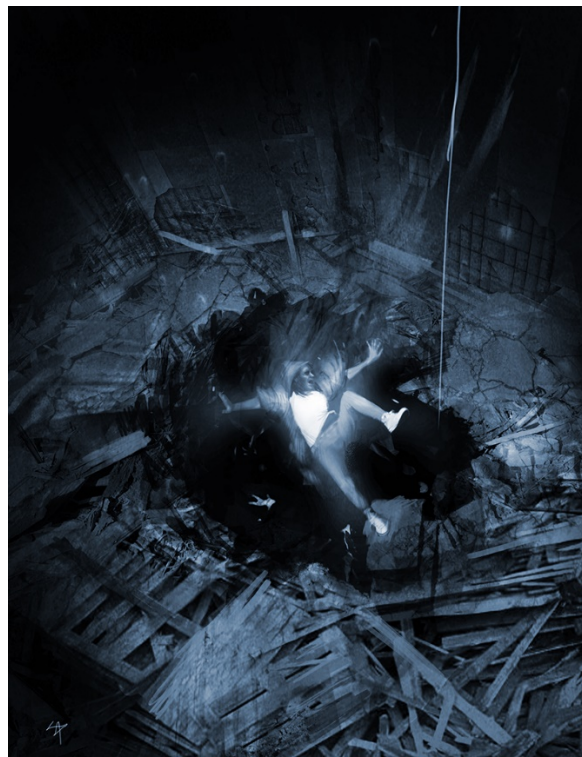


# GEIST

THE  
SIN-EATERS  
SECOND EDITION



KICKSTARTER MANUSCRIPT PREVIEW

Part 3

# Chapter Four: Old Laws

*In the long run we are all dead.*

—John Maynard Keynes, *A Tract on Monetary Reform*

This section contains the basic rules for playing **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**. More information, system variants, and examples can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.

## Traits

In addition to the supernatural traits of the Bound, **Chronicles of Darkness** characters have mundane Traits common to mortals and monsters alike. Many Traits are rated in *dots*, ranging either from 0-5 or from 1-10. Trait dots are used to determine how many dice you roll when your character takes *action*.

- *Attributes* are raw potential, the inherent levels of physical, mental, and social prowess a character possesses. Attributes are rated in dots ranging from 1-5.
- *Skills* are trained abilities, learned by dint of study or practice. They are rated in dots ranging from 0-5.
- *Skill Specialties* are specific areas of training in which a character excels. They are not rated in dots; a character either has a Skill Specialty or she doesn't.
- *Merits* are special knacks, social connections, and similar abilities characters possess. Merits are rated in dots, with each Merit requiring a certain number of dots to purchase.
- *Willpower* is the extra effort a character can bring to bear in a stressful or dangerous situation when success is crucial or hangs by a thread. Willpower is also used for some supernatural powers. It is rated in dots ranging from 1-10.
- Finally, human characters have Anchors in the form of a personal *Virtue* and *Vice* from which they can draw strength and refill Willpower, much the same way a Sin-Eater derives Willpower from her Root and Bloom. These are short, usually single-word descriptors and are not rated in dots.

## Attributes

Attributes represent essential traits that every character possesses by default. These serve as the foundation for most rolls in **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**. The nine Attributes are split into three categories: *Mental*, *Physical*, and *Social*. Each category has a *Power* Attribute, a *Finesse* Attribute, and a *Resistance* Attribute.

One dot in an Attribute reflects a below-average capacity. Two dots are about human average. Three and four reflect a high level of competency, while five reflects the height of human potential in that field.

### Attribute Basics

- **Rating:** Attributes are rated from 1-5 dots. Supernatural beings sometimes have Attributes rated at 6 or more dots.
- **Use in Actions:** Most actions a character takes involve one or two Attributes.

- **Basic Competency:** All characters receive one free dot in every Attribute.

## Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes reflect your character's acuity, intellect, and strength of mind. Each is listed with a sample action that might use that Attribute; see p. XX to learn how to roll dice and determine success or failure.

### Intelligence

Intelligence is your character's raw knowledge, memory, and capacity for solving difficult problems. This may be book smarts or a wealth of trivia.

*Example Task:* Memorization (Intelligence + Composure, instant action)

### Wits

Wits represents your character's ability to think quickly and improvise solutions. It reflects your character's perception and ability to pick up on details.

*Example Task:* Perception (Wits + Composure, reflexive action)

### Resolve

Resolve is your character's determination, patience, and sense of commitment. It allows your character to concentrate in the face of distraction and danger, or continue doing something in spite of insurmountable odds.

*Example Task:* Resisting coercion (Resolve + Composure, reflexive action)

## Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes reflect your character's bodily fitness and acumen.

### Strength

Strength is your character's muscular definition and capacity to deliver force. It affects many physical tasks, including most actions in a fight.

*Example Tasks:* Breaking a barrier (Strength + Stamina, instant action), lifting objects (Strength + Stamina, instant action)

### Dexterity

Dexterity is your character's speed, agility, and coordination. It provides balance, reactions, and aim.

*Example Task:* Keeping balance (Dexterity + Composure, reflexive action)

### Stamina

Stamina is your character's general health and sturdiness. It determines how much punishment your character's body can handle before it gives up.

*Example Task:* Staying awake (Stamina + Resolve, instant action)

## Social Attributes

Social Attributes reflect your character's ability to deal with others.

### Presence

Presence is your character's assertiveness, gravitas, and raw appeal. It gives your character a strong bearing that changes moods and minds.

*Example Task:* Good first impressions (Presence + Composure, instant action)

## Manipulation

Manipulation is your character's ability to make others cooperate. It's how smoothly she speaks, and how much people can read into her intentions.

*Example Task:* Poker face (Manipulation + Composure)

## Composure

Composure is your character's poise and grace under fire. It's his dignity and ability to remain unfazed when harrowed.

*Example Task:* Meditation (Resolve + Composure, extended action)

## Skills

Whereas Attributes represent innate ability, Skills reflect behaviors learned and honed over a lifetime. These are things that could be practiced or learned from a book. Similarly to Attributes, Skills are divided into Mental, Physical, and Social categories. Skills without dots are deficient or barely capable. Skills with a single dot reflect cursory training. Two dots are sufficient for professional use. Three represents a high level of competency. Four is outstanding, and five is absolute mastery of the discipline.

We've listed sample actions for each Skill; these lists are just common actions and should not be taken as a comprehensive guide to Skill usage. We also suggest dice pools, but it's important to look at the context of the scene and apply the best Attribute + Skill combination for the events at hand.

We've also listed some sample *equipment* and *circumstances* that could enhance Skill use (p. XX). You can find deeper rules for equipment in the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.

Finally, each Skill comes with a list of possible Specialties. As with sample actions, these are common examples, not a comprehensive catalogue.

### Skill Basics

- **Rating:** Skills are rated from 0-5 dots. Supernatural beings sometimes have Skills rated at 6 or more dots.
- **Use in Actions:** Many actions a character takes involve a Skill. Only one Skill is used for a given action.
- **No Free Dot:** Characters *do not* receive a free dot in any Skills.
- **Untrained Penalty:** Actions that require a Skill your character has no dots in suffer a penalty. Untrained Mental action: -3; untrained Physical action: -1; untrained Social action: -1

### Skill Specialties

In addition to Skills, your character possesses Skill Specialties. These are refinements of broader Skills: narrower than the main Skill, and defining your character's particular expertise. For example, your character might have three dots in Firearms but a Specialty in Rifles. This means

he's capable with all guns, but particularly good with rifles. If you look to the Skill descriptions, you'll see example Specialties. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a Specialty and what doesn't; Specialties that are too broad or too narrow can hurt the story or never come into play.

Skill Specialties let you flesh out your character and offer a mechanical benefit. When creating your character, let Specialty choice guide his development. For example, there's a huge difference between a character with Brawl 4 (Bar Fights) and Brawl 4 (Aikido).

### **Skill Specialty Basics**

- **Skill Specific:** A Specialty is linked to a single Skill.
- **Applicable Specialty:** A Specialty is applicable if the action your character is taking uses the linked Skill *and* fits with the description of the Specialty.
- **Effect:** An applicable Specialty grants a +1 bonus on the action.
- **Multiple Specialties:** A Skill can have multiple different Specialties, but not multiple instances of the same Specialty.
- **Multiple Applicability:** More than one applicable Specialty may apply to an action. The bonuses from multiple Specialties stack.

### **Mental Skills**

Mental Skills reflect knowledge and procedure, lore and understanding.

#### **Academics**

Academics is a broad Skill representing your character's higher education and knowledge of the arts and humanities. It covers language, history, law, economics, and related fields. The Bound often study history, literature, and philosophy looking for clues about the Sin-Eaters who came before.

*Sample actions:* Recall trivia (Intelligence + Academics; instant action), Find patterns in the data (Wits + Academics; extended action), Distort statistics to fit an agenda (Manipulation + Academics; instant action)

*Suggested equipment:* Internet access (+1), Library (+1 to +3), Professional consultant (+2)

*Specialties:* Anthropology, Art History, English, History, Law, Literature, Religion, Research, Translation

#### **Computer**

Computer is your character's advanced ability with computing. While most characters in the Chronicles of Darkness are expected to know the basics, the Computer Skill allows your character to program computers, crack into systems, diagnose major problems, and investigate data. This Skill reflects advanced techniques and tricks; almost everyone can operate a computer for email and basic internet searches.

*Sample actions:* Hacking a system (Intelligence + Computer, extended action, contested if against a security administrator or other hacker), Internet search (Wits + Computer, instant action), Programming (Intelligence + Computer, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Computer system (+0 to +3, by performance), Custom software (+2), Passwords (+2)

*Specialties:* Data Retrieval, Graphics, Hacking, Internet, Programming, Security, Social Media

## **Crafts**

Crafts reflects your character's knack with creating and repairing things. From creating works of art to fixing an automobile, Crafts is the Skill to use. Sin-Eaters use Crafts to build monuments and repair Anchors, as well as to create art that expresses their faith.

*Sample actions:* Appraisal (Wits + Crafts, instant action), Counterfeit item (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Create art (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Repair item (Wits + Crafts, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Point of reference (+1), Quality materials (+2), Tools (+1 to +3, depending on utility and specialty), Well-equipped workplace (+2)

*Specialties:* Automotive, Cosmetics, Fashion, Forging, Graffiti, Jury-Rigging, Painting, Perfumery, Repair, Sculpting

## **Investigation**

Investigation is your character's ability to solve mysteries and put together puzzles. It reflects the ability to draw conclusions, find meaning out of confusion, and use lateral thinking to find information where others could not. Sin-Eaters dedicated to unearthing the forgotten stories of the dead typically have high Investigation ratings.

*Sample actions:* Examining a crime scene (Wits + Investigation, extended action), Solving riddles (Intelligence + Investigation, instant or extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Forensic kit (+1), Unrestricted access (+2), Reference library (+2)

*Specialties:* Artifacts, Autopsy, Body Language, Crime Scenes, Cryptography, Dreams, Lab Work, Riddles

## **Medicine**

Medicine reflects your character's knowledge of the human body and how to fix it and keep it in working order. Characters with Medicine can make efforts to stem life-threatening wounds and illnesses.

*Sample actions:* Diagnosis (Wits + Medicine, instant action), Treating wounds (Intelligence + Medicine, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Medical tools (+1 to +3), Trained assistance (+1), Well-stocked facilities (+2)

*Specialties:* First Aid, Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, Physical Therapy, Surgery

## **Occult**

The Occult Skill is your character's knowledge of things hidden in the dark, legends and lore. While the supernatural is unpredictable and often unique, the Occult Skill allows your character to pick out facts from rumor.

*Sample actions:* Identify the sliver of truth (Wits + Occult, instant action), Relate two similar myths (Intelligence + Occult, instant or extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Well-stocked library (+2)

*Specialties:* Alchemy, Mystic Places, Casting Lots, Phrenology, Sorcery, Supernatural Being (specify), Superstition, the Underworld, Witchcraft

## **Politics**

Politics reflects a general knowledge of political structures and methodologies, but more practically shows your character's ability to navigate those systems and make them work the way she intends. With Politics, she knows the right person to ask to get something done.

*Sample actions:* Cut red tape (Manipulation + Politics, extended action), Identify authority (Wits + Politics, instant action), Sully reputations (Manipulation + Politics, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Official position (+1 to +5, by Status)

*Specialties:* Bureaucracy, Church, Democratic, Krewe, Local, Organized Crime, Scandals

## **Science**

Science is your character's knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural sciences, such as biology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, and physics.

*Sample actions:* Assess variables (Intelligence + Science, instant or extended action), Formulate solution (Intelligence + Science, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Reference library (+1 to +3), Well-stocked laboratory (+2)

*Specialties:* Chemistry, Genetics, Hematology, Neuroscience, Physics, Virology

## **Physical Skills**

Physical Skills are those practiced, trained, and learned through action.

### **Athletics**

Athletics reflects a broad category of physical training and ability. It covers sports and basic physical tasks such as running, jumping, dodging threats, and climbing. It also determines a character's ability with thrown weapons, and how hard they are to hit when violence breaks out.

*Sample actions:* Acrobatics (Dexterity + Athletics, instant action), Climbing (Strength + Athletics, extended action), Foot chase (Stamina + Athletics, contested action), Jumping (Strength + Athletics, instant action, one foot vertically per success)

*Suggested equipment:* Athletic Shoes (+1), Rope (+1)

*Specialties:* Acrobatics, Archery, Climbing, Jumping, Parkour, Swimming, Throwing

### **Brawl**

Brawl reflects your character's ability to tussle and fight without weapons. This includes old-fashioned bar brawls as well as complex martial arts (the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook offers Merits to complement unarmed fighters). Most of the Bound have at least a basic ability to defend themselves — sooner or later, it becomes necessary.

*Sample actions:* Breaking boards (Strength + Brawl, instant action), Hand-to-hand combat (covered in the combat section, p. XX)

*Suggested equipment:* Brass Knuckles (+1)

*Specialties:* Biting, Boxing, Dirty Fighting, Grappling, Martial Arts, Threats, Throws

## **Drive**

Drive is the Skill to control and maneuver automobiles, motorcycles, boats, and even airplanes. A character can drive a car without Drive dots; the Skill relates to moments of high stress, such as a high-speed chase or trying to elude a tail. It's assumed that most modern characters have a basic ability to drive. Drive can also reflect your character's familiarity with horseback riding, if appropriate to her background.

*Sample actions:* Impressive maneuvering (Dexterity + Drive, instant action), Pursuit (Dexterity + Drive, contested action), Tailing (Wits + Drive, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Performance vehicle (+1 to +3)

*Specialties:* Defensive Driving, Evasion, Off-Road Driving, Motorcycles, Pursuit, Stunts

## **Firearms**

Firearms reflects your character's ability to identify, maintain, and otherwise use guns. This Skill covers everything from small pistols, to shotguns, to assault rifles, and anything else related. (You can find numerous Merits and further rules for firearms combat in the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.)

*Sample actions:* Firearms combat (see p. XX for more on how firearms combat works)

*Suggested equipment:* Ranged weapons (p. XX), Scope (+1 to +3), Stable firing platform (+2)

*Specialties:* Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Trick Shots

## **Larceny**

Larceny covers intrusion, lockpicking, theft, pickpocketing, and other (generally considered) criminal activities. This Skill is typically learned on the streets, outside of formal methods. However, stage magicians and other entertainers learn these tricks as part of their repertoire.

*Sample actions:* Bypass security systems (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Lockpicking (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Pickpocketing (Dexterity + Larceny, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Crowbar (+1), Crowded area (+2), Lockpicks (+2), Partner in crime (+1)

*Specialties:* Breaking and Entering, Concealment, Lockpicking, Pickpocketing, Safecracking, Security Systems, Sleight of Hand

## **Stealth**

Stealth reflects your character's ability to move unnoticed and unheard or blend into a crowd. Every character approaches Stealth differently; some use distraction, some disguise, while some are just hard to keep an eye on. *Sample actions:* Losing a tail (Wits + Stealth, contested action), Shadowing (Dexterity + Stealth, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Binoculars (+1), Dark Clothing (+1), Smokescreen (+2), Spotters (+1)



*Specialties:* Camouflage, Crowds, In Plain Sight, Rural, Shadowing, Stakeout, Staying Motionless

## **Survival**

Survival represents your character's ability to "live off the land." This means finding shelter, finding food, and otherwise procuring the necessities for existence. This could be in either a rural or urban environment. This Skill also covers the ability to hunt for animals or, under the right circumstances, people. The Bound often use this knowledge to survive and find their way in the Underworld.

*Sample actions:* Foraging (Wits + Survival, extended action), Hunting (for animals, Wits + Survival, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Survival Guide (+1), Survival Knife (+1)

*Specialties:* Foraging, Hunting, Navigation, Shelter, Weather

## **Weaponry**

Weaponry is the ability to fight with hand-to-hand weapons: from swords, to knives, to baseball bats, to chainsaws. If the intent is to strike another and harm him, Weaponry is the right Skill. (You can find numerous Merits for Weaponry-based fighting in the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.)

*Sample actions:* Attacking another (see p. XX for more on Weaponry combat)

*Suggested equipment:* See p. XX for a full list of weapons

*Specialties:* Chains, Clubs, Improvised Weapons, Spears, Swords

## **Social Skills**

Social Skills are your character's ability to understand and relate to other people and animals.

### **Animal Ken**

Animal Ken reflects your character's ability to train and understand animals. With Animal Ken, your character can cow beasts or rile them to violence under the right circumstances.

*Sample actions:* Animal training (Manipulation + Animal Ken, extended action), Cowing an animal (Presence + Animal Ken, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Treats (+1), Whip (+1)

*Specialties:* Animalism, Canines, Felines, Reptiles, Threatening, Training

### **Empathy**

Empathy represents your character's ability to read and understand others' feelings and motivations. This helps discern moods or read deceptive behavior in discussion. It is not inherently sympathetic; one can understand another's positions without agreeing with them. Empathy is key to understanding the dead, particularly those ghosts who have passed beyond the ability to communicate easily.

*Sample actions:* Finding someone's pain (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Sense deception (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Soothing nerves (Manipulation + Empathy, instant action)

*Suggested equipment:* Muted clothing (+1), Relaxing environment (+2)

*Specialties:* Calming, Emotion, Lies, Motives, Personalities

### **Expression**

The Expression Skill reflects your character's ability to communicate. This Skill covers written and spoken forms of communication, journalism, acting, music, and dance. Sin-Eaters often incorporate it into their religious rites.

*Sample actions:* Composing (Intelligence + Expression, extended action), Performance (Presence + Expression, instant action)

*Suggested equipment:* Quality instrument (+1 to +3)

*Specialties:* Dance, Drama, Journalism, Musical Instrument, Performance Art, Singing, Speeches

### **Intimidation**

Intimidation reflects your character's ability to influence others' behavior through threats and fear. It could mean direct physical threats, interrogation, or veiled implications of things to come.

*Sample actions:* Interrogation (Wits + Intimidation, contested action), Staredown (Presence + Intimidation, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Fearsome tools (+2), Gang colors (+2), Isolated room (+1)

*Specialties:* Direct Threats, Interrogation, Stare Down, Torture, Veiled Threats

### **Persuasion**

Persuasion is your character's ability to change minds and influence behaviors through logic, fast-talking, or appealing to desire. It relies on the force of your character's personality to sway the listener.

*Sample actions:* Fast Talk (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action), Firebranding (Presence + Persuasion, instant action), Seduction (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action)

*Suggested equipment:* Designer Clothing (+1 to +3), Reputation (+2)

*Specialties:* Confidence Scam, Fast-Talking, Inspiring, Sales Pitch, Seduction, Sermon

### **Socialize**

Socialize reflects your character's ability to present herself well and interact with groups of people (alive or dead). It reflects proper (and setting-appropriate) etiquette, customs, sensitivity, and warmth. A character with a high Socialize is the life of the party.

*Sample actions:* Carousing (Manipulation + Socialize, instant action), Fitting in (Wits + Socialize, instant action), Getting attention (Presence + Socialize, instant action)

*Suggested equipment:* Drugs (+1), Knowing People (+1), Money (+1 to +5)

*Specialties:* Bar Hopping, Church Lock-in, Dress Balls, Formal Events, Frat Parties, Political Fundraisers, The Club

### **Streetwise**

The Streetwise Skill is your character's knowledge of life on the streets. It tells her how to navigate the city, how to get information from unlikely sources, and where she'll be (relatively) safe. If she wants to get something on the black market, Streetwise is how she'll know what to do.

*Sample actions:* Finding a shortcut (Wits + Streetwise, instant action), Working the black market (Manipulation + Streetwise, instant action)

*Suggested equipment:* Burner phone (+1), Known nickname (+2), Valuable contraband (+1 to +3)

*Specialties:* Black Market, Gangs, Navigation, Rumors, Undercover

## Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the ability to deceive. With Subterfuge, your character can lie convincingly, project hidden messages in what she says, hide motivations, and notice deception in others.

*Sample actions:* Disguise (Wits + Subterfuge, instant action), Lying (Manipulation + Subterfuge, contested action)

*Suggested equipment:* Costume Supplies (+2), Fake ID (+1)

*Specialties:* Detecting Lies, Doublespeak, Hiding Emotion, Little White Lies, Misdirection

## Willpower

A character's Willpower represents her determination and her ability to go above and beyond what should be possible to achieve her goals.

### Spending Willpower

- **Reflexive Action:** Unless otherwise specified, spending Willpower is a Reflexive action.
- **Roll Bonus:** Spend 1 Willpower: +3 bonus on a single dice pool.
- **Increased Resistance:** Spend 1 Willpower: +2 bonus on *Resistance* against a single action.
- **Other Expenditures:** Other abilities may require Willpower expenditure, as noted under **Cost**.
- **Per Turn Limit:** Characters may only spend 1 Willpower per turn.

## Anchors

A Sin-Eater's Anchors are her Root, Bloom, and Touchstones (p. XX). Human characters have only two Anchors: Virtue and Vice.

Virtue and Vice are traits that human characters possess instead of Elpis and Torment. Virtue is a point of strength and integrity in the character's life, while Vice is a place of weakness. This is just a brief touch on the topic; for more, look to the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.

When choosing Virtues and Vices, use the following guidelines:

- Both should be adjectives that describe dominant personality traits. Don't use physical descriptions.

- Traits that describe existing Advantages, Attributes, or Skills similarly do not apply. For example, “Strong,” and “Composed,” would not work as Virtues.
- Virtue should be a point of self-confidence and self-actualization, but something easy and tempting to ignore. It’s a higher calling if she chooses to walk the talk.
- Vice should contrast Virtue as a short-term, quick source of distraction from the world. It should be a hiding place when you’re weak.
- Virtue and Vice must be different. The same adjective could work as both a Virtue and Vice in some cases, but a character must have two different ones.

### **Anchors Basics**

When your character *fulfills* their Vice, they take an action that is in accordance with it (picking a fight if they’re Violent, stopping off for a pint if they’re Drunk, etc.) When your character fulfills their Virtue, they take *meaningful* action in accordance with it (putting themselves in harm’s way for another if they’re Protective, defeating a great threat if they’re Crusading, etc.).

- **Vice:** Fulfill Vice: Regain 1 Willpower; once per scene.
- **Virtue:** Fulfill Virtue: Regain *all* Willpower; once per chapter.

## **Speed**

Your character’s Speed is the number of yards or meters she can travel in a single turn. This trait is a combination of her Strength, Dexterity, and a species factor that reflects her age, physical configuration, Size and other considerations.

Other species, such as horses and cheetahs, have physical configurations that lend themselves to high travel rates.

### **[CHART]**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Species</b>
1	Turtle
3	Human toddler
5	Human adult
8	Wolf
10	Caribou
12	Horse
15	Cheetah

### **[END CHART]**

## **Defense**

Defense measures your character’s ability to react to danger and mitigate harm to herself. It’s most often used when violence breaks out, but is sometimes used to resist harm from other sources as well.

### **Defense Basics**

- **Resistance:** Defense counts as a Resistance Attribute (p. XX) for any rule that interacts with Resistance (e.g. spending Willpower).
- **Multiple Hazards:** In an *action scene* (p. XX), each time you resist an action with your Defense, you suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to Defense. This penalty goes away at the beginning of your next turn. You can choose not to resist an action with Defense; if you do, the penalty doesn't increase.

## Actions

**Geist: The Sin-Eaters** rates each action by two criteria: how long they take to attempt and whether they are opposed by another character. All actions fall into one category in both arenas: an action might be instant and basic (usually just abbreviated to “instant”), extended and contested, or reflexive and resisted, for example.

### Actions by Time

- **Instant:** The action is resolved in a single roll. Unless otherwise noted, an instant action only takes a few seconds and takes up your *turn* in an *action scene*.
- **Reflexive:** The action takes no appreciable time or effort, and is resolved in a single roll. In an action scene, you can take reflexive actions on other characters' turns, and reflexive actions don't take up your turn. *Contesting* someone else's action is always reflexive.
- **Extended:** The action requires multiple rolls over time to complete; as such an extended action is not usually an option in action scenes.

### Time

When you're playing **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**, time in the story can speed past or slow to a crawl compared to time in the real world. Weeks or months might pass in the space of few words, while a tense negotiation plays out in real time — or takes even longer.

In addition to years, days, hours, and so on, **Geist** also uses six units of dramatic time. These build upon one another, from shortest to longest.

- **Turn** — The smallest increment of time, a turn lasts for about three seconds. A character can perform a single instant action and move their Speed in a turn. Turns normally only matter in fights or other dramatic and stressful situations.
- **Scene** — Much like a scene in a play, a scene in a roleplaying game is the time spent dealing with a single, specific event. The Storyteller frames the scene, describing what's going on, and it's up to the players to resolve the event or conflict. A scene might be played out in turns (called an *action scene*), progress in real time, or skip forward depending on dramatic necessity.
- **Chapter** — A chapter is the collection of scenes that happen during one game session. From the moment you sit down and start playing to the point where you pack up your dice, you're playing out a chapter of your story.
- **Story** — A story tells an entire tale, following the dramatic arc of a related series of events. It might comprise several chapters or be completed in just one. It has an introduction, rising tension, a number of twists, and a climax that brings things to a conclusion.

- **Chronicle** — The big picture, a chronicle is the collection of interlinked stories that involve your characters. They might be linked by a common theme or overarching plotline, or they may only share characters and locations. As your story progresses, the players and Storyteller work together to create an ongoing chronicle.

### **Actions by Opposition**

- **Simple:** No opposition. Calculate dice pool and roll results as normal.
- **Contested:** Calculate dice pool as normal and roll. The target rolls a dice pool specified by how they contest the action. If the target's total successes exceed yours, your action fails.
- **Resisted:** Calculate dice pool, then apply a penalty equal to one of the target's Resistance Attributes (Stamina, Resolve, or Composure) or Defense. Roll, and calculate roll results as normal.

Contested or Resisted?

If you're not sure whether to use resistance or a contested action, use this guideline: Resistance applies in situations where the number of successes on the roll is an important factor. If what matters is just whether the roll succeeds or not, use a contested action. For example, combat applies Defense as a resistance because the number of successes on the roll determines how badly the attacker messes up his victim. A supernatural power that puts a victim in your thrall uses a contested action, because the number of successes you roll doesn't matter to the power.

### **Extended Actions**

Some actions require a great deal of effort over time, and represent the sort of project you can abandon and resume later. Such actions are modeled as extended actions, and they're a little more complex than instant or reflexive actions.

When you take an extended action, the Storyteller determines how many successes you require. Most actions require between five and 20 successes. Five reflects a reasonable action that competent characters can achieve with the right tools and knowledge. Ten represents a difficult action that's still realistic for a professional in a field. Twenty represents a very difficult action that even a particularly skilled character will have trouble pulling off.

The Storyteller also determines the interval between rolls. If an action would take weeks to complete, she might consider one roll per week. If it's likely to take a day's work, one roll per hour makes for a solid timeframe.

Once those factors are determined, you make a number of rolls, counting up the total number of successes across all your rolls. If you earn the required number of successes before you run out of time, you accomplish your goal.

### **Extended Action Basics**

- **Multiple Rolls:** You roll your dice pool multiple times over the course of the action. Successes earned on all rolls count toward completing the action.

- **Roll Limit:** You can make a total number of rolls equal to your base dice pool for the action, before factoring in any modifiers. The Storyteller may reduce this value if time is a factor.
- **Time Interval:** Each roll takes a certain amount of time, determined by the Storyteller.
- **Required Successes:** The Storyteller sets the total number of successes required for the action, usually between five and 20.
- **Exceptional Success:** Extended actions earn an exceptional success when a single roll shows 5 or more successes.

### Extended Action Roll Results

These apply to all extended actions. Specific extended actions may have additional effects.

**Success:** Add the successes earned on the roll to your running total. Work with the Storyteller to determine what steps your character has taken towards his goal.

