and somehow, all I can think is that her breath is terrible. You'd think death would clear up that sort of thing. "I know the deal you cut on that train, boy. It stinks. Could smell it clear from South Station."



I've long since given up trying to lie to Oracles. It doesn't pay, and they have a way of making Fate bite you on the ass if you piss them off. So I shrug and gently push her away with my good hand — the one without the steel spines in it — and back off a few steps. "Look, it's no big thing. I got out of that poker game with my skinmask intact and a few new oboli, and we still had a few hours of travel time left. The four of us playing poker got to talking, and all that went down was that Chillheart—"

"Coldheart."

"Whatever. Coldheart agreed to check to see if the woman I've been looking for had been Harrowed lately if I'd just go back to my original Haunt. I'd been planning on stopping in anyway, so what's the big deal?"

She waddles up to me, looking like a mummified duck. The image is comical, and I can hear the other Erik whispering *Go ahead. Have a good chuckle. Sure she's got a sensa humor....* I tell him to go screw, but it's still hard to keep a straight face as she stomps over.

"Listen, Erik, I'll warn you three times 'cos you've got a good heart on you, if not such a good head. This is two. Doing what a Spectre asks you has never done nobody no good no how no way no when."

"It's harmless. I'm just going home. Oh, and are you being intentionally rustic to make what you're telling me sound more authentic, or do you just naturally slip into down-home dialect?"

"Don't give me any of your lip. I've been sassed by bigger than you and twice as ugly, though lookin' at you that ain't as easy as you might think. And here's something for you to think about: what did Coldheart tell your Shadow to do when you got there, hmm? Hear you've been getting pretty good at lighting fires, boy. Want your Shadow to get twitchy at your big Fetter? They've already had one 'accident' this spring back at your precious little consulting firm. A little one, of course. I'm sure you had nothing to do with it."

Her tone is mocking by the end, and I hate to admit it, but part of me thinks that she's got a good point. Coldheart hadn't seemed too friendly before I pulled a straight flush on the next-to-last hand of the poker game. Why *would* he care if I went home, anyway?

She's making sense, you know. Suddenly, the other Erik is chiming in. *Coldheart scared the bejeezus out of me, and that's saying something. Why don't we go to that bar down the end of the Common, the one all the weirdos hang out in? It's early, you'll Skinride a nice buzz — it'll be a party.*

Waitaminute. My other half warning me off? Interesting. He could be trying a little reverse psychology on me, or maybe he just doesn't want me to get that shot of home-cooked Pathos that hitting my Haunt would bring. Some Slumber would go down nicely right about now, too.

On the other hand, if I do what the other Erik tells me, I go out, spend a few more Pathos and maybe step on a few local toes. That means either a fight or losing face, and either way my Shadow gets his jollies. I don't like this one bit.

"Third warning, Erik. You go in there, you'll regret it."

I really think heading back to the office would be a bad idea.

"The woman you're looking for is long gone, Erik. You're not going to find her here."

She's right. This is really starting to worry me. Look, I'll even lay off hassling you for a few days if you just take her advice and skedaddle.

"Last time I'm telling you, son. It's been foretold."

Look, your old girlfriend still lives around here. Why don't you go Skinride her, get some cheap thrills?

That does it. Making my apologies, I back off, thank the rag lady for her advice, and double-time it down Newbury Street. I can hear her still shouting warnings as I cross Berkeley Street, but what I can hear more clearly is the other Erik.

He's saying, *C'mon, man, this is insane. We don't want to do this. Jesus Christ, Erik, you're going to get us both wasted.*

I don't care. It's not far to the old office from Berkeley, and by now my rep has gotten big enough that the local toughs leave me alone. The rest of the neighborhood wraiths just fade back into their haunts when I march past. They know how I feel about them, how much I hate them for just peeking out of their windows and watching the Legionnaires take the woman I loved to pieces. They know that I hate them for not trying to save her.

A few of the more intelligent ones have also figured out that whatever loathing I have for them, I have in spades for myself. After all, I didn't try to save her, either. Those are the wraiths who stay the furthest from me when I'm in town.

The lights are on in the old office. Someone's working late, probably the owner. Whatever else you could say about my former employer, he didn't push anyone any harder than he pushed himself. It's well past 10, but the pre-midnight oil is blazing away. Goody for him, I think. He's not on salary.

Gritting my phantom teeth, I step through the door leading to the stairwell. Ghostly wings unfurl from my back and carry me up to the fourth floor. I'd traded learning some basic Argos for some Outrage tips a while back, and the Phantom





Wings stunt had come in very handy on more than one occasion. Before they've completely folded, I've stepped through another door and into the office.

It looks the same to me as it did back in the first days of my death. Oh, the nameplates on the desks have changed, but the same magazines are strewn across the table in reception, and the same miasma of hatred, fear and self-loathing still stews in the atmosphere. Even the map that gave me my little souvenirs — the metal spines through my right hand — still hangs in the same place on the wall, placid and malign. I laugh, and fade through the door into Joel's office.

He's working late, and he's not alone. His formality still astonishes me, though — it's getting near 11, and he's still wearing a tie. His hair's gone a little grayer, and it looks like he's put on a few pounds, but otherwise Joel looks much the same as he did when I drew paychecks from him instead of Pathos.

The computer at his desk is on, open to a spreadsheet that has to be this month's financial numbers. They're appalling, and not because the company is in any kind of trouble. What's insane is how well the firm is doing. The bottom line has risen considerably since I shuffled off the mortal coil.

Bullshit. That's my dark half again. *The numbers always were this good. He lied to you when he said there was no money for a raise. He was keeping it for himself and laughing when you believed his lies.*

I've got no response.


As I said, he's not alone. His secretary is in there with him, giving him (of all things) a neck rub. There's got to be something extracurricular going on here — last I heard as a living man Brigit was making less than her expenses, and Joel wouldn't give her overtime hours. Either he's rescinded that little declaration, or there's something else that's up. I don't much care, to be honest. Brigit and I had never gotten much past some drunken necking at the Cock'n'Bull once, and jealousy just isn't on my agenda any more.

Faintly, in the background, I can hear Yanni on the office stereo system. The other Erik starts digging up memories of days when that damned CD would be in from 8 in the morning until 7 at night, with me slaving away at my desk the whole time listening to the same thing over and over until I wanted just to scream and smash the CD player. We couldn't change the CD, though. We weren't allowed. It was corporate policy.

I'm losing my calm.

Now Brigit's hands are sliding under his shoulders. Joel's making satisfied little grunts as his hands move over the keyboards. He's upping a client price here, adjusting a payment schedule there, changing a commission percentage over in column J.

Oh, good, now even Brigit's gone over to the enemy. Remember the bitch sessions the two of you used to have? I'll bet Joel's



heard every word of those now. You're dead, why keep the confidence?

It's too much. I back away.

Chickening out of watching a live woman give a live man a backrub? God, you were a prude when you were alive, but this is something else. Just hop on in. Skinride. Brigit always gave you good backrubs when you were breathing. Don't you want just one more?

No, I scream silently into my own head. No, I don't want one more, and no, I don't want to see what's happening here, and no, I do not want to be here any more. We — I — am leaving. I turn on my heel, prepare once again for the pain of walking through a solid door.

He's paying your replacement more than he paid you.

I stop. I can't move, can't think. All I see is a curtain of red, pure rage. The bastard. The absolute bastard. Then, suddenly, I'm sitting in the back of my head staring out through the other Erik's prison bars.

Sucker, he says to me. All I can do is howl.

Now we're going to take care of that prick once and for all, and you're going to help me do it. I try to fight, but not as hard as I could, I think. I don't know. Part of me wants to do this.

Brigit's hands are back on Joel's neck, strong fingers working along the vertebrae. "Yes, a little harder there...." is what I think he's mumbling.

I can feel my face tighten in a smile. "A little harder," I can hear the other Erik say with my voice. And I can feel the terrible, terrible pressure that my mind brings to bear with Brigit's fingers.

The snapping of Joel's neck is almost anticlimactic. One minute he's lolling forward, the next his tongue is lolling obscenely as it swells out from under his thick moustache. Brigit steps away from the corpse, staring at her hands with wide blue eyes and screaming. I feel sorry for her.

Gotcha, the other Erik says, and suddenly I'm in control again. I feel sullied. I feel dirty. There's a fat dead man in a chair, and I'm responsible, and I find myself praying to God that Joel goes straight to Oblivion so I don't have to face him and tell him what I've done.

Disgusted with myself, I walk through the bookshelf and the wall, back into the reception area. Brigit is on the phone to the police, yammering hysterically and crying. She must have left Joel's office while I was regaining control. It means nothing to me.

Out of force of habit, I turn to the big bay window at the office's front. I used to see the woman I loved out that window.

Tonight, I see gray swaddled rags.



Clark 89

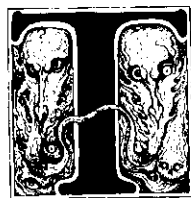


Rules

Everything not forbidden is compulsory. Everything not compulsory is forbidden.

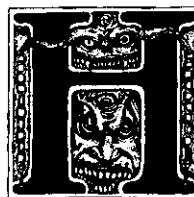
— T.H. White, *The Book of Merlin*

Introduction



This book is intended as a companion to **Wraith: The Oblivion 2nd Edition**. It has a little bit of everything in it: rules, creatures, Storyteller help, a FAQ and a setting/chronicle to give new players an introduction to the world of **Wraith**. This book is not a masterpiece of the gamer's art; rather, it contains a few things to help make **Wraith: The Oblivion** complete. Enjoy.

Artifacts



He who dies with the most toys wins.

— Anon.

The greatest treasures of the Underworld, Artifacts can be as varied as imagination allows and as dark as perverted morals. Sought after by all wraiths, the objects listed below cover the gamut, from weapons to protective devices and more. Most of these devices are extraordinarily rare, and many wraiths will show no hesitation about using violence to obtain them.



Standard Artifacts

Stygian Steel Armor (Level 3)

Only a meager few within Stygia receive such a prize. These highly ornate full suits of armor appear ceremonial, but in reality are quite functional. Their design falls somewhere between the full plate mail dress of the romanticized chivalric knights and the Roman aesthetic that emulated the perfect proportions of the human figure, but the important fact is that most of the armored Legionnaire's torso is protected. Stygian steel armor can absorb a full 10 levels of damage before it is considered to be destroyed, and certain suits have been known to amplify their wearers' Arcanoi as well.

Nhudri's Embrace (Variable Level)

Built for one purpose alone, these Artifacts are the marks of slavery that so many rebel against. These inky black chains are infused with the means to inhibit a wraith's Arcanoi in order to prevent him from escaping. The lower grade chains are equipped with mechanical locks that can be picked, while

the more powerful chains are sealed with a secret password spoken in thought alone.

Normally it is impossible for a chained wraith to use his Arcanoi. To even attempt to do so, the prisoner must roll Willpower (difficulty 8) and achieve a minimum of two successes. Nhudri's Embrace is specially configured to resist the use of Argos; the difficulty on any roll to use that Arcanos is 9.

Variations: The invisible manacle is one form of chain used to bind people into servitude without limiting their mobility. The manacles, once in place, vanish and can be neither felt nor seen by anyone save the Thrall himself. The chain's owner possesses an identical set of manacles that allow him to dictate the terms of the slave's limited mobility (e.g., he cannot venture beyond a certain distance, or must return after a period of time). For every hour that the imprisoned wraith breaks these rules, he is drained of one Corpus.

Bell of Summoning (Level 1 Soulsteel Artifact)

The Bell of Summoning, brought over from the Jade Empire, bears the appearance of a small Tibetan bell complete with round-headed hammer. By touching this Artifact, one or more wraiths may invest as much Pathos as they wish

into it. Afterward, whenever the bell is rung, its summons is heard across the Shadowlands by those who have invested Pathos into the device.

The Bell of Summoning is indiscriminate, in that it will automatically spend one Pathos for each person who empowered it every time it is rung; it cannot call out to one wraith specifically. Once all the Pathos from a wraith has been spent, he will no longer hear the bell's summons, no matter how urgent they might be. The bell can be rung for one minute for each point of Pathos expended.

Scribbler's Pen (Level 2 Soulsteel Artifact)

First created for the use of the Great Library's chief archivist, the Scribbler's Pen allows a wraith to transcribe the words that other would have remained entirely unvoiced. They are the scribbings of Angst and Passion given inky form and shape upon parchment through the pen. The words written are of liquid silver that never appears to dry, and which will shimmer enticingly for eternity.

For every hour spent using this pen, a player may transfer one point of Pathos to the paper. Two hours' writing time will enable a wraith to scribble down one point of Temporary Angst. In either case, the character who does this must be very careful with where he hides these papers, for they are his

soul revealed. Should the papers be torn or otherwise damaged, all the emotions stored upon them, good or bad, will fly back into the character who wrote them down. This whirlwind rush of Pathos and/or Angst will render the wraith unconscious for as many turns as he spent hours writing with the pen.

Some wraiths are known to use the pen to store Pathos for later use, caching positive emotions which can be recalled by rereading the passages containing them at a later date. With this method, the words evaporate from the page as the Pathos once again floods back, but this time in a more controlled manner. Nobody else can use the Pathos or Angst of another, and any emotion stored through use of the pen is for the pen's wielder alone.

Living Chains (Level 3 Stygian Steel Artifact)

These ebony chains are often mistaken for Nhudri's Embrace, but while Nhudri's Embrace inhibits the abilities of a wraith, Living Chains are meant to empower the user. Once activated, the chains leap up and embrace their user, coiling around his form like a snake. The middle link of the chain embeds itself into the base of the wraith's back, inflicting one Corpus Level of non-aggravated damage (which cannot be healed until the chains are removed). The other lengths of



chain wrap themselves around the wraith's arms, resembling great black serpents. At this point, the chains are capable of striking targets up to 10 feet away at the mental command of their wielder.

This weapon costs one Pathos to activate for the duration of a scene. Living Chains are considered to be melee weapons, and offer the user an additional three dice in combat. They can either inflict non-aggravated damage (Strength + 3 dice), or grapple the target (three successes on a Strength roll, difficulty 6, to break free of them).

Stygian Wall Flies (Level 3 Soulsteel Artifact)

As mere works of soulcraft, these mouse-sized flies would draw many approving nods. Stygian Flies, however, are far more than normal statuettes. They are messengers and spies for those who own them. While they can fly and travel about, each insect must remain within the realm in which it originated (such as Stygia or the Shadowlands). It cannot cross the Tempest or go into the Labyrinth. Still, within those limitations, a Wall Fly can go just about anywhere and insinuate itself into almost any surroundings.

By expending two Pathos, a Fly's owner can see through the eyes of her Artifact. For a third Pathos, she can speak through the Fly, no matter how far away it might be. By spending a fourth point of Pathos, the wraith can also hear through the Fly. All these effects last one hour before more Pathos is needed to infuse this Artifact. Though quick and reliable, the Stygian Wall Fly is also easily damaged because of its delicate construction. It is for this reason that Flies are primarily used in safe areas or in cases of extreme emergency. Some Flies are capable of instantaneously teleporting their owner to them, as per the Argos •••• art Flicker.

Soulfire and Souled Weapons (Variable Level)

Soulfire crystals are essentially batteries of Pathos, usable for everything from melting the Corpora of wraiths in the forge to powering weapons to running relic jukeboxes. Supposedly distilled by the Usurers' Guild, the bloody red crystals of soulfire can also be used to fuel relics and Artifacts so that an item's user need not invest Pathos every time he wishes to use it.

Ranging in size from tiny (one stored Pathos) to huge (the size of an 18-wheeler's engine block; 50 stored Pathos), soulfire crystals are most often found in units about the size of a soda can that hold 10 Pathos points. Relics designed to be powered by soulfire crystals are generally created to receive this size crystal, which is just plugged into the object's shard receptacle and allowed to power things up. Such items are referred to as "souled."

In the case of "souled" weapons, crystals can be affixed to the grip or butt of a firearm (by an Artificer only). For each

bullet fired, the weapon's Pathos cost is drained from the crystal. For items like relic shotguns, this can get expensive quickly, so enterprising Artificers have come up with multiple crystal mounts and other innovations allowing more than one bit of soulfire to be in place at a time.

Note: Spectres are reputed to possess crystals filled with Angst. Called bloodfire, these crystals glow the reddish-black of an old, clotted bloodstain.

Soulfire Lantern (Level 2 Artifact)

Most lanterns are designed to illuminate the unseen. This Artifact, on the other hand, conceals the presence of its holder. The lantern holds a soulfire shard with 10 Pathos at its center. When the crystal is activated, a point of stored Pathos is spent and the lantern, along with the bearer, fades from view, becoming visible only as a bobbing, dim light. The lantern reduces the difficulty of all Stealth rolls by - 2 as long as it is lit, but it does take a wraith a turn to reacclimate to normal light after dousing the lantern's glow.

Soulfire Mask (Level 2 Weapon)

Masks were developed by the Hierarchy in order to protect those of higher station. Sometimes, however, mere anonymity is not enough protection. Unlike their common cousins, these Stygian steel masks were designed for use by high-ranking Hierarchy officials as weapons. Each of these grimacing visages is infused with a soulfire gem that holds 10 points of Pathos. Upon activation, the mask is capable of either spewing ribbons of flame (Dexterity + Firearms, difficulty 6) that inflict 4 + successes dice of damage for every point of Pathos expended, or surrounding its wearer with a fiery nimbus that can absorb two dice of physical damage for every point of Pathos available. The user dictates how much Pathos is spent in this defense.

Masks (Level 1 Soulsteel Artifact)

Most masks are strictly functional and decorative, nothing more. Made from polished soulsteel, they are iconic in the extreme. Each is intended to represent an office, not an individual, and as such they are forged (each from a single traitor's soul) in a highly representative style. Barghest trainers' masks have a distinctly houndlike cast to them, while Anacreons' look like heraldic skulls. Somehow, masks (at least official Hierarchy-forged ones) adjust to fit any wearer not marred by extensive Moliation.

While not innately powerful, masks do represent the authority of the offices that they represent. A wraith wearing an Overlord's mask, regardless of how tatty or disheveled her appearance, will be accorded the respect due the office that her mask indicates — *no matter what*. That is why mask theft is a favorite sport of many Renegade groups — even when the



theft of the mask is reported, a stolen Hierarch's visage will still serve to bluff most Centurions.

There is also a thriving trade in imitation masks, some of which are very good replicas of the real thing. A good forgery can grant the mask's wearer entry into the heart of a Citadel, but one that's not quite adequate insures that the intruder never makes it out again.

Candelabra of Souls (Level 3 Artifact)

Made through some obscene application of the Usury Arcanos, the Candelabra of Souls is as breathtakingly beautiful as it is evil. Somehow bearing the appearance of beaten brass, the branches of the Candelabra (there are nine, each with a different number of arms) extend out as gracefully as willow fronds. Each branch ends in a holder for a fat candle, in which Moliated wraiths are meant to be set.

Normally soul-candles sit in their holders and add nothing more than aesthetic appeal to the Candelabra. However, when a soulfire crystal is touched to the tip of each candle (and each candle must be touched), the Corpora of the wraiths thus imprisoned begins to transmute into raw, free-floating Pathos. One point of Corpus per candle is transformed into ambient Pathos per hour. This saturates the room in which

the Candelabra sits with the escaped Pathos, which can then be relished by any passerby. With an effect like this, it is no wonder that a Candelabra is *de rigueur* at all of the finest Stygian parties, and the only reason that there aren't more of them about is that the secret of their manufacture has been lost.

Note: The crafting of properly prepared candles is a matter of some skill and delicacy, and only a rare few Masquers have the knack. As each candle is made from a single wraith, it can be assumed that most candles will have between seven and 10 Corpus levels to burn. These candles always fetch an exorbitant price in oboli, but no owner of a Candelabra is willing to be without a steady supply.

Star of the East (Level 2 Artifact)

Imbued with a combination of Fatalism and Argos, the Star of the East is either a baleful warning or a useful guide, depending on whom one talks to. Looking like a star of palest spun sugar, the Star of the East hovers around the head of its owner in an eccentric orbit that can at times cause near-collisions with buildings, other wraiths and whatever else is nearby.

However, when activated by the investment of a point of Pathos, the Star immediately rises to a position 30 feet away



V. 1056

from its owner in the direction of the greatest danger currently facing the wraith. If the danger is within 30 feet, the Star hovers directly over the threat; otherwise, it maintains its position as a constant compass of danger for one hour. At the end of this time, the Star again lapses into its irregular movement unless fed another point of Pathos.

Before the Star will function at all, however, it must be attuned to its new owner through the investment of three Pathos points and a point of Willpower. The wraith must also hold the Star in his hand unceasingly for 24 hours, else the attunement does not take and the Star will flutter away to seek a master with more perseverance.

