

HUNTER: THE VIGIL

BLOCK BY BLOODY BLOCK



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We shall never understand the... environment
until we see it as a living organism.
Land can be healthy or sick, fertile or barren,
rich or poor, lovingly nurtured or bled white.
Our present attitudes and laws governing
the ownership and use of land represent an abuse
of the concept of private property...
Today you can murder land for private profit.
You can leave the corpse for all to see
and nobody calls the cops.

- Paul Brooks, *The Pursuit of Wilderness*

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Introduction

Here's the good news: the monsters don't dominate this city. No one foul fiend or callous society calls all the streets its own—they're kept to their corners, hedged into their tight little territories.

But with that comes some very bad news, too: with limitation comes desperation, and with desperation comes a host of ill doings. If, say, the vampires "owned the night," then it's in their best interest to keep things quiet. They spread out beneath the surface like an infection, persistent but not bad enough to kill the host. Here, the power isn't in the hands of a single entity or ruling body. It's like several diseases fighting for supremacy, competing infections that are running the body ragged. Territorial boundaries press back and forth; blood spills as claimed domains wax and wane. It's a war out there, and so far, nobody's winning.

That's where the characters come in. They're hunters. They're not much—just one cell operating in the dark of the night, flashlight beams dimming as the batteries die. Maybe they have help—or hindrance—from above, maybe they don't. Either way, they might be just the stabilizing force this city needs. Then again, maybe they don't care about stability. Maybe, just like everybody else, the hunters want their cut, too—of the money, of the law, of the streets.

Territory

This supplement is about territory. The city is not one giant blob—it's a series of domains and territories carved up among competing powers. It works the same way that a city does in the human world: the cops are strong here, the Latin Kings own this part, the Guardian Angels watch that street over there, the Russian Mob has the waterfront, and so on and so forth.

In the World of Darkness, some cities are like that—yes, mortal gangs and institutions control parts of and elements within the city, but so do the monstrous factions: cults and vampires and witches and other awful things that walk the dark streets and monitor their domains from dark towers. Maybe these fiendish factions work to compete with the mortal institutions, or maybe they actually consider such institutions (police department, crime family, local government, whatever) as part and parcel of their territories, jerking the puppet strings when they need something done.

The hunters like to think themselves outside this struggle, but sadly, they're not. Hunters are a paranoid, secretive lot. Some are heroes, but they're flawed. Some are villains, but they're sympathetic. They give themselves over to strange compacts and conspiracies, and these larger-than-life groups

rarely rise above the conflict and instead become part of the problem, claiming territory in bloody coups and culling monsters in mysterious pogroms. Where do the characters fall? Can they stay safe and sane in this mess? Do they climb to the top, or get lost beneath the writhing pile? Do they support the lesser of two evils, or no evils at all? Above all else, can they snatch territories from the jaws of the monsters?

How to Use This Product

This is something of a combination product. On the one hand, it's a generic setting piece establishing a series of generalized territories that you can pick up and drop into whatever city you choose to use in your **Hunter: The Vigil** game, whether it's the default metropolis of Philadelphia or somewhere else entirely. On the other hand, it introduces new

TWO SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

For this product, look to two sources of inspiration.

- **Grand Theft Auto**, any of the games. Don't look at it so much for mood and theme, but more in how it deals with territory: the cities are blocked out into neighborhoods, and each is often ruled by a single individual or group—the game involves ousting these figures and taking territory, but it does so in a way that makes story paramount.

- **No Man's Land**, a Batman story arc in the late 1990s. In this arc, Gotham is abandoned after a devastating earthquake, and what's left of the city is divided up amongst the monsters and villains. It's more obvious than what would happen in the World of Darkness, but the story gives a good look at the push-and-pull of these factions, and shows how territory is a coveted resource.

systems to the game that are meant to simulate the push and pull (action and consequence) of a city-wide secret war for its many territories.

The territories are broad, and meant to be found in most cities—London, New York, Philadelphia, Berlin, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City share common elements, from financial districts to slums to mass transportation.

Each territory has many small stories bound to it, reflected in story hooks, characters, locations and other tidbits. In addition, each domain has control conditions as well

as assets and liabilities taken on when one “claims” a given territory. You can find more information under “The Territories,” p. 11.

Also, each territory has a link to a web page where you can share your version of each territory with other players and Storytellers, or look for inspiration from other fans’ contributions. If you’re reading this in a print-on-demand format or otherwise can’t access the links, the website can be found at http://wiki.white-wolf.com/worldofdarkness/index.php?title=Block_by_Bloody_Block

New Systems

Below are some new systems that come into play within this product and apply across the board to all territories.

Claiming Territory

Each territory has control conditions listed that might help a hunter cell or organization make a successful claim against a given domain. These control conditions aren’t exhaustive, and are really just guidelines—as much as we’d like to say, “Killing Duncan ensures ownership of the park,” it’s rarely that straightforward. Stories must remain fluid, and so it’s impossible to list absolutes.

When a hunter cell does claim a territory (as decided by the Storyteller), that cell is given some benefits. Those benefits are as follows:

- Each territory has a number of assets and liabilities listed. The cell gains access to or the benefits from these assets for as long as they hold the territory. If the Storyteller determines that another group reclaims or steals the territory, they gain access to the assets and the cell loses them. The same, of course, goes for the liabilities: when hunters take a territory, they have to deal with certain consequences, and any new owners take those consequences on themselves while divesting the hunters of them.

- At the time the cell claims the territory, each hunter character gains one Willpower point and one additional experience point. In addition, the cell receives five total practical experience points to bank, divvy up or spend as the group sees fit.