**Exceptional:** Choose one: Reduce the number of successes required by your character's Skill dots, reduce the time on each following roll by a quarter, or apply the exceptional success result of the action when you complete your goal.

**Failure:** You face a setback. The Storyteller will offer you a choice: Take a Condition of her choice or abandon the action. You can offer a different Condition if you think it makes sense. If you refuse or cannot agree on a Condition, you lose all accumulated successes (see "Conditions," p. XX).

**Dramatic:** Lose all accumulated successes. In addition, the first roll on a subsequent attempt suffers a -2 die penalty.

#### When to Use Extended Actions

As Storyteller, when should you call for an extended action vs. an instant action that takes a defined amount of time? Use the following guidelines:

- **Time Pressure:** If the hungry ghosts manifest at dusk and the characters need to fix their car before that happens, the question of "how long does it take?" has real stakes and tension. If the characters aren't under time pressure, extended actions can feel like a lot of tedious rolling for no reason.
- **Take a Break:** Extended actions are best suited for things the character could conceivably abandon for some time and then resume later: fortifying a safehouse or researching a haunting, for example. If it's something that has to be done all in one go (like performing a magical ritual or cooking a meal), it's probably better modeled as an instant action unless time is a factor.

## Common Actions

The following actions represent some of the more common actions characters might undertake in a **Geist: The Sin-Eaters** game. They are presented here in a highly condensed form; for more detailed discussions of many of these actions, see the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.

**[PRODUCTION -- BEGIN A LITTLE GRID FOR EACH OF THESE, SORTA LIKE SCENE CARDS]**

**Abjuration (Instant and Contested; Resolve + Composure vs. target's Power + Resistance; requires five minutes)**

By confronting an ephemeral entity with faith and conviction, you drive it back to wherever it came from.

- **Success:** Any Manifestation Conditions tagged by the target within (your Willpower) yards are suppressed for one day.

**Exceptional:** The Conditions are suppressed for one week.

- **Failure:** The entity is not abjured.

**Dramatic:** You cannot attempt to abjure the same entity for the rest of the story.

**Argument (Instant and Contested; Intelligence + Expression vs. victim's Resolve + Composure)**

You try to sway someone with a rational argument. (If arguing with a crowd, use the highest Resolve in the crowd.) (See also Social Maneuvering, p. XX.)

- **Success:** They accept the truth (or apparent truth) of your words.

**Exceptional:** They're convinced and become recruits to your point of view, though they might change their minds if they find themselves at risk.

- **Failure:** They listen but are ultimately unaffected.

**Dramatic:** You convince them of quite the opposite.

**Carousing (Instant; Presence + Socialize or Streetwise)**

You mix with a group, bringing high spirits with you and using them to loosen tongues.

- **Success:** You make a single-serving friend who might be willing to pass secrets or go with you somewhere private.

**Exceptional:** You make a friend you can contact again.

- **Failure:** You end up a wallflower, with a drink in your hand that you don't even want.

**Dramatic:** A faux pas reveals that you don't belong...and maybe even hints at your supernatural nature.

**Fast-Talk (Instant and Contested; Manipulation + Subterfuge vs. victim's Composure + Empathy)**

You may not be able to win the argument with facts, but you can try to get out of trouble with a little judicious spin.

- **Success:** The other party swallows your story.

**Exceptional:** The other party believes you so thoroughly that they're even willing to offer a little aid...though they won't put themselves at any kind of risk.

- **Failure:** The other party doesn't believe you.

**Dramatic:** The other party has a good idea what the truth is.



### **Interrogation (Extended and Resisted; Manipulation + Empathy or Intimidation – victim’s Resolve)**

You try to dig secrets out of a reluctant informant. (See also Social Maneuvering, p. XX.)

- **Success:** You get the information you were looking for; one piece per success rolled.

**Exceptional:** You get the information you were looking for, and the informant is willing to continue cooperating.

- **Failure:** The informant blabs a mix of truth and falsehood — even he may not know the difference.

**Dramatic:** The informant is so alienated or injured that he will no longer reveal information.

### **Intimidation (Instant and Contested; Strength or Manipulation + Intimidation vs. victim’s Resolve + Composure)**

You try to get someone to do what you want by making him afraid of you.

- **Success:** They’re coerced into helping you.

**Exceptional:** They develop a lasting fear of you, which could make them easier to coerce in the future.

- **Failure:** They’re unimpressed with your threats.

**Dramatic:** They don’t take you seriously, even if you knock them around a bit. They won’t be doing what you want.

### **Investigating a Scene (Extended; Intelligence + Investigation)**

You look for clues to what’s happened in the recent past...or tidy up so that no one else can find them.

- **Success:** You find a clue of exactly the sort you need or manage to significantly confuse future investigators.

**Exceptional:** You find a clue, and know exactly how it fits in, or you leave the scene immaculate and impossible to decipher.

- **Failure:** You find evidence, but it’s damaged and hard to interpret. Or you miss a spot in your clean-up that you won’t find out about until later.

**Dramatic:** You find clues but you contaminate them, or you leave evidence of your presence.

### **Jumping (Instant; Strength + Athletics – [yards or meters of distance])**

To get past an obstacle or out of danger, you leap into the air.

- **Success:** Your character clears the obstacle or avoids the danger.

**Exceptional:** Your character may attempt another instant action in the air or upon landing.

- **Failure:** Your character doesn’t achieve any significant distance at all — she jumps too early, has a false start, or loses her nerve.

**Dramatic:** The task not only fails, but your character loses her balance.

### **Repair (Extended; Intelligence + Crafts)**

You try to fix something that's broken down.

- **Success:** You get the thing working...for now.

**Exceptional:** The object works better than before. It won't break again any time soon.

- **Failure:** You're stymied by the problem, but you could come back to it in another scene.

**Dramatic:** The broken object's a lost cause. It'll never work again.

### **Research (Extended; Intelligence + Academics or Occult)**

Using your existing knowledge, you look for information on a current mystery.

- **Success:** You find the basic facts you were looking for.

**Exceptional:** You find what you were looking for, which leads toward a much bigger source of information.

- **Failure:** You turn up a lot of promising leads, but they're all dead ends.

**Dramatic:** You learn something, but it doesn't help. In fact, it sets you back. If using Occult, this could mean dangerously false assumptions.

### **Shadowing a Mark (Instant and Contested; Wits + Stealth or Drive vs. Wits + Composure)**

You follow someone, perhaps in the hopes of ambushing them, or of finding out their destination.

- **Success:** You follow the mark to his destination.

**Exceptional:** You find some means by which you can continue following the mark, such as an unlocked entrance into the building he arrived at.

- **Failure:** The mark senses he's being followed and manages to lose you.

**Dramatic:** You're caught, either by the mark or some observer that's become suspicious of you.

### **Sneaking (Instant and Contested; Dexterity + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure)**

You're trying to avoid notice by someone...or multiple someones. Maybe you want to get into a place undetected. Maybe you're trying to break out.

- **Success:** You avoid notice and get closer to your goal.

**Exceptional:** You avoid notice and get away before anyone has another chance to catch you.

- **Failure:** You're noticed but still have the chance to slip away.

**Dramatic:** You attract a lot of attention...enough that now it's going to be hard to get out.

### **Warding and Binding (Instant and Contested; Resolve + Composure vs. Power + Resistance; requires 15 minutes)**

Using an ephemeral entity's Bane, you mark out a boundary it cannot cross.

- **Success:** The ephemeral entity treats crossing the boundary you defined as against its Ban. This lasts for (successes) days or until the boundary is broken.

  - **Exceptional:** The effect lasts (successes) weeks.

- **Failure:** The ephemeral entity is not bound or warded.

  - **Dramatic:** You cannot attempt to ward or bind this entity again for the rest of the story.

[END QUICK REFERENCE]

## Rolling Dice

When your character is trying to accomplish something and the outcome is in doubt, you roll a number of 10-sided dice. The result of that roll determines whether your character *succeeds* and accomplishes their goal, or whether they *fail* and don't do what they set out to. Failure doesn't mean "nothing happens," just that your character doesn't get what they want and complications are headed their way.

You might also score an *exceptional success* or suffer a *dramatic failure* (p. XX).

## Dice Pool

The number of dice you roll depends on the action you're taking. Most of the time, it will be the value of one or more Traits on your character sheet; for example, fast-talking your way past a bouncer might be a roll of Manipulation + Subterfuge, which means you roll a number of dice equal to your Manipulation rating plus your Subterfuge rating. Circumstantial factors, appropriate equipment (or lack thereof), or opposition from another character can add or subtract dice from the total. The total number of dice you roll is called your *dice pool*.

The Storyteller determines the appropriate dice pool based on what you're trying to do and how you're trying to do it, using the descriptions of the various Traits involved. In the above example, if you explained to the Storyteller that you weren't trying to lie your way past the bouncer but schmooze her into liking you enough to let you in, the Storyteller might revise the dice pool to Manipulation + Socialize.

Most of the actions described in this book will tell you what the dice pool should be, but it's fine to come up with dice pools for other actions on an ad hoc basis. Just try to be fair and consistent — if you decide bashing down a door is Strength + Stamina in one session, it should always be Strength + Stamina unless the situation radically changes.

### Circumstance and Equipment

Sometimes, fortune favors your character, or they're packing the right tools for the job. Other times, the odds are stacked against you or you don't have the right gear at all. The Storyteller should weigh how circumstances or equipment affect a character's chance of success and assign an appropriate *modifier*. A slight advantage — picking an old and damaged lock — might be worth a bonus die, while a stressful situation — trying to pick a lock while people are shooting at you — might subtract three dice from your pool.

## Dice Rolling Basics

- **Building a Pool:** Unless otherwise noted, a dice pool is always Attribute + different Attribute or Attribute + Skill.
- **Modifiers:** Bonuses add the indicated number of dice; penalties remove the number of dice. Unless otherwise specified, modifiers can never exceed +/-5. Add all relevant bonuses *before* subtracting penalties.
- **Successes:** Any die showing 8, 9, or 10 counts as a *success*.
- **10-again:** Any die that shows a 10 is counted as a success, then rerolled. Rerolled dice count successes as normal. Continue counting successes and rerolling as long as you keep rolling 10s.

### Dice Rolling Advanced

The Storytelling system has a few special rules that apply to certain actions. This section lists the ones used most commonly in **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**. For a more complete list, see the **Chronicles of Darkness** Rulebook.

- **9-Again:** Replaces 10-again (p. XX). You reroll dice that show 9 or 10, as opposed to just 10. Keep rolling until you get a result that isn't a 9 or 10.
- **8-Again:** Replaces 10-again and 9-again. You reroll dice that show 8, 9, or 10 — any successful die — and keep rolling as long as your dice show successes.
- **Extra Successes:** On a successful action, add additional successes after the roll. This can turn a success into an exceptional success.
- **Rote Actions:** After rolling, reroll all dice showing 1-7. If you're reduced to a chance die on a rote action, don't reroll a dramatic failure. Only reroll once.
- **Successive Attempts:** If time is not an issue and your character is under no pressure to perform, retry failed actions with your full dice pool. If time is short and the situation is tense, retry failed actions with a *cumulative* -1 die penalty. Successive attempts do not apply to extended actions.
- **Teamwork:** Say how your character's action helps another character with a task and roll an appropriate dice pool: For every success you roll, give that character a +1 bonus on their roll. If you roll a dramatic failure, give that character a -4 penalty instead.

### The Chance Die

If penalties ever reduce your dice pool to 0 or fewer dice, roll a single die anyways. This single die is called a *chance die*, and it follows slightly different rules.

#### Chance Die Basics

- **Success:** A chance die showing a 10 counts as a success.
- **No 10-again:** Do not reroll 10s on chance dice.
- **Dramatic Failure:** A chance die showing a 1 is a *dramatic failure* (p. XX).

### Roll Results

Once you've rolled all the dice, counted all your successes, and finished any rerolls or other permutations, it's time to see how your character fared. On most actions, you'll only worry about

whether your character succeeded or failed. Sometimes, however, the outcome of an action is more dramatic.

### Roll Result Basics

- **Success:** 1-4 successes; your character's action succeeds.
- **Exceptional Success:** 5+ successes; your character's action succeeds *and* your character gains a beneficial Condition (p. XX). Usually, the Inspired Condition is the most appropriate. Specific actions might have additional effects on an exceptional success.
- **Failure:** 0 successes; your character's action fails.
- **Dramatic Failure:** Chance die showing 1; your character's action fails and something goes significantly awry. Specific actions might have additional effects on a dramatic failure. Otherwise the Storyteller decides on an appropriate turn.
- **Voluntary Dramatic Failure:** Take a Beat; convert a failure into a dramatic failure, once per chapter.

### When to Roll Dice

You don't need to roll dice for many actions. If your character isn't in a stressful situation — nobody's actively trying to tear his throat open or demolish the building as he works — you don't need to roll; as long as it's something your character could reasonably do, he just does it. Some actions, like spending Plasm, don't require a roll at all.

When the dice hit the table, the Storyteller should have some idea of what will happen if the roll fails, as well as if it succeeds. Sometimes that's coded in the rules. If you fail on an attack roll, for example, you don't deal any damage. Other times, it's up to the Storyteller. If you fail a roll to jump between buildings with a group of necromancers on your tail, do you make it but fall on the other side, grab the next building by your fingertips, or plummet to the alley below?

### Social Maneuvering

A Pilgrim tries to help a ghost resolve her Anchors by convincing her to let go of her obsession with her still-living twin brother. An interfaith council struggles to resolve doctrinal conflicts between two krewes before a war breaks out. A Mourner smooths over the shock when a young man realizes his grandfather's ghost lives in the attic and watches over him. All of these scenes are rich with potential drama and complexity, which might be undercut if they're resolved in a single throw of the dice. When you want to spotlight interpersonal relationships and conflicts solved without violence, Social Maneuvering is the system to use.

In a Social Maneuver, you start by stating your character's *goal*. Maybe you want to convince the police chief to keep his officers out of the Tenderloin tomorrow night, or get One-Eyed Jack to tell you where the Reverent Lodge of the Crow holds their sacrificial rites.

Once you and the Storyteller have agreed that the goal is reasonable, you'll have to overcome the other person's resistance by taking actions that make them more likely to agree to your terms. Successful actions open *Doors* (as in, "the door is open for further discussion," not literal doors.)

How often you can try to open Doors depends on the *impression* your character makes — the more they like you, the more often you can try to sway them.

## Social Maneuvering and Consent

This system is designed to allow characters to manipulate or convince other characters to perform favors or undertake actions, but it does raise the question: is one character dictating another's actions, and how much of that should be allowed in a roleplaying game? Or, put a different way, can one character seduce another with this system?

Under a strict read of the rules, the answer is yes. The goal is “get that character to sleep with my character,” the number of Doors is decided as explained below, and impressions and other factors play into the final result. This is not too different from how seduction and other less carnal forms of persuasion actually work — the persuader tries to make the offer as enticing as possible.

But because it's the persuader's player making the rolls, the target is left without a way to say “no.” As such, we recommend reserving this system for use by player-controlled characters on Storyteller characters rather than on other players' characters. If one player's character wants to seduce, persuade, convince, or intimidate another, leave it up to roleplaying and let players make their own decisions about what their characters do. Remember that the Geist Card (p. XX) is always an option in any scenario that makes you uncomfortable or pushes limits you don't want to push.

## Goals

When using Social Maneuvering, the first step is to declare your character's intended goal. This is as simple as stating what you want the subject to do and how your character is going about making it happen. You need only announce the initial stages, as the effort will likely occur over multiple rolls, reflecting different actions.

At this point, the Storyteller determines whether the goal is reasonable. A character might, with time and proper tactics, convince a rich person to give him a large sum of money. He probably isn't going to convince the wealthy individual to abandon *all* of his wealth to the character (though it might be possible to get him to name the character as heir, at which point the character can set about speeding up the inheritance process).

## Doors

Once you've declared your character's goal, the next step is to determine the scope of the challenge. We represent this with “Doors,” which reflect a character's resistance to coercion: her social walls, her skepticism, her mistrust, or just his hesitance toward intimacy. It's abstract and means different things in every given case.

### Calculating Doors

- **Baseline:** The subject starts with Doors equal to the lower of their Resolve or Composure.
- **Breaking Point:** If the stated goal would be a *breaking point* (p. XX) for the subject, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add two Doors.

- **Aspiration:** If the stated goal is in opposition to one of the subject's Aspirations, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add one Door. If the goal would clearly help the subject achieve an Aspiration, remove one Door.
- **Virtue:** If the stated goal is in opposition to the subject's Virtue, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add one Door.
- **Adding Doors:** If things change such that the breaking point, Aspiration, or Virtue rules above apply during the Social Maneuver, add Doors to the remaining total (two for breaking point, one each for Aspiration or Virtue). If your character goes back on her word during the maneuver, add two Doors.

## Impression

The Storyteller sets the first impression based on any past history between the characters, the circumstances of their meeting, the nature of the favor being asked (if the acting character is asking right up front — sometimes it's a better idea not to lead off with what you want!) and any other factors she deems relevant. Most interactions default to average impression, which makes the maneuver a long, drawn-out process. Your character can take steps to improve that: meeting the subject at their favorite restaurant, wearing their favorite perfume, and so on. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether any particular action raises the impression level, but she should be open to working with you to develop a plan.

Impression level determines how frequently you're allowed to roll to open the subject's Doors — the more they like your character, the more often you can roll. If the impression is too hostile, you might not be able to roll at all.

### Impression

[[CHART: SHOULD BE ON THE SAME PAGE AS "FIRST IMPRESSIONS"]]

Impression	Time per Roll
Perfect	1 Turn
Excellent	1 Hour
Good	1 Day
Average	1 Week
Hostile	Cannot roll

[[END CHART]]

### Adjusting Impression

- **Favorable Circumstances:** A comfortable environment, appealing clothing, or similar pleasant situations can raise a hostile impression to average, or an average impression to good.
- **Actions:** Success on an appropriate action, like a Wits + Socialize action to create the ideal guest list for a party, can raise an average or good impression to excellent.
- **Soft Leverage:** A bribe, gift, or offer of service or payment raises the impression level one step if the subject accepts the offer.

- **Vice Leverage:** An offer that indulges the subject's Vice, or an equivalent Trait (like a Sin-Eater's Root or Bloom) raises the impression level one step if the subject accepts the offer.

## Opening Doors

At each interval, you may make a roll to open Doors and move closer to your character's goal. The roll might be different each time, depending on the character's tactics. Some of the rolls might not even be Social. For example, if your character is trying to win someone's favor, fixing his computer with an Intelligence + Computer roll could open a Door.

As Storyteller, be creative in selecting dice pools. Change them up with each step to keep the interactions dynamic. Similarly, consider contested and resisted rolls. Most resisted actions or contested rolls use either Resolve, Composure, or a combination of the two, but don't let that stand as a limit. Contested rolls don't require a resistance trait. For example, Wits might be used to notice a lie, Strength to help a character stand up to threats, or Presence to protect and maintain one's reputation at a soiree.

### Roll Results

**Success:** Open one Door.

**Exceptional:** Open an additional Door.

**Failure:** Open no Doors. Subsequent actions as part of the Social Maneuver suffer a cumulative -1 penalty. The Storyteller may choose to lower the impression level by one step; if she does so, take a Beat.

**Dramatic:** The Social Maneuver fails utterly. No further rolls can be made. Any attempt to achieve the same goal must start from scratch, likely with a worse impression.

## Resolution

The outcome of a Social Maneuver is either success or failure. Don't confuse this with the success or failure of any particular action that's part of a Social Maneuver; here we're talking about the whole thing.

### Success

Once your character has opened all the Doors in her path, the subject must act. Storyteller characters abide by the intended goal and follow through as stated. How they feel afterward might vary, but they will always do what you and the Storyteller agreed on.

### Failure

A Social Maneuvering attempt can fail utterly under the following circumstances:

- **Dramatic Failure:** The player rolls a dramatic failure on an attempt to open a Door (the player takes a Beat as usual).
- **Deception:** The target realizes that he is being lied to or manipulated. This does *not* apply if the target is aware that the character is trying to talk him into something, only if the target feels betrayed or conned.
- **Bad Impressions:** The impression level reaches "hostile" and remains so for a week of game time. The character can try again during the next story.



## PvP Resolution

If you allow players' characters to be the targets of Social Maneuvering, resolve this stage as a negotiation with two possible outcomes. The subject chooses to abide by the desired goal or offers a beneficial alternative.

### **Go With the Flow**

If the character does as requested and abides by the intended goal, his player takes a Beat (see p. XX).

### **Offer an Alternative**

If the subject's player chooses, he may offer a beneficial alternative and the initiator's player can impose a Condition (p. XX) on his character. This offer exists between players; it does not need to occur within the fiction of the game (though it can). The alternative must be beneficial and not a twist of intent. The Storyteller adjudicates.

The initiator's player chooses a Condition to impose on the subject. It must make sense within the context of the scenario.

## Action Scenes

Sometimes it's useful to zoom in close on the action and track things moment by moment, with a clear understanding of who does what in what order. We call these scenes *action scenes*, and to keep everyone's actions straight we proceed by *turns* in order of *Initiative*. The most common action scenes are fights, but the Storyteller can call for one any time a lot of complex things are happening very quickly, like a car chase or an escape from a crumbling haunted house.

### **Turns**

- **What You Can Do:** On your turn, move up to your Speed and take one instant action *or* move twice your Speed.
- **How Long it Lasts:** A turn is roughly three seconds. If an effect says it lasts "until your next turn," it lasts until the beginning of your next turn.
- **Order of Action:** Characters involved in an action scene take turns one at a time in order of Initiative, from highest to lowest.
- **Cycle:** Once all characters involved in the scene have acted, the order of action returns to the character with the highest Initiative.

### **Initiative**

- **Calculating:** When you come into the action scene, roll one die and add the result to your Initiative modifier (p. XX). This is the only roll in the game where you treat the result of the die as a number rather than a success or not.
- **Delaying:** You may choose not to act when your turn comes up and instead act at any point later in the scene, even if the order of action has reset. When you do act, change your Initiative to the Initiative you acted on for the rest of the fight.
- **Surprise:** If a character might be taken unawares by the start of the action, the Storyteller may call for a surprise roll. Roll the character's Wits + Composure, possibly contested by an opponent's relevant dice pool (Dexterity + Stealth for an ambush, Manipulation + Subterfuge if

they lull you into a false sense of security, etc.). If the surprised character's roll fails, they cannot act or apply their Defense until their second turn.

## Violence

Sin-Eaters have many enemies. Reapers assault the dead communities they're part of, rival krewes settle theological disputes with gunplay, and Kerberoi come to crush any who dare violate the Old Laws. In a Sin-Eater's life, violence is rarely a permanent solution: Ghosts and other Bound are notoriously hard to kill permanently, and even living foes are likely to come back as vengeful shades. Still, sometimes it's inevitable, and a fight breaks out.

"Violence" is a catch-all term for what happens when two people find that they cannot reach agreement like rational individuals and instead beat, claw, and bite the living shit out of one another until one of them gets what she wants.

## Intent

Everybody wants something out of a fight. The very first thing you need to do — before worrying about who attacks first or anything like that — is to determine what each character wants to get out of the fight. Boil it down into a simple sentence that starts with the words "I want:" "I want to kill Johnny," "I want the book that Frances is holding," or "I want what's in Larry's wallet."

### Declaring Intent

- **By Violence:** Intent must be something achievable by violence within the current scene.
- **The Price:** If your intent doesn't include causing harm and your character ends up killing someone, lose 1 Willpower.

#### Optional Rule: Beaten Down & Surrender

A character who takes more than his Stamina in bashing damage or any amount of lethal damage suffers the Beaten Down Tilt (p. XX): he's had the fight knocked out of him.

If one side's intent involves violence, their intended victims don't get Beaten Down. When someone wants to kill you, the only thing you can do is to try to stop her, whether you run like hell or unload a shotgun at her.

This optional rule only applies to people (or supernatural beings) who would incur a breaking point for committing (or attempting) "murder." Creatures that don't have a problem killing people in general — like Reapers — never suffer the Beaten Down Tilt from damage taken. Because they can normally get back up after being killed, the Bound don't get Beaten Down unless some effect (low Synergy, an attack that mirrors her original death, etc.) would prevent her from resurrecting.

## Down and Dirty Combat

The Storyteller might decide that your character can get what she wants without focusing on the details of the fight. Maybe she's picking on people weaker than her. Maybe she's internalized the mechanics of violence. Or maybe the fight's not the important thing going on with regards to the character's intent. If that's the case, the Storyteller can opt to use Down and Dirty Combat. This system resolves the entire fight in a single roll.

**Action:** Instant and contested; takes anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.

**Dice Pool:** Combat pool (Dexterity + Firearms, Strength + Brawl, or Strength + Weaponry) versus either the opponent's combat pool (as above) *or* an attempt to escape (Strength or Dexterity + Athletics).

### Roll Results

**Success:** Inflict damage equal to the difference in successes + weapon modifier and achieve your intent — including killing, if that was on the table.

**Exceptional:** Gain 1 Willpower.

**Failure:** Do not achieve your intent. If the opponent rolled a combat pool, suffer damage equal to the difference in successes + opponent's weapon modifier. Opponent escapes if they want to.

**Dramatic:** The opposite of your character's intent happens, or she's knocked out or suffers other serious consequences.

## Detailed Violence

When the fight is a significant event in the story, or Down and Dirty Combat doesn't suit, use these rules. Violence like this is an action scene (p. XX).

### Actions in a Fight

The most common action in a fight is to *attack*. Characters can also *dodge* or push themselves to the limit, sacrificing Defense for greater effect.

#### Attack

All attack actions are instant actions. Unarmed, melee, and thrown attacks are resisted, while ranged and touch attacks are basic actions.

- **Unarmed Attack:** Strength + Brawl – Defense; bashing damage
- **Melee Attack:** Strength + Weaponry – Defense; lethal damage
- **Ranged Attack:** Dexterity + Firearms; lethal damage
- **Thrown Attack:** Dexterity + Athletics – Defense; lethal damage
- **Touch Attack:** Dexterity + Brawl *or* Dexterity + Weaponry; no damage.
- **Damage:** A successful attack inflicts damage equal to the number of successes rolled + weapon modifier (p. XX), if any. Touch attacks do not inflict damage.
- **Pulling Blows:** Set a maximum damage value up to the highest Trait in your attack dice pool and grant the target +1 Defense. Your attack cannot inflict more than the maximum damage you set.

#### Specified Targets

A normal attack is aimed at the target's center of mass. You can aim for specific body parts by taking a penalty on your attack roll. Attacking a specific body part can bypass Armor (p. XX) or inflict a Tilt (p. XX) on the target. Attacks against specified targets aren't a way to inflict extra damage or instantly kill people; that's covered by simply rolling a lot of successes on the attack action.

The following modifiers assume a target roughly human in size and shape. The Storyteller can adjust these for more unusual targets.

- **Arm (-2):** If damage exceeds victim's Stamina, inflicts Arm Wrack.
- **Leg (-2):** If damage exceeds victim's Stamina, inflicts Leg Wrack.
- **Head (-3):** If damage equals or exceeds victim's Size, Stuns victim.
- **Heart (-3):** If damage equals or exceeds 5, the attack pierces the victim's heart. This isn't instantly fatal, but may have special effects against certain monsters.
- **Hand (-4):** If the attack deals damage, inflicts Arm Wrack.
- **Eye (-5):** If the attack deals damage, the victim is Blinded.

## Dodge

Dodging is a reflexive action, but after dodging your character loses their next turn.

- **Contested Attacks:** Attacks made against your character become contested instead of resisted until your next turn. Contest attacks with double your Defense, and unlike a normal contested action, your successes cancel out the attacker's successes on a one-for-one basis.
- **Multiple Attackers:** Apply the Defense penalty for multiple attackers before doubling. If your character's Defense is reduced to 0, roll a chance die.
- **Dramatic Failure:** Defense suffers a -1 penalty until your next Turn.

## Special Maneuvers

The following instant actions cause your character to sacrifice xir Defense until xir next Turn. If your character has already lost xir Defense, for example by being surprised or being attacked by enough opponents in one turn to reduce xir Defense to 0, xie cannot take any of these actions.

- **Charge:** Move up to twice your character's Speed and make an unarmed or melee attack.
- **All-Out Attack:** Make an unarmed or melee attack with a +2 bonus.

## Other Actions

These are all instant actions.

- **Drop Prone/Stand Up:** Ranged attacks against prone characters suffer a -2 penalty, but unarmed and melee attacks against prone characters gain a +2 bonus if the attacker is standing.
- **Reload a Weapon:** If rounds must be loaded individually, lose Defense until your next turn.
- **Killing Blow:** Inflict damage equal to your attack's dice pool + weapon bonus. Requires an unconscious, immobilized, or otherwise helpless target. Counts as a breaking point.