A free-floating Star can be caught by a wraith who makes a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 7) and a Strength check (difficulty 8). A failure indicates that the Star escapes; a botch means the captor crushes his prize. A Star of the East has only 2 Corpus and cannot be repaired once broken.

Redeyes (Level 2 Artifact)

A superb tool for marking a trail in the trackless Tempest, Redeyes were sardonically named by a Legionnaire who noted that from a distance, the twin red beacons were a dead ringer for the eyes of the dreaded Spectre Coldheart. The fact that said soldier disappeared a scant three days later has been remarked upon, but wisely not analyzed.

Just a pair of soulfire torches in relic glass spheres, Redeyes burn with a strong light that can always be seen for a distance of up to a mile through the glare and miasma of the Tempest. Each set of Redeyes has enough power to last a full year, and at least one set is carried by each Legionnaire on patrol in the storm itself (as opposed to along a Byway). When released into the Tempest, a set of Redeyes hovers in position without drifting down to the Void until the soulfire crystals powering its lanterns burn out. These items are particularly useful for providing reference points for patrols in the Tempest, search and rescue teams and other work details that wander far from a Byway.

There is no Pathos cost for activating a set of Redeyes.

eMap (Level 3 Artifact)

Navigating the Electron Highway can be a nasty business, particularly for wraiths who are inexperienced with the subtler manipulations of Inhabit. It is extremely easy for wraiths to get hopelessly lost in the maze of circuits, ISDN lines, nodes and other components of the Internet. Without proper guidance or a great deal of luck, it is quite possible for a wraith navigating the Electron Highway to end up miles — or even hundreds of miles — away from her intended destination.

For this reason, the Artificers' Guild has created the eMaps, single sheets of hammered souls that somehow manage to map the entire Electron Highway. From a distance, an eMap appears to be a shifting, shimmering gray-green piece of parchment that folds exactly like an earthly road map. When a wraith wishes to map a path along the Electron Highway, however, the details of her vicinity instantly come into sharp focus.

By expending a Pathos point, then touching her finger to both her starting point and destination on the eMap, the wraith activates the Artifact. A glowing line indicating the shortest path along the circuits and lines of the Net will draw itself on the eMap. The wraith can then use the eMap to navigate to her destination without any fear of becoming lost or misdirected so long as she remains on the route laid out by the eMap.

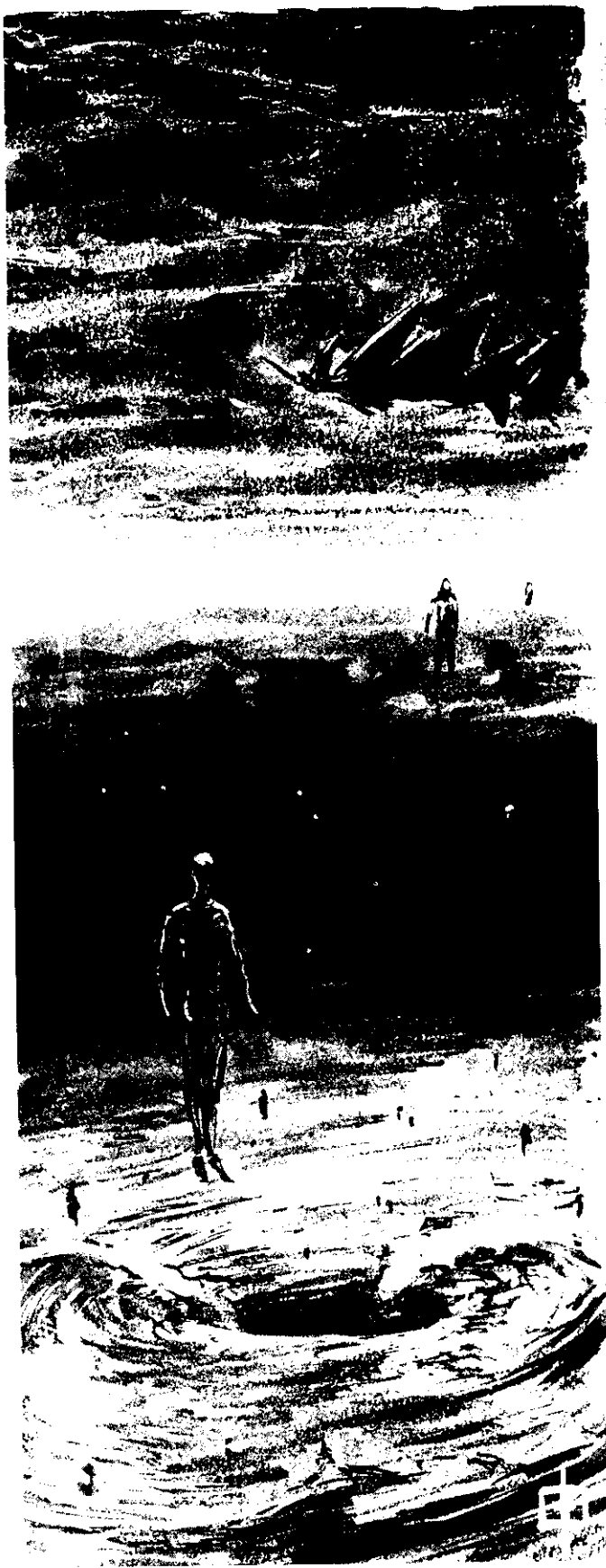
Unfortunately, the eMap only provides the shortest route to the intended end of its owner's journey. It does not provide the route that is necessarily the fastest, nor does it map out the safest. Many wraiths counting on a quick and easy journey with an eMap's help have found themselves splattered all over a virtual wall, as their guide didn't reveal that their shortest route went straight through a firewall.

Instant Nihil (Level 2 Artifact)

Very popular among Renegades, Legionnaires at isolated outposts, and other wraiths who frequently have to make fast getaways, Instant Nihilts are equally useful for escape or attack. Looking like glass bottles filled with inky black liquid, Instant Nihilts are fragile and must be handled carefully lest they break before their owners get a chance to use them. Once a bottle is broken (say, by a fleeing wraith tossing an Instant Nihil behind him to discourage pursuit), a Nihil approximately six feet across forms within a single turn. A wraith in close pursuit of the Nihil-tosser may well fall into the Tempest unless she makes a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 7) to avoid the newly opened gaping pit. Conversely, a cornered wraith without Tempest Threshold (Argos •) might just wish to use an Instant Nihil to provide an escape route for himself.

Officially, the Hierarchy frowns on the use of Instant Nihilts as they tend to linger for days or even weeks. In addition, the use of an Instant Nihil seems to attract the attention of Shades. These Spectres gravitate toward any Instant Nihil in their vicinity, which can be bad news for any wraith who falls (or leaps) into one.

No one seems to know exactly how to make Instant Nihilts. However, they are popular items in the black markets of many Necropoli, and most wraiths with at least Streetwise •• know where to find a steady supply. Current rumor has it that Ferrymen make the things, though no one has yet explained why Ferrymen would do so.



Relics

Avery's Sweets (Level 1 Relic)

When Avery's Sweets burned down in the '50s, many wraiths were astonished to discover that his wares had entered the Shadowlands, still resplendent in their original rainbow-colored wrappers. Many younger wraiths scoff at the notion of relic candy, but these minor items are never refused by even the most cynical Lemure.

The primary attraction of the candies is that they can still be tasted in all their shocking, syrupy sweetness. The candies inevitably awaken good and pleasant memories, albeit briefly. When enjoying a sweet, the wraith is infused with two points of Pathos, which last as long as the candy does. Once the candy dissolves, the Pathos is gone.

Sweeney's Pride (Level 4 Relic)

This device, an old straight razor with a mother-of-pearl inlaid oak handle, has claimed many a victim during its three-century existence. Sweeney's Pride, as it has been satirically christened, remains honed and delivers Strength + 2 aggravated damage. Furthermore, a wraith who possesses the razor receives five Pathos whenever his work with the blade drops someone into a Harrowing or destroys him.

If a wraith is harmed by the razor for more than five points of Corpus and manages to escape or survive her Harrowing, she immediately acquires the **Passion Destroy the razor's wielder and take it for my own (Vengeance) 4**. To date, the razor seems to be indestructible, though it is debatable how many of the object's owners have really wished to test that.

Emperor's Nightingale (Level 4 Relic)

Rumored to be an import from the Jade Empire, the Emperor's Nightingale is a thing of clockwork and gears that Lord Ember himself is said to have been unable to duplicate. Some scholars speculate that it is actually a Relic Artifact, and the gems cunningly worked into the metallic skeleton of the Nightingale lend credence to this theory.

Beauty is not the only thing for which the Nightingale is noted. When started with two points of Pathos and a spoken instruction, the Nightingale can find literally anything in the Underworld, be it a place, Artifact or wraith. So long as the target still exists, the Nightingale immediately flies to it once activated. Unless circumstance intervenes, the bird makes a steady pace allowing its owner to follow, but it never halts its flight. Once a wraith sets the Nightingale to hunt, she'd best be prepared to follow to the heart of the Labyrinth or the ends of the Underworld, as her hunting bird neither pauses nor rests.

Skin Artifacts

While not all Skin Artifacts have a shared origin, most possess a common source of forging material. The first Skin Artifact was created from the corpse of a gigantic Whistimmu, brought back by a detachment of Harbingers loyal to the Hierarchy. Charon decreed that the monster's remains be brought to Nhudri, in order to see what he might craft from them. To this day, many Artificers still recall Nhudri's wan face when he emerged from the forge, and how he claimed that the portions he forged seemed to take forms contrary to those his hammer would have dictated.

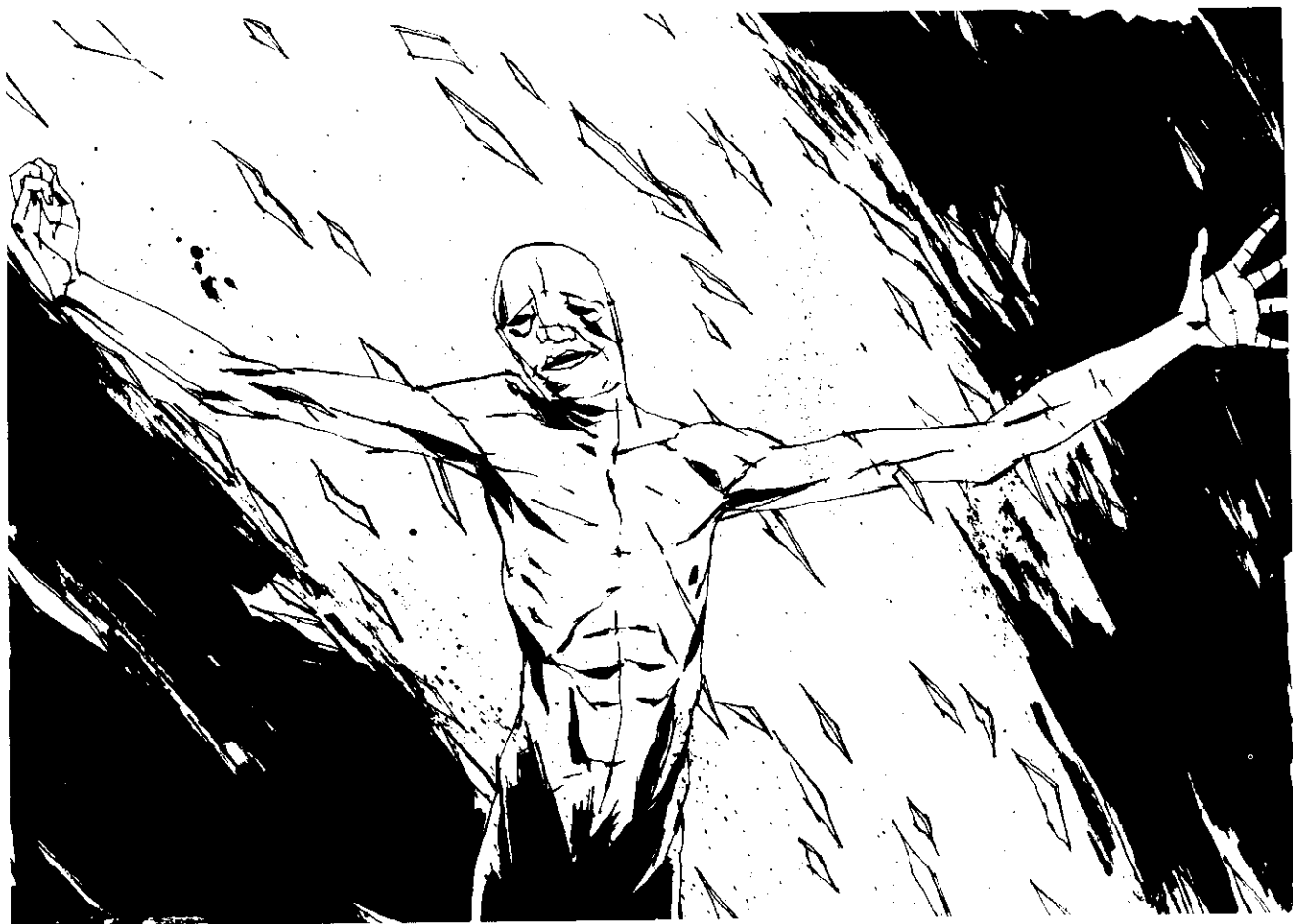
All Skin Artifacts require two Pathos a day in order to maintain their active status, otherwise they do not work for a full day and require four Pathos to be reactivated. Any botches rolled while using these dark items give the wraith a point of temporary Angst, and most Legionnaires don't like using Skin Artifacts for long. Among the more useful creations culled from the gigantic Plasmic were:

Bloodwebs (Level 2 Skin Artifact)

When the scavenged portions of the Plasmic Entity arrived before the Artificers, nothing was left to waste. This included the Bloodwebs, small nets created from its stripped veins and arteries. Blue-black in hue, the nets are designed to be thrown over a target (range 10 yards, difficulty 6), at which point they begin draining Pathos from the victim. A Bloodweb steals one point of Pathos for each turn that it remains on a wraith. Anyone hit with a Bloodweb must roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 5) in order to stay on her feet and another Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 7) in order to escape entanglement. Otherwise the target is trapped and is considered to be entangled in the Bloodweb beyond hope of freeing herself. A Bloodweb may store up to 10 points in Pathos before it stops draining a wraith, at which point it glows bright blue. When full, the Bloodweb will drop off of its victim and simply lay on the ground, pulsing. The 10 points of Pathos it contains can be scavenged by any wraith who chooses to suck on one of the web's veins, and the web will remain inert until its Pathos storage capacity is restored at least partially.

Wail Tongue (Level 4 Skin Artifact)

Wail Tongue is one of many slivers cut from the tongue of the fallen Plasmic, inlaid with Stygian steel. The placement of this Artifact is painful indeed, for it requires a wraith to place the Wail Tongue within his own mouth. At this point, the Artifact begins devouring the tongue of the wraith until it replaces it. This procedure costs the wraith two Corpus (which may be healed normally) and 3 points of temporary Angst, as well as changing the wraith's speech patterns permanently.



Fully operational Wail Tongues automatically grant their users the ability to use Crescendo (as in Keening ••••), as well as permitting them to speak with Spectres in such a manner that the Spectres will not immediately attack.

Guardian Orb (Level 5 Skin Artifact)

This beach ball-sized, milky-white eye (with optic nerve cord still attached) is set within a thin circular brace made of Stygian steel. A smaller ring (made from the same forged soul comprising the brace) is worn by the Orb's user, behind whom the Orb will bob and float in midair. Not only does the Orb permit its user to see behind himself, but it also will maneuver to intercept any projectile attacks on the wraith who controls it. Each Orb has a Corpus rating of 20, and it will place itself between its controller and harm (even bullets and other rapidly moving missile weapons) on a successful roll of its owner's Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty 7). The number of successes dictates how many attacks the Orb can intercept in that turn.

Spectre Artifacts

No Artificer, no matter how sadistic, could ever forge the dark fantasies and fetishes of a Spectre. However, Artificers and Masquers who succumb to their Shadows are capable of monstrous workings indeed, with their talents and experience driven by pure malice. Spectral Artifacts are created with one purpose in mind: pain. They are lovingly crafted to bring misery, and then turned loose on an unsuspecting Underworld.

Memory Net (Level 3 Spectre Artifact)

Spectres skilled in Tempest-Weaving can often pluck useful items from the endless storm, but even the best Spectral fishers have haphazard luck. The odds of success improve, though, when a Doppelganger out for an afternoon's fishing is armed with a Memory Net. Supposedly woven from the hair of a captured Angelic, a Memory Net is a web of shimmering golden beauty surmounting a hoop and rod of inhumanly long bone. Upon close examination, the rod bears re-



markable resemblance to the skeletal structure of a human arm, and twisted fingerbones make up the hoop from which the netting hangs. The diameter of the net's opening is three feet; nothing larger than this can be plucked from the Tempest's waves.

There are a grand total of 17 Memory Nets in existence, and all appear precisely identical. Oddly enough, individual Spectres never seem to retain possession of Memory Nets for very long. Whether by theft, gift or destruction, the Nets seem to pass from Shadow-eaten hand to Shadow-eaten hand at an alarming pace.

A Memory Net, when used properly, greatly increases a Spectre's chances of pulling a desired memory or item from the swirling tides of the Tempest. A Spectre sufficiently skilled in Tempest-Weaving has his difficulty on all Grasp the Passing (Tempest-Weaving ●●●●) rolls reduced by three when utilizing a Memory Net. Spectres without enough skill to Grasp the Passing, and those with no knowledge of Tempest-Weaving at all can still attempt to pull something useful from the seething chaos. By making a Wits + Awareness roll (difficulty 7), any Spectre with a Memory Net can attempt to duplicate

Grasp the Passing's effects and rescue something pertinent from the storm.

Wraiths attempting to use a Memory Net run a bit of a risk. They too can use a Net to withdraw useful items from the Tempest by rolling Wits + Awareness (difficulty 8). However, any Spectre seeing the Net will instantly recognize it for what it is and undoubtedly attempt to wrest it from its owner. Even worse, on a botch the wraith-gone-fishing will hook *something*, and be dragged down into the Tempest by whatever foul thing is caught in the Net.

Lucky's Mr. Bunny (Level 1 Spectre Relic)

This stuffed rabbit is deceiving, for it does not grow to monstrous proportions, sprout needle-sharp fangs or spew forth swarms of carnivorous insects. Instead, it harasses and ridicules opponents with verbal barbs and jabs. However, that's more than enough, and Mr. Bunny has driven many a wraith to distraction.

With the exception of the dialogue that he spews, Mr. Bunny is the cutest stuffed animal a child could ever hug. He

has huge cartoonish eyes, an ever-present smile (even when he insults someone), large floppy ears, a stuffed potbelly and soft fur. Mr. Bunny is also capable of walking around under his own power, which he will do to follow wraiths, and once he becomes attached to a Circle he will verbally harass its members to the best of his ability. The taunts themselves are occasionally amusing, usually grating, and never meant in jest, but they really serve one purpose: to get the wraiths to attack him.

As soon as a wraith gets incensed enough to attack the bunny, the real fun starts. The lightest blow to the rabbit will send his limbs flying as fake blood begins spurting out in timed intervals. In the background, little children can be heard crying for Mr. Bunny as he whimpers and looks at his "attacker" with huge, tear-filled eyes. Just before he dies, he says, "I'm sowwy..." then pitifully flops over and fades away. At this, the invisible children really start bawling. Most Shadows will have a field day with this sort of thing.

Maggot Revolver (Level 4 Spectre Souled Weapon)

The weapon's name is only as foul as its function. This handgun is a heavy revolver (Colt Anaconda, Difficulty 7, Range 35 yards, Rate 2, Angst cost of two per bullet, damage 6) with a bloodfire crystal affixed to the handle (10 Angst). Rather than shooting bullets, however, this weapon fires the revolting creations called Shadow Maggots. One Shadow Maggot is delivered as ordnance on each success on a damage roll, and the round after impact the Shadow Maggots begin boring into the target. This attack delivers an additional die of damage per Maggot present in the wraith's Corpus. In addition, the pain from each Maggot is excruciating enough to increase the difficulty of all of the victim's actions by + 1.

Burrowing Maggots can be removed either through Molate or simply by digging after the Maggots through their bore holes, though the latter process often wounds the victim further. Castigate ••• (Purify) can also be employed to kill one Maggot per success rolled, and this method won't cause the victimized wraith any further damage. Any wraith using the revolver gains a point of temporary Angst for every bullet fired.

Bean Nighe Caul (Level 4 Spectre Artifact)

Undeniably one of the more revolting Spectre Artifacts known to exist is a body suit christened the Bean Nighe Caul. Made solely from the tattered, stripped remains of various wraiths' faces, the Caul's components have been stretched

and frozen in silent anguish, then Molated together into a macabre suit. A Spectre possessing this Artifact must spend one Corpus a week feeding it, otherwise the suit feeds on itself until sated.

This hideous garment is a prized possession among Spectres and an anathema to wraiths for more reasons than just its appearance. The faces on the suit never stop crying or screaming in anguish. When used as an attack, the suit gives the user the equivalent of Keening •••• (Requiem). Furthermore, while wearing the Caul, a Spectre can see in a 360° arc, making it impossible to sneak up on him. He may also draw upon the memories, emotions and skills of the various wraiths who now comprise the suit for the duration of one scene (Subterfuge + Charisma, difficulty 7, costs 2 points of Angst). A success indicates that the Spectre may now recall a mask's memory or call up a mask's emotion (useful for feeding the Dark Passions of nearby wraiths), use a skill not readily available to him (excluding Arcanoi) or augment his own related skills by one die for every success made.

Any wraith trying to don the Bean Nighe Caul cannot use its abilities, is hampered from using his own Arcanoi (all difficulties increase by + 3) and loses one point of Corpus per turn. Spectres often enjoy watching a bound wraith be devoured by a Caul, making bets as to how long it will take the wraith to disincorporate.

Arcanoi and the World of Darkness



Is there anything your phantomhood would like to know about our armament?

— Oliver Onions, "Phantas"

Arcanoi can affect more than just the Restless Dead. Some have the power to punch through into the Skinlands and have tremendous impact on things — or people — there. Nor are the Awakened dwellers in the World of Darkness immune to the powers of wraiths. While most wraiths (not to mention most vampires, werewolves, mages and changelings) are blissfully unaware of the powers that can be levied from the Shadowlands, some Restless are quite aware of what they're capable of and what they can do. Some cut deals with other Awakened beings, others go hunting.

Argos

Most uses of this Arcanos are restricted to the Underworld. Embodied wraiths can use Enshroud, but cannot wrap others in those same shadows.

Castigate

Dwellers in the Skinlands for the most part don't have Shadows, and an Arcanos that deals exclusively with taming the personified dark side has little use among the living.

Embody

Embody, to quote one Proctor, is all about the Skinlands. When Embodied, a wraith can be affected by other Awakened beings. This includes being Dominated by vampires, being affected by most Spheres of magick, and being caught up in changeling cantrips. All of these will work on an Embodied wraith in the same way they might a normal human being.

Fatalism

Both Interpretation and Kismet can be used on dwellers in the Skinlands. While the readings an Oracle will get on something out of the Underworld will be more vague and less coherent than those obtained on other wraiths, they will still be useful. This effect can be counteracted by the use of Embody.

Fatal Vision can be used on the living and Kindred alike, but the information it yields tends to be of limited usefulness. Attempting Fatal Vision on Garou, mages and changelings, all of whom have been known to reincarnate, can produce some interesting effects, and wraiths who have been too successful with that art have gotten backward flashes to their target's other existences.

Fatal Vision and vampires can be an equally problematic combination. As each vampire has technically already died, occasionally Fatal Vision will show an inquisitive Oracle how the vampire's mortal life ended. In these instances, the method in which the vampire's first death occurred will inevitably have some connection to the details of his Final Death.

Inhabit

Of particular amusement to wraiths who practice Inhabit are the cybernetically enhanced servants of Iteration X. While the Shroud rating in the systems is usually high (even taking into account the reductive effect the cyborg has), cybernetic systems can be Gremlinized, Surged or otherwise mucked with just as any other computer can. As the Technocracy is generally unfamiliar with matters of Spirit (with the exception of certain Void Engineer ghost-chasing teams), Artificers who

are so inclined can often wreak havoc with most Technocratic systems.

Virtual Adepts, on the other hand, have better defenses and more respect for wraiths. Any Virtual Adept with a Spirit rating of at least 2 can generally construct an effective defense (difficulty 8 to crash) against Artificers cruising the electron superhighway. For an enterprising Netrunner to Gremlinize or Shellride such a defended system, it will take a roll of Wits + Inhabit (difficulty 8) to get past the fences.


Sons of Ether present an entirely different problem, as their systems do not conform to the more-or-less commonly agreed upon laws of physics. Any wraith attempting to Gremlinize or Shellride a device put together by a Son of Ether must roll Intelligence (difficulty 7) or be trapped inside the system's weird workings for up to a day. Some Etherites have even gone so far as to create "ghost traps" for overly inquisitive Artificers, trapping the intruding wraiths in Moebius loops of circuitry from which only the mage can free them.

Up, Up and Online

Various Awakened beings maintain online environments in the World of Darkness, with the two best-known ones being the Malkavian Madness Network and the Digital Web. While no one has ever brought back evidence of having accessed either of these domains, plenty of Artificers claim to have done so. Whether or not they've succeeded is still a matter of conjecture, and for every bit of "proof" that an Artificer offers that he has in fact visited the Digital Web, there is a logical refutation. Some wraiths have brought back very detailed descriptions of the infamous Spy's Demise, but their detractors claim that they've simply accessed Virtual Adept systems and downloaded the information. Still, the controversy keeps many late-night Artificer bull sessions going, and "Gone Fishing" is Artificer slang for someone who's gone looking for the other Nets.

Keening

Those Storytellers using werewolves in their chronicles, particularly in conjunction with the Werewolf: The Apocalypse rules, may allow Keening to affect a Garou's Rage. If so, then Dirge may be used to steal Rage points (at difficulty 9,



one per success), and Ballad to add Rage (also difficulty 9, one per success). Some Chanteurs have been known to befriend those of the Silent Strider tribe, singing battle fervor into their allies' hearts in exchange for help in the mortal world. The unfortunate side effect is that the Garou thus affected are more subject to frenzy, but such is the power of art.

Keening can also affect other Awakened beings. At Storyteller discretion, an Embodied wraith can spend a Willpower point while using Requiem and force a vampire either into or out of frenzy. This assault can be resisted with a Willpower roll, but only if the object of the Requiem is prepared for it. Otherwise, no resistance roll is possible.

Changelings can also be strongly affected by Keening. If the changeling in question can see a Chanteur, the wraith need not even Embody to work his magic. Keenings of sufficient beauty (usually Requiems, but occasionally Ballads as well) can infuse up to a point of Glamour per success. Many changelings will also cut deals with Chanteurs, dealing with mortal matters for the wraiths in exchange for uses of Muse on favorite artists.

As noted in **Wraith: The Oblivion**, Crescendo can be used as a physical attack by Embodied Chanteurs.

Lifeweb

Of all of the Lifeweb arts, only Soul Pact has much of an effect on dwellers in the Skinlands. Most Monitors will refuse to make Soul Pacts with Awakened beings, as the incessant violence of the World of Darkness makes acquiring such Fetters risky at best. Very few mages, vampires, werewolves or changelings are interested in such a pact, either, as most have no wish to have their cycle through the Great Wheel of Existence temporarily halted by a sojourn as a wraith.

Moliate

The arts of Moliate only work on the Restless Dead. A Masquer, even an Embodied one, cannot work with flesh the way she works with plasm. Even so simple an art as Glow only effects the stuff that makes up ghosts, not the tissue of the living or unliving.

Outrage

For the most part, this Arcanos is a strictly physical interaction with the living world. A Stonehand Punch is exactly that; it can be countered, blocked or dodged (if the target knows it's coming) just like a normal, physical strike.

The art Obliviate (•••••) also works normally on supernatural beings. It does not matter if the target is a mage, changeling, werewolf or vampire. The Arcanos functions as it would on a normal human being. A very few Dreamspeaker mages have been experimenting with ways to counter Obliviate with Life magicks, but as of yet there is no rote for doing so.

As for the effects of Death's Touch, while Spooks can use this art to set fires, they cannot use it to set living creatures or vampires ablaze. Fetish necklaces, garments, the contents of pockets — all of these can be ignited. However, the actual flesh of an animate being, living or dead, cannot be torched, no matter how talented the Spook attempting to do so.

Pandemonium

Pandemonium is another Arcanos whose function is primarily directed toward the Skinlands. Most of its effects are physical ones (unearthly glows, rains of frogs and blood, and other such paranormal phenomena), and as such can be dealt with by Awakened beings on a purely physical level. While attacks can be generated through the use of Foul Humour (•••••), the materials created for this purpose (acids, for example) must be both relatively simple and common in composition. While the components of a strong acid can be pulled from the very air, a Haunter using Foul Humour could not attempt to manifest, for example, silver or garlic. Furthermore, any dead organic matter created will be similar in composition to human flesh and/or blood — it is impossible for a Haunter to create raw steak, for example, and any meat created in this way will be utterly unpalatable to Garou. Likewise, any blood made by Foul Humour will be revolting to a vampire — clotted, foul and generally nasty, much like what a Risen would have in her veins. As for the creation of living creatures, for some unknown reason only those animals defined as vermin can be generated by this art. Circling gnats or mosquitoes can be created, but killer bees primed for the attack cannot.

Tempus Fugit (•••••) can conflict with the uses of Celerity, Rage, Time magicks and the little-understood Temporis Discipline. A vampire or werewolf using Celerity or Rage cannot garner additional actions from being influenced by Tempus Fugit, but can have actions removed by the dilatory effects of the art. Either Time or Correspondence level three will serve to counteract this art, but only once the mage becomes aware of what is going on. As for Temporis, current theory is that successful use of Frozen Object will counteract the effects of Tempus Fugit. There has been one verified example of this nullifying usage, but as there are so few practitioners of Temporis, it is believed that literally decades can go by without the two abilities coming into conflict.

Phantasm

Sandmen are among the most active wraiths in dealing with the Awakened populace. Whether it's slipping old souls into new bodies for the Progenitors or communing with Silent Striders and Dreamspeaker mages, Sandmen are frequent violators of the *Dictum Mortuum* when it comes to their supernatural neighbors.

Phantasm works on vampires *et alia* precisely as it does on regular mortals. Vampiric souls and Garou consciousnesses can be pulled into Pageants as easily as those of accountants or bank managers. However, an Awakened being is likely to recognize what is going on, and will be able to act accordingly.

Visiting Dreamscapes

When pulled into the dream theatre of Sandmen, Awakened beings have access to various levels of their innate abilities. As it is only the soul, and not the body that is being pulled into the Underworld, the spirits of vampires abducted by Sandmen have no access to their Disciplines for so long as the Dream Pageant lasts. Most Garou do have access to their spiritual and mental-based Gifts (Storyteller discretion) while pulled into the Dreamscapes. Thus, Aura of Confidence would still be available to a dreamnapped Garou, while Silver Claws would not. Mages would have access to their Spheres, but the usage of such would be limited by the normal conditions of the Underworld. Dreamspeaker mages in particular are adept at adapting to the peculiar circumstances of Dreamscapes and adjusting their magicks for maximum effect. Changelings fare best of all Awakened in Dreamscapes, being able to perform pretty much their entire gamut of cantrips and bearing their chimera with them.

Puppetry

No denizen of the World of Darkness is immune to the Puppeteers' wiles. All Puppetry arts, up to and including Obliterate the Soul, can be used on Awakened beings. However, unlike normal humans, Garou and the like can fight back. If an Awakened being is aware that she is being meddled with, she can spend a Willpower point and make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to counteract the effects of the Puppetry art being utilized. Certain arts, like Skinride, Sudden Movement and Master's Voice are almost impossible to anticipate, and thus can only rarely be blocked through the exercise of will. On the other hand, repeated assaults from arts like Rein in the Mind can be countered.

The confluence of Dominate and Puppetry can provide for interesting conflicts. In instances when a wraith is attempting to use Puppetry on a Dominated individual, the control-

ling vampire and the Puppeteer make a contested Willpower roll. This sort of conflict arises only when the Dominate that the Puppeteer is attempting to counteract is a directly controlling order; mortals under long-term vampiric conditioning can be used by Puppeteers for short-term projects.

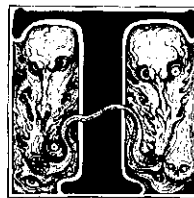
Humans under the influence of Presence can be subverted by means of Puppetry without any conflict between Discipline and Arcanos.

Usury

A wraith can use Usury on a supernatural being just as she would on a mortal. She can thus steal Health Levels from vampires, werewolves, mages and changelings. At the Storyteller's discretion, the wraith may steal other forms of energy from these beings. This sort of attempt is always at a higher difficulty, usually 3 above the norm (maximum difficulty of 10).

At the Storyteller's discretion, a Usurer may rob a vampire of Blood Points (the energy in the blood, not the physical blood itself), a werewolf of Gnosis, a mage of Quintessence, or a changeling of Glamour. Of course, the wraith must first identify his victim as supernatural, and many of these beings can retaliate. A Usurer may also feed his subject's energies (for example, with Charitable Trust). Such uses of Usury can lead to interesting relations between Awakened beings, as wraiths with a knowledge of Usury can be potent allies — or dangerous enemies.

FAQ



This is a list of frequently asked questions concerning **Wraith: The Oblivion**. It is by no means comprehensive, but covers the most commonly asked questions. As always, a Storyteller should feel free to modify or ignore any ruling given below if she finds it unsuitable for her chronicle.

When my wraith talks to his Shadow, can other wraiths hear it?

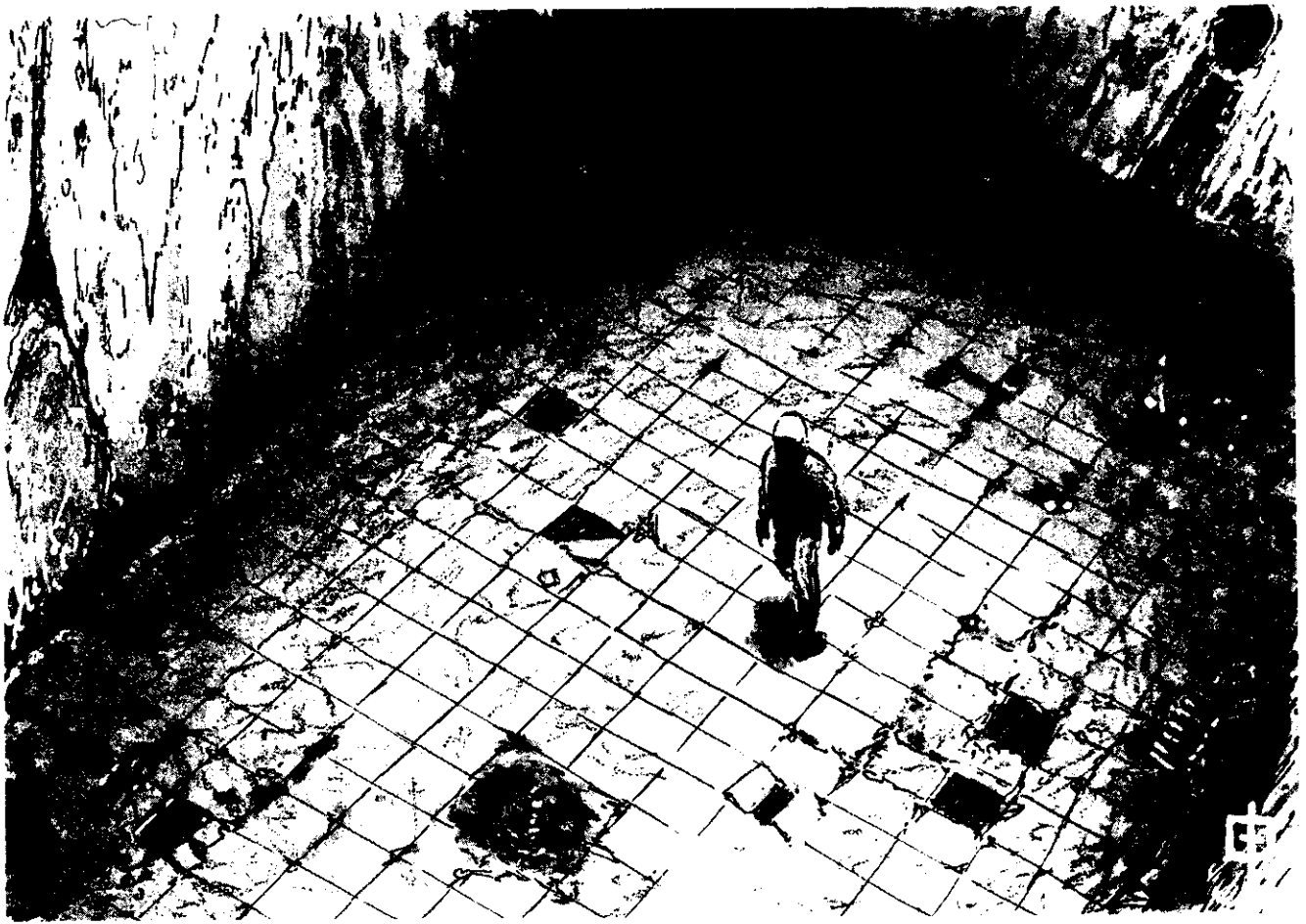
No, that conversation is strictly internal.

How about when Spectres talk to Shadows? Can that be heard by others?

Nope. Again, that conversation is entirely telepathic. For more information, see the Dark Arcanos Contaminate in **Dark Reflections: Spectres**.

How can I tell if my Shadowguide is playing my Shadow or her own character?

Suggested ways for differentiating between Shadow and character include having the Shadowguide wear a black domino mask when playing the Shadow, using a different voice for the Shadow, or whispering to portray the Shadow's voice.



The best method is simply to arrange an agreed-upon method of Shadow identification before each session starts.

Shadows now get experience. Who spends it?

The Psyche's player does, though input from Shadowguide and Storyteller is recommended.

I've got enough Shadow experience to buy my permanent Angst up to 10? What happens now?

In a perfect world, you spend your Shadow experience on something else. Permanent Angst should not be purchased above permanent Willpower with Shadow experience. Why would you want to turn your character into a Spectre, anyway?

My wraith has just been turned into a Spectre. Can I keep playing her?

Sure, though Doppelgangers are a lot easier to pull off than Shades or Nephwracks. If your Circle will accept your explanation for having vanished into the Tempest for an indeterminate time and is willing to welcome you back, go for it.

One of my Fetters was destroyed. Can I keep its relic as a Fetter?

Certainly not. Fetters must be physical objects (people, places or things) in the Skinlands. Underworld objects and denizens cannot be Fetters.

What if a Silent Strider werewolf picks up my Fetter and carries it into the Dark Umbra? Is it still a Fetter?

Yes, because it's crossed into the Underworld physically as opposed to by means of being destroyed. However, this sort of situation is extremely rare.

Can I have Passions centered around the Underworld?

Most certainly. Most older wraiths have Passions devoted almost exclusively to the Shadowlands and Tempest, and few or none dealing with the living.

How fast can a wraith move when using Ride the Electron Highway (Inhabit ••), and can she take along passengers?

Wraiths moving through electronic equipment move at the speed of thought, which is pretty fast indeed. This sort of ease of movement has led to many Artificers abandoning the



Tempest as a method of travel between Skinlands points, as moving through circuits is as fast and often safer. However, it's hard to select where you're going, it's very easy to make wrong turns, and competing for space with data packets can get dangerous. Furthermore, wraiths traveling the Electron Highway cannot take passengers with them, limiting the art's use as a method of basic transportation.

What does the inside of the Electron Highway look like, anyway?

The entire system is representational, and what it looks like pretty much depends on what each individual wraith moving around inside is looking to see.

What other Awakened beings am I likely to see in the Underworld?

Not many of any stripe, but the most frequent visitors are Silent Strider Garou, and Euthanatos and Dreamspeaker mages. Void Engineers are occasional visitors.

What about Giovanni vampires?

Even if they could travel to the Shadowlands, the masters of Necromancy would know better than to meet wraiths on their home territory.

How is Stygia now governed?

The Deathlords of seven of the Legions now rule the Dark Kingdom of Iron in a sort of semi-feudal oligarchy. The Ladies of Fate, servitors of the one true Lady of Fate, command their own Legion but usually do not dabble in Stygian politics.

So who's really in charge?

That would be telling....

Where are the various Dark Kingdoms located in relation to one another?

The true heart of each Dark Kingdom is tucked away in an oasis of safety inside the Tempest, separated from all of the other Deadlands. However, each realm's Shadowlands occupy the same physical space as their Skinlands counterparts. Technically, a wraith could walk from a Stygian Necropolis to the Bush of Ghosts or the Yellow Springs.

Who controls the Shadowlands of the Middle East?

Stygian Legions followed Rome 2000 years ago, and they haven't relinquished control yet. That doesn't mean that the local spirits are happy about it.

One of my Fetters is a human being, and I know he's going to die some day. If I get him ghoulled or Embraced, do I lose him as a Fetter?

You definitely wouldn't if he were simply turned into a ghoul. A Fetter turned into a vampire is more problematical, as the human being technically dies in order to receive the Embrace. In that instant, the Fetter is lost but can later be reattached through Lifeweb (after the Harrowing, of course).