## Unarmed Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when fighting without weapons.

### Bite

Biting counts as an unarmed attack action.

- **Damage:** Human teeth inflict –1 bashing damage (so an attack that rolls only one success inflicts no damage). Animals and monsters treat their teeth as weapons, with a bonus between +1 and +4.
- **Grapple Required:** Humans (and most Sin-Eaters) must first grapple a victim in order to bite them.

## Grapple

Grappling counts as an unarmed attack action. To start grappling, you have to grab your opponent.

- **Grab:** Make an unarmed attack. On a success, inflict no damage but start a grapple. On an exceptional success, also choose a grapple option.
- **One Action:** All participants in the grapple act on the highest Initiative among them. The only action they can take is the grappling action.
- **Grappling:** Instant and contested; Strength + Brawl vs. Strength + Brawl. The character with the most successes chooses a grapple option, or two grapple options on an exceptional success.

## Grapple Options

- **Break Free:** The grapple ends, and your character may take another instant action immediately.
- **Control Weapon:** Take firm hold of a weapon, either your character's or their opponent's. Lasts until your character's opponent chooses Control Weapon. Required for other grapple options.
- **Damage:** Treat the grapple action as an unarmed attack, inflicting damage equal to your rolled successes. If you have control of a weapon, this counts as a melee attack with the weapon's modifier.
- **Disarm:** Remove a weapon from the grapple entirely. Requires Control Weapon.
- **Drop Prone:** Throw all participants to the ground. Requires Break Free to stand back up.
- **Hold:** Immobilize an opponent. Both characters lose Defense.
- **Restrain:** Your opponent is Immobilized (p. XX). Requires Hold. If your character uses equipment to restrain her opponent, she can leave the grapple.
- **Take Cover:** Any ranged attacks against your character automatically hit her opponent. Lasts until your next turn.

## Ranged Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when shooting at people.

### Autofire

Automatic weapons can fire a short, medium, or long burst in place of a single shot.

- **Short Burst:** Uses 3 bullets. +1 bonus to attack action.

- **Medium Burst:** Uses 10 bullets. +2 bonus to attack action. Can attack multiple targets, up to three.
- **Long Burst:** Uses 20 bullets. +3 bonus to attack action. Can attack multiple targets, with no limit.
- **Multiple Targets:** -1 penalty per target after the first. Roll individually against each target.

### Range

Ranged attacks suffer a penalty the farther away the target is. Ranged weapons have a short, medium, and long range listed on the weapons table (p. XX).

- **Short Range:** No penalty.
- **Medium Range:** -1
- **Long Range:** -2

### Concealment

If the target of a ranged attack is partially or fully obscured, she has concealment. Concealment applies a penalty to the shooter's dice pool.

- **Barely Concealed:** -1 (hiding behind an office chair)
- **Partially Concealed:** -2 (hiding behind the hood of a car, with upper body exposed)
- **Substantially Concealed:** -3 (crouching behind a car).
- **Shooting from Concealment:** Barely concealed, no penalty; partially concealed, -1; substantially concealed, -2. You can ignore this penalty, but you lose your own concealment until your next turn.

### Cover

If a target's entirely hidden by something substantial, he's in cover.

- **Tough Cover:** If the cover's Durability (p. XX) is greater than the attacker's weapon modifier, the attack can't penetrate the cover.
- **Less Tough Cover:** Subtract the cover's Durability from the attacker's damage roll. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage.
- **Transparent Cover:** If the cover is transparent (bulletproof glass, for example), subtract *half* the cover's Durability, rounding down. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage.

## Weapons and Armor

Weapons are one of the fastest ways to turn a fight into a murder. Sometimes, that's what you want; pulling a gun shows you're serious about killing people. Armor, meanwhile, keeps that murder from being yours.

### Common Weapon Traits

- **Type:** A weapon's type is a general classification that fits any number of specific weapons. A metal club might be a crowbar or a length of rebar, while a light revolver might be one of any number of .22-.38 caliber weapons.
- **Damage:** Added to successes rolled on attack to determine total damage inflicted.
- **Initiative:** The penalty to Initiative when wielding the weapon.
- **Strength:** The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a -1 penalty on attack rolls.
- **Availability:** The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

**[[PRODUCTION: FULL-PAGE TABLES, LIKE PP. 201-202 OF GMC. TABLE INSIDE A BOX TYPE THING. START BOX HERE]]**

### Ranged Weapons Chart

**[START TABLE]**

Type	Damage	Ranges	Clip	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability
Revolver, hvy	2	35/70/140	6	-2	3	1	••
Pistol, lt	1	20/40/80	17+1	0	2	1	•••
Pistol, hvy	2	30/60/120	7+1	-2	3	1	•••
SMG, small*	1	25/50/100	30+1	-2	2	1	•••
SMG, large*	2	50/100/200	30+1	-3	3	2	•••
Hunting Rifle	4	200/400/800	5+1	-5	2	3	••
Assault Rifle*	3	150/300/600	42+1	-3	3	3	•••
Shotgun**	3	20/40/80	5+1	-4	3	2	••
Crossbow***	2	40/80/160	1	-5	3	3	•••

**[END TABLE]**

### Ranged Weapon Traits

**Ranges:** Short/medium/long ranges in yards/meters.

**Clip:** The number of rounds a gun can hold. "+1" indicates that a bullet can be held in the chamber, ready to fire.

**Size:** 1 — Can be fired one-handed; 2 — Must be fired two-handed and can be hidden in a coat; 3 — Can be fired two-handed but not hidden on one's person.

\* The weapon is capable of autofire.

\*\* Attack rolls gain the 9-again quality

\*\*\* Crossbows take three turns to reload between shots. A crossbow can be used to deliver a stake through the heart (-3 die penalty to attack rolls; must deal at least 5 damage in one attack)

**[END BOX]**

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Melee Weapons Chart

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Special
Sap	0	-1	1	1	•	Stun
Brass Knuckles	0	0	1	1	•	Uses Brawl to attack
Metal Club	2	-2	2	2	•	
Chain	1	-3	2	2	•	Grapple
Shield (small)	0	-2	2	2	••	Concealed
Shield (large)	2	-4	3	3	••	Concealed
Knife	0	-1	1	1	•	
Sword	2	-2	2	2	••	
Small Ax	1	-2	1	1	•	
Large Ax	3	-4	3	3	••	9-again, two-handed
Chainsaw	5	-6	4	3	•••	9-again, two-handed
Spear**	2	-2	2	4	•	+1 Defense, two-handed

[END TABLE]

Melee Weapon Traits

- **Size:** 1 — Can be hidden in a hand; 2 — Can be hidden in a coat; 3+ — Cannot be hidden.
- **Concealed:** A character who wields a shield but doesn't use it to attack adds its Size to Defense and uses its Size as a concealment modifier against ranged attacks.
- **Grapple:** Add the chain's damage rating to your dice pool when grappling.
- **Stun:** Halve the victim's Size when aiming for the head with intent to stun (p. XX).
- **Two-handed:** This weapon requires two hands. It can be used one-handed, but doing so increases the Strength requirement by 1.

\*\* The reach of a spear gives a +1 Defense bonus against opponents who are unarmed or wield weapons of Size 1.

[PROD: BREAK THE BOX HERE PLEASE]

Armor

Armor provides protection against attacks, including bullets and knives. Though it's rare to find Sin-Eaters wearing armor, police officers and other law enforcement agencies rely on it.

Armor Basics



- **Ballistic Armor:** Each point of ballistic armor downgrades one point of damage from lethal to bashing.
- **General Armor:** Each point of general armor reduces the total damage taken by one point, starting with the most severe type of damage.
- **Order of Operation:** If armor has both ballistic and general ratings, apply the ballistic armor first.
- **Minimum Damage:** When applying armor to an attack inflicting lethal damage, you always suffer at least one point of bashing damage from the shock of the blow.

Armor Chart

[PROD: START TABLE]

Type	Rating	Strength	Defense	Speed	Availability	Coverage
<b>Modern</b>						
Reinforced Clothing*	1/0	1	0	0	•	Torso, arms, legs
Kevlar Vest*	1/3	1	0	0	•	Torso
Flak Jacket	2/4	1	-1	0	••	Torso, arms
Full Riot Gear	3/5	2	-2	-1	•••	Torso, arms, legs
<b>Archaic</b>						
Leather (hard)	2/0	2	-1	0	•	Torso, arms
Chainmail	3/1	3	-2	-2	••	Torso, arms
Plate	4/2	3	-2	-3	••••	Torso, arms, legs

[PROD: END TABLE]

### Armor Traits

- **Rating:** Armor provides protection against normal attacks and Firearms attacks. The number before the slash is for general armor, while the number after the slash is for ballistic armor.
- **Strength:** If your character's Strength is lower than that required for her armor, reduce her Brawl and Weaponry dice pools by -1.
- **Defense:** The penalty imposed on your character's Defense when wearing the armor.
- **Speed:** The penalty to your character's Speed when wearing the armor.
- **Availability:** The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the armor.
- **Coverage:** The areas of a character protected by the armor. Wearing a helmet increases the armor's coverage to include a character's head.

\* This armor is concealed, either as normal clothing (e.g. biker leathers) or being worn under a jacket or baggy shirt.

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## Injury and Healing

Characters can suffer three types of damage. Fists and feet, along with other kinds of low-impact trauma, deal *bashing* damage. Brass knuckles, knives, and speeding trucks deal *lethal* damage. Some horrifying powers deal *aggravated* damage. When something deals aggravated damage directly, it's quite obvious. Flesh bubbles and sloughs away. Foaming pustules taint the victim's flesh. Blackened veins streak out from the site of the injury.

The following rules apply to living humans and animals. The Bound deal with damage differently (p. XX), and other horrors likewise have their own rules regarding the effects of damage. Ephemeral entities likewise have their own rules for injury and healing (p. XX).

## Suffering Damage

When a rule tells you to suffer an amount of damage, you mark off that many Health boxes, starting from the leftmost side and continuing to the right. A box marked with any kind of damage is called a *point*.

### Damage Basics

- **Bashing:** Mark bashing damage with a (/) in the leftmost empty box of the Health track.
- **Lethal:** Mark lethal damage with an (X) in the leftmost box that is empty *or* filled with bashing damage. If you mark over bashing damage, move that damage to the leftmost empty box of the track. If there are no empty boxes left, that damage is overwritten but not moved.
- **Aggravated:** Mark aggravated damage with an (\*) in the leftmost box that does not already contain aggravated damage. If you mark over bashing damage, move that damage to the leftmost empty box. If there are no empty boxes left, that damage is overwritten but not moved. If you mark over lethal damage, move it to the leftmost box that is empty *or* contains bashing damage. If there are no empty boxes *or* boxes containing bashing damage, that damage is overwritten but not moved.
- **Upgrading Damage:** If your character suffers bashing damage but has no empty Health boxes in which to mark it, upgrade each point of bashing damage to lethal damage. If she suffers lethal damage but has no empty Health boxes *or* boxes marked with bashing damage, upgrade her leftmost Health box that's filled with lethal damage to aggravated damage.

### Effects of Damage

- **Wound Penalties:** If your character has any damage marked in her third-to-last Health box, she suffers a -1 penalty to *all* actions except Stamina rolls to stay conscious. This increases to -2 when her second-to-last Health box is filled, and -3 when her last Health box is filled.
- **Unconscious:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with bashing *or* lethal damage, roll her Stamina every turn as a reflexive action. Failure means she falls unconscious until her rightmost Health box is empty.
- **Bleeding Out:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with lethal damage, she suffers 1 lethal damage per turn until she receives medical attention (p. XX).
- **Dead:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with aggravated damage, she is dead.

## Example of Marking Damage

Hetienne has seven dots of Health. She's just taken two points of bashing damage. Her Health boxes look like this:

**[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES, FIRST TWO CONTAINING A SLASH]**

If she's later stabbed and takes a point of lethal damage, her Health track would be:

**[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES, FIRST ONE CONTAINS AN X, SECOND AND THIRD CONTAIN A SLASH]**

If Hetienne next suffered a point of aggravated damage, her Health boxes would look like this:

**[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES. FIRST HAS AN ASTERISK, SECOND HAS AN X, THE THIRD AND FOURTH CONTAIN SLASHES]**

## Healing

Characters need time to heal once they've been beaten to a pulp. Normally, a character can heal without medical attention, though use of the Medicine Skill will help him recover (p. XX). The only exception is if a mortal character has all her Health boxes full of lethal damage — she's bleeding out. She can't recover from that without urgent medical attention and emergency surgery.

The following rules apply to living humans and animals as well as the Bound. The Bound, however, have ways of mitigating damage as they suffer it (p. XX).

### Healing Basics

- **Rightmost Box:** Natural healing only affects the rightmost point of damage. Once the rightmost box is cleared, healing time for the next-rightmost box starts.
- **Bashing:** Clear bashing damage after 15 minutes of game time.
- **Lethal:** Clear lethal damage after two days of game time.
- **Aggravated:** Clear aggravated damage after a week of game time.

*Example:* A Sin-Eater low on Plasm gets between her ghost lover and a Reaper and pays the price. Her health track looks like this at the end of the fight.

**[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES. FIRST HAS AN ASTERISK, SECOND HAS AN X, THE THIRD AND FOURTH CONTAIN SLASHES]**

Her rightmost wound heals first. Since it's a bashing wound, she clears it after 15 minutes. After another 15 minutes, her second bashing wound clears. Her lethal damage then heals over the course of the next two days. Finally, her aggravated wound heals over the course of the next week. In all, it takes a little over a week and two days for her to recover from her injuries, barring magical healing.

## Sources of Harm

Outside of damage suffered in fights, characters in the Chronicles of Darkness face peril from a variety of sources. These are just a few of them.

## Disease

Sin-Eaters find themselves drawn to places of death and decay, where strange pathogens often lurk. Enemy Bound with the Key of Disease and the ghosts of long-dead plagues in the Underworld can also expose characters to sickness.

### Disease Basics

- **Tilt:** In action scenes, sick characters suffer the Sick Tilt (p. XX).
- **Moderate Disease:** Outside action scenes, moderate sickness might impose a -1 or -2 penalty on actions where concentration or stamina are required.
- **Grave Disease:** Outside action scenes, grave diseases inflict a certain amount of damage at specified time intervals, as determined by the Storyteller. The sick character's player makes a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll to resist; success means no damage this time.
- **Recovery:** Most diseases simply run their course over a certain amount of time. Others require a minimum number of successful resistance rolls, require medical intervention, or merely go into periodic remission as determined by the Storyteller.

## Poison

Whether from the sting of a venomous insect or a pinch of arsenic in the food, poison stars as the cause of death in many a ghost story.

### Poison Basics

- **Tilt:** In action scenes, poisoned characters suffer the Poisoned Tilt (p. XX).
- **Toxicity:** Outside action scenes, the Storyteller assigns the poison a Toxicity rating. The poisoned character suffers lethal damage equal to Toxicity. Mild poisons only inflict damage once. More severe poisons may inflict damage every hour or even every turn for a period of time determined by the Storyteller.
- **Resistance:** The poisoned character's player rolls Stamina + Resolve - Toxicity every time the poison inflicts damage. Each success cancels one point of damage.

## Drugs

Legal or otherwise, drugs factor into many stories of tragic, untimely death.

### Drug Basics

- **Tilt:** In action scenes, drugged characters suffer the Drugged Tilt (p. XX).
- **Effects:** Drugs can have a wide variety of effects, ranging from dice penalties to imposing Conditions. Most drugs last for a scene, but some burn through a character's system more rapidly or linger for more time.
- **Resistance:** A drugged character can shake off the effects temporarily by succeeding on a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. Depending on the potency of the drug, this roll might be required every hour, scene, or even turn.

### Overdose

- **Poison:** Characters who overdose on drugs treat the drug like a poison, with a Toxicity somewhere between 3 and 7. The drug inflicts damage once per hour.
- **Duration:** The overdose typically runs its course after (eight – Stamina) hours, though the Storyteller may adjust that.

## Electricity

Electric shocks inflict damage based on the strength of the current.

### Source Damage

Minor; wall socket 4 (B)

Major; protective fence 6 (B)

Severe; junction box 8 (B)

Fatal; main line feed/subway rail 10 (B)

### Electricity Basics

- **Damage per Turn:** Electricity inflicts damage every turn if the current is continuous.
- **Breaking Away:** Characters in contact with a continuous electrical current must succeed on a reflexive roll of Strength to pull away.
- **No Armor:** Worn armor provides no protection against electrocution.

## Extreme Environments

The human body is not built to withstand extreme heat, cold, air pressure, and other harsh weather. Extreme environments are rated with a level from 1 to 4, depending on the severity of the environment. While characters are exposed to these conditions, they suffer the level of the environment as a penalty to all actions. After a number of hours equal to the character's Stamina, he takes bashing damage equal to the environment's level once per hour. In the case of a level 3 exposure, the damage is lethal instead of bashing. Level 4 environments cause lethal damage each *turn* after a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina.

Any damage caused by level 2-4 exposure leaves lasting marks, scars, and tissue damage. Damage caused by extreme environments cannot be healed until the character is back in a safe environment.

### Extreme Environment Basics

- **Penalty:** Characters suffer a penalty to all actions equal to the environment's level.
- **Level 1-3 Damage:** After (Stamina) hours of exposure to level 1-3 environments, characters suffer damage equal to the environment's level for every hour. At levels 1-2, the damage is bashing. At level 3, it's lethal.
- **Level 4 Damage:** After (Stamina) *turns* of exposure to level 4 environments, characters suffer 4 lethal damage every turn.
- **No Healing:** Characters cannot heal damage from extreme environments until they are no longer in an extreme environment.

[[CHART]]

## Environment Levels

### Level Example Environs

1 Light snow, heavy storms; too cold to sleep safely; air pressure causes shortness of breath; sweltering sun can cause first-degree burns

2 Heavy snow; cold causes physical pain and potential hypothermia; sun quickly causes first-degree burns, can cause second-degree burns with time; minor radiation poisoning

3 Desert exposure; heat rapidly causing second-degree burns; moderate radiation exposure

4 Desert sandstorm, severe hurricane, tornado, tsunami

[[END CHART]]

## Falling

Ghosts might be able to fly, but Sin-Eaters and the living, as a rule, can't.

### Falling Basics

- **Damage:** Falls of less than 30 yards inflict 1 bashing damage per three yards fallen. Falls of 30 yards or more inflict 10 lethal damage.
- **Armor:** At the Storyteller's discretion, armor may reduce damage from falls of less than 30 yards.
- **Reduced Damage:** If there's a reasonable way for a character to slow xir fall, xie makes a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll. Each success reduces damage from a fall of less than 30 yards by 1 point.
- **Soft Landing:** Landing in water, snow, or another soft surface may automatically reduce damage from falls of less than 30 yards at the Storyteller's discretion.

## Fire

Fire automatically inflicts lethal damage per turn of exposure (no attack roll is required). The damage inflicted depends on both the size and intensity of the flames.

### Size of Fire Damage

Torch	1
Bonfire	2
Inferno	3

### Heat of Fire Damage Modifier

Candle (first-degree burns)	—
Torch (second-degree burns)	+1
Bunsen burner (third-degree burns)	+2
Chemical fire/molten metal	+3

### Fire Basics

- **Combustion:** Exposure to fire for longer than a turn ignites anything combustible on the character; he continues to take full damage even after escaping the source of the flame.
- **Firefighting:** Fighting a fire typically requires an instant action but no roll. At the Storyteller's discretion, an action might immediately put out the fire (e.g. diving into water) or reduce its size by one level (e.g. stop, drop, and roll).
- **Armor:** Most armor can block its general rating in fire damage automatically for a number of turns equal to that rating.

## Equipment

Equipment, tools, and technology help to solve problems. Having the right tool for the job can mean the difference between life and death — or in the Chronicles of Darkness, the difference between life and a fate worse than death. This list is not all-inclusive, but features many of the tools that characters might have at their disposal.

Equipment is divided up by the Skills they typically assist with. Mental Equipment typically assists with Mental Skills, for example.

### Equipment Traits

- **Availability:** The minimum level of a relevant Trait a character must have to acquire the equipment with a single roll. Resources is the most often used Trait, but other Social Merits or Skills may work at the Storyteller's discretion (e.g. Larceny to steal it or Allies to borrow it from a friend).
- **Size, Durability, Structure:** See Objects (p. XX).
- **Dice Bonus:** The bonus the equipment adds to relevant actions.
- **Effect:** Any special rules that apply to using the equipment.

## Mental Equipment

Mental equipment is all but essential for many character types. Mental Skills without the proper tools are almost useless in most cases. A doctor without medicine is hardly capable of healing, and an auto mechanic without a toolbox couldn't change even some minor belts on a car.

### Automotive Tools

Basic (Kit): Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability •

Advanced (Garage): Die Bonus +2, Availability •

**Effect:** Automotive tools are a necessity for all but the simplest automobile repairs. Even then, a fully stocked garage with heavy equipment is required for more involved tasks such as engine or transmission replacement. If time is not a factor, any trained character with a Crafts (Automotive) Specialty can repair a vehicle's mundane issues without rolls. Complex modifications and enhancements or massive damage always require a greater effort (an extended Intelligence + Crafts roll) to work out.

### Cache

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 2, Size 1–5, Structure 5, Availability • to •••

**Effect:** A cache is a hidden and defensible place for items, usually weapons. It keeps important items from prying eyes. A cache can never be more than half the Size of its parent object. For example, a Size 6 car can support nothing larger than a Size 3 cache. A given cache can hold two items of its Size and any reasonable number of smaller-sized items. Its Availability determines its die bonus, which both adds to concealment rolls and subtracts from rolls to find the items within.

## Communications Headset

Die Bonus +2, Durability 0, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability ••

**Effect:** Communications headsets keep characters in constant contact. Different varieties work over different distances, but most commercial models work over about 200 feet. A common alternative is a conference call between cellular phones and Bluetooth headsets. If the users have practiced using their headsets together, they gain the die bonus on any coordinated efforts. In the case of a teamwork action, the die bonus only applies to the final roll. If the users are unpracticed, the bonus falls to +1 and actors must make reflexive Wits + Composure rolls to participate successfully.

Any heavy objects can obstruct a headset's signal. Anything obstructing with Durability higher than 3 requires listeners to make a Wits + Composure roll to understand shared messages. Levy a -1 penalty for each point of Durability over 4.

## Crime Scene Kit

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability ••

**Effect:** A crime scene (or CSI) kit is a toolbox full of investigative aids such as magnifiers, fingerprinting dust, cameras, tape, testing chemicals, and sample bags. While the kits offer a die bonus to Investigation rolls, the more important benefit of the CSI kit is that it allows evidence to be moved and digested elsewhere. Properly applied, it allows investigators to do the bulk of their work offsite and at their own pace.

## Code Kit

Die Bonus +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability •

**Effect:** A code kit is a series of tools created for the purpose of making and interpreting a code for a specific audience. A common example is a book code, where a page, paragraph, and word from a certain book are used as the foundation for a cypher. This keeps any uninformed eyes off the intended message. In the case of a book code, a book is often chosen that all message recipients can access easily. This guarantees that the code never has to travel with the code key.

A successfully designed cypher is difficult to break. The die bonus acts as a penalty to any rolls to crack the code without the necessary reference key.

## Cracking Software

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size N/A, Structure N/A, Availability •••

**Effect:** Crappy software's a dime a dozen. Good, reliable cracking software is hard to come by. With solid software, a hacker can force passwords, breach firewalls, and otherwise be a nuisance in computer systems. Beyond the dice pool modification, the benefit such software offers is a sort of buffer between the hacker and security. Any effort to track the hacker takes two steps: one to identify the software, then one to trace it back to the source. Functionally this means two rolls



on behalf of the security personnel, with an opportunity for the hacker to withdraw before detection.

## Digital Recorder

Die Bonus +1 or +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability • or ••

**Effect:** In the last decade, digital audio recorders have gotten smaller, more effective, and more affordable. Now, any student can carry a coin-sized device that would have put intelligence agencies of the 1980s to shame. The cheaper model of recorder gives its +1 bonus to any rolls to catch words or sounds. The bonus also applies to concealment rolls. The more expensive model gives +2. With an Intelligence + Computer (with die bonus), a character can contest any rolls to obscure discussion or mask noises.

## Duct Tape

Die Bonus +1, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •

**Effect:** Duct tape has as many uses as one can think of, and just as many you never would. It can reinforce barricades, stabilize weapon handles, bind prisoners, repair broken pipes, and so much more. In most cases, duct tape can offer a +1 bonus to Crafts-related rolls. Alternatively, it can add a point of Durability to almost anything. If used as a restraint, rolls to break free suffer a -3 penalty, and must overcome the duct tape's Structure.

## First-Aid Kit

Die Bonus 0 or +1, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability • or ••

**Effect:** A first-aid kit contains all the necessary supplies to stabilize an injury and stop wounds from getting worse until the victim can find proper treatment. The one-dot version of the first-aid kit does not offer a die bonus; it simply allows for treatment. The two-dot version offers a +1 to treatment rolls due to superior supplies.

## Flashlight

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, Availability •

**Effect:** In a world full of darkness, a flashlight can be a person's best friend. It generally does what it's supposed to; it helps cut a path through the unknown. Its die bonus subtracts from any penalties due to darkness, and adds to any rolls to search in the dark. A good flashlight can serve as a club in a pinch. It can also blind an unfortunate subject. A Dexterity + Athletics roll, subtracting an informed opponent's Defense, will put the beam where it needs to be. The victim's player may make a contested Stamina roll. If your character scores more successes than the subject, they're blinded for one turn. Victims with especially acute senses are blinded for two turns.

## Glowstick

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

**Effect:** Glowsticks use a chemical mixture to summon forth enough light to see in a small area. Most commercial glowsticks last a couple of hours; police and other professional varieties can last 12. Because they're small, airtight containers, they serve the added benefit of being useful underwater or in the rain. Functionally, they work the same as a flashlight. They cannot be used to blind a target, however, since their soft glow is far less obtrusive than a flashlight's beam.

They're also very conveniently worn, which can serve strategic purposes for a group operating in low-light conditions. A member will not go missing without being noticed so long as they have a glowing neon bar on their belt.

## GPS Tracker

Die Bonus +3, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability ••

**Effect:** With the advent of the modern cellular phone, most modern people have a GPS-enabled device on their person at any given time. With a bit of know-how and access to someone's phone, your character can track their every move (provided those moves are not in caves, tunnels, or sewer systems). Some characters will trade GPS data in case one of the group becomes lost or if they have to follow someone without notice. Planting a phone on an unwitting subject can serve as a highly effective tracking device.

## Keylogging Software

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size N/A, Structure N/A, Availability ••

**Effect:** Keylogging software does exactly one thing: it logs keystrokes on a computer. This is usually done to record incriminating data or passwords. Usually, keylogging software is coupled with software to transmit the data once captured. The challenge for the would-be intruder is installing the software. Email scams are an unreliable way to get onto a specific computer, but could fool one member of a large organization. A thumb drive is very effective, but requires direct, physical access to the recipient computer. The software's die bonus offers an advantage to breach a network or to find important data.

## Luminol

Die Bonus +2, Durability 0, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

**Effect:** Luminol is a chemical that reacts to certain metals in human blood and other bodily fluids. The reaction causes a faint neon glow for about 30 seconds, visible in the dark. It comes in an aerosol can and will seek out faint traces, even after a thorough cleaning. In addition to showing the exact locations of violent crimes, luminol can assist in tracking wounded people and animals. Luminol's die bonus applies to any roll to track by the fluid traces, or to piece together the details of a crime scene.

## Multi-Tool

Die Bonus +1, Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4, Availability •

**Effect:** Sometimes, the need for mobility doesn't allow for your character to carry around a full tool kit. In these cases, a multi-tool can be a lifesaver. From sawing to stripping wires, to opening bottles, to filing off serial numbers, a multi-tool can do the job in a pinch. The multi-tool offers a negligible die bonus on numerous Crafts and other assorted tasks, and most importantly, allows for rolls when sometimes they couldn't be made for lack of proper equipment. While not made for use as a weapon, it can serve as one, causing 0 lethal but suffering a -1 penalty to hit.

## Personal Computer

Die Bonus +1 to +4, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to ••••

**Effect:** In the developed world, almost every household has access to a personal computer. They can vary in size, functionality, and price, from decade-old models that barely surf the web to

high-end machines that process gigabytes of data per second. In today's world, many lives revolve around computers. For some people, their entire careers and personal lives exist within digital space. The Availability rating of the computer determines its die bonus.

## Smartphones

Die Bonus +1 to +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability • to •••

**Effect:** By themselves, smartphones can make calls, send text messages and emails, take pictures, maintain an agenda, and search the web. With a bit of software, the smartphone becomes the multi-tool of the electronic age. While it cannot accomplish the raw computing power of a full-sized personal computer, higher-end smartphones can manage almost all the same tasks with ease.