I've got two Passions tied up in the same core emotion. Do I roll for both if I'm in the presence of that emotion?

Yes, though it's recommended that you not double up on emotions with Passions. You can even find yourself rolling for a Passion and a Dark Passion simultaneously.

Can I convert 1 point of permanent Angst into 10 points of temporary?

Yes, but that sort of defeats the purpose of the exercise.

If my wraith gets pulled into a Sandman's Dream Pageant, can he still use his Arcanoi?

Within the bounds of the shared dream, most certainly.

So what's so bad about being a Spectre, anyway?

Other than constant agony and the likelihood of being devoured by one of your own allies, not much. Did I mention the incessant suicide charges?

What happens to a wraith caught outside in a Maelstrom?

Lucky ones are simply whirled off to the Tempest. Unlucky ones fall prey to the Spectres riding the storm winds, or have their Corpora abraded away by the sheer force of the wind.

Okay, so my wraith is about to be captured by a bunch of slavers and sold off to the local Artificer. Why not just have my character dump himself into a Harrowing to avoid escape?

In the short term, this is a good plan. On the other hand, what if the slavers have someone skilled in Lifeweb with them? They'll just be waiting at his Fetters if/when he emerges from the Harrowing, tired and depleted.

My vampire/mage/changeling/Garou character just died. Can I bring her back as a wraith?

Any vampire who is not diablerized and who did not reach Golconda before Final Death can become a wraith. Most Garou are reincarnated as opposed to becoming wraiths, but certain werewolves with a Wurm taint on them can become Restless Dead. Any sort of mage can become a wraith, though

she won't bring her Avatar across the Shroud. Only changelings killed by cold iron can become wraiths.

Will my vampire still have all of his Disciplines once he becomes a wraith?

No. Any Awakened being of any type who becomes a wraith starts out as a basic wraith — no Disciplines, no Spheres, no rotes, no Gifts, cantrips or anything else. Most formerly powerful wraiths take a while to adjust to the Underworld ("You mean I can't throw fireballs anymore?"), and for some, that adjustment period is too long. Also, a great many Awakened beings have racked up quite a few enemies before crossing the Shroud, and some of those enemies are certain to be waiting for them, with the benefit of years of wraithly experience and the shoe planted firmly on the other foot.

As with other wraiths, an Awakened being's ghost's appearance will depend on how she viewed herself. A Garou could conceivably become a Crinos-formed wraith, but she would only have the shape, not the additional strength that Crinos form bestows upon the living.

What about that city of vampires that's supposedly in the Underworld? Can't those vampires use their Disciplines?

Awakened beings that are physically transported into the Underworld can still use their natural (or unnatural) abilities. As for the City of Enoch, those few wraiths who have heard of it alternately claim that it has its own island in the Tempest *a la* Stygia, or that it's one of the less popular Far Shores.

My wraith was French. One of my Circlemates was American and another was German. How can we talk to each other?

The language of death is universal. All of the wraiths from a particular paradigm can converse, while their Linguistics ratings determines how well they can understand the languages of the Skinlands.



Storytelling

*Where's the Poet? show him! show him,
Muses nine! that I may know him!*
— John Keats, "The Poet (A Fragment)"



This chapter contains hints for Storytellers running Harrowings, in particular a series of sample Harrowings that they can work with for their chronicles. Also included is more information on the Far Shores, as well as detailed descriptions of other antagonists wraiths might come across.

Sample Harrowings



Ideally, every Harrowing will be unique, drawn from the experiences, Passions and Fetters of the wraith or wraiths undergoing the Harrowing. Generic or standard Harrowings run the risk of becoming predictable, affording little challenge to the Harrowed wraith. On the other hand, it can become difficult constantly coming up with new and different Harrowings on the spot that are both effective and well-constructed.

Harrowings that are impossible to escape, no matter how atmospheric or terrifying, are worse than useless in game terms. On the other hand, Harrowings that are too easy are also pointless, and may well lead to wraiths choosing to go through a Harrowing to escape an unpleasant situation. This produces situations where Harrowings lose their impact from over-familiarity. When Harrowings inspire ennui or the contempt bred of familiarity, then they aren't serving their function either in or out of game. Harrowings should be frightening, difficult and rare. Should any of these three elements be lacking, the results can be disastrous.

One possibility for avoiding this sort of situation is to set up potential Harrowing plots in advance of the session, tailoring them to the individual wraith Harrowed but otherwise having up to three Harrowings prepared per gaming session. Another option is to assign each Shadowguide the task of coming up with an appropriate Harrowing for her Psyche; this way the Harrowing is prepared by someone who knows the Harrowed wraith best.

What follows are suggestions, basic plot outlines and potential escape conditions for some common types of



Harrowings. Storytellers are free to use, modify or ignore these as they wish.

- **Rescue Me** — One of the old standbys, the rescue Harrowing involves forcing the Harrowed wraith to rescue a loved one, usually from her living days, from the grip of unimaginable peril (tied to train tracks, menaced by Spectres, etc.). In its most straightforward adaptation, the wraith moves from rescue attempt to rescue attempt, with each effort ending in failure and landing the “kidnap victim” (usually a Moliated Spectre, but on rare occasions the actual wraith of the target’s loved one) in even greater danger. The best escape from this sort of Harrowing is for the wraith to accept that she cannot win and, as difficult as it may be, she has to accept fate. Other variations call for the wraith to sacrifice herself for the sake of the hostage, but this sort of Harrowing is not about triumph. It’s about acceptance.

- **Wilderness of Mirrors** — The mirror is a favorite psychological image. A funhouse maze, where every pane shows either a distorted image of the Harrowed wraith or one of his enemies, can make for a powerful Harrowing. Voices coming from everywhere and nowhere, a seemingly infinite supply of mocking faces, reflections that move when the wraith does not — all of these offer tremendous horrific potential.

Mirror-maze Harrowings can be resolved in a variety of different ways. Not recommended is the solution when the wraith simply smashes every mirror in sight. Instead, he might choose to walk into the mirror and join with his distorted image, gaining a measure of self-acceptance. Another option might be for the wraith to find the center of the maze and rest there, dwelling at the heart of all of the images of his self and encompassing all of them. A third idea could have the wraith following the trail of the most horribly distorted reflections, descending into the heart of his own darkness and escaping out the other side.

- **The Missing Hammer** — Try as they might, most Wraith players find it impossible not to realize that they are in a Harrowing and alter their play style accordingly. With that in mind, the “missing hammer” technique often works well as a method of keeping players’ attention thoroughly in-game.

With the knowledge that she is in a Harrowing, a wraith player instantly starts assuming the worst. What’s more, she instantly starts looking for it. If disaster is not immediately forthcoming (the setting is pleasant, the disguised Spectres are friendly, there’s no immediate evidence of torture or other unpleasantness), the wraith will seek it in every innocent phrase and action, looking for what she feels to be the inevitable hidden trap. Within a few short minutes, the wraith can make her own hell, as the Spectres simply act politely and watch the wraith drive herself into a frenzy of paranoia.

This sort of Harrowing can be difficult to pull off, and should only be used as a contrast to more standard psychodramas. The lesson to be learned here is that it is all right to

accept good things when they come to you, and that if you look too hard for Hell you just might find it. Wraiths who can actually accept what's going on with a minimum of fuss (there's a difference between acceptance and blind naiveté, after all) should be considered to have roleplayed their way from the Harrowing.

- **Darkness Rising** — Through the use of the Dark Arcanos Contaminate, a Spectre can easily take the part of a wraith's Shadow. Bringing a character face to face with his own dark half, someone who can match his every move and unveil his every secret, can be extremely unsettling. If the other Spectres in the Harrowing are portraying twisted versions of the rest of the wraith's Circle, mocking and mutating familiar mannerisms, the situation can get terrifying. How much of what the Shadow is revealing is being told to the characters and not to other Spectres? How can a wraith defeat his own dark side? This sort of Harrowing can also be done for suspense value, with the wraith and his Shadow trapped in a maze or on a desert island, engaged in some sort of contest. A variation on "The Most Dangerous Game" can work well, as can gruesome variations on tag.

Again, self-acceptance is a good key to this kind of Harrowing. A wraith who can embrace his alter ego, no matter how loathsome it might be, and who can integrate it into his own personality, should be able to escape this Harrowing. Other methods of escape could come from either defeating or escaping the Shadow. On the other hand, acceptance is not the same thing as surrender, and any wraith who simply gives in to his Shadow's blandishments should be considered to have failed the Harrowing (a roll should still be allowed, but the difficulty should be adjusted upward at Storyteller discretion).

- **Misplaced Childhood's End** — Among the most terrifying things imaginable is innocence gone wrong. When the icons of childhood — stuffed animals, friendly parental faces, familiar homesteads — suddenly reveal menace, the impact can be devastating. Returning a wraith to a childhood setting, such as her room in her parents' house *circa* her seventh birthday, and then having evil crawl out of the woodwork is an effective Harrowing technique. Finding horror in place of safety, and having the images the character most associates with safety taken away from her can really unsettle the underpinnings of a wraith's world. The Freudian parent-monster images can also come into play in this flavor of Harrowing; the father-monster is a particularly effective tool.

Conversely, the idea of the Harrowing (from the Spectral perspective) could be to get the wraith to sink back into her childhood, giving up the fight against Oblivion and surrendering. For a superb example of this sort of Harrowing, see the film *Labyrinth*TM, in particular the sequence when Sarah runs across the junkwoman.

Putting aside the things of childhood and accepting adult responsibilities is the way out of this type of Harrowing. A demonic teddy bear who'll rend his owner's flesh rather than





let her go is in a way serving for the demands that childish things make of adult minds, and how they must be put aside for any growth to occur.

• **I Want Your...** — Psychosexual imagery can be extraordinarily horrifying, and should be employed with care. If players are mature enough to deal with the subject matter, a Harrowing cast around sexuality gone wrong can work very well. If the players aren't sufficiently mature, however, the situation can bog down in bathroom humor and lose whatever impact it might once have had.

On the other hand, the perils of sexuality provide rich source material for Harrowings. Seductions turned predatory, obsessive behaviors, sado-masochistic impulses taken too far, the commingling of pleasure and pain and even such delicate topics as castration imagery are all suitable plot paths for psychosexual Harrowings to follow.

Harrowings with a sexual base can be among the most delicate and individual. While there should be no easy out from this sort of Harrowing, mature behavior and an acceptance of the subject material should go a long way toward helping the imprisoned wraith find a way out.

• **After the War** — Harrowings can have elaborate settings, including faux Maelstroms. This sort of Harrowing gives the impression that, rather than being pulled into a Harrowing, the wraith has instead been caught in the Sixth Great Maelstrom. Helpless, he'll watch as the Spectral hordes descend on Stygia (or his home Necropolis), laying waste to all. Desolation and ruin will be the rule of the day, with Doppelgangers frolicking in the stacks of the Great Library and Shades tearing down the bridges to the Iron Hills. The war with Oblivion will be over, and Stygia will have lost.

Then the Harrowing will begin.

The trick here is to see what the wraith will do after all hope would appear to be lost. Will he surrender and join the occupying forces, fight a hopeless battle for vengeance's sake, or attempt to build something from the ruins? Spectres portraying looters, survivors and Enthralled wraiths will give the Harrowing victim something to work against, but the choices to be made here are more difficult than most. It is important for the Harrowed wraith to maintain hope and not succumb to despair or rage. Suicidal attacks on Spectres are as inappropriate as joining the Shadow-eaten at their play.

• **Burned Bridges** — All of us make choices we regret in life, leaving behind friends or loved ones. Whether or not we miss the friendships, romances and other forms of human contact we pass by is irrelevant, as no matter what some relationships simply fall by the wayside. The regrets and unfinished business of such frayed attachments are good raw Harrowing material. Confronting a wraith with everyone he's left behind or climbed over to achieve anything can tie him in knots, never allowing him to see past the immediate confrontation to the greater scheme of the Harrowing. A Greek chorus of Spectres masquerading as old lovers, bosses, friends and so

on, each bringing up a perceived betrayal or loose end, ("I gave you your first break, and how did you repay me?" "That was our idea you sold as your own, you bastard!" and so on) can drown a wraith in echoing recriminations from long ago. It doesn't even matter if the accusations are true to the character history; the senses of hurt, betrayal and vengeance are what matters.

Nor does the setting for this sort of Harrowing need to be consistent. It can flash from home to office to dorm to board room to beach to wherever is appropriate for the character speaking at the time. The more backdrops that flash in and out, the more unsettling the effect. This particularly holds true if the backgrounds are subtly twisted versions of settings associated with the roster of personae the Spectres are adopting.

Harrowings like this are often effective when used to Harrow wraiths on the verge of losing Passions or especially Fetters. The motif of this sort of trial is that certain things have to be written off and let go — much like the notion of Resolving Passions or Fetters. Wraiths who dwell on (and try to justify) every decision they have made will not do well in this sort of Harrowing. Those with broader perspectives on the limits of what one can do for others will tend to handle this sort of situation with more ease.

• **Holding Back the Years** — Also appropriate for wraiths struggling against losing a Fetter is this type of Harrowing. One of the most difficult aspects of wraithly existence is maintaining one's self while watching loved ones grow old, die, or simply move on with their lives. A husband watching his widow take a new spouse, a mother watching her memory fade into, "You never met your grandma, but..." — these can wound a wraith more deeply than Shade teeth and claws.

Imagine, then, the effect of compressing all of that slow agony and change into the space of a Harrowing. Even worse, what if the Spectres lie? The wraith isn't missed by her family. They're better off and happier without her. Her death was the best thing that ever happened to them... and so on. Particularly if the Spectres acting out the parts of the wraith's loved ones ignore her, going about their fictional daily business without so much as a glance at her picture (undusted at the edge of the mantelpiece), a wraith can be stonewalled by silence into frustrated action and failing her Harrowing.

On the other hand, the Spectres might take the opposite tack, showing the wraith's family in utter misery since her death. Destitute, cold and loveless without her, they curse the day that she died and make her realize her impotence to help them. Of course, the Spectres will attempt to twist matters so that the wraith perceives her loved ones' sorrow as being completely her fault. If the wraith is foolish enough to take this notion to heart, things will fall apart rapidly from there.

In either case, the idea here is for the wraith to come to grips with accepting what is, or what might be. While a wraith



can affect her loved ones' destiny to a certain extent from beyond the Shroud, there comes a time when she must realize that their destinies are their own. Again, this sort of acceptance harkens back to Resolving Fetters, self-knowledge and eventually to Transcendence.

• **War Without End** — On the opposite end of the Harrowing scale from the purely cerebral is the visceral approach of this type of assault. Merely wave after wave of Spectres throwing themselves at the Harrowed wraith, Harrowings of this type have the advantage of inducing despair without requiring extensive preparation. Endless attacks without rhyme or reason, not giving the victim a chance to think or recharge, can lead to surrender or hopelessness. After all, no matter how many assaults the wraith repels, there's always another one coming....

This sort of Harrowing also works well when set among the tunnels of the Labyrinth in a sort of "bug hunt" scenario. The trick is, of course, that the Harrowed wraith is the "bug," with the Spectres serving as the hunters. Herding their prey down Labyrinthine corridors and stepping up their attacks at opportune moments, the Spectres can easily induce paranoia, fear and even despair in the character they are chasing.

If the Harrowed wraith plays the game according to the Spectres' rules (meeting violence with violence, continuing to flee mindlessly when it's already been demonstrated that there's no escape), then he's bought into the Spectral paradigm for the duration of the Harrowing and probably won't be able to discover a way out on his own. On the other hand, if the wraith somehow manages to turn the tables and change the situation, then he's on the path to escape.

Come in, come in! I'm flattered that you would ask me, a humble Masquer, and not even a Master, about such weighty matters. But yes, I have studied the deathmark in more depth than some of my peers. After all, who better to ask than a Masquer concerning questions of appearance?

I've seen all variety of deathmarks since I started here, and I've been at this for ages, dearie! There seems to be eight, maybe nine, different marks, none of them quite the same way twice. Mostly they're used like markers, like you see cows with a brand on them? Same thing, really. Deathlords marking their territory and all that. Some Masquer, probably gone to Oblivion by now, decided to spruce it up a bit so we didn't look like somebody's dairy herd, and here we are.

The painted ones look like graffiti sometimes, all different colors and patterns. I had some poor girl come in with this strange swirl in Day-Glo green on her arms, which she said the Laughing Lady put on her. Couldn't even find the original mark. I felt sorry for her, so I did her up cheap — toned it down, put a few flowers so it looked like a virg, prettied it up. I keep telling these people — If you're going to go with the painted look, K-I-S-S! Yes, that's "Keep it simple, stupid!" Just to start with, and for Heaven's sake, try to have a color scheme! There's nothing more distracting than someone who can't pick color for squat having themselves done up with dots, or dingbats, or Charon forbid, plaid!

The carved ones — now there's a story! Some of them look like some butcher just started sawing through the damn Caul, which means we pick up the pieces. Then there's the strange types, the ones that look like they were there from the breathing days. Set in stone, I call them, which is about what they look like. Speaking of stone, are you familiar with Mr. Zog? If you want a sample of my quality, just look him up. The original mark is in the middle of his chest, that funny star for the Smiling Lord. The rest is mine. Notre Dame was my main inspiration. The crest was difficult, but I'm so proud of it.

Nowadays, aesthetic is the thing, which means busy days for us. The fellow you passed coming in, he's pricing for a set of exposed ribs. Skeletal Lord, as if you couldn't tell. There's some who are so covered and changed that their own mothers wouldn't recognize them, but you know exactly whose flag they're flying. I've got one lady, 70-something when she came over, and there's not a speck of color on her, not even her eyes. Everything's ash-gray, just like you know, who. I heard that her husband passed her up on the street, thought she was some stranger hanging on his coattails until she got mad at him. It's work for me, whatever, but even I've got limits. If you can't tell what you're looking at beyond who signs their paycheck, then someone needs help.

Now you, dear, I've been looking at that little green symbol on your forehead. Emerald Lord, right? I've been thinking ever since you came in — maybe a little bit to frame your face, highlight your eyes? I'd just bring this green running vine around your sockets, across the bridge of your nose, add a little décoration — voila! Masks are so very stylish these days. Here, let me show you. Now hold still — getting started can be a little tricky....

— Zillah Riazi, Masquer for the Painted Pigeon Parlor

Other Antagonists

Angelics and Demonic



o other dwellers in the Tempest, not even the mysterious Mourners, attract as much speculation from wraiths as the aptly named Angelics and Demonic. Appearing as the icon figures of good and evil from Western religious thought, these storm-riders are largely a mystery to the wraith population at large. However, tales of encounters with Angelics and Demonic are common fare in many Haunts, and a wraith with a good story to trade of meeting an Angelic in the Tempest will never find himself lacking for shelter.

Very little is known concretely about these beings, but among the known facts are:

- Angelics and Demonic are neither angels nor demons, but more akin to beings like the Legendaries.
- Most Angelics and Demonic honestly believe that they are angels or demons, and act accordingly. It is extraordinarily dangerous to attempt to convince one of these beings otherwise, and when dealing with one it is usually safest to play along with its delusion.
- While Angelics and Demonic are most assuredly not wraiths, they sometimes behave in a fashion that is distinctly wraithlike, speaking of Skinlands events that would seem to be far from their ken.
- More than one seasoned Harbinger has sworn on his own grave that he has heard the same voice issuing from an Angelic guardian and, years later, a Demonic tempter. This has given rise to speculation that the two types of being are actually the same, with the Demonic form being equivalent to a Shadow-ridden wraith. Certainly there must be some reason Angelics and Demonic are so commonly linked in the public imagination....
- Demonic usually act in accordance with their appearance, but that does not mean that Angelics are necessarily friendly. Most have very strict ethical codes, and will not hesitate to strike down a wraith with a self-dubbed sword of justice for an infraction, real or imagined.
- Both Demonic and Angelics collect souls, though no one has ever spotted a free-floating forge in the Tempest. Popular rumors have Demonic devouring the souls that they take, and more fanciful ones talk about Angelics trading unworthy souls for worthy ones. However pleasing the latter image might be, however, there's no real evidence to support it.

Sample Angelic Statistics

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Fanatic

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 2, Appearance 6

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Intimidation 4, Expression 1

Skills: Etiquette 3, Leadership 5, Meditation 5, Melee 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Linguistics 5, Occult 5, Religion 5

Backgrounds: Memoriam 5

Arcanoi: Argos 5, Castigate 5, Fatalism 3, Lifeweb 4, Molate 4, Usury 5

Willpower: 10

Pathos: 10

Permanent Corpus: 15

Image: Most Angelics appear slightly more in keeping with their Old Testament forebears than with the watered-down visions of angels so popular today. They have a piercing and terrible beauty to them, and to look into their ageless eyes is merely to see one aspect of something far greater. Most Angelics have huge feathered wings of various hues growing from their backs, though the actual number of wings can range from two to eight. Tall and thin, Angelics have fine-boned features and an elfin pallor to their skin; some wear loose robes of white. Luminous halos are worn by a sizable minority, and some Angelics are clad only in pure, shimmering light.