Most major gadgets have been successfully replicated with smartphone applications. GPS scanning and tracking are staples of the amateur investigator. Facial-recognition software finds a face in a crowd with relative accuracy. They can photograph and transcribe text, then translate ancient tomes. They can store a library's worth of text and allow for automated searches. They offer directions with photographic assistance. Even the value of a mindless video game on a stakeout is often underestimated.

## Special Effects

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 5, Structure 3, Availability •••

**Effect:** Special effects is a catch-all term for the tricks and chicanery used by amusement parks and stage magicians to fool witnesses. A character may use these as a distraction or a defense. For example, the Pepper's Ghost illusion is relatively easy to set up with the right tools. It uses a large mirror and a sheet of glass, along with a model and a light source. It projects an illusion of the model's reflection and makes witnesses see a "ghost."

In addition to the die bonus, special effects generally fool their audience at first. A witness will fall for the trick unless given good reason to be suspicious. This can waste valuable time or lead the witness into a trap.

## Surveillance Equipment

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability •••

**Effect:** Standard surveillance equipment usually consists of motion detectors, cameras, and monitors. High-end versions may include infrared heat sensors, barometric scanners, or even more complex gear. Either way, the point of surveillance equipment is to survey, detect, and otherwise track who enters or leaves a location. Often, this also means locking down breached zones. Unless someone knows surveillance equipment exists and actively avoids it, his presence is noticed and recorded. If he tries to avoid it, contest his Dexterity + Stealth against the installing technician's Intelligence + Computer or Intelligence + Crafts (for digital and analog systems, respectively). The technician may add the equipment's die bonus. If the intruder scores more successes, he remains unnoticed. Otherwise, he goes on record.

## Survival Gear

Die Bonus +1 or +2, Durability 2, Size 2 or 3, Structure 3, Availability • or •••

**Effect:** Survival gear is the catch-all term for the various kits of equipment needed to survive in harsh environments. This could encompass tents, canned foodstuff, raingear, sleeping bags,

sterile water, or any of the various things a person can use to survive the world outside their cushy homes. They come in two levels: a basic level and an advanced level. The basic level offers +1 and subtracts one from the effective level of environment (see Extreme Environments, p. XX), while the advanced offers +2 and subtracts two from the effective environment level. This does not help with a level 4 environment. A resourceful character can rig or scavenge the necessary supplies for basic survival gear, but an advanced set of gear requires very specialized equipment. Basic survival gear can assist with most any environment, but advanced survival gear must target one particular type of environment.

## Talcum Powder

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size 1, Structure N/A, Availability •

**Effect:** Talcum powder can keep a baby's bottom from getting diaper rash, but it can also show the presence of the unseen or evidence of intrusion if placed at a portal of entry. If an entrance is dusted with talcum powder, a character must achieve five successes on a Dexterity + Stealth roll to enter without a trace. Fewer successes will only obscure the specifics of their feet and hands. Some paranormal investigators use talcum powder as a way to give ghosts and other invisible entities a method for communication.

## Ultraviolet Ink

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •

**Effect:** Ultraviolet ink, or invisible ink as it's commonly called, is an outstanding way to relay messages in plain sight. Since the naked eye cannot perceive the ink without an ultraviolet light, a character can scrawl messages for other recipients in the know. It also allows for secretive information to be passed around through mundane channels. If nefarious forces are surveying someone, an ultraviolet message scribbled on a throwaway magazine is much easier to get into their home unmolested than, say, a suspicious letter slid through their doorframe. If you need to mark a path to a secret hiding place, what better way to conceal the guiding marks?

## Physical Equipment

Physical equipment enhances the use of Physical Skills. This often means the use of simple and complex machines to make things easier, or tricks to heighten the effectiveness of a character's inherent talents.

## Battering Ram

Die Bonus +4, Durability 3, Size 4, Structure 8, Availability ••

**Effect:** The purpose of the battering ram is to bring down doors and other barricades with direct, focused force. A battering ram uses a Teamwork action (see p. XX), allowing up to four participants. The primary actor adds the ram's die bonus to her roll. A ram ignores two points of Durability.

## Bear Trap

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 5, Availability ••

**Effect:** A bear trap is a large metal contraption that looks something like a set of deadly jaws. For this reason, they're also commonly called jaw traps. When a human or large animal steps

into the bear trap, it snaps shut on their leg. Due to the serrated edges on the trap, this can cause massive bleeding or even broken bones.

The jaw trap causes 3L damage and ignores two points of armor or Durability. A character trapped in the jaws can attempt to escape as an instant action. Doing so requires a Strength + Stamina roll, with the trap's die bonus as a penalty due to the distracting pain and the strength of the jaws. Failure on this roll causes another point of lethal damage as the jaw digs in further. Creatures without opposable thumbs cannot escape this way and must rip themselves free.

Any rolls to hide a bear trap suffer its die bonus as a penalty. They're difficult to hide due to their awkward shape and weight.

## Caltrops

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ••

**Effect:** Caltrops are small, pointed pieces of metal, arranged in such a way that one point is always facing upward. This makes walking (or driving) through a patch of caltrops inconvenient and painful. These traits assume enough caltrops to fill a doorway or other narrow corridor.

Moving through caltrops causes one point of lethal damage. Caltrops ignore a point of armor or Durability. To move through safely, a Dexterity + Athletics roll is required with the caltrops' die bonus applied as a penalty to the roll. A character may only move half Speed (rounded down) while moving safely through caltrops.

A character may hide caltrops, although it is difficult. A Wits + Larceny – 3 roll is required; the caltrops' die bonus does not apply to this roll.

## Camouflage Clothing

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ••

**Effect:** Camouflage clothing allows its wearer to blend in sufficiently with her surroundings for the untrained eye to pass over her completely. Effective camouflage must be catered to the environment; greens and browns in the woodlands, shades of gray in an urban area. Proper camouflage adds its bonus to rolls to remain unnoticed.

## Climbing Gear

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability ••

**Effect:** Climbing gear includes ropes, pulleys, handles, carabiners, hooks, and other assorted tools for scaling things. They serve a twofold purpose. First, they add their die bonus to the normal Strength + Athletics rolls for climbing. Second, if properly applied (with a Wits + Athletics roll), they prevent a character from falling more than 10 feet at a time.

## Crowbar

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 4, Availability •

**Effect:** A crowbar is a curved piece of steel used to pry open shipping pallets, jammed doors, and other things a normal person would be incapable of doing by hand. It adds to any dice rolls used to establish leverage. When prying things open, it allows your character to ignore two points of Durability on the lock or barricade. A crowbar can also be used as a weapon (see p. XX).

## Firearm Suppressor

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability ••

**Effect:** A firearm suppressor is popularly and misleadingly referred to as a silencer in cinema and other media. It's a cylinder placed on the end of a gun barrel that changes and lightens the sound of a shot. A suppressor delivers many minor benefits, but offers two noteworthy advantages: short-range accuracy and concealment.

*Increased Accuracy:* A suppressed firearm travels through a longer barrel and the muzzle crown evens the expulsion of hot gasses that can slightly affect trajectory. In game terms, reduce a suppressed gun's damage rating by 1 due to the bullet's subsonic flight, but increase the attack dice pool by 2 when firing at short range.

*Position Concealer:* The sound changes dramatically, to the point where many people do not recognize the sound as that of a gunshot and are often unable to place where the lower tone came from. The muzzle flash is also reduced dramatically with a suppressor, helping to conceal a shooter's position. A character trying to identify a suppressed shot must roll Wits + Firearms – 2. Any character searching for the shooter using the gun's tells suffers a –2 penalty.

## Gas Mask

Die Bonus +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability ••

**Effect:** A gas mask is a filtration device placed over the face that defends against noxious chemicals in the air. With a working gas mask, a character can stand minor toxins for as long as he needs, whereas other characters might take damage over time or require rolls to remain conscious. Powerful toxins may still require rolls. A gas mask adds five dice to these rolls.

## Handcuffs

Die Bonus +2, Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 4, Availability •

**Effect:** A solid pair of steel handcuffs is made to restrain even a remarkably strong person. Applying handcuffs to an unwilling combatant is an additional option in a grapple. Roll Strength + Brawl – the opponent's Strength. Success means the handcuffs are where they need to be.

Breaking out of successfully applied handcuffs requires a Strength + Stamina – 4 roll. Each success on the roll reduces the Structure of the cuffs by 1. Cuffs reduced to 0 Structure snap open. Each attempt to escape causes 1 point of bashing damage.

A character may also try to finagle their hands out of the cuffs. This requires a Dexterity + Athletics – 4 roll. Success allows for an escape, and causes one point of bashing damage. Failure on this roll causes one point of lethal damage, as the thumb jerks out of socket.

Attempting to do anything requiring manual dexterity while cuffed incurs a –4 penalty, or –2 if the hands are cuffed in front. Witnesses are unlikely to behave favorably around a cuffed character, Social rolls against strangers incur a –3 penalty.

Many police forces and security companies now prefer heavy-duty plastic zip ties in place of handcuffs. While they're slightly less durable (Durability 3), they incur a –5 penalty from behind or –3 from the front, because they can be far tighter on the wrists. They can also be cut free.

## Lockpicking Kit

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability ••

**Effect:** A lockpicking kit consists of picks, tools, and rods for manipulating tumblers and opening locks. A good kit contains a wide array of tools to all but guarantee intrusion of an analog lock. With such a kit and at least a dot of Larceny, a character can pick a lock without a roll if time is not an issue. If time is an issue, the die bonus applies to the Dexterity + Larceny rolls. At Availability •, a character may procure a portable lockpick. It has Size 1, Structure 1, and is far more concealable. However, it only offers a +1 bonus and doesn't allow for picking without rolls since the kit realistically may not have the right tools for a given job.

A lockpicking kit only works on mechanical locks. Digital locks require more specific hacking and code prediction. A character may procure a digital lockpick at Availability ••, but it typically only works on one type of lock, such as the keycard locks used in hotels. Digital lockpicks can be Size 2, or Size 1 if crafted as an extension of a laptop computer or smartphone.

## Mace (Pepper Spray)

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

**Effect:** Pepper spray, or “mace” as it's commonly called, is a blend of chemicals (mostly capsaicin, the “hot” part of a chili pepper) in a small spray can, designed to debilitate threats. Civilians use these devices in self-defense; police use them to subdue unruly criminals. Use of pepper spray requires a Dexterity + Athletics, or Dexterity + Firearms roll. Each yard is a range category, so one yard is short range, two yards is medium, three yards is long range. An opponent's Defense applies, but in normal wind conditions, the die bonus applies to the roll.

Upon the first attack, the victim suffers the Stun Tilt (see p. XX). Someone affected by the spray suffers a –5 penalty to all actions. This penalty can be reduced by 1 for every turn spent rinsing the eyes with water. Commercial chemicals designed to cleanse the eyes will fully remove the penalty after a turn.

## Rope

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability •

**Effect:** Rope is one of the oldest tools known to humankind. It's never left prominent use because of its simple, efficient utility. A good rope adds its die bonus to relevant Crafts rolls and anywhere else it would assist. As a binding agent, it resists breaking with Durability (or effective Strength) equal to its user's Crafts score, due to the multiplicative effect of solid knots. An applicable Specialty adds one to the user's Crafts score for this purpose. Some interrogators, shibari fetishists, and boy scouts alike specialize in remarkable knot-tying, potentially rendering subjects completely and hopelessly immobile.

## Stun Gun

Die Bonus 0, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •, ••, or •••

**Effect:** A stun gun is designed to deliver an overwhelming amount of electricity to an assailant in order to shut down her muscles and send her to the ground. As a defensive item, this gives the would-be victim time to run or get help. As an offensive item, it leaves the victim ready for restraint or worse.

These devices come in two varieties (hand-held and ranged) and three intensities (1-3, corresponding to their Availabilities). The hand-held model has live leads on the edge of a handle and can be used as many as 50 times on one battery charge. The ranged model fires small,

wired darts up to 15 feet away. While the ranged model has a similar battery life, it uses a compressed air cartridge that must be replaced after each shot.

Use of a handheld stun gun requires a Dexterity + Weaponry roll, penalized by the victim's Defense. The ranged model uses Dexterity + Firearms, also penalized by the victim's Defense. On a successful hit with either, the victim takes one point of lethal damage. The successes subtract from the victim's next dice pool. With the ranged version, the darts remain in the victim's body, adding three successes automatically each turn. They can be removed with a Strength + Stamina roll, with the initial successes penalizing the action. With the hand-held version, the attacker can attempt to maintain the shock, which takes a Strength + Weaponry, penalized by the greater of the opponent's Strength or Defense. Once the accumulated successes exceed the victim's Size, the victim collapses in neuro-muscular incapacitation. Once the shock ends, this lasts for (10 – victim's Stamina) in turns.

## Social Equipment

Social actions deal with people. Social Equipment offers tools for leverage, influence, and manipulation.

### Cash

Die Bonus +1 to +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to •••••

**Effect:** This represents a wad of cash, a briefcase of money, an offshore bank account number, or some other lump sum. It can't be reflected in the Resources Merit since it's not a regular income. However, it can be expended to offer a bonus equivalent to its Availability on any social roll where a bribe could benefit. It can also be expended to purchase one item of equal Availability. For more complex uses, consider it a single month's allotment of the same Resources.

### Disguise

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to •••

**Effect:** A good disguise goes a long way to help fit in with a strange group or go unnoticed in a crowd where one doesn't belong. Properly costumed for a situation, no rolls are required to blend into the crowd. Any rolls to actively detect the outsider suffer a penalty equal to the die bonus of the disguise; the disguised character also gains the bonus to remain hidden.

With a disguise, a character can emulate the first dot of a single Social Merit that would make sense within the scope of the scene. For example, it doesn't make money appear from thin air, but it would allow a character to get their drinks on a nonexistent tab, reflecting Resources •. This requires a Composure + Subterfuge to maintain in the face of anyone in the know, contested by the witness's Wits + Subterfuge. The die bonus of the disguise applies to the liar, but does not affect the witness.

### Fashion

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to •••••

**Effect:** Never underestimate the value of high fashion. Like a disguise, fashionable clothing allows a character to fit in. However, the point of fashion is to draw attention, not to fade into the crowd. As opposed to anonymity, fashion means being noticed. Note that the clothing chosen must be appropriate to the setting. Punk chic will not work at a Senator's fundraiser, for



example. When improperly dressed, the die bonus applies as a penalty to all Social Skill rolls. The die bonus for Fashion is equal to half the Availability rating, rounded up.

## Services

In addition to equipment, characters may want to procure services from other characters. Treat Availability of these services as the cost of securing the bonus on a single instant or reflexive action or for the entirety of an extended action or social maneuver.

Note that some services listed could be highly illegal and should be limited in access to appropriate Merits. In many cases, illegal services only offer negligible die bonuses. Their real advantage comes from a layer of separation from legal authorities.

### [[THIS STUFF SHOULD BE CHARTED]]

ServiceAvailability Die Bonus

#### Academics

Historical specialist consulting	•••	+3
Research assistance from grad students	••	+2
Translation of a dead language	•••	+2

#### Computer

Custom phone application	•••	+2
Digital image enhancement	••	+3
Graphic design/forgery	••	+2

#### Crafts

Antiquities restoration	•••	+2
Auto repair	••	+3
Custom equipment modifications	•••	+2

#### Investigation

Consultation on evidence	•••	+3
Investigative photography	•••	+2
Private investigation/background check	••	+2

#### Medicine

Black market surgeon	••••	+3
Expert medical witness	••••	+2
Rush plastic surgery	••••	+2

#### Occult

Esoteric consultant/sage	••••	+3
Exorcist	•••	+2

Protective amulets or wards	••••	+1	
Politics			
Campaign assistant	•••	+3	
Cutting red tape (read: bribe)	•••	+2	
Spin doctor	•••	+2	
Science			
Fact-checking	••	+3	
Falsifying research/cover-up	•••	+2	
Lab access	••	+2	
Athletics			
Meditative assistance	•••	+2	
Personal trainer	•••	+3	
Throwing an athletic competition	••••	+4	
Brawl			
Arrange underground boxing ring	•••	+2	
Bodyguard service	•••	+3	
Self-defense classes	•	+1	
Drive			
Chauffer	••	+2	
Stunt performance/mock crash	•••	+3	
Tour bus rental	••••	+2	
Firearms			
Antique gun repair	•••	+2	
Cover fire from gangs	•••	+3	
Procuring smuggled military arms	••••	+2	
Larceny			
Breaking and entering	•••	+2	
Security consulting	•••	+2	
Stealing a protected relic	••••	+3	
Stealth			
Strategic distraction	•••	+3	
Tailing a suspect	•••	+2	
Targeted vandalism	••	+2	

## Survival

Field dress and preserve an animal   •••   +1

Trail guide   ••   +3

Weatherproof a shelter   ••   +2

## Weaponry

Properly forged sword•••   +2

Identify wound from obscure weapon   •••   +2

Training in archaic warfare   •••   +2

## Animal Ken

Buy a trained animal   •••   +2

Identify animal droppings   ••   +1

Rule out natural causes of death   •••   +2

## Empathy

“Good cop” interrogator   •••   +2

Neutral arbitrator   •••   +2

Therapy session   ••   +1

## Expression

Document forgery   •••   +3

Ghostwriting   ••   +2

Motivational speech   •••   +1

## Intimidation

Anti-interrogation training   ••••   +3

“Bad cop” interrogator   •••   +2

Deprogramming therapy   •••   +2

## Persuasion

Defense attorney   •••   +3

Hostage negotiator   ••••   +3

Pickup artist   •••   +2

## Socialize

Catering   •••   or ••••   +1 or +2

Elocution consulting   •••   +1

Escort   •••   +2

## Streetwise

Arrange a rave or block party	•••	+2
Black market access	••	+2
Find crash space	••	+1
Smuggling contraband	•••	+1
Subterfuge		
Amateur actor/actress	••	+2
Con artistry	•••	+2
Gambling ringer	•••	+2

**[[END SIDEBAR OR BREAKOUT, AND THE CHART WITHIN]]**

## Objects

Objects such as lead pipes, walls, or cars have three traits in the Storytelling System: Durability, Size, and Structure. Mostly, these relate to how easy the object is to destroy.

### Object Basics

- **Durability:** How hard the object is to damage. Subtract Durability from any damage inflicted on the object. Durability has no effect against attacks that inflict aggravated damage.

**[BEGIN TABLE]**

Durability	Material
1	Wood, hard plastic, thick glass
2	Stone, aluminum
3	Steel, iron
+1	per reinforced layer

**[END TABLE]**

- **Size:** How large the object is. Objects smaller than Size 1 can fit entirely in a person's palm.

**[BEGIN TABLE]**

Size	Object
1	Pistol
2	Crowbar, sawn-off shotgun
3	Assault rifle
5	Door
10	Sports car
15	SUV

**[END TABLE]**

- **Structure:** An object's Structure equals its Durability + Size.

### Damaging Objects

- **Damage:** Each point of damage removes a point of Structure. Objects do not differentiate between bashing and lethal damage.
- **Reduced Functionality:** Once it's taken more damage than its Durability, anyone using the object suffers a -1 die penalty.
- **Destruction:** When an object's Structure hits 0, it is destroyed.
- **Repair:** Repairing an object is typically an extended Wits + Crafts roll, with time interval and required successes determined by the Storyteller.

## Krewes

No man is an island, or so the saying goes, and the Bound understand that better than most. Without their geist partners they would be anchored to their pasts, powerless before the inevitable pull of the Underworld. Without their fellow Sin-Eaters they would have no one to offer them guidance, protection, and camaraderie in their descent. Without the krewes, the Sin-Eater is just a lone idealist trying to singlehandedly restructure the monumental machinery of the afterlife.

Krewes have adopted many trappings over the decades, from esoteric societies of scholars to exclusive new personal training regimes for the spiritually inclined. They've gone by just as many names: krewes, mystic orders, sects, unions, guilds, cults and fraternities. No matter the name, they bring together the living, the dead, and those few individuals that straddle both worlds.

### Krewe Traits

Krewes aren't just abstract philosophies and religious precepts: they are organizations composed of like-minded individuals pooling their collective resources. Instead of measuring themselves in terms of soul, mind, or physical limits, krewes are an accumulation of human and supernatural ability. In game terms, krewes are represented with Traits similar to those of the characters'.

### Attributes

Like ghosts, a krewe uses the simplified Attributes Power, Finesse, and Resistance.

Power describes the krewe's ability to get things done itself, directly and without dissimulation. When the krewe needs to apply physical force in a turf war, participate in a large-scale ritual, or scour a city for a single artifact, it rolls Power.

Finesse describes the social and intangible leverage the krewe has. When a krewe needs to blackmail a city councilor, come to an armistice with local gangs, or find a guy that knows a guy, it uses Finesse.

Resistance describes the krewe's loyalty and commitment to its own philosophy. If the krewe needs to resist infiltration, participate in the sort of ceremony that normal people could never stomach, or remain ideologically pure, it rolls Resistance.

### Krewe Attributes

- **Rating:** Attributes are rated from 1-5 dots. Krewes with high Esotery Traits (p. XX) may have Attributes rated at 6 or more dots.
- **Use in Actions:** Most krewes actions use Attribute + Esotery as their dice pool.
- **Basic Competency:** All krewes receive one free dot in every Attribute.

## Merits

Krewe Merits function similarly to those of individual characters. Merits represent the collective capabilities of the krewe rather than a generalized statement about it. A krewe with five dots of Resources doesn't mean every member is affluent, just as three dots of Status (City Hall) doesn't mean every member of the krewe is a government employee. Instead these refer to the krewe's ability to pool together enough resources to make that purchase even if it means putting a second mortgage on a few members' houses, or the fact that a few celebrants are also in the same fraternal order as the mayor.

Every krewe has a custom Mystery Cult Initiation Merit associated with membership (p. XX).

### Krewe Merits

- **Rating:** Merits are rated from 1-5 dots.
- **Not a Krewe Action:** Using a Merit is *not* a krewe action, and is not subject to the same limits as krewe actions (p. XX).
- **Dice Pool:** Merits with the Krewe tag have an entry telling you what dice pool, if any, to roll.

## Doctrines

Doctrines are phrased as goals, beliefs, and dreams that the krewe works toward. Acting in accordance with Doctrines earns Krewe Beats, which allow the players to improve the strength and mystical puissance of their krewe. Doctrines are powerful, but restrictive: breaking Doctrines leads to doubt and unrest within the krewe, and they are difficult to change without sacrificing the very power they helped the krewe to build.

### Doctrines

- **Pillars of Faith:** Krewes have three Doctrines, phrased as active tenets of the krewe's faith.
- **Krewe Beats:** At the end of the chapter, for every Doctrine the krewe has actively lived by or advanced, the krewe takes a Krewe Beat. The entire group, collectively, decides whether the krewe has advanced its Doctrines this session.
- **Redefining Doctrines:** The krewe may sacrifice a dot of Esotery to rewrite one of their Doctrines. Doctrines may also be redefined in the wake of a Schism (p. XX)
- **Broken Doctrines:** If the krewe takes an action that directly violates one or more Doctrines, or if a leading member of the krewe (a player's character, or a Storyteller character with Mystery Cult Initiation •••+) openly violates a Doctrine, the krewe gains the Shaken Faith Condition (p. XX).

- **Secret Violations:** If a leading member of the krewe violates a Doctrine and covers it up, they gain the Dark Secret Condition (p. XX). When that Condition is resolved, the krewe gains the Shaken Faith Condition.

## Virtue and Creed

If Doctrines define the works a krewe undertakes, Virtue and Creed describe the spiritual pillars of their faith. Creed represents easy, surface-level devotion, the sort of thing that makes celebrants feel better but seldom effects any lasting change. Virtue, on the other hand, represents the true spiritual bedrock: the difficult, painful self-examination that ultimately makes you a better person.

*For example, a Psychopomp krewe has the Creed of Hopeful and the Virtue of Loyal. The krewe takes comfort in sharing their vision of the Underworld without actually challenging their own beliefs, but when they do make a promise to aid someone they will crawl through hell for them.*

For the living, affirming their krewe's Virtue and Creed are spiritually refreshing, but the dead understand how much being included helps anchor them to this world. To a ghost, fulfilling a krewe's Creed is as nourishing as being remembered by the living, while fulfilling its Virtue is a rush unlike anything else.

## Virtue and Creed

When a krewe *fulfills* its Creed, the group collectively takes an action that is in accordance with it. When it fulfills its Virtue, it take *meaningful* action in accordance with it, in spite of risk or difficulty.

- **Creed:** Fulfill Creed: All participating celebrants regain 1 Willpower; once per scene.
- **Virtue:** Fulfill Virtue: All participating celebrants regain *all* Willpower; once per chapter.
- **Essence Substitute:** Ghost celebrants may regain Essence instead of Willpower when fulfilling the krewe's Creed or Virtue.

## Congregation

Where a living character has Health and a ghost has Corpus, a krewe has Congregation. This Trait measures the unity, cohesiveness, and overall well-being of the krewe as a group. Damaged Congregation represents celebrants pulling away from the krewe, doubting its mission, or even being injured in battle.

## Congregation

- **Starting Value:** 5 + Resistance

## Esotery

Esotery represents the symbolic strength and faith of the assembled krewe. When a krewe first forms it is a tenuous thing, more a collection of impermanent and material alliances than a matter of spirituality. As Esotery increases, the Krewe's beliefs and practices find purchase in the structures of the Underworld, gaining power from the symbolic resonances much as a geist does when it drinks of the Rivers.

Esotery ranges from one to 10 dots, but krewes with more than five dots of Esotery are rare. Most people find it hard to both keep up the sacrifices necessary for the journey and manage

their own private affairs. Those few krewes that do possess six or more dots have found niches for themselves in the current status quo, realizing it's easier to not rock the boat.

Newly formed krewes find even a single project leaves them burning the candle at both ends, while larger krewes can attempt to make the afterlife a better place while simultaneously pursuing revenge against those who've wronged them. Mechanically, a krewe is limited in the number of actions they may attempt based on their Esotery.

However, if a krewe finds they really must begin another project beyond what they're capable of they may push themselves past their normal limits. A krewe who wishes to start a project past their limit takes 1 lethal damage for every roll they make to generate Effort.

### Esotery

- **Krewe Actions:** This indicates how many *krewe actions* (p. XX) the krewe can undertake in a story.
- **Task Limits:** This indicates how many *Tasks* (p. XX) a krewe action can comprise.
- **Attribute Maximum:** This indicates the maximum value of the krewe's Attributes (p. XX).
- **Krewe Regalia:** This indicates the number of *Regalia* (p. XX) the krewe can have.

#### [BEGIN TABLE]

Esotery	Krewe Actions	Task Limits	Attribute Maximum	Krewe Regalia
1	1	3	5	0
2	1	3	5	1
3	2	5	7	1
4	2	5	7	2
5	3	7	9	2
6	3	7	9	2
7	4	9	12	3
8	4	9	12	3
9	5	9	15	3
10	5	10	15	4

#### [END TABLE]

### Ceremonies

Krewe Ceremonies represent the core rites an initiate of the faith is expected to be able to perform. Just as any Catholic priest can perform Mass, any hierophant of the Bone Collective can perform the Diviner's Jawbone.

#### Krewe Ceremonies

- **By Archetype:** Krewes begin with a one-, two-, and three-dot Ceremony determined by their archetype, and with the Bestow Regalia Ceremony.



- **Further Ceremonies:** Krewe Experiences may be spent to buy additional krewe Ceremonies.
- **Initiation:** Any krewe member whose Mystery Cult Initiation rating equals or exceeds a krewe Ceremony's may perform that Ceremony.

## Regalia

As krewes accrue mystic significance, they develop ritualistic trappings and roles that reflect their shared mythology of how the afterlife should be. Regalia are specially created Conditions that reflect a deeper mystical anchoring to the philosophies that each krewe espouses. By reenacting a key tenet of their faith through a Ceremony, the krewe may crown a celebrant with one of its Regalia.

### Creating a Regalia

- **Base Condition:** Start with the Regalia Condition (p. XX). Then choose a Regalia Effect from the list below.
- **Unique:** A krewe may only have one of each Regalia Effect. Only one character may have the same Regalia at any time.

### Regalia Effects

- **Glory:** The character gains 8-again on rolls using a specific Skill related to the mythic concept. Resolve: Gain half of the krewe's Esotery (rounded down) as automatic successes to a single roll using the chosen Skill.

*The Keeper's Child Regalia, an archetype of ghostly understanding, gives 8-again on Empathy rolls.*

- **Eminence:** A Sin-Eater, ghost, or geist member of the krewe donning the Regalia gains +1 Rank (the living and others who don't have an effective Rank are treated as Rank 1). Resolve: Give all lower-Ranked entities that can see you the Beaten Down Tilt.

*When the ghosts of the Dead Letters krewe invoke the Regalia of the Bear Mother on one of their own, she is treated as a Rank 3 ghost.*

- **Power:** The character may access a Key related to the krewe's mythology as if it were an innate Key for the duration of a scene. Resolve: Unlock a Haunt with the Key *without* gaining the Doomed Condition.

*The All Souls krewe often invokes the regalia of its founder's second death to impart the Key of Blood to the wearer of the Regalia.*

- **Grace:**

Sample Regalia: Orpheus the Lover

The members of the Coven of the Rose are something of classics nerds and incorporated Orphic motifs into their own krewe mythology. If the Underworld exists, couldn't an individual like Orpheus have existed as well? When a celebrant of the krewe dons the Regalia of Orpheus the Lover, he sees the world in the hopeful light of new love. They find ancient songs flow easily from their mouth even if they have no prior training in music.

### **Effect**

- Improve your reaction level (p. XX) with other Sin-Eaters by 1.
- Gain 8-again on rolls using Expression.

### **Possible Sources**

- Regalia Ceremony

### **Resolution**

- Act in opposition to a krewe Doctrine, Virtue, or Creed. Gain the Guilty Condition.
- Gain half of the krewe's Esotery in automatic successes on a roll using Expression.
- Resolving this Condition grants a Krewe Beat.

## **Krewe Action**

Krewe actions are projects agreed on and planned out by a krewe, to achieve an outcome that a single person couldn't normally do alone. A krewe action is always a long-term project; an opposed roll or an activation roll for a krewe Social Merit never count as krewe actions. The core of a krewe action is the generation of *Effort* by members of the krewe undertaking smaller steps of the action. Sometimes a krewe action enables individual characters to do something big on their own, while other times the outcome of the action is all that is required. Effort contextualizes the outcomes of krewe actions, showing the difference between a trail of broken lives behind the krewe or a clean project where nobody was hurt.

This system is about bringing the full power and resources of the krewe to bear on a situation. This is usually a means to an end of furthering the krewe's Doctrines. Perhaps the krewe is looking to rescue a particular ghost that has been dragged down unwillingly into the Underworld, or the characters are calling on the krewe to locate a living relative of a particularly fearsome Reaper. Maybe the krewe just really doesn't like somebody and wants them to suffer.

### **The Bigger Picture**

Unlike most actions, a krewe action spans geographic space and time. A member of the krewe may be hustling a store owner on one end of town for access to the steam tunnels under their business while another, dead member shadows a local doctor of whom the krewe is suspicious. The Sin-Eaters might be spending all their attention on scaring off a local drug dealer dealing ghost cocaine, so who is running this job while they're occupied? A krewe is a many-headed hydra able to focus its attention on several problems at the same time, but that doesn't mean its members can't be stretched too thin or make major mistakes.

Krewe actions aren't just a series of rolls to see if the Sin-Eaters' minions performed a task while the camera was focused elsewhere. Krewe actions should be immersed in the world just as much as the central scenes of the chronicle are. Which member of the krewe is in charge of this if all the Sin-Eaters are too busy to help out? Are they alone or did they bring help with them? Do they have any experience trying to do anything like this? These sorts of questions help build a sense of interconnectedness between the characters and the krewe. The world is

turning outside of the main action and krewe members aren't frozen in stasis waiting for the characters to interact with them.

## Step One: Determine the Desired Outcome

The first step of a krewe action is for the krewe to decide just what they are trying to accomplish. Are they looking to dig up dirt on a local politician? Find the Avernian Gate that's letting Reapers out into the world? Uncover a lost Ceremony in the depths of the British Museum archives? Having a clear goal makes the rest of the process much easier, so make sure everyone is on the same page before going any farther.

## Step Two: Determine Complexity

Small actions that could easily be completed by a character in a scene or two, such as making sure a film team of ghost hunters doesn't disturb the dead, are relatively simple. Herculean tasks that are the all-consuming focus of the krewe throughout an entire story, like cementing a new, permanent cultural practice of sacrifice to the dead among the city's forensic investigators and morticians, are considerably more complex.

### Complexity

- **Rating:** The Complexity of a krewe action is set by the Storyteller, with input from the players. Use the table below as a guideline.

#### [THUS BEGINS THE TABLE]

Complexity    Example

- 1        Locate the anchor of a ghost famous in life. Influence the vote of a city councilor. Discover the last living descendent of a recently deceased ghost. Expand the membership of the krewe within the local population.
- 3        Locate the Anchor of a ghost who was unknown or unremarkable in life. Induct a local politician into the mysteries of the krewe. Discover the last living descendent of a ghost that died years ago. Expand the krewe's influence and territory across a district of the city.
- 5        Locate the Anchor of a ghost who went unrecorded by history or intentionally purged from it. Draw multiple powerful or wealthy local players into the krewe's ranks. Discover the last living descendent of a ghost that died generations ago. Establish multiple branches of the krewe throughout the region.
- 7        Locate the former Anchor of a geist that has long since shed their mortal identity. Elevate a true believer of the krewe to a position of national attention or stardom. Discover the last living descendant of a ghost whose entire bloodline was thought killed. Expand the krewe's membership to include adherents throughout a major region.
- 10       Locate and acquire the former Anchor or the closest thing to it of one of the Kerberoi. Infiltrate a national scale organization like a corporation or intelligence agency with several true believers in the krewe. Discover the last living descendent of a ghost that has shed most of its identity in the Ocean of Fragments. Unify the disparate Bound and dead of a region under the krewe's beliefs.

#### [TABLE ENDS HERE]

## Step Three: Determine the Tasks

The krewe must determine how it are going to go about accomplishing its goal. Questions to consider while creating tasks are “Where did they send him?” “What is she hoping to do here?” and “How is this going to help?” These are the basic leading questions that help establish the situation, but pay attention to what details the krewe provides and ask questions to elaborate on them. If no one can come up with any ideas for how to accomplish their goal, or if it seems like accomplishing it would require more steps than the krewe’s Task limit (p. XX), that may be a sign that the goal needs to be split into multiple, smaller krewe actions, or that the first step is a krewe action to gather the information they need to actually tackle this goal.

### Tasks

- **Defining Tasks:** Define a number of Tasks equal to the action’s Complexity.

“I Want to be the Ghost President!”

Complexity is only one element of gauging the feasibility of a krewe action. Everyone at the table must *also* agree that the chosen Tasks make logical sense for getting the krewe from where they are now to where they want to be. In other words, it’s not enough for a small krewe with no political influence to say “We want to win a presidential election, so our Tasks are ‘get nominated (Intelligence + Politics), name a running mate (Wits + Manipulation), and win the election (Presence + Subterfuge).’” That might be enough to win a small-town mayoral race, but national campaigns require vastly more money and political clout.

Particularly big goals are usually a series of krewe actions, laying the groundwork for a final, big push to complete the ultimate goal. Ultimately, it’s up to the group as a whole to decide whether a course of action is feasible — and if not, to figure out what they need to do first.

## Step Four: Establish the Structure

Now that you know what the steps of the action are, it’s time to translate those into game mechanics. Is the Task contested? How long will it take? What are the relevant dice pools? Do the Tasks have to be undertaken in a specific order, and if so, what happens if they fail in a key step?

### Beware Extended Actions

When determining the structure of Tasks, avoid the temptation to make them extended actions, even if they’re things that would take a long time. Krewe actions are already effectively a kind of extended action; putting another extended action within them rapidly bogs things down with excessive rolling.

### Structure

For each Task, decide the following:

- **Action:** Simple or contested.
- **Time Required:** Determined by the Storyteller in consultation with the players, but should be at least an hour.

- **Task Order:** Based on the described Tasks, determine which, if any, must be done first.
- **Dice Pool:** The default dice pool for Tasks is (relevant krewe Attribute) + Esotery. If a player's character or major Storyteller character undertakes the Task, they may use their own dice pool most relevant to the Task. For contested Tasks, the Storyteller, in consultation with the players, determines the opposition dice pool.

## Step Five: Generate Effort

Effort is the fruit of the krewe's labor. Each point of Effort represents Tasks successfully performed to ensure the desired outcome. Failed Tasks instead generate complications when the krewe action is resolved.

### Generate Effort

**Action:** Determined by Task

**Dice Pool:** Determined by Task

**Suggested Modifiers:** No relevant skill set (-1 to -3), working with a krewe Leader (+2), violating krewe Doctrine (-5), being watched by the authorities (living or dead) (-2), thorough planning (+1), limited timeframe (-2), requires specialty equipment (-1 to -3), potential breaking point (-1 to -4)

**Success:** The krewe generates a point of Effort.

**Exceptional:** The krewe generates *two* points of Effort and creates a Condition relevant to the task. Connected and Leveraged are almost always appropriate, but any Condition the Storyteller deems appropriate is fine.

**Failure:** The krewe generates no Effort, and the Storyteller applies one Complication immediately. If the Task was a prerequisite for other Tasks, those Tasks suffer a -2 penalty.

**Dramatic:** Additionally, the krewe gains a negative Condition of the Storyteller's choice. If the Task was a prerequisite for other Tasks, the krewe lowers its Task Limit (p. XX) for this action by 1 as its members scramble to find alternate Tasks.

### Effort

- **Exclusive:** Effort can only be applied to the krewe action for which it was generated. Effort lasts until the end of the story.
- **Complete Action:** If the krewe has accumulated Effort for the scale of the project, they successfully complete the krewe action.
- **Spending Effort:** A character may spend Effort, one for one, to gain temporary dots of a Social Merit related to the krewe action. Retainer or Staff, for example, after calling in aid from specialists in the field that the krewe contacted. These temporary dots last for a chapter.

## Step Six: Repeat

Once one Task has been resolved, repeat Steps Four and Five for the remaining tasks.

Jesus Take the Wheel

Most Tasks in a krewe action are abstracted to a single action for a reason: They're the sort of drudge work that isn't terribly interesting to play out. But sometimes, a

more exciting Task presents itself: stealing a potent Memento from a rival krewe, attacking some necromancer's hideout to free his imprisoned ghosts, or a tense negotiation with a rival krewe.

In these cases, it's fine to "zoom in" on the players' characters as they tackle the Task directly. Rather than resolving the Task with a single roll, play the whole thing out using the normal rules — when the Task is over, the Storyteller assesses how well the group did and determines whether that counts as a success or not (or, in more extreme cases, an exceptional success or a dramatic failure.)

## Step Seven: Resolve Action

Once the krewe has resolved all its Tasks, the krewe action is finished. Krewe actions always succeed unless they're abandoned, so at this stage it's about determining the cost of the final outcome.

### Resolve Action

- **Effort:** If the krewe generated Effort equal to the action's Complexity, the action is completed successfully with no further complications.
- **Shortfall:** For every point of Effort short of the action's Complexity, the Storyteller adds a number of complications equal to the difference.

### Complications

- A member of the krewe is badly injured or killed carrying out the plan. The krewe gains the Casualties condition.
- Some within the krewe begin to question their motivations. The krewe gains the Shaken Faith condition.
- The action severely taxes the resources and goodwill of the celebrants. The krewe suffers 2 lethal damage.
- The krewe makes an enemy of somebody that was negatively affected by the outcome of the project.
- It required significantly more resources than originally planned: the krewe is Indebted to someone who picked up the slack.
- The krewe comes to the attention of someone higher in the social food chain.
- The krewe undergoes a schism.
- The action revealed a deeper problem of which the krewe was previously unaware.
- The project has its intended outcome but unintended side effects. The krewe gains a negative Condition such as Leveraged or Notoriety.

Yes, But...

A krewe action is a powerful thing. With enough celebrants, most mundane actions will succeed eventually, so failure becomes a question of time and stakes. Don't imagine failure as just being the opposite of the krewe getting what they want — play with the results. Maybe failure in a certain situation means a member of the

krewe does manage to complete their part of the project, but he is marked for reprisal by a rival krewe. Maybe the krewe succeeds in figuring out the identity of a ghost, but not in time to stop their last Anchor from being destroyed.

Failure doesn't mean that the krewe can't succeed, it just means who and what they lose along the way is going to be more severe than they originally planned.

### Running Krewe Actions

Generating a point of Effort may take as little as a few brief lines of conversation or it may stretch out over weeks, such as hunting down one specific haunted house based only on urban legends. In these cases, determining what information a character present in such a scenario may be lacking is vital. Somebody that has been out for hours may not know about the growing unease in the krewe or even the death of one of their krewemates.

Pace the generation of Effort out over the rest of the story, especially in situations where the characters are not directly participating in a krewe action. Use krewe action scenes as a way to provide dramatic pauses or reorientations to aspects of the story that have been neglected.

Additionally, if the krewe system becomes too much the center focus it can be limited outside the narrative with Effort only able to be generated once per session, allowing for it to happen as a sort of "B plot" like the non-linear storytelling of many popular television shows. Players see a small sampling of how the krewe is going about their plans, but don't see the final payoff of such action until the climax of the story.

## Krewe vs. Krewe

Sin-Eaters sometimes find themselves facing off against other Bound over philosophical incompatibilities. Sometimes both sides agree like rational adults that the only way to resolve those difficulties is to wipe each other off the face of the earth. When a krewe goes to war, it's rarely the kind of the battle that ends after a single firefight. Krewes are multifaceted organizations made up of beings that have defied death itself, and faith is a substance somehow harder to completely destroy than the Bound that spread it. While some Bound subscribe to the "Just to be Safe" doctrine of overwhelming force, most krewes find the idea more than a little distasteful. When the average krewe goes to war with another organization they don't rely (exclusively) on violence, but instead go after the cohesion of the krewe that keeps them unified in their faith.

Destroying a krewe or similar organization is a krewe action with no set Scale. Every point of Effort generated on such an action deals 1 lethal damage to the enemy krewe's Congregation. The krewe can continue the war with the other krewe until they're destroyed or the leadership decides the price is too high. If a krewe action succeeds in generating Effort equal to the enemy krewe's Congregation it immediately inflicts the Coup d'Etat Condition (p. XX) on that krewe.

These sorts of wars are rarely one sided, however. Krewe vs. krewe actions are contested, with the winner of the roll gaining the Effort. In conflicts with higher-Esotery krewes the lower-rank krewe may elect to begin a second krewe action to continue opposing the offensive. If the smaller krewe doesn't elect to begin another action, the rest of the higher-Esotery krewe's Tasks are unopposed rolls with a penalty equal to half the smaller krewe's Power. Complications for

failing these rolls often come in the form of the Casualties (p. XX) or Shaken Faith (p. XX) Conditions.

War rarely ends well for any krewe, especially those that are equally matched and focusing exclusively on destroying each other. The world is full of stories of krewes going to war, only to ensure the mutual destruction of both sides. Most successful wars happen when a krewe maneuvers the conflict to happen during a time when their victims are stretched too thin dealing with their own agendas to fight back effectively.

#### Bringing a Krewe to a Knife Fight

What happens when a Sin-Eater comes to a duel with her entire krewe backing her up? If an antagonist doesn't have a way of fighting a small crowd of people that are probably armed, it's safe to assume the best course of action is to use Down and Dirty Combat, with the krewe providing a Teamwork bonus to the character's combat dice pool equal to the krewe's Power.

If the antagonist can fight back against such a large group, or happened to bring a similarly well-armed group of people, treat it as a krewe vs. krewe action with a time frame of seconds or minutes as the brawl rages.

## Harm, Healing, and Schism

Rather than directly mapping to physical damage, Congregation tracks how devout the krewe's celebrants are to the cause. Bashing damage indicates a general slipping of religious attitudes, observant but distracted from the faith by material concerns. Lethal damage reflects a true unease with the current state of the krewe and its leadership. Aggravated damage is outright apostasy and flight from the organization as celebrants fear for their lives or are horrified at the actions they're being asked to commit. Organizations are slower to heal than the scars inflicted on the bodies of individuals. Without direct action to bolster the faith or numbers of the krewe, organizations can only wait for tempers to cool, rumors to die, and the faithful to return to the flock. Congregation recovers at the following rate:

- **Bashing:** One point per two days.
- **Lethal:** One point per week.
- **Aggravated:** One point per month.

Once a krewe's Congregation track is filled with lethal damage, it enters a schism: a tumultuous period where the core ideologies of the krewe are in jeopardy. The krewe's leadership must act quickly to resolve the issue, or the krewe may disband. The krewe has three options for mitigating a schism.

- **Purge:** The krewe may elect to silence dissent with a show of force. The krewe permanently loses a dot of Power, but clears all damage from Congregation. Most people find this a little drastic and it tends to have the bad result of only encouraging dissent; the krewe gains the Notoriety Condition.
- **Resolve:** The krewe comes to a resolution between the leadership and dissenting members of the krewe. The krewe loses a dot of Finesse but clears all damage from Congregation. The krewe gains the Leveraged condition.



- **Splinter:** The krewe allows those that wish to leave the krewe to do so. The krewe loses a dot of Resistance, but clears all damage from Congregation. The krewe gains the Diminished condition.

If the krewe leadership cannot come to an agreement over the best course of action, or simply decides to let the schism continue, then the krewe slowly implodes on itself. The krewe loses the ability to perform krewe actions and takes 1 aggravated damage. If the situation remains unaddressed, the krewe continues to take 1 aggravated damage a day as celebrants begin leaving en masse. Once the Congregation track is completely filled with aggravated damage, the krewe disbands. The characters retain all dots of Merits under Sanctity of Merits but lose all dots of Esotery and permanently lose access to their former krewe's Regalia. If the characters come together to form a new krewe, then it will be a different creature as they have turned their backs on those avenues to power they originally cultivated.

## Krewe Conditions

Krewe Conditions represent factors affecting the organization and its ability to function cohesively as a whole. Some of them only reflect the actual circumstances of a few members of the krewe, but they nonetheless have wide repercussions to the wider group. Krewe Conditions are gained when the krewe's Congregation track is filled with damage or as a complication from a particularly poorly thought out krewe Action.

The following is only a small sample of the sorts of Conditions that may befall a krewe, and Storytellers shouldn't feel limited to just assigning these Conditions but should use these as a guide to improvising Conditions that reflect the story.

### New Condition: Casualties

Members of the krewe are hurt or even hospitalized.

#### Effects

- The krewe suffers a -2 penalty to Power.
- When the krewe gains this Condition, choose one named Storyteller character celebrant who is among the injured.

#### Possible Sources

- A dramatic failure on a krewe action.
- The krewe is involved in a serious brawl.
- Somebody tries to kill a member of the krewe.

#### Resolution

- Declaring that the named Storyteller character has died of their wounds (or been permanently destroyed or lost to the Underworld, for a ghost). All players must consent to this resolution.
- The krewe undertakes no krewe actions for an entire chapter (not including the chapter in which the Condition was inflicted).

### New Condition: Diminished

Demoralized and running frightened, the krewe has had the fight beaten out of them by some spectacular show of force.

### **Effects**

- At the beginning of every krewe action, a member of the krewe's leadership must spend 1 Willpower.

### **Possible Sources**

- A complication on a krewe action.
- A concerted effort by enemies to undermine the krewe's faith.
- Resolving a schism.

### **Resolution**

- The krewe fulfills its Virtue.
- The krewe successfully completes a krewe action with no complications.
- The krewe gains a point of Esotery.

### **New Condition: Shaken Faith (Persistent)**

The krewe's faith is troubled by something, and now they're questioning everything they believe in.

### **Effects**

- Whenever krewe members fulfill the krewe's Virtue, they regain only a single point of Willpower *or* Plasm/Essence.
- At the start of each chapter, the Storyteller rolls (10 – Resistance) dice and keeps any successes. Once she's accumulated 10 successes, replace this Condition with either the Coup d'Etat or Heresy Condition. If another action inflicts this Condition a second (or subsequent) time, immediately replace it with either the Coup d'Etat or Heresy Condition.

### **Possible Sources**

- The krewe learns of one of its leaders having violated a Doctrine.
- The krewe's Congregation track is filled with bashing damage.

### **Resolution**

- The krewe gains a dot of Esotery.
- The problem grows worse and is replaced with the Coup d'Etat or Heresy Condition.

### **New Condition: Coup d'Etat (Persistent)**

The krewe's leadership has burnt enough goodwill among the krewe that a new potential leader has stepped forward to take up the reins — whether they like it or not. A coup may be a bloodless power play, or it could be a bloody civil war.

### **Effect**

- All krewe actions are reduced to a chance die. In addition, once per chapter the Storyteller may introduce a complication related to the coup: an assassination attempt, a block on the characters' Social Merits, etc.

### **Possible Sources**

- The krewe's Congregation track is filled with lethal damage.
- The Shaken Faith condition worsens.
- Another organization tries to undermine the krewe.

### **Resolution**

- The krewe leadership disbands the krewe.
- The characters purge the disloyal and reestablish their dominance over the krewe.
- A larger threat forces the krewe to unify — at least for the time being.

### **Beat**

- The characters are abandoned by their disloyal krewemates.

### **New Condition: Heresy (Persistent)**

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and no matter how well-intentioned a krewe is, they can still lose their way.

### **Effect**

- A krewe suffering from Heresy gains a temporary Doctrine that describes their specific heresy. Whenever the krewe indulges the Heresy and gains a Beat through this heretical Doctrine, the Storyteller makes a note of it.
- All tasks in krewe actions become contested rolls of Attribute + Esotery versus (the number of Beats generated by the Heresy Doctrine). If the Heresy wins, it gains Effort instead of the krewe action. If the Heresy has more Effort than the krewe action when all the tasks are resolved, the Storyteller replaces one of the krewe's Doctrines with the Heresy.

### **Possible Sources**

- The krewe's Congregation track is filled with aggravated damage.
- The Shaken Faith condition grows worse.
- The krewe experiences a religious epiphany without the characters present.

### **Resolution**

- The krewe undergoes a Schism.
- The heretical branch of the krewe is destroyed.
- The Heresy is adopted by the krewe as a new Doctrine.

### **Beat**

- The krewe fulfills the heretical Doctrine.

Krewes and the **Chronicles of Darkness**

The krewe action system offers a new toy in the Storytelling system toolkit that Storytellers may want to import to other games in the line. Any small to mid-sized organization — a vampire’s blood cult, a police precinct, or a Russian *mafia* — can be given Traits using this system, with minimal modifications

For most games, the basic Attributes and Advantages of a krewe need little alteration, though large organizations are most likely made up of krewe-sized departments under common leadership. You might also wish to rename “Congregation” to something more appropriate, like “Membership.”

Instead of Esotery, mundane organizations have Standing indicating the group’s relative scale and importance within their field. Organizations still create Regalia, but they tend to reflect the mundane or particular strangeness of each group such as “Owners of the Eastside” or “Firstborn Amongst Equals” rather than a defining mythological concept of the new Underworld.

# Ghosts

Imagine waking up at home, with no idea how you got there. Your mind has trouble grasping onto events, and your memories are full of holes. It feels like you're suffering dementia or a stroke, but it's much worse than that. You know something happened, something terrible, but you have no idea what. You can't touch anything; objects may as well be made of smoke. Your loved ones ignore you. Worse than ignore you — they don't even know you're right there in front of them, screaming at them, begging them to notice you.

This is what it is to be a ghost.

Whenever something is destroyed, it leaves an afterimage formed of *ephemera*, the non-manifested form of Plasm. Ephemera is naturally insubstantial and invisible (a state occultists and the Bound call being “in Twilight”), so most people have no idea it even exists. These afterimages last as long as the living still feel loss over the absence of whatever was destroyed — fueled by the instinctive expectation for something to be present while knowing it won't be, which shores up the afterimage's ephemeral form. Eventually, once no one is unwittingly maintaining it, the afterimage collapses through the nearest Avernian Gate. These portals, also in Twilight, stand in every place associated with death: sites stained by murders or disease, quiet, lonely places, as well as every graveyard, morgue, crematorium, and even pet cemetery in the world. The gates lead to the Underworld, a realm formed entirely of ephemera, where the forgotten detritus of the living world is slowly eroded by the trickling movement of Plasm, carried down the Rivers to the Ocean of Fragments, piece by microscopic piece.

Nothing is exempt from this cycle, though most broken objects last seconds at most in Twilight before joining the heaps of trash clogging the Underworld's arteries. Buildings and possessions of great emotional significance, or those lost in a deeply traumatic way, can last much longer, at least until someone builds over their original footprint and the living begin to move on. The sites of famous disasters linger in Twilight, haunted with ghostly populations that resist new development with their powers. Eventually, though, even they will fade and fall to the Great Below. Everything does.

When the afterimage is an object, a building, or even a family pet, it is of interest only to Sin-Eaters and occultists capable of perceiving things in Twilight. Some harbor dormant powers that can erupt naturally or by supernatural prompting — a newly built suburban home fills with the smell of the squat that burned down on the same site after a medium performs a ceremony, or a loyal hound instinctively protects its master even after death — but most go unnoticed until the Underworld claims them.

When the afterimage is a *person*, suffering ensues.

## The Nature of Ghosts

When a living person dies, she leaves herself behind. Ghosts aren't, strictly speaking, the deceased people they resemble. Rather, they're copies — copies with varying degrees of fidelity, who gradually evolve and change over time after their death. How closely a ghost resembles her former self depends on how healthy her living sense of self was. Many ghosts are every bit as self-aware as a living person, although often with gaps in their memories they aren't aware of unless prompted. More are trapped in a train of thought, reliving their death or another

significant memory over and over again. Within that loop, they're as sapient as anyone else, but they lack the capacity to break out of their cycle, and frequently don't even remember that they've lived this moment dozens or hundreds of times. A few aren't even humanoid, just shapeless forms of ephemera that briefly change into body parts or objects in response to their broken thoughts.

### Poor Unfortunate Souls

Although Bound and mortal occultists alike often call ghosts "souls," they're not. Souls appear just before birth and vanish shortly after death, and ghosts don't possess them. In fact, a living person deprived of their soul suffers long-term effects strikingly similar to the damage to many ghosts' personalities. Someone without a soul can leave a ghost, and the existence of ghostly buildings and animals underscores the point.

Some occultists aware of the distinction cling to beliefs that the soul moves on to an afterlife closer to their expectations than the Underworld is, or justify their enslavement or abuse of ghosts with the difference, but just because a ghost isn't a soul, doesn't mean he isn't a person.

A ghosts' ephemeral form degrades over time, but ghosts can replenish themselves with *Essence*. Combination currency and food for the dead, Essence is the psychic energy created by memory and emotion. When a ghost first appears, she is sustained by *Anchors*; the sympathetic ties to particular people, places, and things from her living days that shore up her identity and feed her Essence. When her husband grieves, when teenagers tell stories about Chop-'em-Up Charlie who haunts the old mill, or even when loved ones visit her grave, her Anchors produce Essence and hold off the Underworld for another day. If something should destroy her ephemeral body, it will reform at the closest Anchor as long as she still retains any Essence. Away from an Anchor, ghosts' ephemeral forms bleed Essence faster (which causes pain), so ghosts haunt their Anchors except in desperate circumstances.

Most ghosts don't have the power to do anything but lurk, unseen and unheard, in Twilight near an Anchor. Some learn to possess their Anchors, slumber inside them, or become briefly visible. These *Manifestations* only work on Anchors — one ghost could appear as an apparition to his wife, but not to anyone else. Another comes to inhabit the car that killed her in a DUI.

Less powerful ghosts have specific Anchors, while more powerful ones that have descended to and returned from the Underworld have more general Anchors; a geist called the Candle Man can inhabit any flame or possess any third-degree burn victim.

Only the weakest Manifestations work on an Anchor without preparation; most need the ghost to prepare its future host carefully. Mortal necromancers and the Bound alike summon or exorcise ghostly Manifestations by creating or destroying the appropriate setting for the ghost. Would-be exorcists spread salt and burn ghosts' bones, while mediums hold séances with prized belongings of the dead as offerings.

A ghost able to protect his Anchors can remain safely in the living world for centuries. Some try to move on to alternative forms of an Anchor, with mixed success: for example, haunting the building constructed after the original Anchor is demolished. Once a ghost has no Anchors remaining, and the last of her Essence bleeds away, the Underworld beckons. She feels pushed, as though borne along by a raging current, to the nearest Avernian Gate, which swallows her

whole into the Underworld. Some ghosts voluntarily pass through the Avernian Gates, through despair or a desire to move on. Others are forcibly relocated by the Bound, Reapers, or other supernatural beings.

Ghosts don't travel well, thanks to the pain of being away from an Anchor, and only a sizable minority is sapient enough to recognize other ghosts and Bound as beings with which they can interact. Most, then, go their entire time in Twilight isolated, unaware of what would hasten or put off their descent. Graveyards are the exception that proves the rule; the presence of multiple mid-Rank ghosts with Anchors (the graves) next to each other means those sapient ghosts haunting their final remains often form tight-knit communities. These camps' cultures vary from mutual fear of the graveyard's Avernian Gate and the Underworld beyond, to pacts between ghosts to assist one another in protecting their Anchors, to communities made up of all those who died at specific disasters, or hailed from a certain community when alive.