The average Angelic will be carrying a golden horn, often belted by rope at its waist. The beings labeled Archangelics carry what they refer to as "scrolls of judgment" and flaming swords, but never scabbards.

A very few Angelics are trapped in bodies like those of Demonic; these are among the gentlest of heart and least frequently recognized. However, the reverse is also true; certain Demonic are clad in Angelic forms and often pass for their more moral counterparts.

Roleplaying Notes: Yours is the truth and the light and the faith. Let pass the worthy, but strike down those who serve darkness. You are a servant and aspect of the Lord of Hosts, and as such are part of the Divine All. God's will is thine, and thy will is God's.

Sample Demonic Statistics

Nature: Fanatic

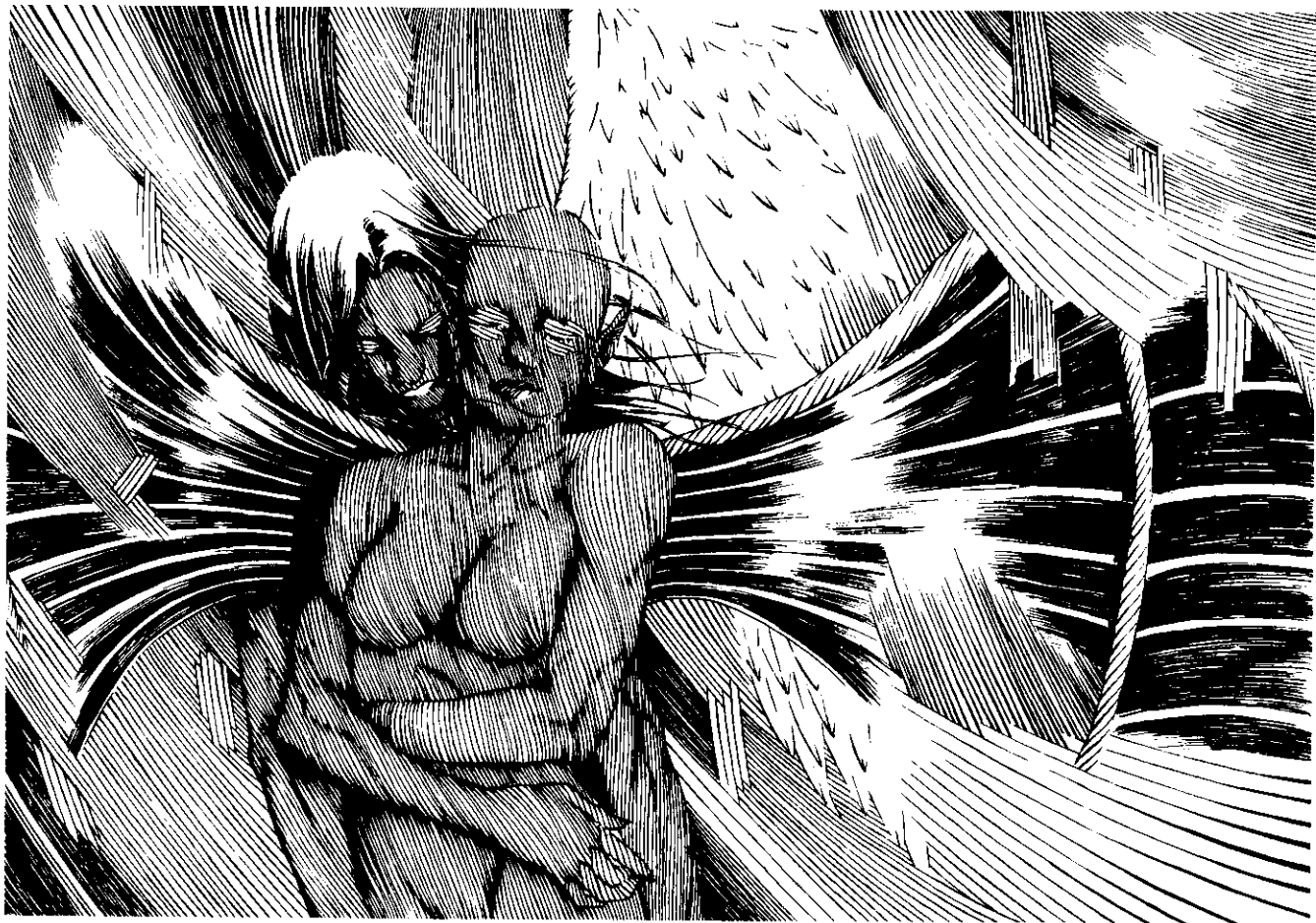
Demeanor: Fanatic

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 5, Alertness 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Expression 4



Skills: Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Meditation 4, Melee 5
Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Linguistics 5, Occult 5
Backgrounds: Memoriam 5
Arcanoi: Argos 5, Fatalism 3, Intimation 5, Lifeweb 4, Mnemosynis 3, Moliate 4, Pandemonium 5, Usury 5
Willpower: 10
Pathos: 10
Permanent Corpus: 15

Image: The vast majority of Demonic would appear to have done their research, at least so far as medieval demonology is concerned. A hodgepodge of animal heads, torsos and limbs, mixed in with bat wings, scales, blazing red eyes, hooves and the occasional chunk of human anatomy, the Demonic population is comprised of a horde of unique individuals. No two look alike, though most seem to be mockeries of Angelics. Most common are forms that graft one or two animal features (i.e., a crocodile head, bat wings and hooves) onto an otherwise human frame.

Demonics have been known to carry anything, from relic gold to fiery whips to Artifacts which slowly but surely corrupt their users. Some Demonic would also appear to share the Spectral ability to reach into the Tempest and pull forth whatever they wish.

Roleplaying Notes: Why, this is hell, nor are you out of it. As you are tormented eternally by the absence of God's grace, so must others suffer. As you are denied Heaven, so must you deny Heaven to others. Any wiles or ploys are yours to employ in your mission, and let none count the cost so long as the blissful unholy torment is gifted to others.

More information on Angelics and Demonic can be found in *Sea of Shadows*.

Human Antagonists

The Sons of Tertullian

Dedicated to the destruction of wraiths, spirits and other "spawn of the darkness," the Sons of Tertullian draw their name and inspiration from the writings of the early Christian theorist who postulated that evil could hide in the guise of goodness. The Sons, however, have interpreted Tertullian's doctrine to mean that any who dealt with the dead, willingly or no, are servitors of the Devil and needed to be destroyed. The group's list of targets includes wraiths, psychics, victims of possession and those who simply blaspheme against the Sons' doctrine (and therefore must be possessed by an evil spirit).

All of the Sons are trained and dedicated exorcists, though their methods are hardly gentle. While techniques vary from Son to Son, all are brutal and designed to drive the "possessing" wraith out through sheer agony. While these crude techniques are actually effective at driving out Skinriders (none of whom really want to relive the experience of excruciating pain), the other victims of the Sons' attentions often find themselves becoming wraiths in truth before the exorcism ends.

While the Sons have various methods for detecting the ghost-ridden (miscellaneous artifacts and the like), most of these techniques are haphazard at best. Sons of Tertullian can rarely tell the difference between the genuinely possessed and psychics, victims of insanity and other innocents. Unfortunately it is nearly impossible to convince a Son of his error in choosing a soul to "help." If his methods don't produce a fleeing ghost immediately, he'll work at them until they do. Many of the wraiths "vanquished" by members of this order over the years have been those of their victims at the moment of transport across the Shroud.

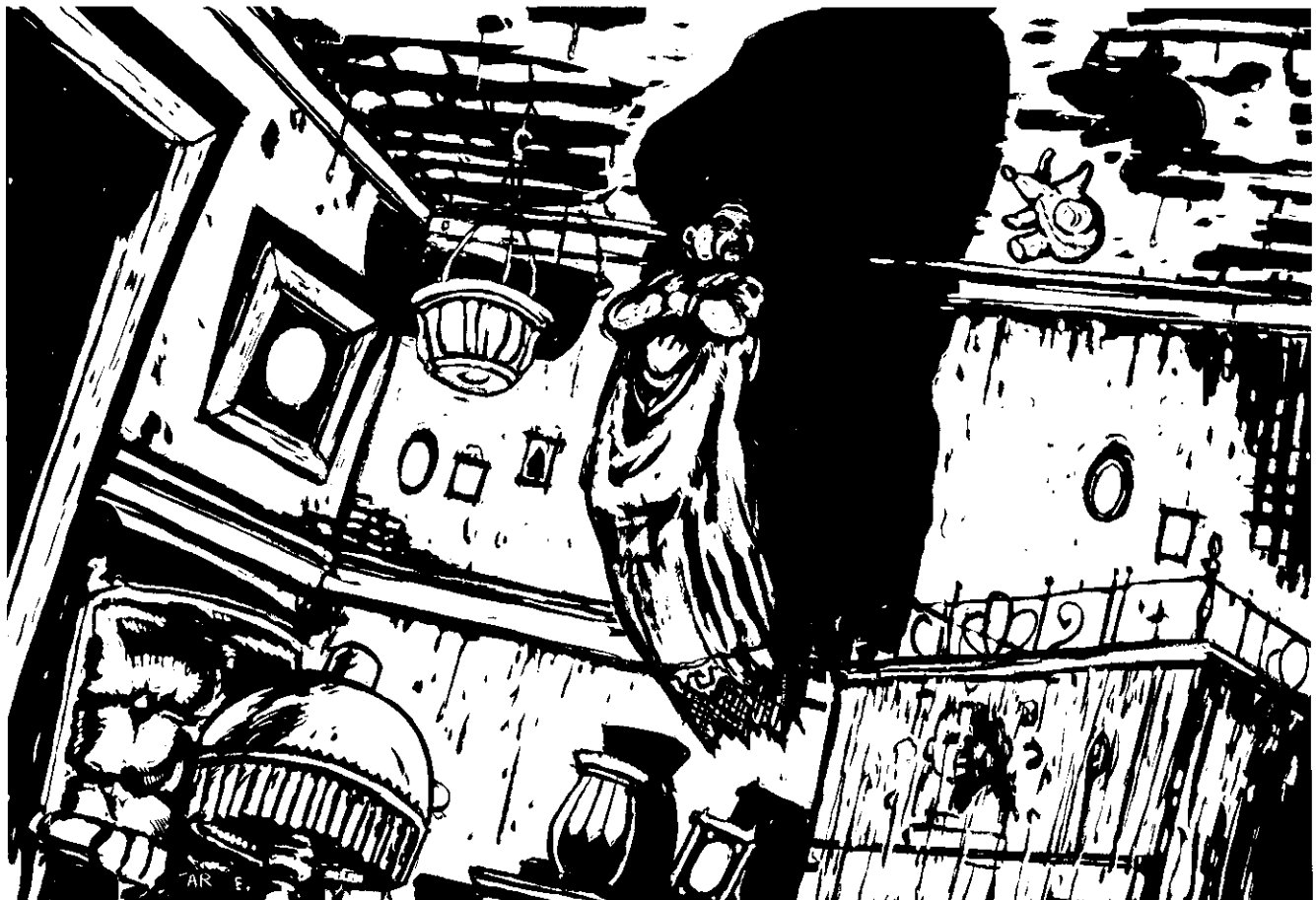
Some Sons are capable of genuine ghost detection or the more advanced forms of exorcism. Such hunters are held in high regard by other members of the order. Other Sons (there are a great many women in the group, despite the name) have come up with a concoction of specially prepared holy water that enables one who anoints his eyes with it to see into the

Shadowlands, albeit dimly. The Sons are always trying to upgrade their weaponry in the eternal fight against the ghosts of the world, and they're more than willing to field test on the first victim of possession they come across.

The Sect of Saint James

Fanatical and dangerous even by the skewed standards of the Sons of Tertullian, the Sect of St. James believes in taking the direct approach to annihilating the Devil's creatures. An all-male sub-order within the Sons, the Sect has a membership of 99 and a very high turnover rate; only the most driven and devoted members of the Sons of Tertullian need apply. Members of the Sect fervently believe in a passage from one of the recently uncovered Gnostic Gospels, which states that the truly virtuous man should kill himself in order to speed his entrance to Heaven. The fact that the authenticity of the gospel in question is still being debated furiously by biblical scholars matters not a whit to the Sectarians; they've found their *raison d'etre*.

Combining this doctrine with the Sons' war on the ghostly, the members of the Sect ritually commit suicide in order to wreak havoc in the Underworld. Groups of four to eight Sect members, called "crosses," will often spend more than a year in preparation for their suicidal plunge into the Deadlands. That year is taken



up with instruction, preparatory rituals and the crafting of each Sect member's chosen weapon. Missions against dangerous opponents and research into what wraith lore is known (infiltration of Arcanum chapters is a common tactic) also are used to hone each cross for its final assault.

Each cross member's most important task before his death, though, is the creation of his personal blade. Always an edged weapon, the "weapon of righteousness" is crafted by each individual St. Jamesian and wound round with powerful blessings. The end result is an impressive Artifact-to-be, as each member's weapon crosses the Shroud with him and bears extraordinary power on the other side.

When the Sect decides that a cross is ready, the men who make it up are spiritually bound together through a rite known only to the Sect's leaders. This ensures that the all of the cross' members will become wraiths, arriving in the Underworld at the same place and time. The brothers then commit ritual suicide using their weapons of righteousness, and even before their bodies have stiffened they are already out of their Cauls and destroying any wraiths they can find. While no St. Jamesian goes into his final battle with any actual hope of victory, every Sect member firmly believes that if he battles honorably, he will immediately achieve Heaven upon his destruction in the Shadowlands.

Even among such fringe groups as the Inquisition and the larger body of the Sons of Tertullian, the St. Jamesians are regarded as nigh-heretical. There is no love lost between other ghosthunters (whom the Sect thinks of as "soft") and the Sect, which is regarded as completely cracked and possibly blasphemous in turn. Still, even the censure of their brothers within Tertullian's order is not enough to deter the St. Jamesians from their appointed tasks, and there are always new recruits willing to take up the mantle of those honorably passed on.

The Agathans

Not every mortal aware of wraiths is by definition inimical to them. Even the dead have allies among the living. Chief among those groups of mortals who seek to aid ghosts are the venerable members of the Agathan Society. These women quietly yet effectively succor wraiths in need — at least those with some modicum of manners.

Despite one emeritus member's grandiose claims of a centuries-old tradition with links to ancient Phoenicia, Atlantis and sunken Mü, the Agathans go back a scant 110 years. Agatha Cabot, a wealthy widow from Boston, lost both her child and husband in an unfortunate carriage accident in 1879 and spent both years and a small fortune attempting to contact the spirits of her departed loved ones. Her quest led her to any number of frauds, including the noted Bostonian "medium" Hannah Ross, who purported to show Cabot the "face" of her lost son from behind a curtain. The verisimilitude of the illusion was quite convincing, and Cabot was prepared to sign over a preposterous sum of money to the "medium" for the opportunity to repeat the contact.





Later that evening, however, the situation suddenly, dramatically changed. The late Mr. Beauregard Cabot, formerly of Beacon Street, manifested himself to his wife in her bedchamber through the use of Embody and, after a tearful reunion, apologized deeply to his wife for the ill-mannered way in which he'd allowed her to keep searching for him when he had the ability to contact her at any time. Agatha was naturally quite curious about the details of both ghostly existence and Beauregard's reasons for not contacting her, and thus ensued a night-long discussion as to the details of ghostly life, including the binding dictates of the *Dictum Mortuum*.

When morning light came and her husband's wraith slipped away, Agatha found herself filled with diametrically opposed emotions: pity for those poor wretches trapped in the Underworld, and dignified rage at those who would play upon the sympathies of the credulous — false mediums like Miss Ross. (Beauregard had revealed, during the course of the evening, that his and Agatha's son had not become a wraith, and that the strumpet Ross was perpetrating a fraud by painting a certain portion of her anatomy to resemble a "face" and pushing that through the concealing curtain. Not only were Ross' actions fraudulent, they were immodest as well.) Using her considerable pull in the drawing rooms and polite society of Boston, Agatha Cabot was soon able to convince many other respectable ladies and matrons of the worthiness of her cause and, in short order, the Agathan Society (named over her bashful protests) was in full swing.

Initially the group's focus was on defrocking false mediums and charlatans — Ross' ultimate embarrassment in 1887 had Agathan fingerprints all over it — but Mrs. Cabot herself never stopped urging that the Society should do more to help destitute wraiths instead. Over the decades, the original Agathans passed knowledge of wraithly existence to their daughters (never their sons) as well as the heavy responsibility that membership in the society entailed. As the numbers of false mediums dwindled, the Society's emphasis shifted toward more work aiding destitute ghosts, primarily by seeing to the safety of their Fetters and helping them to fulfill their Passions, so long as said Passions were *proper*. An invaluable aid in all this was the gallant Beauregard Cabot, who regularly communicated to his wife the details of requests for aid made by wraiths less fortunate than himself.

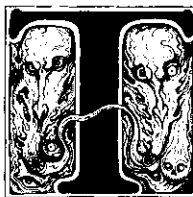
Agatha Cabot herself died in 1947 with few regrets, and in a rare manifestation before the entire Society her husband revealed that she had instantly achieved Heaven (i.e., Transcended) upon her demise. However, he personally would take it as a great kindness if the ladies of the Society would be so kind as to continue their work, as they had been a tremendous comfort to so many lost souls. Their hearts touched, the ladies of the Society pledged to forge onward and save as many ghosts from misery as they could. Beauregard Cabot thanked them profusely and vanished, reappearing later on behalf of one Restless petitioner or another.

Today the Society meets once a week in the old Cabot townhouse on Beacon Street, on Tuesday nights after supper. Generally the meetings consist of the late Mr. Cabot or one of his associates presenting the cases of several unfortunate wraiths — ones whose living Fetters are destitute or ill, whose Haunts are about to be razed or whose Passions they are unable to fulfill. Afterwards, the ladies of the Society discuss which cases are most worthy of aid, and how that aid might most effectively be rendered. Endangered Haunts might be bought or leased, objects serving as Fetters might be “collected,” living loved ones might be “sponsored” through a variety of foundations and funds (each Agathan has connections to at least a trio of “mainstream” charitable organizations) and so on. The end result of this *sub rosa* charity has become remarkable. The Agathans themselves have managed to acquire quite a bit of real estate in the Boston area, including many of the most psychically active spots in the region. Furthermore, their collection of Fetters is invaluable in terms of both material and metaphysical worth. As a final note, they have helped a great many wraiths over the decades, and at least some of these remember the favor. The Agathans have more allies across the Shroud than they suspect.

Furthermore, the women of the Society are not the doddering dilettantes that one might expect. Veterans of the merciless wars of Boston’s high society, the nine women currently making up the Agathan Society are shrewd, wealthy and, when the occasion demands, merciless. Many also have some smattering of occult knowledge in the form of folklore, and better than half of the Society’s members can throw up a formidable ward in two shakes of a lamb’s tail. Nor are all of the Agathans elderly; three are under 30 and only one, seated president Hazel Stowe Weldon, is over 70 years of age. When roused to action by pity or righteous indignation, the Agathans can be quite effective.

The Far Shores

Travel There



Traveling to the Far Shores is far more problematical than it ought to be. Technically, the isles comprising the Far Shores are merely a straight sail across the Sunless Sea from Stygia and any of the other Dark Kingdoms, and if one can avoid the Sea’s perils, the journey ought to be easy. Alas, that’s

not the case.

Sailing to the Far Shores is in reality an exercise in equal parts exploration and insanity. Byways have been laid down by Ferrymen who’ve gone before, but many of these safe paths end randomly in the Tempest, and can only be found by luck. Others are haunted by soul-slavers, pirates or Whistimmu, and thus are unsafe. Slavers from many of the Shores don’t restrict themselves to the Byways either, finding more plentiful prey on the wrong roads (e.g., wandering aimlessly across the waters) than on the correct ones.

To seek the Far Shores, then, requires either finding a safe Byway or making it across the open waters of the Sunless Sea. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Safe Byways are rare, and there’s no guarantee that the Far Shore they open to will be hospitable. Many of the theoretically safe Byways lead to wraith-made hells more terrible than any peril from slavers could possibly be. On the other hand, if a seeker after the Far Shores does

The Noble Beauregard

The one flaw in the Agathan strategy, unfortunately, is that the Society relies upon a single source for its information on the Shadowlands and those who dwell within. This would not be such a bad thing, of course, were that source entirely honest. Unfortunately, the Agathans’ chief informant is Beauregard Cabot.