To a ghost, physical objects and beings have no substance (and vice versa). They can touch other ghosts, and lean on a phantom wall long-since demolished, but physical objects, animals, and living people are as little barrier to the dead as the dead are to them, appearing pale and insubstantial. To ghosts, material light sources are dimmed and sounds distorted as though underwater.

Unlike the world of the living, the Underworld is entirely made of ephemera, and the state of Twilight does not exist there. Should one of the living find her way to the Great Below, she finds the dead as solid and visible as she herself is.

#### The Birth of a Ghost

Ghosts are “born” from death or trauma, but every ghost's rising is unique. Some, especially those who expected death and prepared for it, rise sometime after their own funerals, usually at their own grave or memorial but sometimes near another Anchor. Others rise moments after death, awakening to the agony of Essence bleed and the need to reach an Anchor. Still others, especially those who died instantaneously and totally unexpectedly, don't even realize anything has happened — they go about their day unperturbed by the bus that flattened them or the sudden aneurysm that killed them, and only realize something is wrong when people completely ignore them or they try to touch something.

#### Ghosts

- **Ephemera:** Ghosts are comprised of *ephemera*.
- **Twilight:** In the living world, ephemera exists in the state of Twilight. Twilight is invisible and intangible to anything not in Twilight.
- **In the Underworld:** In the Underworld, Twilight does not exist.

#### Other Entities

The various Chronicles of Darkness games have used these rules to represent many different beings, from spirits, to demonic owls made of smoke with a strange connection to vampires, to the inhabitants of an astral world visited by mages.

Although some beings have rare powers that affect other “ephemeral entities,” for the most part the different types of ephemera are mutually exclusive — spirits and

ghosts are both made of ephemera, and both exist in a state of Twilight when in the physical world, but they remain “out of phase” with one another and don’t interact. They can’t even sense one another’s presence.

## Ghost Traits

Ghosts no longer have souls, nor the divisions between body and mind that living beings possess. In game terms, they are represented by simplified Traits.

### Rank

All ghosts have a rating in an Advantage called Rank, which notes how self-aware and powerful the ghost is.

Rank 0 ghosts are non-sapient: most ghost objects and animals are Rank 0, as are ghostly phenomena like phantom handprints or bleeding statues.

Rank 1 ghosts are sapient, but trapped in a loop repeating their death or another significant memory of their lives. They lack the capacity to break out of these loops without an outside agent; most don’t clearly remember anything from before the current loop, and some don’t even seem to exist except at certain significant times: midnight, the anniversary of their death, etc.

Rank 2 ghosts are sapient and fully aware: Except for the fact that they’re in Twilight, they’re mostly indistinguishable from living people.

Rank 3-5 ghosts, or geists as the Bound call them, are sapient, but their human nature is buried beneath a thick scum of Underworld-tainted Essence. Their forms are twisted and exaggerated by the manner of their death, but their humanity is still there if you know where to look.

Rank 6 and higher ghosts were almost certainly never human: ancient Chthonians and Kerberoi fall into this category. They have no game statistics or Traits; when they appear in a chronicle at all, it’s as plot devices.

### Rank

- **0-10:** Rank ranges from 0-10, though entities with Rank 6 or higher are not represented with game mechanics.
- **Starting Rank:** Most ghosts are created at Rank 1 (if they died with an Integrity of 6 or lower) or Rank 2 (if they died with an Integrity of 7-9). Ghosts created at Rank 3-5 are the result of mystical convergences, occult rituals, and similar effects.
- **Gaining Rank:** Unless a specific mechanic says otherwise, ghosts only gain Rank by drinking from the Rivers of the Underworld.
- **Losing Rank:** Ghosts cannot normally lose Rank unless a specific mechanic says otherwise.
- **Effects of Rank:** Rank determines a variety of Traits, as described on the following table.
- **Dominance:** A ghost’s natural attacks count as the Bane (p. XX) of any ghost two or more Ranks lower than herself.

**[PRODUCTION — BEGIN A TABLE WITHIN A BOX OUT, SEPARATED BY SINGLE TABS]**



Rank*	Traditional Name	Trait Limits **	Attribute Dots	Maximum Essence
	<b>Numina</b>			
0	Spectre/ Phantasm	3 dots	1-4	5
•	Lare	5 dots	5-8	10
••	Lemure	7 dots	9-14	15
•••	Lesser Mane	9 dots	15-25	20
••••	Greater Mane	12 dots	26-35	25
•••••	Lesser Kerberos	15 dots	36-45	50

[END TABLE]

\* Each Rank levies a -1 modifier on attempts to forcibly bind that ghost and acts as a Supernatural Tolerance trait.

\*\* These represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted ones.

## Essence

Essence fuels ghosts' powers, sustains their insubstantial bodies, and allows them to continue existing.

### Essence

- **By Rank:** Maximum Essence is determined by Rank. A ghost may not have more Essence than her Rank-derived maximum.
- **No Per Turn Limit:** Ghosts have no limit on how much Essence they spend per turn.

Ghosts use Essence in the following ways:

### Living World

- **Activity:** 1 Essence: Remain active for one day. A ghost who does not pay enters *hibernation*.
- **Essence Bleed:** Outside the Anchor Condition: Lose 1 Essence per hour. A ghost who runs out of Essence suffers 1 lethal wound and enters hibernation.
- **Essence Sense:** Ghosts sense the presence of an Anchor or Avernian Gate from up to a mile away. The Seek Numen (p. XX) increases this range.
- **Manifestations:** Essence fuels Manifestations (p. XX).

### Underworld

- **Activity:** Remain active for one day. A ghost who does not pay is Trapped in the Walls (p. XX).
- **Old Laws:** Follow the Old Laws of a Dominion for 1 day: Gain 1 Essence.

### Both Worlds

- **Anchors:** Spend 1 day within the Anchor Condition: Gain 1 Essence.

- **Memory:** Be remembered as the living person you once were, by a living person: Gain 1 Essence.
- **Attribute Boosts:** Spend X Essence up to Rank + 2: Gain a total of +X to one or more Attributes; instant action.
- **Numina:** Essence fuels Numina (p. XX).
- **Ectophagia:** Inflict bite damage on another ghost: Steal Essence from the victim up to damage inflicted.

#### Dead Memories

The Bound are metaphysically dead, even though they are medically alive. This means that their memories alone cannot give ghosts Essence. They must encourage living people to honor the dead or use supernatural means to share Essence with the dead.

### Attributes, Skills, and Merits

Ghosts use a simplified set of the Power, Finesse, and Resistance categories mortal Attributes fall into. They retain Skill dots important to their living identities, and Merits that aren't invalidated by their ephemeral nature. A Giant ghost remains Size 6 even after death, but without a ready means to speak with the living Merits like Allies and Contacts don't carry across the grave.

#### Attributes

- **Power** describes the raw ability of the ghost to impose itself on other ephemeral beings and the world at large. It is used in all rolls that call for Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.
- **Finesse** describes how deft the ghost is at imposing its desires with fine control. It is used for all rolls that call for Dexterity, Wits, or Manipulation.
- **Resistance** describes how well the ghost can avoid imposition from its peers and how easily it is damaged. It is used for all rolls that call for Stamina, Resolve, or Composure.
- **Core Competency:** All Attributes start with one free dot.
- **By Rank:** Newly created ghosts divide a number of dots determined by their Rank between their Attributes, up to a maximum determined by their Rank.

#### Skills

- **Key Skills:** Ghosts retain Skills that were important to them in life, but lose Skills that were tangential to their identity, as determined by the Storyteller.

#### Merits

- **Key Merits:** Ghosts retain Merits as long as those Merits are still applicable to a ghost. Merits that do not carry over may be replaced as per the Sanctity of Merits rule (p. XX).

#### Simplified Skills

For Storyteller characters, tracking the full Skill dots of a ghost along with the Manifestations and Conditions it's using can be a pain. To simplify matters, just

use the ghost's Rank instead of Skill dots for any roll relating to something with which the ghost should be familiar.

## Advantages

Ghosts possess Integrity, Virtue, and Vice, but treat the traits slightly differently than living characters. They also have Anchors.

### Integrity

- **Fixed at Death:** A ghost's Integrity is a holdover from her living self, set at the level she had before death, barring any final breaking point (see pg. XX.)
- **Limited Breaking Points:** Ghosts do not suffer breaking points except in the situations described below, or if a mechanic specifically says otherwise.
- **Rank Independent:** Changes to a ghost's Integrity after death do not change her Rank.

### Ghost Breaking Points

- Losing an Anchor without resolving it
- Realizing that they are dead for the first time
- Drinking from a River of the Underworld
- Breaking an Old Law in a Dominion
- Committing ectophagia

### Virtue and Vice

- **Vice:** Fulfill Vice: Regain *all* Willpower; once per chapter.
- **Virtue:** Fulfill Virtue: Regain 1 Willpower; once per scene.

### Anchors

- **Nature and Number:** Anchors are people, places, and things that held great significance to the ghost's life or death. Most ghosts have at least one (their own body or grave), and few have more than three.
- **No Ghosts:** Ghosts, including ghostly objects, cannot be Anchors for other ghosts.
- **Anchor Condition:** A ghost's Anchors all have the Anchor Condition (p. XX) keyed to that particular ghost.
- **Losing Anchors:** An Anchor that is destroyed or dies loses the Anchor Condition. Certain occult techniques can also strip an Anchor of its Condition.
- **Losing All Anchors:** A ghost who loses all her Anchors is immediately and irresistibly blown through the nearest Avernian Gate and into the Underworld.
- **Resolving Anchors:** Resolving an Anchor means that the ghost is willing to let go of that Anchor and move on. Ghosts always know when one of their Anchors is resolved. Resolved Anchors lose the Anchor Condition.

- **Resolving All Anchors:** A ghost who resolves all her Anchors is no longer subject to Essence bleed and is not dragged into the Underworld. She may Pass On with the appropriate Ceremony.

## Other Traits

Because they have simplified Attributes, ghosts calculate derived Traits a little differently than mortal characters.

- **Corpus:** Resistance + Size, replaces Health
- **Willpower:** Resistance + Finesse, maximum 10
- **Initiative:** Finesse + Resistance
- **Defense:** Lower of Power or Finesse. Ghosts apply Defense against all attacks, even firearms
- **Speed:** Power + Finesse + 5
- **Size:** As their living selves

## Bans

All ghosts with Rank suffer from a mystical compulsion known as the *Ban*, a behavior that they must or must not perform under certain conditions.

Bans increase in both complexity and consequences with Rank.

**Rank 0** ghosts don't have Bans.

**Rank 1** ghosts have mild Bans that are easily triggered but don't endanger the ghost. e.g. *The ghost of a nun must immediately use an offered rosary.*

**Rank 2 and 3** ghosts have moderate Bans that curtail their activities in a more serious way than mere distraction. e.g. *A Reaper must immediately dematerialize when it hears a cat.*

**Rank 4 and 5** entities have complicated Bans that put an end to whatever the ghost is trying to do — often in an explosive fashion. They have consequences in game traits or long-term actions, but esoteric requirements. e.g. *The Smiling Corpse, a geist summoned back from the Underworld by a mystery cult, is immediately banished back to the Great Below if anyone should sing a particular nursery rhyme in his presence.*

## Bans

- **Compulsion:** A ghost cannot resist his Ban.

## Banes

The interaction between a ghost's ephemeral form and physical substance always contains a flaw — a *Bane* — that damages his Corpus through symbolic or mystical interference. The Bane is a physical substance or energy that the ghost can't abide.

Banes are increasingly esoteric and obscure with increasing Rank.

**Rank 0** ghosts have ubiquitous Banes. A phantasm melts away in sunlight.

**Rank 1** ghosts have common substances and phenomena as Banes, such as salt or fire.

**Rank 2 and 3** ghosts have difficult to obtain but still “natural” Banes such as holy water or silver.

**Rank 4 and 5** ghosts have highly specific Banes that require great effort to acquire. A dread Reaper hunting wayward ghosts can be destroyed by an obsidian blade marked with the names of 13 gods of death.

### Banes

- **Aversion:** Ghosts voluntarily attempting to come into contact with the Bane must spend a Willpower point and succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll with a dice penalty equal to their Rank.
- **Solid:** Banes are solid to a ghost, even when the ghost is in Twilight.
- **Contact:** Touch the Bane while in Twilight or in the Underworld: Suffer 1 lethal damage per turn.
- **Materialized Contact:** Touch the Bane while Materialized: Suffer 1 aggravated damage per turn, end the Materialized Condition unless the ghost succeeds on a reflexive Rank roll every turn.
- **Fettered Contact:** Touch the Bane while Fettered: Suffer 1 lethal damage per turn. The ghost must use the Unfetter Manifestation to escape.
- **Weapon Damage:** If the Bane has been used as a weapon against the ghost, the wounds suffered are aggravated for Materialized ghosts, and lethal for those still in Twilight or in the Underworld.

### Influence

Although the effects are subtle for those still in the living world, ghosts have the ability to influence the world around them, protecting and directing Anchors, deepening their connection to loved ones, or recreating the manner of their death.

### Influence

- **Based on Rank:** Ghosts begin with dots in Influence equal to their Rank, and a maximum Influence rating equal to their Rank. At least one dot is usually Influence (Anchors).
- **Multiple and Specific:** Ghosts may have multiple Influences, each representing a specific area of control, such as Influence (Car Crashes) or Influence (Cats).
- **Sanctity of Influences:** If a ghost loses or resolves an Anchor related to her Influence, she may reassign those Influence dots.
- **Numina Exchange:** Rank 2 or higher ghosts may forego learning Numina to learn Influence dots on a one-for-one basis.

### Influence Effects

- **Using Influence:** Spend Essence according to the tables below and roll Power + Finesse (vs. the higher of Resolve + Synergy or Composure + Synergy if the target is sapient).
- **Scale and Duration:** Add together the dot ratings of the desired effect and duration from the charts below. The ghost’s Influence dots must exceed the total.

## Influence Effects

[BEGIN TABLE]

Level	Effect
•	<b>Strengthen</b> The ghost can enhance her sphere of influence; she can add her Rank to the Defense of a loved one, make an emotion strong enough to create a Condition, or give an Anchor her Rank in bonus Health or Structure. This Influence can shift the Anchor Condition to Open for its duration. The cost is 1 Essence.
••	<b>Manipulate</b> The ghost can make minor changes within her sphere of influence, such as slightly changing the nature or target of an emotion, or making minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth, or an object's functioning. The cost is 2 Essence.
•••	<b>Control</b> The ghost can make dramatic changes within her sphere of influence, twisting emotions entirely or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. This Influence can shift the Open Condition to Controlled for its duration. The cost is 3 Essence.
••••	<b>Create</b> The ghost can create a new example of her sphere of influence: creating a new Anchor, instilling an emotion, creating a new sapling or young plant, or creating a young animal or brand-new object. The ghost can cause a temporary Anchor Condition in a subject for the duration of the Influence. The cost is 4 Essence.
•••••	<b>Mass Create</b> The ghost can create (Rank) examples of her sphere of influence: triggering emotions in multiple people or creating new copses of trees, small groups of animals, or multiple identical items. Alternatively, the ghost may create one instance of her sphere of influence — including creating the Anchor Condition— permanently, although a ghost can't permanently alter the mind of a sentient being. The cost is 5 Essence.

[END TABLE]

## Influence Durations

[BEGIN TABLE]

Level	Duration	Cost
0	One minute per success	No additional Essence cost
•	10 minutes per success	No additional Essence cost
••	One hour per success	1 additional Essence
•••	One day per success	2 additional Essence
••••	Permanent	2 additional Essence

[END TABLE]

## Manifestation

Far from staying safely invisible in Twilight, ghosts can interact with the mortal world in many ways, from physically Materializing to possessing a living host. Just as Influence traits determine what level of control the creature has over their environment, Manifestation traits indicate which forms of Manifestation are possible for a particular ghost.

### Manifestations

- **Starting Manifestations:** Ghosts begin with the Twilight Form Manifestation and a number of Manifestation Effects from the list below equal to Rank.
- **Numina Exchange:** Rank 2 or higher ghosts may forego learning Numina to learn Manifestations on a one-for-one basis.
- **Prerequisites:** Manifestations require certain Conditions, which much be keyed to the Manifesting ghost or universal.
- **Living World Only:** Manifestations only function in the living world.
- **Using Manifestations:** Spend Essence according to the Manifestation and roll Power + Resistance.
- **Plasm Creation:** When a Manifestation effect ends, it creates Plasm equal to its Essence cost at the ghost's location. This Plasm lasts until the end of the chapter.

### Manifestation Effects

[BEGIN TABLE]

Manifestation	Effect
Twilight Form	If the ghost is in the living world rather than the Underworld, she is in Twilight (see p. XX). The Effect has no cost, but produces the ghost's Size in Plasm in the Underworld when it ends, such as when the ghost passes through an Avernian Gate.
Avernian Gateway	(Requires Open Condition) By spending 3 Essence and touching an Avernian Gate, the ghost may open it and apply the Underworld Gate Condition to the location. This Manifestation works in the Underworld if the ghost is Rank 3 or higher.
Bargain	(Requires Rank 3 or higher) By spending 10 Essence while touching a dying mortal, the ghost may offer them the Bargain. If accepted, the mortal becomes a Bound and the ghost her geist, subject to the Bound Geist Condition. This Manifestation works in the Underworld.
Claim	(Requires Controlled Condition, Fetter, and Possess) By spending 5 Essence, the ghost gains permanent control over an object, creature or corpse, applying the Claimed Condition to the subject. Living subjects contest the roll with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. A ghost must be capable of both the Fetter and Possess Manifestations to buy Claim. This Manifestation works in the Underworld.
Descend	(Requires Rank 4 or higher, Open Condition, and Avernian Gateway Manifestation) By spending 10 Essence, the ghost tears a location subject

to the Open Condition into the Underworld without using an Avernian Gate, leaving only empty space and Plasm behind in the living world.

Discorporate	In emergencies, the ghost can voluntarily Discorporate as though it had lost all Corpus to lethal injury — a painful way to escape a threat. The Effect has no cost.
Fetter	(Requires Open Condition) By spending 2 Essence, the ghost adds the Fettered Condition to itself. Living beings targeted by this Effect contest the roll with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. If the Effect is successful, living targets gain the Urged Condition.
Image	(Requires Anchor Condition) By spending 1 Essence, the ghost may make its Twilight form visible to material beings for a scene.
Materialize	(Requires Open Condition) By spending 3 Essence, the ghost may shift from Twilight form into the Materialized Condition.
Possess	(Requires Open Condition) By spending 3 Essence, the ghost gains temporary control over an object, corpse, or creature, applying the Possessed Condition to the subject. Living subjects contest the roll with Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance.
Unfetter	(Requires Fettered Condition) By spending 1 point of Essence, the ghost temporarily suppresses the Fetter Condition for a scene, allowing it to use other Manifestation Effects or roam in Twilight. When the scene ends, any Manifestation Effects used during it immediately end. If the ghost isn't back within range of its Fetter (see p. XX) when Unfetter ends, it immediately goes dormant.

## [END TABLE]

## Numina

In addition to Influence and Manifestation, all ghosts have a number of discrete magical powers called Numina. Each Numen is a single ability linked to the ghost's nature — activated by a successful Power + Finesse roll unless stated otherwise.

### **Anchor Jump**

The ghost vanishes and reappears instantly at another of her Anchors, chosen upon activation. The Numen costs 3 Essence and activation is only contested (with Strength + Athletics) if another character is grappling the ghost.

### **Awe**

The ghost causes terror in anyone who can see it. The Numen costs 3 Essence and activation is contested individually with Presence + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance by anyone looking at the ghost. Anyone gaining fewer successes than the ghost is unable to move or speak for a turn. If the ghost gains an exceptional success, the effect lasts three turns.

### **Blast**

The ghost may wound opponents at a distance, projecting freezing Plasm at his victim. Range is equal to 10 yards per dot of Power and the ghost does not suffer range penalties. If the activation



roll succeeds, the Blast wounds as a +0L weapon. The ghost's player may increase the lethality of its Blast by paying Essence — every two Essence spent increases the “weapon” by +1L. The maximum weapon bonus is equal to the ghost's Rank.

### **Descend**

This Numen requires Rank 3 and at least three ghosts acting in concert, all of whom possess the Numen. One ghost makes the activation roll, the other participants may assist using teamwork (p. XX). The ghost tears a location subject to the Open Condition into the Underworld without using an Avernian Gate, leaving only empty space and Plasm behind in the living world. This Numen costs 10 Essence per area roughly equal in size to a city block, which may come from any of the participating ghosts.

### **Drain**

The ghost can steal Willpower (chosen at activation) from a material being. The activation roll is contested by Stamina + Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. Whichever character — ghost *or* target — gains the most successes receives points of Willpower equal to the number of successes, while the other party loses the same number.

### **Emotional Aura**

The ghost sends out a wave of powerful — and distracting — emotion. This Numen costs 1 Essence and lasts for a scene or until the ghost uses another Numina. The activation roll is made once but anyone coming within five yards of the ghost must make a Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance roll. If the activation roll has more successes, the victim suffers a –2 dice penalty to all actions as long as the aura remains. If the victim gains more successes, he is immune to the aura unless the ghost uses the Numen again.

### **Empower Ghost**

This Numen requires Rank 5, and as such is only used by Kerberoi and the most powerful Chthonians. The entity instills a ghost with power. This Numen costs 3 Essence, and raises a ghost of Rank 3 or less by one Rank dot. The empowerment lasts for a scene.

### **Engulf**

This Numen requires Rank 3 or higher. Upon winning a grapple (p. XX) against a ghost or filling the target's rightmost Corpus box with lethal damage, the ghost entraps the target, placing her into a dormant state within his own form. Apply the Engulfed Condition to the victim. This Numen costs 3 Essence, and a ghost may have a number of engulfed prisoners up to his Rank.

### **Firestarter**

The ghost causes flammable materials to combust. This Numen costs 1 Essence and causes one small fire to break out per activation success within the ghost's Power in yards.

### **Hallucination**

The ghost may create an illusion experienced by a single target: it can be anything from a sight or sound to an imaginary person who holds a conversation. The Numen costs 1 Essence and is contested by the victim's Wits + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. Each success over the contesting roll alters one of the victim's senses.

### **Host Jump**

The ghost may leap from host to host when using the Possess or Claim Manifestations. The current host must touch the intended host while the ghost spends 3 Essence; the new host must be under all necessary prerequisite Conditions. If both prerequisites are met, the ghost immediately transfers the Possessed or Claimed Condition to the new host, although Claimed hosts must begin the process of Claiming again. The ghost does not need to re-spend Essence on the Manifestation Effect when jumping hosts with this Numen. Living Claim victims who are vacated with the use of this Numen still suffer the aftereffects listed under the Claimed Condition.

### **Implant Mission**

This Numen grants a mortal a vision of a task the ghost wishes him to accomplish as well as a magical determination to see it through. The ghost pays 2 Essence and rolls Power + Finesse. On a success, the subject receives a short vision of whatever the ghost wishes him to do and is under the Obsessed Condition regarding carrying that mission out.

### **Innocuous**

The ghost is very good at being overlooked. Perception rolls to notice the ghost are penalized by 2 dice. This Numen does not require a roll to activate and has no cost.

### **Left-Handed Spanner**

The ghost disables a device, paying 1 Essence and touching the object if Manifest, or moving its Twilight form to superimpose with it if not. The device must be a human-manufactured object with at least three moving parts. If the activation roll succeeds, the device malfunctions for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Using this Numen in combat requires the ghost to grapple and gain control of the object, and so can't be used this way in Twilight unless the target is in Twilight as well.

### **Moliate**

This Numen allows a ghost to alter her appearance by sculpting her ephemera like putty. Using the Numen costs 1 Essence, and the pliability of the ghost's form lasts for a scene. Any alterations made are then permanent unless the ghost uses the Numen again. By paying 2 Essence, the ghost can Moliate other ghosts she can touch, although the process takes long enough to only work on willing or restrained subjects.

### **Omen Trance**

Once every 24 hours, the ghost may enter a trance in order to gain a glimpse of the future. The Numen costs 1 Essence if the ghost is trancing on its own behalf or 3 Essence if it is searching for omens for another. The activation roll is an extended action, lasting at least one scene. If successful, the ghost sees a vision of an event sometime in the next week. The visions are predisposed to be warnings of danger.

### **Pathfinder**

This Numen allows a ghost to know the quickest route to a destination in the living world. The fastest route isn't always the safest, of course; the Numen doesn't reveal any dangers on the way, only a set of directions to the target. If the destination is the subject of the Safe Place Merit, the activation roll is contested by the lowest Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance among any owners.

The Numen costs 1 Essence and lasts for a scene. If the destination is too far away to reach that quickly, the ghost must use the Numen again. The Numen does not function in the Underworld.

### **Proxy**

This Numen allows a ghost to lend one of its own Manifestations, Numina, or Influences to another ghost by spending 3 Essence and making physical contact with the subject. The ghost using Proxy must have sufficient Rank to be the subject's bane in unarmed violence (i.e. two Ranks higher or one Rank higher for a Kerberos.) Unwilling subjects contest the activation roll with Rank + Resistance. All prerequisite Conditions for the power used must be met, and the ghost using Proxy still pays any activation costs, but in all other ways treat the power used as though the subject had activated it.

### **Puppeteer**

This Numen allows a ghost to spend compel another ghost to use any of her own Manifestations, Numina, or Influences by spending 3 Essence and making physical contact with the subject. The Puppeteer must have sufficient Rank to be the subject's bane in unarmed violence (i.e. two Ranks higher or one Rank higher for a Kerberos.) Unwilling subjects contest the activation roll with Rank + Resistance. All prerequisite Conditions for the power used must be met, and the subject must be able to afford any activation cost.

### **Rapture**

The ghost forces a response from the pleasure centers of a living being's brain, granting ecstatic visions, a feeling of communion with the universe, and sensations of bliss. The Numen costs 2 Essence to activate. If successful, the victim suffers the Insensate Tilt (p. XX). If the victim fails a Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance roll, she gains a temporary derangement for the ghost's Power in days, in a form that binds her closer to the ghost's wishes.

### **Regenerate**

The ghost can use Essence to heal bashing and lethal wounds on its Corpus. This Numen does not require a roll to activate, but costs 1 Essence and heals one level of damage — the ghost must reactivate the Numen each turn to heal more severe wounds. Bashing damage is healed first, then lethal.

### **Seek**

The ghost can sense the presence of suitable Conditions from a distance. The base range is two miles per Rank; entities may spend an Essence to multiply this by 10. If successful on a Finesse roll, the ghost becomes aware of the direction and distance to the nearest suitable Anchor, Infrastructure, or Resonant Condition.

### **Speed**

The ghost accelerates into a blur of movement. The ghost chooses whether to spend 2 or 4 Essence when activating this Numen. Spending 2 Essence doubles its Speed for the remainder of the scene, while spending 4 Essence triples it.

### **Sign**

The ghost creates messages or images in any medium — it can write in the condensation on cold glass, produce images on computer screens, and send audible messages via phone lines. The Numen costs 1 Essence to activate, and if successful creates a single message.

### **Stalwart**

The ghost appears armored in Twilight form and uses Resistance as its Defense score instead of the lower of Power or Finesse.

### **Telekinesis**

The ghost can manipulate objects without using a Manifestation Effect. This Numen costs 1 Essence. Successes on the activation roll become the ghost's "Strength" when attempting to lift or throw an item. Fine motor control is impossible using this Numen.

## **Damage**

Where living characters have Health, ghosts have Corpus. The two function identically, except as noted below.

### **Damage**

- **Essence Loss:** Suffer aggravated damage: Lose Essence equal to damage suffered.
- **Bashing Damage:** Ghosts suffer bashing damage from all attacks, unless those attacks use their Bane or a specific power says it inflicts more severe damage against ghosts.
- **No Unconsciousness:** Ghosts never risk falling unconscious when their rightmost Corpus box is filled.
- **Reforming:** A ghost with at least 1 Essence whose rightmost Corpus box is filled with lethal or aggravated damage dissolves into (Size) Plasm and reforms in hibernation at her nearest Anchor (in the living world) or on the shore of the nearest River (in the Underworld).
- **Hibernation:** A ghost remains in hibernation until she regains (Corpus) Essence, at which point she awakens with all Corpus boxes empty. A hibernating ghost cannot act and is insensate.
- **Destruction:** A Rank 1-2 ghost with no Essence whose rightmost Corpus box is filled with lethal or aggravated damage dissolves into (Size) Plasm and is utterly destroyed. A Rank 3+ ghost leaves behind a Deathmask Memento instead of Plasm.