It’s not that Cabot is a bad man, *per se*. It’s just that he has his own agenda. A dedicated Renegade, Cabot does genuinely wish to improve the lot of wraiths, but only wraiths of his choosing. Thus the Agathans do a vast majority of their good works for a tiny minority of Boston’s wraiths, specifically those whom Cabot commands, has alliance with, or wishes to recruit. To date, Beauregard has not dared to ask his mortal contacts to destroy or raze the Fetters of one of his enemies, but he *has* had the Society collect the Fetters of a great many of his enemies. The end result, then, is that his mortal allies hold some extremely strategically important positions, as well as objects of power over friends and foes alike. The implications of this worry the local Anacreons to no end.

At this point, Mr. Cabot has the complete trust of seven of the nine Agathans. Only the two youngest — Deidre Holcomb-Watts and Wendy Fox (Wellesley graduates both) suspect Cabot’s motives. The rest of the Society sees him as completely selfless, a romantic relic of a bygone age of chivalry. As subtle and bitter as they can be when dealing with the living, they maintain a curious blind spot when it comes to Cabot himself. The notion that he could be engaged in petty politics himself — well, it would be heart-rending to consider.



find a secure Byway, she could well cut her travel time in half, if not more, and avoid prolonged exposure to the Tempest and all that dwells within.

As for those hardy souls who brave the Sunless Sea directly, they have an equal chance of meeting a slaver or a Ferryman on their travels. More Tempest-creatures can be found on the open sea than along the Byways, but those creatures haunting the Byways are there for express purpose of feeding; dwellers in the open sea will not necessarily attack.

Most curious of all, however, is the way in which the Sea itself seems to dictate the travel time of those passing over it. While the average trip from Stygia to the first of the Far Shores takes approximately two weeks, if the Sea itself feels the seekers are unworthy it can delay their craft for days, weeks or even years at a time. Even the Ferrymen have legends of wraiths forever trapped in coracles, eternally circling the Far Shores but never gaining admittance because of some slight directed at the waves of the Sunless Sea. Then again, if the Sea decides to favor travelers, it can speed their crossing considerably.

The most common perils faced by those who seek the Far Shores are respectively slavers, Spectres, Tempest-

dwellers and the rulers of the Far Shores themselves. Rare is the wraith who finds her way to a Paradise Shore without encountering at least one of these, and the rulers of the Hells, Irrolans, Sheols and other torment gardens of the Isles are far from the least potent of the threats a traveler will face. Many of these wraiths will style themselves Satan or Shaitan, most are former Ferrymen, and all have hundreds, if not thousands of years of experience and skill under their metaphorical belts. All are also looking for new prisoners, and wars have been fought between various hells over the disposition of a particularly choice soul.

Ferrymen are more common between Stygia and the Far Shores than just about anywhere else in the Underworld, but that doesn't mean that they necessarily answer hails or pleas for help from those they pass. On this stretch of ocean, more than anywhere else, the Ferrymen seem most unearthly and least concerned with the doings of the rest of the Restless Dead.

Sample Realms

Far Shores realms exist for virtually every religion and faith that ever existed — Christian, Buddhist, Islam, Jewish,

various African faiths, Norse, ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Mayan and many, many others besides. Created by charismatic leaders of the faiths, many thousands of heavens and hells dot the Far Shores, giving rise to the names by which many Far Shores wraiths know them: "The Thousand Hells" and the "Isles of Infinite Paradises." Most are based on their leaders' religious conceptions of heaven and hell (Paradise, Alfaradaws, Seventh Heaven, the Garden of Eden and of Irem, the Land of Leal, Zion, Purgatory, the Inferno, Amenti, Arallu, Gehenna, Hades, Naraka, Niffheim, Sheol, Tophet), some on poetically-inspired conceptions such as those of Dante, Milton and even Blake, while still others are based on folklore and cultural legend.

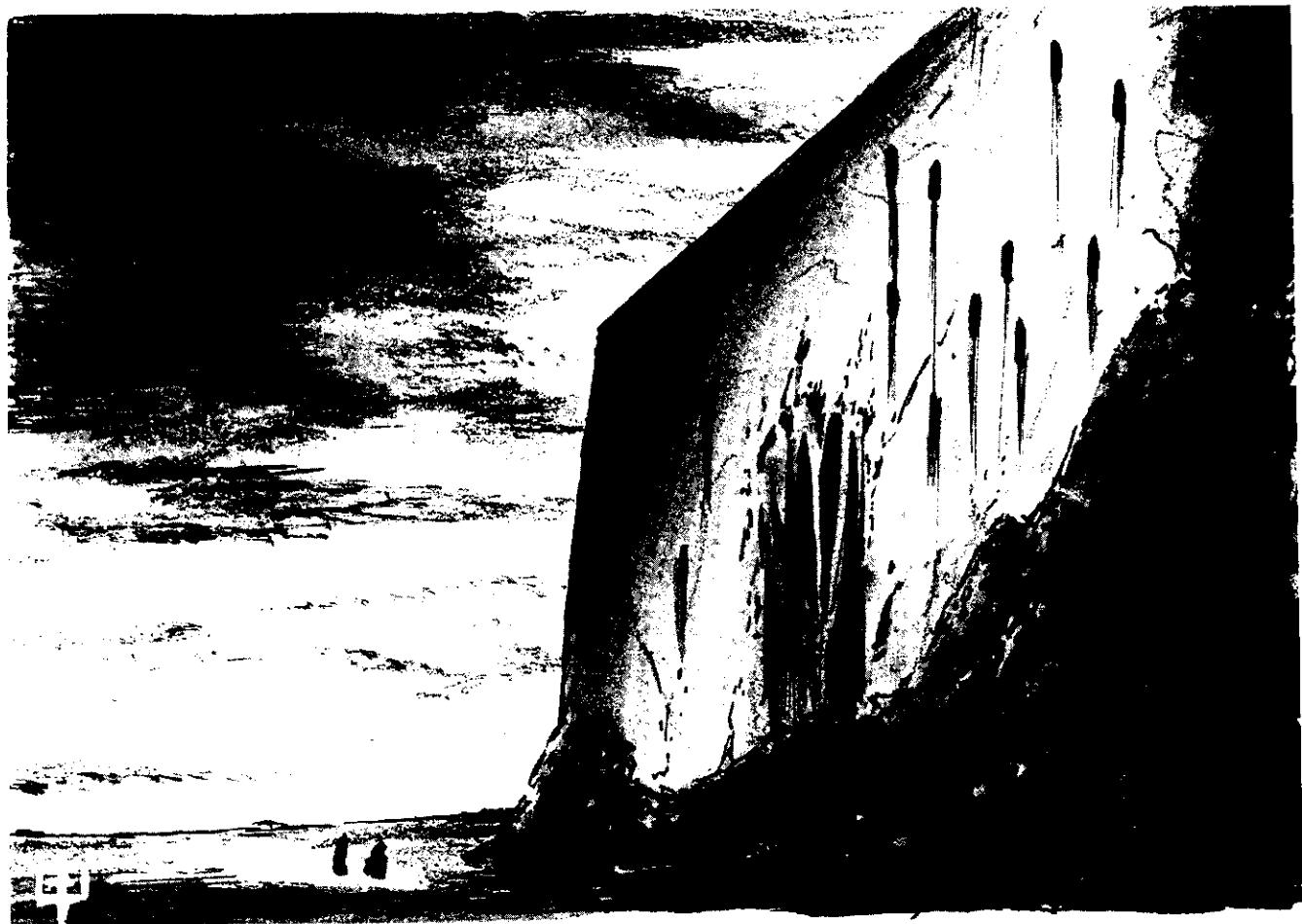
Sukhavati, the Pure Lands, is a peaceful isle, the paragon of certain Buddhists' aspirations. Those who die with the name of Amitabha, the Bodhisattva of infinite light, on their lips sometimes find their way to Sukhavati and the lotus throne reserved specifically for them. Other Buddhist-based realms exist in which wraiths believe they are in a state between death and rebirth. There, wraiths in the forms of the various Bodhisattvas judge the dead and Moliate them into karmically appropriate shapes. Wraiths in the forms of animals of all shapes

and sizes fill these isles, hoping to work their way up the karmic chain to Buddhahood.

For instance, a pre-Flaying cadre of Mayan priests created two realms within the Far Shores. Mitnal, the "lowest" of their nine underworlds (only two of which they constructed), hosts terrible creatures that torture the supposedly impious and wicked ancient wraiths of the Mayan culture, while its paradise houses the honored souls of those who hanged themselves to death, warriors killed in battle, sacrificial victims, women who died in childbirth and members of the priesthood. These souls escape suffering by sitting in the cool shade of the cosmic tree *yaxche* — little do they know that the tree itself is composed of the unwilling souls of the dead.

The wraiths in the Sumerian version of Heaven believe that they have been spared the wrath of Angra Mainya. This "god of death," an ancient Sumerian Masquer who founded the hellish sister isle, created the dragon Azhi Dahaka (thousands of wraiths Moliated into draconic form), who is supposedly destined to destroy a third of humanity at the end of the world, but is currently chained high atop the cloud-enshrouded Mountain of Wisdom that dominates the central portion of Heaven's isle. Of course, no one has seen Azhi Dahaka in





centuries, but few wraiths are foolhardy enough to climb the Mountain of Wisdom to verify the dragon's current status.

Several wraithly versions of Osiris, the Egyptian god of the dead, also exist. Most of these "gods" were pharaohs or high priests when alive, and have since conscripted the souls of those who died with them to eternal servitude under the rubric of their religion. On several of the islands they have

claimed, "Anubis" serves them as judge of the dead, while "Set" (a "Renegade" leader of souls unhappy with the status quo) schemes against them. The hierarchy on these islands often includes a dog-headed "god" called Wepwawet, the "Opener of Ways," who helps the souls of the dead and guides them where they wish to go. It is speculated that Wepwawet may actually be a Ferryman in disguise.



Kilark 96

Weed 'em and Reap

An Adventure and Setting for **Wraith: The Oblivion**



ood evening, kiddies. This is Rockin' Randolph Slay, calling out into the night from the Boneyard; that's WBON to you newcomers, and I know you're out there. How can we escape a few newbies here and there, when the living insist on killing each other? But then, isn't that what makes this crazy town so much fun?

There's a lot going on in the old Necropolis tonight, but for all you Renegades, Little Five Points seems the place to be if you want to be hip. Word on the street is that something big is going down in a certain little coffee shop on Euclid, and if you're cool, you know the one I'm talking about....

Weed 'em and Reap is a starting chronicle for **Wraith: The Oblivion**. It includes setting material for the Little Five Points section of Atlanta, as well as character histories and a plot that will serve to get characters up to speed in the world of **Wraith**. If you wish, you can excise the plot information and just use the setting for your own chronicle. Otherwise, **Weed 'em and Reap** can be used to allow your players to take their first steps as Restless.

More information on Little Five Points and the wraiths who dwell there can be found in *Necropolis: Atlanta*.

Setting



Little Five Points is a mishmash of stores dealing in everything you can't — or shouldn't — find in other parts of Atlanta, and it serves as the nexus of the city's alternative lifestyle. From the New Age to the New Wave, it's available in the Little Five — gay and lesbian literature, grunge and Goth fashions, underground comics, illegal drugs, Tarot cards, art galleries.... It's just a question of whether you go looking in the stores or along the streets for what you need.

During the daylight hours, Little Five Points belongs to the youth of Atlanta. It is a veritable Mecca for the slacker set, as race, religion, sexual preference and even social status are all set aside when hanging at the intersection of Colquitt and Euclid. From the numerous coffee shops to the wide range

of bars and restaurants to the overwhelming variety of specialty shops, the rule on the street is tolerance.

But at night, when the wraiths are free to move as they will and the shops begin to close, Little Five Points acquires a very different and much darker flavor. The streets are no longer quite so safe, and the tolerance and friendliness get swallowed by the creeping shadows. After sunset, the shaggy street bum who so politely asked for handouts during the day shuffles off to a shelter, and gets replaced by another who demands your money with a razor pressed to your throat. The pretty waif in Doc Martens who perched on a bench and talked of music surrenders her vision for a chemical rush and the cold embrace of anyone who can meet her price. The New Age dreamers disperse to their incense-fogged living rooms, and are replaced by the desperate and hungry whose dreams are long gone.

And walking among them, the Renegades of Little Five make their plans for bringing down the Hierarchy once and for all.

Geography

Little Five Points is situated close to the center of Atlanta. At one time the area was a pleasant suburb, but the rapid growth of the city has long since recreated the neighborhood as something more stereotypically urban. Euclid Avenue is the main artery of L5, though the neighborhood stretches out a few blocks in every direction.


Nearby landmarks include a hub for the local Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, Innman Park (a fairly sizable open area where many of the disenfranchised members of society tend to sleep) and, to the west, an abundance of abandoned and condemned buildings. The last are almost always occupied by a hodge-podge of displaced souls, living and dead.

Bass High School

The largest of the abandoned buildings, Bass High School serves as a way station for Enfants. While it has never officially been declared to be such, most of the wraiths in the area consider Bass High a sort of neutral territory, where the Enfants fortunate enough to find their way there can learn a bit more about Restless existence before being forced into the Necropolis proper. The sanctity of this free zone is enforced by the local Renegades, and the school building is often used as a Haunt by both new wraiths and "recruiters" for various Renegade factions.

In the world of the living, the old high school (closed for over a decade) has often been a home for runaways, junkies and those with much darker intent. Though never reported, several murders have occurred within the confines of the old school, though nary a body has been found there. While the





living continue to ignore the problem, the Restless accept the darker side of the school's existence as a prime source of Pathos. Several wraiths who were murdered in the building spend their time here, waiting for their murderers to return, and they're given plenty of space by Renegades and Enfants alike.

Theaters Macabre

Just across the street from Bass High, a small cluster of buildings houses a coffee shop and two independent theaters, the Euclid Playhouse and the Seventh Stage. Both playhouses handle only small productions with even smaller budgets, and for the most part, the shows produced here are over by nine p.m. Not long after, the local Sandmen take over both stages for the night. A nightly gathering of wraiths comes to perform, reciting poetry or casting their ghostly dramas for ever-appreciative audiences of Drones and Restless theater-lovers. Occasionally full-scale dramas are produced, and a surprising number of the Restless come by the "Theater Macabre" to see and be seen.

Four Humours

Located in the same cluster of buildings is a vegetarian store called the Four Humours. While outwardly nothing special, the store seems to be almost a magnet for the dead, and more Restless cluster around it than practically any other building in L5P. Many wraiths believe the owners of the store are actually death-mages, though this rumor has been kicked around for years without being substantiated.

Urban Primitive

African motif clothing and modern variations of the same are the main product sold within the store. In the back rooms of the establishment, three special rooms deal in special needs. For the living, body piercing and tattoos are available in two of the secluded rooms. For the Restless, the third room, long walled-up and not known to exist in the realms of the living, is the haunt of a very powerful wraith who goes by the name of Jomo. Jomo is a master Masquer, and provides (among other services) new identities for Renegades who have caught a little too much Legionnaire heat. Jomo's price is very dear, but he is among the best of the local Masquers, and he maintains a client confidentiality that is legendarily strict.

Euclid and Colquitt

Just to the north of Urban Primitive, the intersection of Euclid Avenue and Colquitt Street defines the main commercial area of Little Five Points. Several restaurants and bars, as well as a number of privately owned shops are established here, serving the Quick and the Restless alike. While the stores

may belong to the living, a variety of wraiths have made them home as well. From inside the gaily painted walls, they offer Arcanoi and Artifacts to any who can meet their price.

Gargoyles

By day this large shop specializes in "vintage clothing," a valuable commodity in the eyes of the Atlanta Goth community. When night falls, Renegade Artificers take control of the darkened shop, working outside the laws of the Hierarchy and selling goods both stolen and crafted on the premises. In imitation of the mortal merchants whose space they use, the quartet of soulforgers (locally nicknamed "John," "Paul," "George" and "Ringo," as they refuse to give their real names) set exorbitant prices on their goods. However, the combination of the lack of competition and the quality of the items they can locate or create gives the four outlaws a guaranteed market. The site and its business is well-known to the local Hierarchy, but a series of raids have netted only an empty store and the echo of mocking laughter.

The Smoking Mirror

The Smoking Mirror is an eclectic store that stocks a little of everything for the Quick and the Restless alike. Run by a couple of Haitian refugees named François and Nejla LaPierre, the store sells occult paraphernalia, incense and virtually any other merchandise that can be found in a typical head shop. The under-the-table selection also includes illegal herbal supplies for the items openly displayed, a hodgepodge of *voudoun* and *Santeria*-related items, and charms designed to do everything from warding off the dead to ensuring romantic success. While the jury is still out as to the power of the love charms, those who buy trinkets designed to ward off the dead have proven remarkably resistant to possession by the local Restless. Fortunately, few of the shop's customers buy the actual charms, preferring to spend their money on the heroin and *ganja* sold after hours. Interestingly enough, François and Nejla have never had any problem seeing the wraiths in the area, and are willing to make deals with the dead as well as with the living. A common trade arrangement is for a wraith to spy on the local law enforcement in exchange for Nejla and François' retrieving a Fetter.

Ray Gunn Video

Behind the Smoking Mirror is a small video store owned by a man who calls himself Ray Gunn. While the store itself specializes in pornographic tapes and a wide array of so-called cult films, what happens after hours is much more interesting. The owner considers himself to be a practiced medium, and every Friday and Saturday night he and a select group of customers join together in efforts to communicate with the Restless. While most of the area's wraith population wouldn't

be caught dead communicating with Gunn and his naive associates, the weekly séances have lowered the Shroud rating in the store to 6.

Not surprisingly, the wraiths in Little Five Points are very fond of Ray Gunn, viewing him as a sort of mascot. Unofficially, the local Restless take turns protecting both Gunn and his store from robberies or worse. However, this sort of protection has become almost unnecessary since the last attempted break-in. The burglar was found the next day with massive contusions and frostbite damage on his face and throat. The unwanted guest had scraped both of his palms raw in a vain attempt to remove what he claimed were bloodstains from his hands. Forensics experts found no trace of any blood besides the burglar's in the area, and the youth, white-haired at age 19, was gently led off to an asylum.

The Zone

The Zone rests near the corner of Euclid and Moreland Avenues. Within this area are a number of benches and trees, once again surrounded by shops. In the small opening, musicians and street artisans of every variety attempt to amuse the locals and shoppers in the hopes of some small compensation. Political organizations, usually of a leftward bent, also patrol the area attempting to enlist support for their causes, but they usually end up either driving off tourists or preaching to the converted.

For obvious reasons, the local police precinct keeps a few officers on foot patrol here, just to be safe. While the officers are friendly (more or less), they take their duties very seriously, and will bust anyone acting too strangely in order to protect visitors from excessive weirdness. More than one Skinrider has ducked out of a body that was getting hauled off to a holding cell for actions performed quite literally under the influence.

The Zone is considered neutral territory by the warring factions of Renegade and Heretic wraiths who frequent the area. Of course, the local Citadel doesn't subscribe to this unspoken truce, and runs regular patrols through the Zone. Of late, the Hierarchy has even taken to running a brace of barghests through the area. Anyone on the current "Wanted" list caught on the street when the barghests and their master storm through the area is in serious trouble. Rumor is that the barghests' master, one Emmet Waters, was a Doomslayer who got bored with his old job and finds hunting Renegades to be more of a challenge.

Thrift Stores

Three thrift stores, a T-shirt shop and a used music store called Echoes and Memories are adjacent to the Zone. All of the stores close at 6 p.m. The music store is loaded down with a seemingly endless collection of old albums, CDs and eight-

track tapes, as well as a number of ancient phonographs not for sale which are used for "atmosphere." While most of Echoes and Memories is of little interest, one antique gramophone in the back corner of the store is apparently inhabited by a spirit of some sort. Just what the spirit is or wants remains a mystery, but its influence is well-known to the local Restless. From time to time a living human will stand before the dusty contraption and sway to music audible only to her. Within seven weeks, the human so enraptured inevitably commits either a murder or suicide. To date, no one has successfully communicated with the spirit in the gramophone, but some suspicion has fallen upon the Artificers in Gargoyles.

The Blue Crystal

The Blue Crystal contains the most extensive collection of New Age paraphernalia and neo-pagan materials available in the city. Wind chimes, crystals of every variety, dreamcatchers and incense are all staples here. The soothing sounds of New Age music fill the inside of the store throughout the business day. At night, things are a little different, as a rapidly growing Nihil has ripped its way into the storeroom. While the Nihil is not open all of the time, most nights its aperture can be found starting at the instant of sundown.

Collected Dreams

The oddly named pawn shop across the street from the Blue Crystal is only rarely open. The man running the store only sees one customer at a time, and then only by appointment. His name is Solomon Stark, and he is both intimidating and remarkably charming. Unfailingly polite, he always has a handful of hard candies for local children on the rare occasions when he is at the store. On the other hand, the proprietors of the Blue Crystal have been known to make gestures of warding every time they spot Stark across the street, and despite his kindness to small children, the antiquarian has a brutal reputation among the local Restless.