## **Legions of the Dead**

Mortal occultists and krewes alike have attempted to put labels on the endless varieties of ghost, usually classifying them by potency, but no one scheme has ever caught on. To most Bound, the difference between an unthinking, barely-formed "Phantasm" and a self-aware, desperate "Lemure" is academic. They're all ghosts. That said, some distinctions are useful, and a few names circulate for those ghosts who differ from the norm.

### **Doppelgängers**

Many cultures have ghost stories about people seeing loved ones when the person in question is far away — and, as the story goes, in mortal danger. Amputees feel the presence of limbs they no longer possess. People who have suffered grave accidents or undergone extreme changes of circumstance sometimes feel "haunted" by the pasts they left behind. These stories all describe

the ghosts the Bound call Doppelgängers. If someone suffers a life-changing trauma, or is on the brink of death but survives (whether naturally or by supernatural means), sometimes they leave a ghost behind anyway.

Doppelgängers vary as much in power and self-awareness as any other ghost, but thinking examples are especially tortured compared to the truly dead; a Doppelgänger has to watch a twin of herself living her life, evolving and maturing from the person she was when the Doppelgänger was birthed into ephemera like a shed skin. Some try to use their powers to influence their living counterpart, forcing them to regress or stay as they were when they “died.” The least Doppelgängers, the equivalents of the weakest half-formed ghosts, latch onto their Anchors unseen, provoking feelings of nostalgia or phantom limb syndrome. Curiously, when two ghosts formed from the same person touch, they merge, the weaker of the two destroyed and consumed as essence by the stronger. Some new ghosts find themselves hunted by much stronger and dangerous enemies sharing their face, and a handful of legendary Sin-Eaters have claimed to have their own Doppelgängers as geists.

### **Doppelgängers**

- **Rank:** “Phantom Limbs” and other ghosts that aren’t made up of a whole person are Rank 0, while other Doppelgängers use the normal rules for determining initial Rank.
- **Multiple Doppelgängers:** Multiple ghosts of the same individual always count as one another’s Bane.
- **Ectophagia:** A Doppelgänger who fully consumes another ghost of the same person gains 1 Rank.

### **Barghests**

Most creatures don’t leave ghosts — without a person realizing they died to supply the psychic “spark” of loss, they never form in the first place — but a minority do. Bound call the ghost of a non-human animal a Barghest, a name traditionally used only for ghostly dogs but in modern times applicable to deceased champion racehorses, legendary “man-eater” predators killed by human hunters only to rise again as Twilight-bound monsters, and even the occasional zoo exhibit mourned by the public. Without a sapient mind, Barghests resemble lesser human ghosts, following ingrained instincts and behaviors. A spectral tiger hunts, and a family dog doesn’t let the fact that he’s dead stop him from protecting his former owners. Without thinking minds, though, Barghests are more vulnerable to the myriad of forces tugging at them, especially the Underworld. Once Barghests move on to the Underworld, they feel the call to move deeper much more strongly than human ghosts do, instinctively enter the Rivers and dissolve into their Plasmic waters. Some ghosts with power over animals can draw a Barghest’s attention away from the Rivers and train them as companions and pets.

### **Barghests**

- **Rank:** If the death that created the Barghest resulted in a human losing a dot of Integrity through a breaking point, the Barghest is Rank 2. If the death prompted a breaking point but not Integrity loss, the Barghest is Rank 1. All other Barghests are Rank 0.
- **Speed Factor:** Barghests use their species Speed factors when calculating Speed.
- **Defense:** Barghests use the higher of Finesse or Resistance to calculate defense.

- **Natural Weapons:** If an animal has natural weaponry such as claws or fangs that inflict lethal injuries, so does its ghost. These natural weapons inflict lethal damage on other ghosts.
- **Count as Animals:** Supernatural abilities that affect animals work on Barghests.
- **Ectophagia:** Committing ectophagia on a Barghest is not a breaking point (or a crisis point for the Bound).

## Castoffs

Much like animals, inanimate objects only leave ghosts behind when someone cares enough to miss them. While rumors abound about higher-Rank castoffs possessing some degree of (usually malign) intelligence, most of the dead agree that the ghost of a house is just a place to shelter from the ghost rain. Most castoffs lack Anchors and are dragged into the Underworld as soon as they are created, but ghost buildings are usually Anchored to the site they were built on, and occasionally an object remains Anchored to a piece of its former self or the place it was destroyed, like a phantom roadster Anchored to its own Keys or the stretch of M-14 between Detroit and Ann Arbor where it crashed.

### Castoffs

- **Rank:** If the destruction that created the castoff resulted in a human losing a dot of Integrity through a breaking point for any reason, the castoff is Rank 2. If the destruction prompted a breaking point but not Integrity loss, the castoff is Rank 1. All other castoffs are Rank 0.
- **Object Rules:** Castoffs have all the Traits of the objects they were before becoming ghosts (Durability, equipment bonus, vehicle Traits, etc.). Castoff weapons inflict lethal damage against ghosts.
- **Attributes:** Castoffs have Attributes, but only use them for Numina, Influences, or Manifestations.
- **Mindless:** Castoffs have no minds and cannot act, except to use their Influences, Numina, or Manifestations in specific, prescribed circumstances (for example, a ghost house uses Sign to write “Get Out” in blood on the walls when a living person spends the night inside).
- **Operator:** Castoffs that function as equipment allow their users to employ the castoff’s Influences, Numina, and Manifestations. The user employs her own Attributes for the activation, but may spend her own Essence or the castoff’s.
- **Ectophagia:** Committing ectophagia on a castoff is not a breaking point (or a crisis point for the Bound).

## Geists

Something fundamental shifts inside a ghost when she first drinks from a River. Assuming she survives the process, she emerges stronger and forever marked by a connection to the Underworld as strong as any Anchor, a connection that even replaces an Anchor if she still had any. Some mortal necromancers’ tomes call a ghost that’s undergone this transformation a Mane, a ghost evolved to embody a kind of death rather than a single person. These empowered ghosts rarely venture beyond the communities clustered along the Riverbanks in the Underworld’s depths, outnumbering those not brave enough to drink but still subject to the Old Laws. Those who do venture upward to (and through) the Gates come in two main forms — geists, who

Bargain with dying mortals to create the Bound, and Reapers, who take on Masks and hunt the dead, believing all ghosts belong in the Underworld.

### Geists and Reapers

- **Anchors:** Geists do not have Anchors, do not suffer Essence Bleed, and are not subject to being dragged into the Underworld for lacking Anchors.
- **Influences:** Geists replace all their former Influences with their innate Key, with dots equal to Rank.
- **Iconic:** Geists are barely recognizable as the people they once were. Even those who knew them in life must succeed on a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll to recognize them.
- **Broken:** Geists' humanity is buried beneath the corrupting power of the Underworld. Any Social rolls, other than to intimidate or frighten, that they make or that are made against them, are reduced to a chance die.
- **Remembrance:** All geists have a Remembrance (p. XX)

### Kerberoi

The Kerberoi are the tyrant-rulers of the Dominions, keepers of the Old Laws, demigods of death presiding over kingdoms of lesser ghosts. Kerberoi are so tied to the Underworld that they can't easily leave. In its Dominion, though, a Kerberos is the closest thing to a Chthonic God any ghost or Bound will ever meet, sensing whenever anyone breaks one of its edicts and able to control the physical structure of the Underworld within its territory. Kerberoi often stray from humanoid appearance, tending to compound or assembled bodies made from humanoid "parts," such as multiple torsos fused together, or a snake made of human skulls. Whether Kerberoi were ever alive remains hotly debated among occultists.

### Kerberoi

- **Dominion Influence:** All Kerberoi have Influence (Dominion) •••••.
- **Numina:** All Kerberoi have the Dominion Sense and Enforcement Numina (p. XX).
- **Essence Font:** Kerberoi gain their Rank in Essence every scene while within their Dominion, up to their Rank-derived maximum.
- **Universal Bane:** Kerberoi count as the Bane of all ghosts of lower Rank, not just those they outrank by two dots.
- **Essence Bleed:** A Kerberos suffers Essence bleed even in the Underworld if away from its Dominion.
- **Ban:** A Kerberos' Ban is always his Dominion's Old Laws.
- **Violation Sense:** Kerberoi sense whenever another ghost in their Dominion suffers a breaking point from breaking the Old Laws. They retain knowledge of the offender's location until the offender leaves the Underworld.

### Chthonians

Billions of ghosts have entered the deep below, eking out an existence in the upper reaches, then the Dominions, before succumbing to accident, somehow passing on, or entering a River (or the

Ocean they flow to) and being destroyed. The human species is the Underworld's great tide of immigrants.

The Underworld has *natives*.

Superficially, a Chthonian resembles a ghost. It has a body formed of ephemera, and its supernatural abilities resemble those ghosts learn to develop over time. Although many ancient ghosts and Kerberoi stray in form from their human origins, they're usually still humanoid. Chthonians look like admixtures of upsetting images of death, carrion, and decay; e.g. yards-long maggots with distorted human faces, chitinous beetle shells covering a core of congealing blood. Their mindsets are so inscrutable as to be alien. Most Chthonians don't respond to ghosts at all, or "talk" in waves of pain and flies buzzing. The few Chthonians with whom ghosts have bargained appeared to view the interaction to be like scratching an itch.

A Chthonian's touch tears Essence away from a ghost, so ghosts give them a wide berth. Sin-Eaters record tales of Chthonians destroying whole Dominions — not for any sin, but simply because the domain was in their way. On the other hand, many Chthonians are coated in Plasm, which drips and congeals in pools as they pass. Some ghosts follow in their wake, collecting Plasm, worshipping them as avatars of the Chthonic Gods (the Chthonians don't notice) or trying to follow them. Eventually, these pilgrimages come to an end at a River. Chthonians are immune to dissolution from entering the Rivers, and appear to use them as migration routes. Ghosts who journey as deep as the Ocean of Fragments tell stories of gigantic, never-alive things, to the Chthonians as the Kerberoi are to ghosts, swimming beneath the still waves.

### **Chthonians**

- **Alien Minds:** Chthonians have no Virtue, Vice, or Aspiration. They regain one point of Willpower every fifth point of Essence they gain.
- **No Manifestations:** Chthonians have Influences and Numina, but not Manifestations.
- **Gaining Essence:** Chthonians regain their Rank in Essence per day in the Underworld, or their Rank in Essence per hour submerged in the Rivers or Ocean of Fragments.
- **River Dwellers:** Chthonians are immune to the deleterious effects of the Rivers and the Ocean of Fragments.
- **Alien Ephemera:** Chthonians count as the Bane of ghosts they outrank by two dots, but ghosts of higher rank do not count as their Banes in turn.
- **Alien Essence:** Ghosts who commit ectophagia on Chthonians suffer 1 lethal wound per Essence they would gain, and gain no Essence.
- **Plasm Trails:** Chthonians leave a trail of (Size) Plasm behind themselves every scene. This Plasm evaporates at the end of the chapter.
- **Materialization:** A Chthonian who enters the living world gains the Materialized Condition, but suffers one aggravated wound per turn when outside an area with the Underworld Gate Condition.
- **Avernian Gates:** Chthonians automatically open any Avernian Gate they touch in the living world, but cannot open Avernian Gates in the Underworld.



- **Ectophagia:** Chthonians commit ectophagia against non-Chthonian ghosts with a touch attack (p. XX).

## Ghost Advancement

Player character ghosts have Aspirations and earn Experiences like living characters do, but their simplified traits require different Experiences costs.

### [TAB TABLE]

Attribute dot	6
Numen	3
Manifestation	3
Influence dot	5
Skill dot	2
Merit dot	1
Specialty	1
Rank*	5

### [END TABLE]

\* To increase Rank, a ghost must have the Experiences needed to buy both the Rank dot and purchase dots in Attributes, Numina, Manifestations and Influences to bring herself up to the minimum for the new Rank as soon as it increases. Then she must drink from a River (p. XX). If she survives, her player may spend the Experiences to raise Rank and buy the other attached traits.

## The Underworld

The veil that separates the world of the living from the land of the dead is thin as a knife's edge, insubstantial as a faulty brake pad, and slippery as an icy step. It rushes up to greet those who cross over, but for those who wish to venture into the Great Below before their time has come, the way is not so easily traversed. The Avernian Gates stand in Twilight, opening and closing seemingly on their own schedules, as if to add insult to injury. With a little insight, though, even such obstacles may be overcome. After all, it's not as if the Underworld is *trying* to keep you out — it just hasn't gotten around to you yet.

## Avernian Gates

Morgues. Graveyards. Crossroads. Battlefields. Once you can see them, Avernian Gates are almost impossible to avoid. Anywhere that death has marked as its own births one, standing silent and dripping with phantasmal water just out of mortal sight. The Gate forms without pomp or circumstance — even if keenly watched for, it appears between blinks, between frames of video, standing as though it always had, already weathered and seemingly ancient.

A cold dampness pervades the area around them, clinging to every surface in Twilight. Every so often, the living notice it on the subconscious level, shivering at the presence of a chill they cannot feel. Normally, the Gates stand closed, though the presence of a ghost without any Anchors always causes an Avernian Gate to open, to draw the unfortunate through.

## Crossing Over

Avernian Gates stand locked for most of their existence, grim monuments to the fate that awaits all who live. Each Gate has a key, however, and this key may or may not be a physical object. One Gate opens to any who hold a certain worn, ceramic doll with an uncanny stare — which vanishes as one passes through, always seeming to find its way back to the same empty nursery. Another Gate opens in the presence of tears. A third, to the final lines of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Avernian Gates always open for Reapers, or for their Deathmasks, allowing them free passage to carry on their dread work. The Bound, and Sin-Eaters in particular, only seldom realize what that means: that Avernian Gates *can* be opened without the presence of their key. In other words, the Gate may be locked, but any lock can be picked.

## Bloody-Handed Payment

The simplest method for forcing open an Avernian Gate is, of course, to give it what it wants: death, either in quantities sufficient to confuse the Gate or of great enough significance and in such fashion that it would open anyway. The trouble with the former is that it doesn't always work, and the trouble with the latter is that not only does it require human sacrifice, but the body must be wholly destroyed, else it will serve as an Anchor. This method is preferred mostly by amateurs and those with no sense of ethics.

### **Bloody-Handed Payment**

**Requirement:** Near an Avernian Gate

**Cost:** Living beings or objects to be sacrificed

**Target:** Avernian Gate

**Action:** Contested Extended; 10 successes more than Gate; one-hour interval); each roll requires a sacrifice.

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge vs. 6 dice

### **Suggested Modifiers**

Expensive Sacrifice (Resources ●●+) +2

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The Avernian Gate opens, creating the Underworld Gate Condition.

**Exceptional:** The ritual's interval becomes 30 minutes.

**Failure:** The Avernian Gate does not open.

**Dramatic:** The ritual is noticed by an unsympathetic party, living or dead.

## Picking the Lock

The more successful spectral locksmiths take a step back, into the realm of the symbolic. Through ritual, they encode all the things that accompany death — grief, tears, ceremony, and so on. Done properly, the Gate senses the semblance of mourning, and opens in response. Any ritual works for this, regardless of its origin or context — pouring out a 40 is just as good as a church service with incense and a priest — but it must have *meaning*. The grief must be honest, or at least honest enough to tap into the resonance of death and through it manipulate the Avernian Gate into opening.

## Picking the Lock

**Requirement:** Near an Avernian Gate

**Target:** Avernian Gate

**Action:** Instant; 30 minutes

**Dice Pool:** Attribute + Occult; Attribute varies according to method of mourning

### Suggested Modifiers

Mourning an actual death +3

### Roll Results

**Success:** The Avernian Gate opens, creating the Underworld Gate Condition.

**Exceptional:** The ritual used to pick the lock becomes a new key for the Gate.

**Failure:** The Avernian Gate does not open.

**Dramatic:** The Gate will not open for any attempt to pick the lock for the rest of the story.

## Pay the Toll

Every ghost, whether she knows it or not, can reach into her pocket at any time and find two ancient, leaden coins inscribed with the profile of a woman of indeterminate age and ethnicity. If she doesn't have pockets, that's fine, too — the coins appear in a purse or pouch or just her loosely cupped hand. These coins are her toll to enter the lands of the dead, and can open any Avernian Gate — but only once, and only for the ghost herself.

### Pay the Toll

**Requirement:** Ghost only; touch the Avernian Gate; a given ghost may only pay the toll once in her existence.

**Target:** Avernian Gate

**Action:** Instant

**Result:** The Gate opens, creating the Underworld Gate Condition.

## Crossing Back

The Upper Reaches lie. Tunnels slant ever downward, ever leading the dead deeper into the machine that flenses them for their Essence (unless they, in turn, flense others). Coming back isn't easy. For most of the dead, it's impossible — the Gate only swings one way. Reapers can always open an Avernian Gate, and pass through without difficulty — such, they say, is the blessing that comes of serving the Chthonic Gods. Others must make do as best they can.

## A Different Key

A gate's key only works on the living side: ghosts who think to escape the Great Below with a bit of old doggerel about the world's end are in for a rude surprise. But there are keys and there are Keys, and what's a Key good for if not opening a locked door?

### A Different Key

- **Doom:** The Bound, geists, and anyone else capable of unlocking a Key may suffer the Key's Doom to open an Avernian Gate. They gain no further benefit from unlocking the Key.

## Picking the Lock

The dead and the living alike use another method to convince the Avernian Gates to grant them passage to the living world. Every Avernian Gate sits in a place marked by the same resonance that suffuses the Underworld, and the crafty can, with ritual and wild celebration, confuse the Gate for long enough that it treats the Underworld as the living world and vice versa.

### Picking the Lock

- **Mirror Ritual:** As Picking the Lock (p. XX), but the ritual must be one of celebrating life rather than mourning death.

## Crash the Gates

When all else fails, sometimes excessive force succeeds. Destroying an Avernian Gate is difficult, but not impossible — especially for crafty Bound with access to high explosives and heavy-duty trucks.

### Crash the Gates

- **Durability and Structure:** An Avernian Gate has exactly enough Structure and Durability that a pound or two of semtex can blow it up. Destroying the Gate opens it, creating the Underworld Gate Condition until the end of the story.

## The Guardian Geist

Every graveyard starts with a single burial. Every mortuary has its first tenant. Every battlefield has its first casualty. Death touches the world and the Avernian Gates rise where it does so — but so too do the guardian geists. For reasons no one quite understands, the first person interred in such a location inevitably rises as a Rank 3 ghost. The few who have witnessed the event report geysers of brackish water welling up from the soil, the geist clawing desperately for dry earth as it crawls from the body it can no longer call home.

But though every Avernian Gate ought, according to this process, to have a geist bound to it, no few stand deserted. Perhaps their geists were consumed by one of the Bound, or else made the Bargain and no longer stand their cold, dark vigil. No one can be sure, just as no one is sure *why* the geist always precedes the Gate. Perhaps their presence is the foot in the door the Underworld needs to create a passage between itself and the world of the living. Perhaps it's simply a byproduct of the effort, a reverse echo of an event yet to come imprinting the earliest traces of its hold on the ground it will stand on. The geists, their identities and memories washed away by the waters that birthed them, are silent on the matter, if indeed they ever knew to begin with.

## Dead Roads

First-time travelers are often nonplussed by what lies on the other side of an Avernian Gate — often, they wonder if the thing hasn't just spat them back out somewhere else. It's only when they follow the trickling streams of water downwards, and the tunnels or caverns become a patchwork of styles and eras, that they realize the truth. It's usually around that time that first-timers also realize that they're hopelessly lost.

Those who know what they're doing have several ways to navigate the Great Below. These methods rely on feel as much as knowledge — it's not a question of marking or planning one's way as it is of following one's gut. Set paths through the Underworld do exist, but even these are best not relied upon — they tend to lead ever downward, and rarely safely. Usually content to wait, the Underworld sometimes grows impatient, and carves great gouges into itself. Sinkholes swallow up individuals, passageways, even entire River Cities. Sometimes the unfortunate targets survive, but often they do not, the only evidence of their existence the gaping maw of stone that replaces them.

### Navigation Basics

- **Legs:** A journey in the Underworld is divided into legs, determined by the Storyteller. A leg is the time it takes to travel between two landmarks within the same layer, or the transition from one layer to another.
- **Navigation:** Characters must navigate using one of the methods below for each leg. If a leg is interrupted for a scene or longer, a new navigation action must be attempted.
- **Cartographic Research:** Identifying the correct legs to reach a destination is typically a Research action (p. XX).

### Architecture

This method of navigation relies upon knowledge of architectural and engineering styles over a range of historical periods. The Upper Reaches usually mimic certain styles in each region, and being able to track those changes helps one find one's way. Regrettably, this method is of less use the deeper one goes, as buildings and infrastructure from disparate eras, to say nothing of architecture no living society ever built, combine in bizarre ways.

### Navigating by Architecture

**Action:** Reflexive

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics

### Suggested Modifiers

Relevant Library Merit	Merit Dots
Upper Reaches	+1
River Cities	+0
Lower Mysteries	-5

### Roll Results

**Success:** The character navigates to her intended destination for this leg.

**Exceptional:** The character is Informed (p. XX) about the area of the Underworld she is navigating.

**Failure:** The character goes off trail and encounters a hazard or threat, but may backtrack if so desired.

**Dramatic:** The character is Lost (p. XX).

### Society

People are people, no matter where one goes. Their ways may differ, but they're still people, and that commonality is a compass the knowledgeable can steer by. Knowing the cultures in an area, and knowing other cultures, older cultures, and even how modern cultures existed in premodern times, gives one a rough map to steer by. Better yet, it lets one blend, lets one take advantage of ancient rules of reciprocity — even in the Underworld, vicious and draining though it is, people are still people.

Navigating by society may encompass any number of Skills, including Empathy (reading locals to pick up on their habits of travel), Persuasion (to offer payment for services rendered), Intimidation (to force them to guide the way), or Subterfuge (to trick them into it).

### **Navigating by Society**

**Requirement:** Must move among the dead and speak with them.

**Action:** Reflexive

**Dice Pool:** Varies

#### **Suggested Modifiers**

Large Population Centers +2

Sparsely Populated Area -2

Deserted Wastes -5

#### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character navigates to her intended destination for this leg.

**Exceptional:** The character is Connected (p. XX) to the culture at her destination.

**Failure:** The character goes off trail and encounters a hazard or threat, but may backtrack if so desired.

**Dramatic:** The character becomes Notorious (p. XX) or Leveraged (p. XX).

### **Instinct**

Some people just know how to get around. Call it a good sense of direction, call it an internal compass — whatever it is, it works, even in the Underworld. For all its twisting and turning, for all its changing tunnels and caverns, the human mind can still work out some glimmer of understanding, if only subconsciously. This method is most often used by the dead themselves, who have spent so much time in the Underworld that they've grown accustomed to its ways, but the Bound may learn it as well. To someone with this talent, the objective is simple — just keep moving. Every moment wasted is a moment the Underworld has to change something.

Physical Attributes are most likely to be important when Navigating by Instinct, as overcoming barriers and maintaining a steady pace are key. Athletics and Survival are the two most applicable Skills, though others may work at the Storyteller's discretion.

### **Navigating by Instinct**

**Action:** Reflexive

**Dice Pool:** Varies

### **Suggested Modifiers**

First time in the Underworld	-5
Have spent days in the Underworld	-3
Have spent months in the Underworld	-1
Have spent years in the Underworld	+0
Have spent decades in the Underworld	+1
Have spent centuries in the Underworld	+2

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character navigates to her intended destination for this leg.

**Exceptional:** The character is Steadfast (p. XX).

**Failure:** The character goes off trail and encounters a hazard or threat, but may backtrack if so desired.

**Dramatic:** The character is Lost (p. XX).

### **Key**

The Bound have access to a fourth kind of navigation, unique to their condition: they can navigate through their Keys. Only innate Keys, or Keys inherited through ectophagia, work for this method of navigation, as Keys bound up in Mementos provide too tenuous a connection to the relevant resonant deaths. With the Doomed Condition of an inherent Key active, the character can sense all resonant deaths in the Underworld. The first experience of this is often shocking and numbing, but with experience one learns to tune out the rushing flood of sensation and focus on specific signals.

### **Navigating by Key**

**Requirement:** Doomed Condition of the relevant Key

**Subject:** A ghost to be found, whose death resonates with the Key

**Special:** The character does not need to know where the subject is or how to get there.

**Action:** Reflexive

**Dice Pool:** Key's Unlock Attribute + Occult

### **Suggested Modifiers**

Subject died an identical death to the seeker +3

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character navigates toward the subject for this leg.

**Exceptional:** The character resolves the Doomed Condition on arrival.

**Failure:** The character goes off trail and encounters a hazard or threat, but may backtrack if so desired.

**Dramatic:** The character is Lost (p. XX).

## The Ever-Hungry Maw

The first thing a new arrival in the Underworld feels as she picks herself up from the sopping floor is the absence of her Anchors. She no longer feels them tugging at her, brimming over with Essence to sustain her. She is without any form of support — each moment she is active drains her, slowly but surely. She feels herself wasting away, a gnawing and painful hunger growing in the memory of her stomach as the chill air numbs more and more of her skin. But nature abhors a vacuum, and the Essence that the dead lose is not lost, but *taken*, a tribute to the Underworld, a tax on one's very existence. The Underworld, just like the dead, feeds.

### Needs Must: Survival in the Underworld

The first rule of existence for the dead in the land of the living is simple: Stay close to your Anchors, lest the world rasp away your very being. In the Underworld, this is no longer the case — the dead move freely, needing only to spend a point of Essence every 24 hours to stay active. This is quite untenable in the long term, however, as even a very fortunate ghost has only enough Essence to survive for a week or two at the very most. Many go several days without learning the awful truth — to survive, they must consume the ghosts of *things*, beloved items laden with memory that they strip away in what remains of their stomachs.

Finding a meal on one's own in the Underworld is half wilderness survival and half antiquing. The streams of the Underworld carry memories ever downward, waiting to be fished out. Some ghosts construct makeshift traps to filter out debris, hoping to glean a meal from their harvest. Others take a more active role, something akin to spear fishing, hoping to pinion an item of value. Most can eke out a meager living doing this, but occasionally someone gets lucky, and a stockpile of Essence-laden goods is always a lucrative target.

### Underworld Survival

**Action:** Basic, instant; a few hours

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Survival

### Roll Results

**Success:** The character finds something from which she can strip a single point of Essence.

**Exceptional:** The character fishes up a cornucopia of phantasms worth 5 Essence.

**Failure:** The character doesn't catch anything.

**Dramatic:** The character caught something, but it sure isn't food, or particularly safe for that matter.

### Eating the Pomegranate

The living can find things to eat in the Underworld, be it weird fungi in the tunnels of the Upper Reaches or a luxuriant meal of Barghest Essence cooked up in one of the River Cities. While it may seem filling and possibly even flavorful, none of it will sustain a living body. To dine on the fare of the Underworld is to dine on ash without realizing it, the first hint of the hunger is not an ache in the belly but a lightness in the head. Some starve to death without ever realizing *why*, only to wake up experiencing an entirely new kind of hunger.



The Bound don't have this problem. The world recognizes them as dead, and the food of the dead nourishes them even as it fills them with Plasm. The problem isn't so much finding food as it is finding ghosts willing to share.

## Don't Starve

For ghosts, to starve in the world of the living is simple enough — wander far enough from your Anchor, and the biting winds begin to tear at you, hollowing you out inside. If the dead go long enough without Essence, they slip into a kind of torpor, somnolent until revived. Those trapped in the Underworld are not so fortunate. True, the bleeding is staunch, no longer arterial, but it continues nonetheless, and the consequences of starvation are far direr.

Without Essence to keep it sated, the Underworld feeds directly. The walls close in, pulling at one's heels, rock flowing like sticky, impregnable molasses, trapping the dead and slowly digesting them. Their features slowly wear away over the next few days, outstretched limbs vanishing beneath the surface — the face, twisted in agony and terror, is always the last to go.

## Starving

- **Essence Leeching:** Spend 1 Essence: remain safe for 24 hours.
- **Trapped in the Walls:** Ghosts without Essence to expend are pulled into the walls, floor, or ceiling of the Underworld.
- **Integrity Leeching:** Ghosts who are Trapped in the Walls lose one Integrity every 24 hours.
- **Last Chance:** Spend 3 Essence: Restore 1 Integrity to a ghost Trapped in the Walls.
- **The End:** When a ghost Trapped in the Walls reaches Integrity 0, she is gone forever.

## Dark Markets

At the furthest edges of the Upper Reaches, where trickling streams from the Avernian Gates merge to form the mighty Rivers of the Underworld, the dead harvest the forgotten debris of 1,000 cultures to sustain a mean existence. Clinging to what passes for life here, the dead are exploited by the powerful and hunted by the Reapers, the “fortunate” merely paying tribute for protection. Here, the only sustenance is memory, consumed whole or in part, and if the people who dwell here can no longer kill for it, they consent to do the next best thing.