Gregory L. Davis Plaza

On the other side of the thrift stores is an area with a small plaza. A coffee shop, a pizza parlor and an ice cream store are open throughout the day, selling remarkably good food at affordable prices. They are joined by an art gallery specializing in the macabre and a large bulletin board with advertisements for various local bands, services and the occasional political meeting. An older Lemure by the name of Max can be seen patrolling the area. Max specializes in knowing everything that is going on in the area, and he can normally be convinced to share the information in exchange for some tidbit that he has not yet heard. Max also goes by the name Crier, as he is usually the first to spread word when the Hierarchy is on the move into Little Five.



Facing the plaza from the other direction are several more shops, most of which are currently empty. From time to time someone brave or naive will rent one of the shops and attempt to set up housekeeping. The current record for one of these hardy entrepreneurs staying in business is just over three months; most break and leave after one.

The Restless call this row of shops “Boo Street,” and have set up the site as a sort of informal competition. The object of the contest, of course, is chasing out the intrepid humans foolish enough to rent on Boo Street. Crier is the final arbitrator as to what’s fair and what isn’t, but a few casualties have resulted from wraiths getting a little too gung-ho in their pursuit of their amusement.

Politics in Little Five Points



While most of the wraiths in Little Five Points do their best to get along, it is impossible for everyone to see eye to eye. The assorted Renegade gangs are constantly in conflict with the local Heretics, and the almost endless harassment by the Hierar-

chy only adds to the tension felt on all sides. The Hierarchy is almost powerless to control Little Five, a bitter pill for the Anacreons to swallow. The Renegades alone would be bad enough, but the increasing number of Heretics moving into the area has the Deathlords’ servants worried about losing what influence they have — not to mention losing Slumber over how a Stygian observer would view a Renegade/Heretic sub-Necropolis right in the heart of the city. At this time, there are no members of the Hierarchy brave or foolish enough to reside in Little Five Points, but the Citadel is always looking for informants, infiltrators and flat-out quislings.

Unbelievable as it might seem, most Little Five Points residents consider the Legions to be a secondary threat. Of more immediate concern is a Heretic cult calling itself the Burning, which has aggressively settled in L5P. While Heretic groups of all stripes have long used the area peacefully as a base of operations, the Burning is a little different. The rest of the wraiths of L5P are just waking up to this now, but for a few it’s already too late.

Heretics

• **The Burning** — Despised by Hierarchy and Renegades in the know alike, the Burning is one of the most virulently



dangerous Heretic cults ever to take root in Atlanta. Disdaining even the veneer of friendliness adopted by most Heretic groups, the members of the Burning have acquired an unsavory reputation based in equal parts on their fanatical demeanors and the rumors that they ritually feed wraiths to Spectres as a form of appeasement.

Sadly, the rumors are true. Convinced that "appeasement" is the only way to placate the barrowflame firestorms that occasionally sweep through the Necropolis, the Burning's membership makes certain to keep the local Spectre population well-fed, dumping kidnap victims, Thralls and foolish new recruits into a series of Nihilis. Members of the Burning do not discuss their beliefs with outsiders, feeling quite certain that non-believers will simply not understand the importance of the sacrifices that they are making.

• **Other Heretics** — The other Heretics of Little Five Points have been taking considerable heat from both Renegades and Hierarchy patrols, as the animosity felt toward the Burning slops over onto them as well. Over a half-dozen cults have some sort of presence in L5P, ranging from a band of deceased Hare Krishnas to an energetic but directionless trio of Children of the Green. The latter have been trying, without success, to close the Nihil in the back of the Blue Crystal, but they refuse to ask for help in their operations.

• **Influence** — Despite numerous attempts to drive the unwanted Heretics from the area, the Renegades of Little Five Points have met with no success. The main reason for this is simply that no one has any idea who among them might be a member of the Burning. No one admits to being with the cause, but the signs of their presence are obvious to those who are familiar with their tactics. Several Enfants who recently appeared in the area disappeared almost as quickly as they made their presence known, and without the benefit of a Hierarchy sweep. Most area Renegades will warn the newly dead away from the Burning as a matter of course, but unwary Enfants vanish just the same, never to be seen again.

Renegades

The only reason for the continued dominance of the Renegades in Little Five Points is the unspoken rule that everyone stands together against the Hierarchy. There are several factions of Renegades working together in the area, all of whom are merely splinters from larger factions at work in the Necropolis. Essentially any stripe of Renegade can be found in Little Five, from gangbangers determined to tear down the Hierarchy brick by brick, to would-be Charons wanting to set up L5P as their own little fiefdom of the dead. Still, most of

the Renegade gangs fall within a fairly narrow neo-anarchist viewpoint; they all want to tear down the Hierarchy, but just can't agree on who should be on top when they're finished.

Among the more notable Renegade groups with presences in the area are the Shattered Chain, which works to end slavery in any form, and their arch-rivals, the Sons of the Imperial Dragon. The Sons have a somewhat different take on slavery than do the primarily African-American members of the Shattered Chain, and while most Renegade gangs get along fairly well with one another, these two go at it hammer and tongs whenever they meet.

• **Randolph Slay** — While not affiliated with any given Renegade gang, the notorious Randolph Slay is among the best-known wraiths in the city. Broadcasting as WBON, Randolph keeps up a 24/7 stream of rock'n'roll and news for the Restless. Many of his between-song raps are public service announcements of upcoming Hierarchy raids, putting him near the top of the Anacreons' hit list. They haven't caught him yet, though, and in the meantime WBON keeps cranking out the hits — and the misses.

• **Influence** — Despite the best attempts of the Hierarchy and the Burning, the assorted groups of Renegades in the area still hold sway in Little Five Points. However, paranoia and the Burning's depredations are starting to take their toll. Unless the atmosphere of distrust fades soon, the gangs will be too busy turning on each other to realize that the Hierarchy's "divide and conquer" tactic is working perfectly. That is, if the Burning doesn't pick off the gangs one by one first.

Hierarchy

There are no wraiths residing in the area who will openly admit to belonging to the Hierarchy. However, the belief that at least a few of the dead in the area are working for the Anacreons is not unwarranted.

The Story



Weed 'em and Reap is designed for new players of **Wraith** as an introductory chronicle. Someone has been Harvesting Enfants with ungodly speed in Little Five, and it's up to the characters to discover who, why and how. As this interruption in the flow of new Restless is a threat to the Hierarchy,

the Renegades and most Heretics as well, the characters can come from any background. While each of the sects wishes it could restrict others' access to new souls, nobody wants to be completely cut off themselves. That's what's happening in Little Five, and that's what brings the Circle together.

The story starts with the characters entering Little Five Points, for whatever reason the Storyteller deems fit. Perhaps they're Legionnaires sent by their Anacreon, or Heretics scouting for a new safe zone. It doesn't really matter; the first person they'll meet is Crier, who'll set them in the right direction.

Chapter I: A Voice in the Urban Wilderness

As soon as the characters enter L5P, Crier will finger them as new arrivals and will sidle up to them. He will act in a friendly, self-deprecating manner, making much of the fact that the characters are new to the area. If pressed on this issue, he will mention that there haven't been many new wraiths in the vicinity lately, and that it's nice to see some new Enfants around. Nowland will also warn the characters about the Burning and an upcoming Hierarchy sweep, claiming that it's all part of the job. He will then gracefully fade into the distance, mentioning as he departs that they should go see the Merchants' Guild if they need anything.

Nowland's real agenda is twofold. First of all, he is in fact very worried about what's going on. There have been no new Enfants in the area in over three months, an absurd length of time considering the number of suicides, overdoses and murderous muggings that the area generates. It's now accepted as common knowledge among the wraiths of Little Five that someone is getting to Enfants first somehow and carting them off. The prime suspects are, of course, the Burning's members, but they're not behind what's going on. Instead, in the absence of gullible new Enfants, the Burning has been forced to attempt to kidnap older, wiser wraiths for sacrifice, and those disappearances have really set the neighborhood on edge. At this point, any wraith even suspected of being a Burning member is likely to be hauled off to the forges instantly.

Nowland's other agenda is motivated by guilt. He's hoping that these obviously inexperienced wraiths that he's sent off to the Merchants' Guild will make a great deal of noise as they stumble around the neighborhood, flushing out various Renegades and Heretics in a way that can't be traced back to him.

Max "Crier" Nowland

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Jester

Circle: Wraiths of Little Five Points

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Streetwise 5

Skills: Melee 3, Stealth 4, Survival 5

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Computers 4, Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 2



Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5 (Two higher-ups in the Hierarchy, and three well-placed Renegades in the Merchant's Guild. In addition, Crier knows and is liked by pretty much everyone in L5P; at least no one is rude to him in public.)

Fetters: Crack house on Euclid (3), Murder weapon (2)

Arcanoi: Inhabit 3, Lifeweb 2

Passions: Hide the secret of your Hierarchy affiliation (Despair) 3, Make everyone like you (Self-Pity) 3, Keep Little Five Points safe (Love) 2

Willpower: 7

Permanent Corpus: 10

Pathos: 6

Angst: 5

Shadow: The Freak

Thorns: Bad Luck, Freudian Slip, Trick of Light

Shadow Passions: Expose Nowland as a traitor to the rest of L5P (Guilt) 4, Gather as many new Artifacts as possible (Lust) 2, Watch the city burn (Hatred) 1

Image: Crier appears as a young man with shoulder-length black hair and brown eyes. His skin is very pale and pockmarked with acne scars. He wears only a pair of bell-bottom jeans and leather sandals. A necklace bearing a peace sign sways between his scrawny shoulders. Both arms and even spots between his toes bear track marks from long years of drug abuse.

Background: Max Nowland tried his best to fit in. Always chosen last on the playground, he still showed up for every game. Later, when the darkest and worst aspects of the "hippie era" came into play, he dealt in heroin and angel dust in order to gain acceptance. He also made the mistake of indulging in what he sold, and killed himself by means of an accidental OD. Reaped by the Hierarchy, he was set up as a deep cover mole in Little Five Points against the day when an accurate source of information (and misinformation) would be needed in Little Five. For over two decades Max' warnings have been scrupulously accurate, as his Hierarchy controllers have left him alone. Last month, however, he was activated, and he now passes information to the Hierarchy regularly.

Roleplaying Hints: You are everyone's friend. You listen to everything and never argue or contradict, saving up everything everyone tells you for your regular meeting with the Hierarchy agents who come to you for information. You still warn your friends of any approaching Hierarchy actions in the area, but now the warnings aren't always as accurate as they used to be. Look around constantly, never leaving your eyes in one place for more than a second. You hate the gnawing fear that you will be betrayed or discovered as a traitor, and are self-consciously loose and jokey in an attempt to distract people from your obvious (to you, at least) evil. Keep your hands clenched tightly together, as they might shake otherwise.



Odds are that the characters will head for the mysterious Merchants' Guild; any passing wraith will give them directions if they mention Crier's name. Information on the Burning will be hard to come by if the characters interrogate other wraiths; it's not a subject most folks like to talk about. Eventually, however, the Circle should find itself in front of Urban Primitive, ready to enter Jomo's domain.

Scene Two: Pound of Flesh

As the wraiths stand in front of Urban Primitive, they will be approached by Holly Underwood. Word that new wraiths are in the neighborhood has gotten around, and various factions are mobilizing in order to attempt to recruit the Circle first. Unfortunately, the Burning, in the form of Holly, got to the characters first.

Holly will not make an obvious recruiting pitch, nor will she seem other than friendly in an exaggerated, cartoonish rendition of Southern hospitality. She won't mention the Burning or even the current situation (to do so would be in poor taste), instead concentrating on leaving a good impression with the Circle for her to exploit later.

If the topic of the Burning comes up, Holly will poo-poo the more outrageous rumors as ludicrous, though particularly perceptive characters (Perception + Empathy, diffi-



culty 9) may notice a bit of an edge to her voice when discussing the matter.

Most, if not all of this conversation will be directed at the male wraiths of the party. Holly is fiercely competitive with other female wraiths, and will pointedly ignore them whenever possible. The fact that Miss Underwood has also re-created her Corpus into a va-va-voom caricature of femininity will probably not simplify relations between the sexes in any given Circle, either.

Holly Underwood

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Circle: The Burning

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Intuition 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Performance 3, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Computers 1, Linguistics 2 (French, Italian)

Backgrounds: Haunt 2 (Bass High School), Memorium 3

Fetters: Hidden stash of money 4, Grave 3,

Arcanoi: Argos 1, Castigate 3, Inhabit 2, Keening 2

Passions: Be the prettiest of them all (Ego) 5, Attract as much attention as possible (Insecurity) 3, Find and destroy your murderer (Vengeance) 3, Stave off the flames through sacrifice (Faith) 2

Willpower: 7

Permanent Corpus: 6

Pathos: 8

Angst: 3

Shadow: The Parent

Thorns: Dark Allies 3, Shadow Traits 4

Shadow Passions: Mutilate your own appearance (Self-Hatred) 4, Give yourself to the Nihil (Despair) 2, Throw as many wraiths as possible to the Void (Hate) 2

Image: Holly was a beautiful girl in life. In death she has managed to remain remarkably attractive, if one ignores the gaping wound where her throat used to be. Refashioned into a pinup girl image, she appears in a halter top and tight jeans, with a bloodstained scarf around her throat. The stains on the scarf highlight the red of her hair, and the halter top does nothing to hide her Moliate-enhanced curves.

Background: Marge Hollings ran away from her home in Alabama at the age of 15, hoping to find fame and fortune in



Atlanta. Instead, she found that the city was filled with girls who had similar dreams and similarly dim prospects. Within a month of moving to the city, circumstances forced her into prostitution. In order to separate herself from the vile acts she committed in order to pay her bills, Marge adopted a British accent and the false name Holly Underwood. By the age of 18 she had contracted a number of venereal diseases from unsanitary johns, as well as developing a bitter disillusionment regarding her chances of succeeding in the legitimate entertainment industry. This cynicism led her to get careless, and an unfortunate run-in with a man who liked knives a bit too much followed soon after. Her body was buried in an unmarked grave not far from Bass High School, but Holly's spirit was already in the Shadowlands.

Having been ground up by the dream of fame and fortune when she was alive, Holly quickly fell into agreement with the Burning's policies. Normally most new recruits to the cult are high on the list to be disposed of, but Holly's talents, both obvious and otherwise, convinced the group's higher-ups to use her instead to lure unwary newcomers into the group's clutches.

Roleplaying Hints: You don't like or trust anyone. You will, however, act as if everyone is your close friend. You have almost completely forgotten that you are actually from Alabama, and continue to use the false English accent you adopted so long ago. These days, you really do believe your name is Holly Underwood.

Marge Hollings is just the name that voice in the back of your head uses to make you angry. Keep your eyes on the men and ignore the women. It's your mission to make the men want you. Purr when you speak to a male, and add a healthy dose of frost to anything you need to say to the women; odds are you'll be able to get the men to follow you to the Nihil's edge.

Rather than make a serious play at this time, Holly will saunter off and allow the characters to visit Jomo and the rest of the Merchants' Guild. She will, however, promise to come see them later, which can provoke all sorts of interesting Shadow reactions. Still, for the moment the former Miss Hollings will leave, and into Jomo's haunt is the obvious next place to go.

When the wraiths enter Urban Primitive, they will have the definite feeling of being watched. The store is neat and clean, even when viewed from a Shadowlands perspective, with African motif prints and sculptures tastefully arranged around the displays. Perceptive or paranoid wraiths will notice that some of the sculptures are in the Shadowlands as opposed to the Skinlands. These are wraiths whom Jomo has Moliated into what he considers to be more aesthetically pleasing forms, and any connoisseur of sculpture (or Moliate) will be hard-pressed to disagree.

As the characters wend their way past the displays, they will hear two voices coming from the back room, raised in argument. The door to Jomo's office is open, so if the characters wish they can stumble in on two members of the Merchants' Guild having a tiff.

Jomo

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Loner

Circle: Merchants' Guild

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Brawl 4, Dodge 2 Expression 1, Intuition 2, Intimidation 4 Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Craft 4, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Leadership 1, Stealth 4, Survival 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Computers 2, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 4 (French, Latin, Swahili, Chinese), Medicine 3, Occult 4, Religion 2

Backgrounds: Artifacts 4 (Stygian metal blades, used to perform his art), Contacts 3

Fetters: Mortal remains 1, African mask in the High Museum of Art 3, Collection of carved stones scatted in the woods near Little Five Points 3

Arcanoi: Argos 3, Castigate 2, Lifeweb 4, Moliate 5, Puppetry 2

Passions: Further the will of Baron Samedi (Faith) 5, Avoid failing the Baron (Fear) 3, Protect his living family (Love) 2

Willpower: 8

Permanent Corpus: 10

Pathos: 9

Angst: 2

Shadow: The Monster

Thorns: Devil's Dare, Doppelganger, Infamy 3

Shadow Passions: Achieve the Baron's power (Envy) 4, Cast down and replace Baron Samedi (Hate) 2

Image: Jomo is a stunning figure. He is tall and lean with flawless, ebony skin and perfect, even teeth. His long, tapered fingers move with an unsettling grace, and his cold, merciless stare unnerves most wraiths. He wears striped pants and a vest, with numerous fetishes and trinkets on string around his neck to finish his attire.

Background: A ghoul in the service of a Samedi vampire claiming to be the legendary Baron Samedi himself, Jomo served his master in Africa long before he came to Haiti. He spent many years attending conferences and handling the mortal needs of his vampiric lord in the Caribbean before he

came to Atlanta. Whatever his master demanded, Jomo gladly handled, no matter what the nature of the order. Blood Bound beyond hope of escape, Jomo murdered and married with equal detachment, all at the command of the Baron.

As the decades passed and Jomo became one of the vampire's most trusted servants, Samedi told Jomo of the Shadowlands and the dangers inherent there. He also often warned that the day would come when Jomo would have to die in order to further the Baron's purposes, and, with the equanimity of the ghoul, Jomo accepted his fate. The Baron brought forth wraiths to speak with Jomo, showing him how to see the Restless and how to aid them when they needed assistance. Nor was Jomo's education limited to Stygian wraiths; in exchange for favors from wraiths of the Bush of Ghosts, he spent years in Mali and Dahomey, hunting down the murderers who'd sent his contacts across the Shroud. After almost three decades of this service, he returned to Atlanta, where his children had grown, married and had children of their own. He settled his affairs, writing out his will and leaving his money to the children he barely knew. Inevitably, the Baron arrived a scant week later, and Jomo introduced the vampire to his children and grandchildren alike. After a few weeks, when the Baron had bound Jomo's family to his will, Jomo crept away from the house where he lived — not far from Little Five Points — and, as the Baron had commanded, committed suicide.

The preparation that the Baron had given Jomo has served him in good stead, and he adapted smoothly and easily to life in the Shadowlands. However, the Blood Bond that once held him is gone; the service he gives now comes from equal parts loyalty, habit and the fact that the Baron watches over his living family. Still, Jomo is a bit more independent than perhaps the Baron would like, and has risen quickly in the ranks of the Masquers' Guild.

Roleplaying Hints: You do not allow others to see you for what you are. You always maintain an air of confidence and calm that most find frightening. Never ask anyone questions about themselves, as you have long since learned that many will volunteer practically anything in an effort to break the uncomfortable silence when they are alone with you. Never give out any information, as your reputation for silence is very important to your image. This is not to say that you won't deal with others, rather that you pick and choose your spots. Your rage is legendary, but it rarely escapes, as the stories have grown in the telling and thus work to your advantage.

Willie Ardmore

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Circle: Merchants' Guild

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2



Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Streetwise 3
Skills: Crafts 5, Firearms 2, Leadership 4, Melee 3
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Enigmas 3, Occult 2, Religion 1, Science 2
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifacts 3 (Mask of Stygian Steel, Scythe), Status 2
Fetters: Blacksmith's anvil in a small private Civil War collection (3)
Arcanoi: Argos 2, Castigate 1, Embodiment 1, Inhabit 4, Moliat 2
Passions: Bring down the Hierarchy (Hate) 3, Derive satisfaction from a job well done (Pride) 2, End all Slavery (Anger) 2
Willpower: 8
Permanent Corpus: 8
Pathos: 8
Angst: 3
Shadow: The Perfectionist
Thorns: Tainted Touch, Shadow Life
Shadow Passions: Betray the secrets of the Renegades (Hate) 3, Create flaws in Willie's work (Sadism) 2

Image: Willie appears as a thin man with heavily corded muscles. The stains from years of forging souls have left Willie's arms almost black, in comparison to his *café au lait* complexion. Willie has an open, friendly smile that reveals the gap between his front teeth, and a broad nose which has been broken on several occasions. His long curly hair is always pulled back by a leather thong, and his jeans and collarless shirt are protected by a heavy leather apron.