The River Cities are the cosmopolitan centers of the Underworld, where fleets of jury-rigged fishing boats drag wide nets behind them, tempting fate and Chthonians to feed those who remain on shore. Despite being trapped on the wrong side of death and left destitute in the process, they are nonetheless free from the Old Laws and the Kerberoi who enforce them. This means that virtually anything to be found in the Underworld can be had — if one knows where to look and can afford the (often exorbitant) price.

There's always someone who knows how to lay hands on highly desired items, and if she can play her cards right, she can amass a surprising amount of power and influence in these makeshift communities. Eventually they grow to become hidden commercial titans moving behind the scenes, staying under the radar until they are too indispensable to the local economy to be casually threatened by Reapers. With their own hired toughs at hand, such ghosts often

become an approximation of order, but even they are ultimately self-interested. To them, “order” almost always means “got mine, fuck you.”

### Let the Buyer Beware

The most powerful and lucrative items to be found in the Underworld end up in the hands of River City merchant kings, or in the hands of someone desperately trying to sell to them without being taken completely for a ride. In either case, Bound or others hoping to acquire the item in question find themselves embroiled in a game of cutthroat capitalism that regularly descends to the level of outright banditry.

Among the dead, these merchant kings live the high life. Their meals taste almost like real food, the nourishing phantasms palatable (and artfully concealed); their hovels are sturdy, built of the most stable detritus to wash down the Rivers. The difference between their longings and the longings of the masses who squat in hovels only feet away is that with wealth and power come opportunity. As long as they don't overreach, the Reapers leave them and theirs be, and they almost always have something in their collection to entice Bound who pay a visit into service. Down here, such connections might as well be a hotline to God.

Deeper in the Underworld, among the Dominions of the Lower Mysteries, similar figures exist. The difference is the degree of power they hold, for they are ever constrained by the Old Laws, and travel between Dominions is rarer than between the River Cities. Even in the most miserable of Dominions, however, the clever can eke out a living far in excess of their fellows' quality of life, and if they don't have the immediate power of their peers above, neither do they live with the same threat of privation.

### The Autochthonous Jungle

The Upper Reaches and the River Cities can be exceptionally dangerous places, and being better off than virtually everyone around does make one a rather obvious target. Driven by their survival instincts, many ghosts descend to a level of amorality they would have thought quite impossible when they were alive (some, of course, were just as terrible alive as they are dead). Theft and violence are commonplace, and only a fool ventures out alone. The Bound are used to a certain degree of respect from the dead (if only because they tend to be dangerous), but desperation is the mother of action, and more than one Bound has been attacked by a hunger-crazed ghost. Frequent visitors learn not to underestimate the dead.

More dangerous, though, is the organized violence one finds in the shallowest reaches of the Underworld. Here, might makes right. This might mean relative stability, or it might be nothing more than a protection racket. When it's at its worst, the gangs might as well be Reapers. Sometimes, they are. The more enterprising gangs see opportunity when the Bound visit the Underworld, and do whatever they can to ingratiate themselves — eventually, to trap the Bound in a cycle of debt and repayment, favors leading to favors that further the interests of the gang far more than they do the Bound. Such gangs have, after all, had a long time to practice.

### The Politics of Passing

New or naive Bound step through the Avernian Gate for the first time and see the wounds of their death spring into existence upon them — they are, after all, dead, even if their bodies have long since healed in the world of the living. They take in the dripping stab wound in their side, the wet cough, the itchy bullet hole seeping blood and gray matter from the back of their skull,

and think they can pass themselves off as any other ghost. They're wrong, of course, because their liminal aura exists.

The Bound are obvious to the dead, especially in the Underworld, and especially when they've come on krewe business. Even the newest and rawest of the Bound, even Bound who know to consciously dampen the strange energies that course through them, all but *bleed* life into their surroundings in the Underworld, making them as unmistakable to the dead as they are uncanny to the living. The Bound stands out as a living, breathing anchor to the world they have all lost, drawing the desperate to flock to her side. As one might imagine, this makes getting around difficult in the River Cities, where population density and material need combine to form a powder keg just waiting for a spark.

The dead have three common reactions to one of the Bound showing up. The first case is alluded to above, and is common in less organized River Cities: mass hysteria, grasping, pulling, begging, pleading. The mass of the dead is unlikely to listen to reason, and such a situation might well become dangerous if not handled well. The second case, more common in cities marked by the presence of a single strong gang, resembles the first case initially, but quickly becomes an exercise in the gang sequestering the visitors, either to be ushered into an audience with the boss or quietly disposed of — some dead tyrants only grow more paranoid with age, after all.

And the third case? The Bound arrives in a River City only to be greeted with nonchalant surprise. They stand out, to be sure, but only a few come to bother her, and these receive looks of pity or even disgust from those around them, who go about their business — perhaps trying to sell the Bound something. Familiarity, as ever, breeds contempt, or at least disinterest, for the third case is that of a River City whose master, too, is one of the Bound, or perhaps a Sin-Eater

## The Rivers

Water ever trickles from the Avernian Gates, rising to a torrent when the Gate is opened. These trickles become streams one might jump over, then grow wide enough that crossing is a choice between getting one's feet wet and finding a bridge. In the River Cities, it flows through channels, pours over cliffs in little waterfalls, serving to quench the thirst of the dead (or else as their common sewer). But in time, these streams grow wider, deeper, until they can no longer truly be called streams; their waters take on a strange pallor, boil with hidden flame, or run so cold they freeze over. The Cocytus. The Eresh-ki-gala. The Anahita. The Phlegethon. These and many others are the Rivers of the Dead.

## Dead Waters

It's hard to say exactly where the waters of the Upper Reaches become the Rivers, but the dead can tell the difference. While the streams bring life — or at least a prolongation of death — the Rivers bring dissolution. The waters of the Rivers are anathema to the dead... anathema, but also power, for those brave enough to drink from them.

## The Rivers

- **Submersion:** A ghost fully immersed in a River suffers 1 lethal damage per turn.
- **Imbibing:** Drinking from a River inflicts 1 aggravated wound per turn for (10 – Integrity) turns, but also increases a ghost's Rank by 1.

## The Ferryman's Bond: Travel on the Rivers

Few dare to swim the Rivers of the Underworld, fewer still to dive into their depths, but throughout the land of the dead curious figures ply their trade upon them: the Ferryman. Nondescript to a fault, seemingly washed of any trait but their duty, they have little identity outside that of the task to which they are sworn: to carry passengers across or down the Rivers, but never to do so without cost. Payment *must* be made, for it is the payment itself that renders travel safe. Ferryman have an unerring sense of where they are in the Underworld relative to their passengers' destination, and deliver them there without fail — though, requesting that a Ferryman put to shore (if, for example, something there has caught the passengers attention) ends the journey early. If the former passengers wish to contract the Ferryman again, it requires a second round of payment.

## Sailing the Tides of the Dead

The dead have little recourse but to make payment, but the Bound who venture into the Underworld have another option — become the Ferryman themselves. For reasons unknown, any Bound may assume the role of Ferryman, and thus, for payment, guide her fellows on the Rivers. All one needs is a vessel that floats and a pole (or engine, or sail) by which to steer it. Any method of navigating the Underworld works while sailing the Rivers, but the same rules apply — putting to shore ends the journey.

Bound serving as Ferryman gain an additional sense, one for the entropic resonance of a Dominion. Dominions do not endure forever, after all, and when they fall they sink ever deeper into the Underworld, perhaps to be swallowed by the Ocean of Fragments. Bound Ferryman — perhaps all Ferryman — can intuitively feel when the center cannot hold, when the demand for resources exceeds the supply, even those rarest of moments when the Old Laws crumble and the Kerberoi are no more. More than one Sin-Eater philosopher holds that this is the ultimate purpose of the Ferryman, to shepherd the dangerous and ambitious to destinations that facilitate the collapse of anything that might grow powerful enough to threaten the Chthonic Gods.

## Becoming a Ferryman

- **Vessel and Oath:** A Bound who has a vessel fit to sail the Rivers and swears an oath to convey his passengers safely to their destination for a fair price gains the Ferry Bound Condition.

## What Lies Beneath

Hidden in the dark depths of the Underworld's Rivers, Chthonian beasts that have never touched the land swim hungrily, their rotting flesh and scales drifting in their wake. One may see them, breaching here, spyhopping there, their dead eyes staring, even from a ship protected by a Ferryman's charge. When an unprotected vessel passes carelessly by, though, such Chthonians often strike, dragging the inhabitants under, drinking down the Essence of their dissolving prey to slake their eternal thirst.

Nearer to the great Dominions and the River Cities, fishing boats take to the Rivers, armed with Banes and nets woven from the roots of Underworld vines. The flesh of Chthonian fish does not nourish the dead, but it can hide the taste of Mementos, making the dead feel almost as though they haven't been reduced to their current state. That many fisherfolk are lost to half-glimpsed pelagic nightmares seldom troubles the elites who dine on their catch.

These Chthonian mockeries may resemble sea life in the living world, but the price for being proof against the Rivers' dissolving touch is an endless drive to consume, to grow. Anemones cling to skin, desperate to strip what they can; crabs march on the shore en masse, pincers

clicking; and marlins prowl the waves like wolves, waiting to pick off the unwary even from aboard ship.

### **Staying Silent**

**Action:** Basic, instant; duration of the voyage

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Stealth

### **Suggested Modifiers**

Hushed Conversation -1

Normal Conversation -2

Shouting -3

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character does not attract the attention of a Chthonian.

**Exceptional:** The character gains insight into the nature of the River she sails. Ask the Storyteller a single question about it — the Storyteller will answer truthfully.

**Failure:** The character attracts the attention of a Chthonian and is in imminent danger.

**Dramatic:** The Chthonian's attack is the first hint of its presence.

### **More Things in Heaven and Earth**

Humans have rubbed shoulders with the beasts of land and air for a long, long time, and we know more or less what to expect from them. Not so for the creatures that dwell (or dwelled of old) in the deeps, where we have scarcely begun to explore. The living world has biodiversity enough to astonish even the most stoic observer, and the Underworld has been reaping the memory of that biodiversity for untold ages. In the Rivers of the Underworld one may find Chthonians mimicking plesiosaurs or ambulocetids. Without respect to pressure or light, deep-sea life lines even the shallows; the Phlegethon, for example, is known for its black smokers and the sort of strange creatures that cluster around them.

In short, Storytellers should not feel in any way limited when designing marine dangers for their players to encounter in the Underworld. We promise that no matter what you come up with, oceanic evolution has almost certainly outdone you for weirdness at some point in Earth's long history.

## **Houses of the Dead**

The Rivers are the keys to the Dominions, flowing throughout the Underworld on their way to the Ocean of Fragments. The geography may shift over time, confluences drying up and new ones being born, entire Dominions crumbling to dust, but one can always find a way to the Dominion one seeks. Here, where the Old Laws hold sway, the dead have some respite — but only some.

### **The Aegis of the Old Laws**

Sheltered behind the strange walls of Dominions, ruled by the dead of centuries long past and ever watched over by the terrifying Kerberoi, the dead are no longer forcefully stripped of their

Essence as they are above. Instead, they are victimized in other ways, perhaps more recognizable to the living. Few Dominions are kind to their inhabitants, using them for labor in bizarre engines, drafting them into armies of the dead for wars against other Dominions, or even peeling them apart for the very energies and substance of their Corpus. Desperation drives many to the shores of the Dominions, where Gatekeepers greet them and inform them of the Old Laws. The wise keep those laws, even in the face of wickedness, pain, and even destruction, because what the Kerberoi do to those who violate them is almost always worse.

The best advice one can follow if one wishes to keep the Kerberoi out of one's business is simply, "don't break the Old Laws." Many krewes and Bound take this one step further and steer well clear of the Dominions, never venturing that deep into the Underworld out of a desire to avoid the Kerberoi altogether. Yet, the Dominions hold possibilities in too lucrative to ignore, reasons to descend to those depths despite the dangers. Sooner or later, unless one is exceptionally careful, a line is crossed. The Kerberoi are ancient and powerful, as incomprehensible in thought as they are predictable in action. They cannot be bargained or reasoned with, and can only be stopped with great difficulty and more than a little luck.

### **Dominions**

- **Essence:** Ghosts who spend 24 hours in a Dominion gain 1 Essence.
- **Oathbreakers:** Characters who violate the Old Laws gain the Defiant Condition.

"What happens if a Kerberos breaks its own Old Laws?"

It won't. That is to say, it never chooses to and it can't be made to with force, guile, persuasion, or any other means available to the Bound. Still, it *might* be possible to create, with a truly stupendous amount of preparation and a potentially inhuman degree of understanding of a given Kerberos's modus operandi and its Old Laws, to create a paradox situation — a choice wherein all possible options result in the violation of an Old Law. No one has ever, to modern Sin-Eater knowledge, managed to do such a thing, and no one has any idea what would happen if someone did.

It is, however, probably safe to say that the answer is "Bad Things."

### **Irkalla's Gates**

Rare but well attested are Irkalla's Gates, so named for their resemblance to the one-way passage to the Sumerian afterlife. These gates often serve as the entrance to a Dominion; though some lie defunct and seemingly grant passage to nowhere. More than one River City has sprung up around such Irkalla Gates, relying on them for a measure of security and isolation. The dead dread these gates, for when they enter them, they often cannot pass back through them. Each gate exacts a unique toll on those who pass — one's left arm, one's voice, and so on. Some demand seemingly innocuous things, like a particular item of clothing, but when paid, the true cost becomes clear, as any replacement rots away in moments. Those without appropriate payment to offer cannot pass — and thus, one who has paid the toll generally cannot pay it again without some form of trickery. Some, of course, will be unable to pass at all to begin with.

Each Irkalla Gate has a guardian, armored and armed in varying styles, who demands payment from all who pass. Like Ferryman, guardians of Irkalla's Gates have little in the way of personality, and while they can be tricked, they are unmoved by pleas, bribery, or other forms of

influence. The guardian is always the one who takes the payment. One guardian simply devours a newly acquired severed hand, while another takes the hand and nails it to the gate (its surface already likely hidden beneath successive layers of previous tolls paid in full). Once the toll is paid, the guardian opens the gate. If it is possible to force an Irkalla Gate open, no one has ever been known to do so.

Two exceptions stand to the toll: geists and Reapers. Touched by the Underworld's Rivers, geists have already given up so much of themselves that Irkalla's Gates know them not, and so demand nothing of them — indeed, many guardians will not even acknowledge their presence — a trait that carries over to their Bound companions. Reapers, of course, pass without payment by dint of their service to the Underworld, and some have grown rich by acting as coyotes, passing through Irkalla's Gates with a belly full of passengers to be vomited up on the other side.

### **Irkalla's Gates**

- **The Guardian:** The gate guardian is a Rank 3-5 ghost. If destroyed, it reappears at the gate instead of the nearest River.
- **The Price:** The price to pass through an Irkalla Gate often takes the form of a Persistent Condition, Tilt, or Essence payment.

## **The Undiscovered Country**

For all its dangers, for all its wickedness, violence, and exploitation, the Underworld holds many treasures, for those who know to seek them. Every aspect of humanity can be found there, from ancient cities to unfinished novels with their missing chapters intact. Some krewes do nothing more than dredge the depths for the forgotten lore of humanity, sifting the ashes of history for lost gems of wisdom that they spirit away to reintroduce to the living world. Others are more mercenary — knowledge is power, after all, and they mean to have the knowledge to themselves.

### **Hindsight is 20/20**

Everybody dies. Almost everybody leaves a ghost behind. What, then, of every genius that death has taken too young, or who never had the chance to demonstrate their capacities? Are they any less geniuses for no longer being among the living? The Underworld is littered with brilliance, if one can find it among the suffering — the answer to almost any question, the solution to almost any problem. If it's beyond any given Sin-Eater, it's not beyond someone she can find in the Underworld.

But the Underworld is a cruel place, and many of the best and brightest are lost to Essence starvation, pulled into the walls and consumed. Seeking answers in the Underworld is often a rescue mission, pure and simple, if finding a needle in a haystack can be called simple.

There are ways of making such a Sisyphean task possible, however. The dead trapped in the Underworld may no longer have Anchors, but things that belonged to them still carry a shred of their individual resonance, which can be amplified to create ritual sympathy with the dead individual in question. Using such an item as a compass, it becomes possible to find a single ghost in the teeming masses of the Underworld. Getting them out, of course, and keeping them from being rasped apart by the living world, is another matter entirely.

### **Ghost Tracking**

**Action:** Contested extended; five successes; one day interval

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation or Empathy vs. (10 – ghost’s Integrity)

### **Suggested Modifiers**

- Tracker has no tie to target –3
- Tracker has object owned by target –1
- Tracker has important object owned by target +1
- Tracker has target’s Anchor +3
- Subject’s Rank –1 for every Rank above 2
- Subject died recently (less than a week) +2
- Subject dead for weeks +0
- Subject dead for months –2
- Subject dead for years –4
- Subject dead for a decade or more –5
- Subject is in the Autochthonous Depths/River Cities+2
- Subject is on or near a River –2
- Subject is in a Dominion –3
- Subject is near or on the Sea of Shards –5
- Tracker uses Oracle Haunt +2
- Tracker personally knows subject +1

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character finds her quarry.

**Exceptional:** The character gains the Inspired Condition (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 289), applicable to any rolls relating to her quarry.

**Failure:** The character suffers the Obsessed Condition (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 290).

**Dramatic:** A serious roadblock jeopardizes the search and must be dealt with before the search can resume.

### **Uncanny Tableaux**

The physical reality of the Underworld is only one dimension of its power over the dead. Along the Rivers, here and there, cloaked in the mist along the shore, scenes torn from myth and memory play out. But these are not individual ghosts — rather, they are the dead stories that bind disparate lives connected by circumstance, stories that echo again and again throughout history and culture. Sons who unknowingly murder their fathers, fathers who devour their own progeny (literally or otherwise), prophets whose foresight went unheeded; all these and more can be seen from the ferries that ply the Rivers, rendered in twisted and tortuous metaphor.

Some Sin-Eaters believe that these stories are the true underpinnings of the Underworld, the very concept that death should be a punishment animated in spectral flesh and blood, bound to the shores of the Rivers and condemned to endlessly play out scenes from myth they never lived.



And perhaps they are right, for the truth about these tableaux is even more curious than their very existence: *they can move on*. Doing so is a task no less legendary than the stories that spawned these tableaux in the first place, but it has happened before and nothing, save inaction, stops it happening again.

Part of the reason such an undertaking is so rare is that these tableaux's unfinished business is bound up in the unfinished business of countless others. The Underworld feeds on their resonance as stories play out again and again in myriad lives, carving a deep groove into the collective death of humanity that is reinforced every time a death echoes the story. Breaking the cycle requires conscious effort and no small amount of risk.

It's not enough to simply interfere with the scene — to take the killer's knife or hurl the poisoned gauntlet to the ground — that just disperses the tableau to reform elsewhere in the Underworld. Like most things involving the Underworld, you need a key. Specifically, you need a symbol of the cycle broken: a Memento from a ghost who has moved on, a keepsake of a tragic death averted. Whatever it is, it has to come from a death that resonates with the tableau.

Lives or deaths that resonate with aspects of a specific myth or reflect archetypal deaths need not be confined to the Underworld, or even dead, but the living must be in some way marked for death — on death row, fighting terminal cancer, living under a death curse; prosaic or supernatural, a death mark is a death mark. In the case of the dead, the Sin-Eater must aid them in moving on, whatever that requires. For the living, the situation is slightly more complicated. The Sin-Eater might work to change the circumstances of her death, or effect changes in her life that prevent the death in the first place — what matters is that the resonance feeding into the tableau is dispelled.

The former Anchors and Mementos the dead leave behind — or, in the case of the living, keepsakes or trophies — are bound up in the act of liberation, rather than in the Essence of the tableau. By wearing or otherwise holding these objects, Sin-Eaters may ritually insert themselves into the tableau in question, ephemeral actors vanishing as their roles are taken. All that remains then is to go off script, and see the scene to its end.

### **Break the Cycle**

**Requirement:** A number of characters bearing appropriate objects equal to the number of key roles in the tableau; all players participating must succeed at least once to successfully liberate the tableau.

**Action:** Basic, instant

**Dice Pool:** Synergy + Attribute (Storyteller chooses the most appropriate Attribute based on the role being played)

### **Suggested Modifiers**

The character's death resonates with the role she plays +2

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The Underworld's grip on the tableau slips. If all other players have succeeded at least once, the tableau moves on and the krewe takes a Krewe Beat.

**Exceptional:** The tableau is shaken by the character's defiance. The next Break the Cycle action (whoever takes it) receives a +3 modifier.

**Failure:** The tableau reasserts its narrative, and the actor is compelled to act out their role — possibly leading to damage, crisis points, or worse.

**Dramatic:** The character suffers the Insensate Tilt (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 285) as the tableau drags her into its narrative.

The results are immediate and nothing short of astonishing. Freed from the bounds of so many resonant deaths, the tableau slips its chains and sublimates into pure Essence that trickles out into the Underworld, creating for a brief time a flourishing dead ecosystem of ghostly flora, an Eden where hellish scenes of torture once stood.

## Ylem

Perhaps the strangest things to be found in the Underworld are the ylems, vortices of Essence and emotion found in and below the deepest Dominions, and even on the shores of the Ocean of Fragments. Similar to Mementos but seemingly indestructible, some of the dead claim they're nothing more than fonts of Essence — wars have been started over the possession of an ylem — but the true value of the ylem is what is contained within.

An ylem can take any shape, but is always something that can be held in the palm of one's hand. Rumors tell of ylem that appear as twisting, shivering gobbets of flesh, or of carved bones that continuously bleed black ink. It may be a prosaic object as well, but its unusual nature always shines through — figures in the Polaroid photo move when one looks away; the cracked chalice fills with blood regardless of what liquid is poured into it. Few have ever seen an ylem, and fewer still have touched one, so rumor is much of what drives Sin-Eaters to search for them — for it is said that the ylem contain the condensed hope of those who came before, and perhaps the seed of stillborn potential.

With focus, a Sin-Eater can connect with the heart of the ylem, sending them into a trance where they experience vivid waking dreams of other lives. Their subjective sense of time is wildly distorted, and what seems like days or weeks, or even months or years, passes by in just a few moments in reality. Waking from the trance, they remember few details, but the weight of what they experienced will never entirely leave them. These visions may be evoked more than once, and more than one Sin-Eater may participate in an individual trance.

An ylem trance is reflected with a Condition, crafted by the Storyteller, that represents the crux of what was left behind, the resolution of which grants a Krewe Beat. The vision ends either when the people the characters are inhabiting “die,” or when the heart of the mystery is understood or solved — if the latter, the Condition is fully resolved, and the ylem dissolves into pure Essence. Ylem carry within them the encysted hopes and dreams of Sin-Eaters past, thus making them an excellent source of occult knowledge and power, and resolved ylem may serve as the core of Krewe Regalia.

Care should be taken when accepting the Esotery of another krewe into one's own mythology, however. Ylem contain more than memories, after all — some believe that the ylem are the conjoined shades of geist and Bound, or possibly a mélange of an entire krewe. A universal truth lies at the heart of every ylem: The krewe responsible for its creation failed in its chosen task. Perhaps it was through no fault of its own, or perhaps they were misguided in their Doctrine — it's impossible to know. Either way, it's a radical act to accept something of another krewe so utterly. Depending on what is adopted, doing so may represent redefining or breaking Doctrine (p.XX).

## Finding Haunts

The power of Haunts comes from the Underworld, ultimately, and so the Bound must descend to the Underworld to learn new ones. Simple enough, but what to look for? What moment or item should unlock that power?

The answer is: whatever works for the story. If your player is in the process of tracking down the Reaper that abducted the Krewe's seer, consider making her first dot of Oracle contingent on finding the creature and rescuing the seer in proper Orphean style. If your player has Experiences falling out of her pockets, her Sin-Eater just helped a ghost move on from the Underworld, and she really wants to buy the first dot of Caul? Go for it. Epiphanies can be found in the most prosaic of things as well as the momentous, after all, and the most valuable wisdom is often not what we set out to find.

## As Below, So Above

Many believe that the Dominions are held together by their Old Laws, and that the Kerberoi are the expression of those laws. Without the Old Laws, without the Kerberoi, would the Dominions slide into the Ocean of Fragments? Is that what happens when Dominions fall? These questions and others like them have puzzled Sin-Eater philosophers since the beginning of modern Sin-Eater culture (and probably long before), and answers are few and far between.

The Old Laws certainly seem, however, to be something artificial, something grafted onto the Underworld in the name of false stability rather than a natural feature of the place. Certainly, havens from the constant, draining hunger the Underworld inflicts would seem to be at cross-purposes with it. If the Old Laws *are* artificial, that means someone or *something* made them, which means someone should be able to *unmake* them. Some krewes, the desperate, the brave, the reckless, the zealous, go one step further, and seek to make the Old Laws (and the Dominion they support) their own.

## Suborning a Dominion

Suborning a Dominion requires only that the krewe locate a Dominion with an Old Law that shares at least some similarity with one of their Doctrines (or, if they wish, krewe members can change one of their Doctrines to match the desired Dominion). Using this point of correspondence as the thin end of the wedge, the krewe slowly inculcates itself into the body politic, requiring a full story dedicated to the effort. At appropriately climactic moments when the balance of power in the Dominion shifts — the downfall of a wicked tyrant, the gathering of a massive throng of the dead outside the halls of power, and so on — the Storyteller should call for a Taking Control action to replace an Old Law with a New Law. The first New Law is always the one corresponding to the Old Law used to begin the process of suborning the Dominion.

When all Old Laws have been replaced with New Laws or erased, the Kerberos of the Dominion finally lies down and, for lack of a better word, dies, its Corpus slowly absorbed into the substance of the Dominion. The Sin-Eaters of the krewe feel this happen regardless of where they are at the time, for they are now bound through their Doctrines to uphold the New Laws of their Dominion. They are not compelled, as the Kerberos was, to stand an endless vigil, but violations of Doctrine now have sympathetic effects throughout the Dominion, and if they do not enforce their Doctrines, the damage to the Dominion will become quickly apparent. If the Sin-Eaters themselves should violate Doctrine, the sympathetic effect strikes *them* instead — not just

one, but *all* Sin-Eaters bound to the Dominion — and Storytellers are encouraged to get creative with appropriate persistent Conditions and Tilts.

### **Taking Control**

**Requirement:** Doctrine with similarity to Dominion's Old Law

**Action:** Contested, instant

**Dice Pool:** Esotery + appropriate Krewe Attribute vs. Kerberos' Resistance + Rank

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The targeted Old Law is erased, and replaced with a New Law corresponding to one of the Krewe's Doctrines.

**Exceptional:** All krewe members gain the Connected Condition (p. XX) for the targeted Dominion.

**Failure:** The Old Law remains in force.

**Dramatic:** The Kerberoi treats the krewe's effort as a violation of the targeted Old Law.

## **The Ocean of Fragments**

When the Rivers have run past the last and deepest of the ancient Dominions, when their banks dwindle out until they cease to be, then the dead and the Bound know they have come to the end of all things — the Ocean of Fragments that swallows memory and identity. The black waters of this ocean hold uncountable secrets, the flensed memories of every being to suffer its touch. Some cling to the shores, casting lines and nets, to fish up bits of what used to be people. The courageous (or foolhardy) sail it, and inevitably meet the Admiral.

### **System**

- **Waters of Oblivion:** Every turn, a character immersed in the waters of the Ocean of Fragments loses a dot in a single Trait. Merits go first, followed by Abilities, then Willpower, then Attributes. If the character has any supernatural powers or Traits, these are lost as Merits.
- **Sanctity of Traits:** Player characters affected by the Ocean of Fragments receive refunded Experiences for lost Traits.
- **End of Everything:** When every Trait is lost, the character ceases to exist.

## **Navigating the Final Frontier**

The Ocean of Fragments is wide and vast, the confluence of all Rivers, the foundation of the Underworld itself. It follows, therefore, that the Ocean that ends all things touches on those things as well, and the brave or desperate can sail from one shore to another, risking Leviathan's wrath and the Admiral's curiosity. Without the benefit of the stars, sailors here must rely on the lights of the deepest Dominions, those hanging precariously above their own oblivion in the roof of this incomprehensibly vast cavern. There is little else on this featureless expanse to mark one's way.

### **Navigating the Ocean of Fragments**

**Action:** Basic Instant; one voyage

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult

### **Suggested Modifiers**

Has never sailed the Ocean of Fragments before -5

Has sailed the Ocean of Fragments before -3

Has visited one or more Dominions bordering on the Ocean-1

### **Roll Results**

**Success:** The character navigates to her destination.

**Exceptional:** The voyage takes a disturbingly short length of time.

**Failure:** The character is Lost (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 289).

**Dramatic:** The character encounters the Leviathan or the Admiral. Pick one; neither is feeling charitable.