Background: Willie Ardmore was born a slave almost two decades before the start of the Civil War. Like his "father" before him, he worked for a blacksmith as a bellows-pumper. However, the man had a soft spot in his heart for Willie (in reality his illegitimate son), and took to rewarding his hard work by teaching him smithcraft. While Willie seldom worked on anything more complicated than a horseshoe, he learned well, and was recruited almost instantly by the Artificers' Guild when he died in the great fire that roared through Atlanta at the end of the war. Apprenticed to Arthur Davenport, the highest-ranking member of the Guild in Atlanta, Willie moved steadily through the Guild's ranks until, 30 years ago, tragedy struck. Davenport was set up, arrested, and smelted on charges of treason. Any comfort zone Willie had built up for himself had vanished, and the one friend he had in the Shadowlands was gone.

Willie's response was unorthodox. Rather than take on the Hierarchy in a fruitless quest for revenge, he instead organized the Merchants' Guild as a way of organizing and supplying the Hierarchy's enemies. Now Renegades and Heretics have equal access to soulforged weapons and Artifacts, and Legions don't have such an easy time of it. Somewhere, Davenport's spirit must be smiling.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a perfectionist. Praise of your work is a surefire way to get on your good side, but anyone who spots a flaw in something from your forge is just asking for his price to get



jacked up. You're scrupulously honest with your customers. This way they trust you and keep coming back, and you know that they're fighting the Hierarchy with the best tools possible.

The back room is a clutter of cartons, *objets d'art* and other oddities in the Skinlands. In the Shadowlands, dozens of Moliated sculptures peer out from every crevice and nook, and there's no escape from their gaze. In a clear space in the center of the room, Jomo and Willie are arguing hammer and tongs over the recent disappearances. Jomo blames the Burning, but Willie thinks it's the Hierarchy behind it all. The argument will go on for quite some time before either Guild member notices the intruders.

The Villain's Entrance

Also lurking around the back of the shop is Jack the Magical Cat (see below). Jack is doing his best to hide, and it will take a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 9) to spot him in the shadows. Even then, he may well be mistaken at first for an ordinary cat... until one of the characters realizes that there are no animals in the Shadowlands. If spotted, Jack will run like hell, and it is highly unlikely that any of the characters will be able to catch him.



Jomo will notice the intruders first, and ask them what their business is. If the characters say that they're investigating the disappearances, Jomo's reaction will be, "Why do you care?" Ardmore will instantly suspect the characters of being Hierarchy spies regardless of their true affiliation, and will remain close-mouthed unless thoroughly convinced that the characters are on the level. Then the conspiracy theories will come boiling out.

The facts of the case are simple: Over the past month and a half, there have been no new wraiths in the Little Five Points area, despite a spate of murders, an overdose and two fatal car accidents. All of these activities normally generate wraiths, and it was quite surprising that they hadn't this time around. Then the truth was uncovered: wraiths had been born, but someone had Reaped them with insane speed and, presumably, disposed of the Enfants.

There are no real leads, though the Citadel has been vehemently denying responsibility. If pressed, Jomo will remember that he had seen Effie at the site of each of the tragedies at some time before the fatalities occurred, but refuses to believe that the little girl would have anything to do with something obscene like this. He will instead postulate that the Burning is responsible, and mutter grimly about those wraiths in the area whom he is sure are members. On the list: Holly Underwood.

Wille, on the other hand, is convinced that the Hierarchy is behind the whole thing, and will propose a crack Harbinger squad popping in and out of the Little Five grabbing new souls before anyone knows what's happened. While he dislikes the Burning on general principle, Ardmore thinks that they're just a bunch of crackpots and not really dangerous.

Willie will also ask if the characters are interested in buying anything. He has it all: weapons, armor and Artifacts beyond description or belief. Of course, it is unlikely that the characters will be able to meet his prices. On the other hand, inspecting Willie's wares will bring home without a doubt the terrifying nature of Underworld existence.

If the Circle members make a good impression on the two Guildwraiths, they may well have made themselves a couple of allies. On the other hand, if the Circle has behaved badly or foolishly, they will find doors in Little Five closed to them and once-smiling faces turned away. Jomo and Willie both wield tremendous power in the Restless community, and their opinions carry a great deal of weight.

At this point, assuming he hasn't been flushed out already, Jack the Magical Cat will bolt for safety. If the characters follow, he will lead them on a merry chase through sewer pipes, under cars and up rainspouts. On the other hand, he could creep out on little cat feet....

Chapter Three: The Kindness of Strangers

At this point, the Circle will probably take one of the following four approaches:

- **Chase after Jack the Magical Cat** — While the characters may decide that chasing the cat is of paramount impor-

tance, Jack will have gone to ground by now. Looking for him will provide the wraiths with some healthy exercise and a good look at the sights and denizens of Little Five Points, but the odds are that Jack isn't coming out to play.

• **Check out the scene of one or more of the kidnappings** — There isn't much evidence around, and none of the wraiths of Little Five Points will claim to have witnessed any of the deaths in the area. However, multiple passers-by will reaffirm the fact that Effie was seen at the site of each calamity a few days before the disaster occurred. Wraiths questioned about Effie will be uniform in their praise of her — she is a sweet little girl whom everyone loves and will do their best to protect. Even Hierarchy patrols tend to “miss” her. On the other hand, word is that her Shadow is vicious.

If enough questions get asked, odds are that Effie herself will be drawn out. Jack the Magical Cat will accompany her if the characters haven't spotted him freely. Otherwise, he will be attempting to set up a frame around Holly.

The Frame

With the Circle hot on his (figurative) tail, Jack's next move is to shift the blame to someone else. Holly is the obvious target, particularly if Jack has overheard Jomo's accusations. With that in mind, he will stage a tableau that, in his mind, is certain to implicate the ex-streetwalker.

Jack is a master of many Arcanoi, including Moliate and Puppetry. While his rushed attempt to use Moliate to emulate Holly Underwood's appearance wouldn't fool anyone up close, it will serve from a distance, and Jack will make certain that the witnesses to his actions are far enough away not to notice the discrepancies. Therefore, when Jack puts his plan into action, observers will see Holly using Puppetry on a homeless man selling wilted daisies. The man will grow progressively more abusive until, under Jack's guidance, he will suddenly lunge at one or more of the shoppers in the area. Jack will keep his victim in this frenzy, chasing after anyone in sight for a minute or two, then the Magical Cat will force his host into the middle of the intersection of Euclid and Colquitt. The inevitable will result, and Holly-Jack will pop out at the last second as the man is mowed down. Using his Artifact (see below), Jack will then slice a rift into the Tempest and brutally shove the new wraith into it, still wrapped in his Caul. Depending upon circumstance, he will either flee or dive in immediately after his victim. The news of what occurs will be all over L5P within minutes, much to Holly's chagrin.

• **Find and question Holly Underwood** — When the Circle sees Holly again, she will be talking to a Legionnaire. The Hierarch will vanish immediately with an embarrassed look on his face; he will use Enshroud and thus be beyond chase or capture. Incidentally, the unnamed Hierarch is also a member of the Burning, but in light of Nowland's earlier warning, his presence should set off all sorts of alarm bells about Holly.

Holly herself will attempt to vamp her way out of any hot water her conversation with the Legionnaire might have landed her in with the Circle. The obvious excuse is that the soldier was a “customer,” but at this point the Circle probably will have none of it. If pressed, Holly will use her Arcanoi in an attempt to escape, and may well voluntarily surrender to her Shadow. If this happens, the players are in for a horrifying time, as Holly's Shadow has no sense of self-preservation and simply wants to take as many other wraiths with her as possible when she goes. If subdued, she (or her Shadow) will spout off Burning propaganda incessantly, but she will deny any involvement in the disappearances or the homeless man's death.

At this point, Holly will probably be turned over to the custody of the recently arrived Jomo. The Masquer will not be gentle, but will vow to get to the bottom of the matter before deciding what to turn Holly into. In either case, the characters will have hit a watershed of sorts. Only certain nagging doubts should remain at this point, like:

- Why has no one seen Holly manifest Puppetry before?
- What is up with the mysterious cat?
- If Holly had been so careful up to now, why did she suddenly commit a blatant act of soul-snapping?
- Where was the rest of the Burning while all of this was going on?

On the other hand, if the players do believe that Holly is innocent, then what appears to be their best lead has just vanished. All that remains is to find Effie, as there are no other stones left to overturn.

Scene Four: Little Girl Found

Effie dwells in the Blue Crystal, common knowledge to all of the wraiths who reside in the area. Most will be suspicious of handing out that information to strangers, as the L5P community is very protective of the little girl. Many wraiths have heard Effie talk about her cat, and some have even heard her refer to it by name, but no one has ever seen this “Jack.” The assumption is that Effie is talking about either a Fetter or a pet she had back in her breathing days, and no one thinks any more of it.

Effie will not be at home when the Circle arrives at the Blue Crystal, and the players will have a few minutes to wander around. Most of the pieces in the store are junk — overpriced Celtic music CDs, pewter miniatures with lead crystal eyes, insanely expensive polished stones — but a few of the

works are seemingly genuine, and surprisingly disturbing for Restless to look at. Relic tapers, fat and melted, sit burned-out all over the shop, and the light inside is dim at best.

The Nihil in the back of the shop is currently quiescent, but sensitive characters will be quite aware of an intangible wrongness in the air. If the characters poke around, they will discover that the storeroom in the back is the center of the bad vibes, but before there is any time for close examination Effie will return home, followed by Jack on stealthy little cat feet.

Effie

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Child

Circle: Renegades of Little Five Points

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Performance 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Haunt (Blue Crystal) 2, Memorium 4

Fetters: The locket her father gave her (2), The knife responsible for her death (1)

Arcanoi: Keening 3, Lifeweb 1, Outrage 3, Pandemonium 4

Passions: Make grownups suffer (Hate) 4, Fear the Bogeyman under the bed (Terror) 4

Willpower: 7

Permanent Corpus: 5

Pathos: 9

Angst: 7

Shadow: The Leech

Thorns: Dark Allies 4, Shadow Call, Shadow Life, Spectral Prestige 2

Shadow Passions: Torment Effie (Envy) 3, Let the Hierarchy destroy the Little Five (Hatred) 5

Image: Effie is a thin, blonde little girl, apparently only seven years old. Her clothes date back to before the Civil War, and she is never seen without a battered old rag doll in her hands. She seldom smiles, but often hums to herself as she walks through the night-shrouded streets of Little Five Points. On occasion, she presents a more disturbing appearance, walking the streets covered with lacerations and soaked in blood. In her more grisly form, Effie has no eyes, but manages to see through bloody, empty sockets just the same.

Background: Effie was a precocious child, filled with a love of the world around her. She often sneaked out of her house and explored the neighborhood, despite constant warnings by her parents for her to stay where it was safe. At the



age of six, she met a stranger in the area. His name was Jack. For several weeks they played together, despite his being almost 40 years old. Then one day, when Jack came to meet with her in their special place, he brought a new toy. Effie didn't like the knife as much as Jack did, but he made her play anyway. After he was finished, Jack threw Effie's body into a nearby creek and left the area, never to return.

A true little girl lost, Effie's body was never found, nor was her Corpus. She rested inside her Caul for over a century, finally escaping in 1974. Since then she has dwelt in Little Five, generally speaking only to her beloved relic rag doll, Mary. Others, even those she has some small trust for, get only monosyllabic answers and shy smiles.

Lately, Effie has befriended a black cat she calls Jack. Jack teaches Effie all sorts of wonderful tricks for defending herself from any wraith who might try to cause her trouble. Jack has even taught her to bring very bad people to her new home in the Blue Crystal, where Jack's friends can help punish them and make sure they never bother Effie again.

Roleplaying Hints: You don't like anyone. If anyone bothers you too much, you run away, screaming as the wounds open back up across your body. You hate remembering that you are dead, and when someone reminds you, they must pay

the price. Luckily, Jack the Magical Cat helps you by destroying them for you.

Storyteller Notes: Effie does not know that her Shadow warps her perspective on the world and keeps her from remembering certain things. She only knows that Jack is her friend. She no longer remembers her past or her life, and is certain that all grownups are dangerous and want to hurt her. In her eyes, the death of a grownup is not necessarily bad if it keeps her safe. She still likes to explore, but she normally stays close to the Blue Crystal, where Jack and his special friends can look after her.

Jack the Magical Cat

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Intimidation 5, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Investigation 5, Occult 5, Medicine 5

Backgrounds: Memoriam 4, Artifact 5 (straight razor that slices between the Tempest and the Shadowlands as well as inflicting aggravated damage)

Fetters: A well-scattered collection of knives from around the world serves as Jack's Fetters (5)

Arcanoi: Argos 5, Lifeweb 5, Outrage 5, Moliate 5, Pandemonium 5, Puppetry 5

Passions: Make the innocent suffer (Hate) 5, Make others fear the night (Pride) 5

Willpower: 10

Permanent Corpus: 10

Pathos: 9

Angst: 9

Shadow: The Monster

Thorns: Spectral Prestige 4

Shadow Passions: Hoist Jack on his own petard (Hate) 5, Find someone to inflict more pain than Jack ever possibly could (Self-Hatred) 5

Image: Oh, Jack is a sly one. He has any number of shapes he'll wear. These days, at least when bothering with his pet Effie, he appears as a large black cat with huge, innocent green eyes. His ghostly fur is thick and lustrous, except for a patch at the base of his tail and another on his right flank — no one can explain why.

Background: Jack cannot remember a time when he was not simply Jack. He has no memories of childhood, nor of a family who loved him or tortured him. He does not recall going to school or reading the Bible as a youth, though he is well-educated and can recite the text of the King James version of the Good Book verbatim. But Jack can recall the name of every pretty he's ever played with, and he knows the names of every sucker who's come to dance at the end of a rope for



the crimes he committed while Skinriding them. Oh the joys of watching a familiar host kick and thrash while he fights for life! To once again run a razor across the silken throat of a sweet child — that is what existence is all about for Jack.

Roleplaying Hints: If someone notices you, run. There are some strong wraiths out there, and they might even be able to harm you. It has happened before, though not for a long while. If someone touches you by surprise, someone you've never met before, let out a howl of epic proportions and start clawing, hissing and biting. Let them know they've made a hideous mistake, then run like hell. Do whatever it takes to cover your own ass, and you'll throw anyone and anything you know to the wolves to protect yourself. Hell, watching the feeding frenzy afterward is half the fun.

The Hideous Truth

Jack the Magical Cat is, of course, responsible for the disappearances. However, Effie is his willing accomplice, seeing Jack's actions as merely the removal of grownups who would undoubtedly try to hurt her at some point. Jack has no real interest in protecting Effie, and will gladly sacrifice her to escape.

If the characters don't spot Jack, he will simply attempt to escape as quickly and quietly as possible. He has no qualms about leaving Effie to the tender mercies of her erstwhile protectors, so long as his own wraithly hide comes out intact.

If he is spotted, however, the characters will probably also pounce on the fact that, well, there just shouldn't be a cat in the Shadowlands. Jack will attempt to play dumb at first, meowing and purring, but if that fails he will suddenly reverse course. If forced, he will speak urbane and charmingly about how much he enjoys Effie's company and how he's simply trying to protect her innocence.

Effie will simply stand and let Jack talk if he chooses to. Otherwise she will throw a tantrum, demanding that the characters leave her home. If this carries on too long, some of the local wraiths might well come in to assist the little girl. Assuming the characters do manage to calm Effie down, she will admit to having made "bad people" go away, but nothing more serious or detailed than that.

Jack, on the other hand, is stalling for time. He's waiting for the Nihil to open in the back room, and he'll talk a blue streak, if necessary, to keep the characters hanging around until the proverbial hell breaks loose. When that happens, he'll make a suitably concerned exclamation and dash for the back, Effie following. Presumably, the characters will follow,

and then Jack and Effie will try to push them into the Nihil. Jack will also use his Shadow Call to pull up reinforcements; he knows this fight is for keeps. He will also look for any opportunity to escape, and the heat of battle should provide one.

The back room is filled with boxes arranged in neat stacks. Shelves with candles, gargoyles and icons line the walls; everything is clean and neat. On the ceiling, however, is a rippling patch of blackness from which howling winds issue. The stink of rotten meat fills the room, and thunder can be heard dimly issuing from inside the Nihil. If Jack manages to pull off his Shadow Call, answering screams of Spectres will be heard as well. All rolls during the combat in the back room will be at + 1 difficulty because of the swirling winds.

Scene Five: Denouement

There are several possible conclusions to the story:

- **Total victory** — Jack and Effie are both subdued, the Spectres driven off, and the Nihil gets closed. In this case, assuming the characters can actually prove Effie and Jack's guilt, they will be heroes. On the other hand, Effie has many friends among the wraiths of Little Five Points, and quite a few simply might not want to believe the little girl's guilt. If



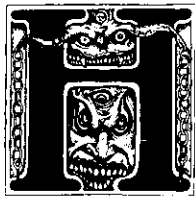


so, the characters will have a whole new batch of enemies to deal with once the ghostly ticker-tape settles.

• **Jack Escapes** — In all probability, the characters will be able to subdue Effie, as she has become totally reliant on Jack to extricate her from difficult situations. If Jack bolts, she'll be high and dry, and will not be difficult to capture. This can lead to a tribunal in front of the other wraiths of Little Five Points, or Jomo and Ardmore could decide to deal with the matter themselves. The chilling effect of a child's unrepentant confession of murder cannot be overstated, and should serve as a fitting conclusion to an introduction to Wraith.

• **Defeat!** — There is always the chance that the wraiths will lose. However, that isn't necessarily the end. If captured by Spectres, they might be dragged off to the Labyrinth for torment and games, any of which might offer opportunities for escape. Jack might succeed in dumping the characters into the Tempest but they could evade the Spectres there. This would lead to all-new adventures as the characters wander, lost in the eternal storm. Finally, there is always the option of having the cavalry come to the rescue. All that really matters, though, is that the conclusion of **Weed 'em and Reap** provides a good jumping-off point for the next Wraith story you tell.

Errata



ouston, we have a problem.

— Jim Lovell, *Apollo 13*

The following information was accidentally left out of **Wraith: The Oblivion 2nd Edition**. We apologize profusely for this.

Regaining Pathos Through Passions

To regain Pathos, a wraith (or Storyteller) rolls dice equal to the rating of her applicable Passion. If the wraith is actually performing the Passion in question, the difficulty of the roll is 6. If the wraith observes mortals who are in the throes of one of her Passions (i.e. experiencing the emotion at the core of the Passion), the same roll can be made at difficulty of 8. Finally, if the wraith herself feels the core emotion, but in a context other than the actual phrasing of the Passion, the difficulty of the roll is 9.

Rolling against a Passion should be reserved for times when a character feels strong emotion. A mild twinge of regret over a sunset not seen should not beget a roll against the Passion **Say farewell to my father (Regret) 3**. On the other hand, players should feel free to request Passion rolls from their Storytellers whenever they feel it is appropriate. Furthermore, Storytellers always have the option of rolling against characters' Passions in secret and handing out Pathos garnered in this manner.

A botch on a Passion roll gives the character a point of Temporary Angst instead.

Pathos can never, ever rise above 10.

For Example:

Daffyd has the Passion **Atonement for my errors (Penitence) 5**, and finds himself low on Pathos. However, he's burned up most of his juice trying to recover a relic that a friend had loaned him and that he'd lost. Daffyd's player asks his Storyteller if these actions were sufficient to trigger the Penitence Passion; the Storyteller agrees that they are and tells Daffyd's player to roll. He takes five dice (equal to his Passion rating) and lets loose: 10, 8, 7, 7, 2. With the four successes, Daffyd gets four points of Pathos and feels much perkier.

Later on, he sees a crying child through the Shroud. The boy has broken what is obviously one of his mother's prized vases and is desperately trying to glue it back together, without much success. Still, the Storyteller rules that observing this allows Daffyd to roll against his Passion, but at a difficulty of 8. Again Daffyd's player reaches for the dice, but this time he gets 7, 6, 5, 2, 1. It's a botch, and instead of Pathos, he gets a shot of Angst. His Shadow chuckles and suggests using **Outrage** to show the kid what a broken vase really looks like.

Much later, Daffyd finds himself awakening from a Catharsis. Gleeefully, his Shadow informs Daffyd that while in control, he had returned to the little boy's house and shattered every breakable in it. Of course, the child was blamed, and of course his parents didn't believe his story about a ghost being responsible. At this point, Daffyd expresses genuine regret over having caused the boy pain, even when it was his Shadow that performed the actual crime. In secret, the Storyteller figures that this is close enough to Daffyd's big Passion to warrant a roll, and behind his screen comes up with 10, 9, 4, 4, 2. He passes Daffyd's player a note letting him know that he's just come up with two new Pathos points, and a hint that maybe those points might be put to best use helping out the child who suffered for his sins....

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