- In addition, for every chapter (game session) in which a territory remains held, each hunter character gains one point of Willpower.

New Dread Powers

The following Dread Powers can be used for any antagonist you hope to create in **Hunter: The Vigil**. These in

particular apply to some of the monstrous characters found throughout this product.

Absorb Knowledge (•)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Effect: The creature may touch a book or other repository of knowledge (a computer, perhaps) and absorb all the information contained within. The information in that book now represents a Specialty for a given Skill (Biology for Science, for instance, or Mythology for Academics) that provides the normal +1 to all appropriate rolls for the rest of the day. The knowledge fades at the end of the day, unless the creature spends another Willpower point to keep it going.

Clamber (• to •••)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics + Clamber

Action: Reflexive

Effect: For the remainder of the scene, the monster can climb on all fours up impossible to climb surfaces such as walls, ceilings, windows and the like. The monster moves as if she were walking or running on normal ground (see Speed, p. 95, **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Destiny (• to ••••)

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Effect: This creature is bound to the crass weave and weft of fate, for good or ill (probably for ill). For every story, the creature gains a pool of “destiny dice” equal to twice the number of dots the fiend possesses in this Dread Power. The monster may add these dice to any dice roll during that story, but once they’re spent, they do not return until the next story.



Drawback: The fiend has a *nemesis*, an individual (or a type of individual) that is forever a thorn in the monster's side (such as an individual hunter, or all the hunters of, say, the Union). Whenever that character or type of character comes into play, the monster's dice pool is penalized by one die per dot in *Destiny* possessed. This only applies to dice rolls directly dealing with the nemesis, however.

Ignorance of the Flesh (••• or •••••)

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Ability is considered "always on"

Effect: At three dots, the creature in question can ignore bashing damage; it just fails to harm the fiend. At five dots, this is increased to being able to ignore lethal damage as well, meaning the creature only takes damage from aggravated sources. This Dread Power can manifest in different ways for different creatures: one reptilian thing might simply possess thick lizard skin, while a rampaging demon may be surrounded by some bleak miasma that seems to absorb certain attacks.

Drawback: Taking this Dread Power, however, confers upon the creature a vulnerability. In much the same way a werewolf takes aggravated damage from silver, the creature suffers aggravated damage from sources or weapons made of a relatively common element (water, fire, gold, oak and so on).

Read Aura (••)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy

Effect: As per the Devil's Eyes Thaumatechnology Endowment (pp. 186–187, *Hunter: The Vigil*), the creature can discern portions of a person's aura. Note that the creature does not actually need to implant eyes as per Cheiron surgery; this effect is likely endemic to the creature (though, should you decide that a creature can only gain this ability by ripping out the eyes of another monster, go for it).

New Merits

What follows are a handful of new Merits that can be used in coordination with this product.

City Knowledge (• to •••••)

Effect: The character can conjure up information about the city at a moment's notice. This includes tidbits about history or the city's layout, or simply unusual or interesting facts about the metropolis.

The character's player can make an Intelligence + Streetwise roll, with a number of bonus dice equal to the dots purchased in this Merit.

Reputation (•• or ••••)

Effect: This works similarly to the Fame Merit (p. 115, *World of Darkness Rulebook*), except it applies to a Social

Skill other than Socialize or Persuasion. The character's cultivated a reputation, for good or bad, that affects Empathy, Expression, Intimidation, Streetwise or Subterfuge rolls. The two-dot version of this Merit confers the 9-Again quality to rolls involving the chosen Skill, while the four-dot version elevates that benefit to 8-Again.

This is tricky, of course, and should be described appropriately: a character who has a reputation for lying doesn't gain the potent quality to Subterfuge rolls, because people *already* expect him to lie. No, for the hunter to gain a Subterfuge bonus, the reputation must be one that suggests he's trustworthy, loyal or honorable. It might be a total sham, but nobody said a reputation had to be accurate. Perception is everything.

This Merit applies to only one Social Skill, chosen at the time of purchase.

Drawback: This Merit won't work on everybody, and the Storyteller has a right to deny its benefit. A character with a reputation for being able to "read people" or "give advice" will earn the Empathy bonus when dealing with people who were capable of picking up on that reputation—a famous psychotherapist with a book deal might be able to affect a good portion of the populace, but won't get squat when dealing with the homeless, foreigners or any who might not have been exposed to the media saturation surrounding the character.

Territorial Knowledge (• to •••••)

Effect: The characters know one of the city's territories (pp. 11–63, though the Storyteller may have others she's using in this story) intimately. Maybe the character grew up there, maybe she works there, or perhaps she's been making recon missions into that domain for the last year or so. (It's even possible that this is something supernaturally-born: consider a Lucifuge hunter whose infernal dreams carry him through a given territory as if flying on the back of a raven.)

The character gains several benefits for that territory. These include:

- The effects of the Direction Sense Merit, but only within that territory; if the character already possesses the general Direction Sense Merit, the effects do not stack together.
- A +1 Drive bonus per Merit dot purchased, representing that the character knows how to navigate this territory with an automobile.
- A +1 Initiative bonus per Merit dot purchased, though this Initiative is only useable when in combat inside that chosen territory.

Note that a character may purchase this Merit several times over to represent knowledge of myriad domains, though never more than once for a single territory.

New Tactic: Territorial Recon

Prerequisites: *All:* Wits 2, Academics 3 (or Academics 2 with a Specialty in Research); *Partial (1):* Computer 2 (primary actor); *Partial (1):* Socialize 2 or Streetwise 2 (secondary actor).

Requires: 2 or more

Dice Pool: *Primary:* Intelligence + Academics. *Secondary:* Manipulation + Socialize or Manipulation + Streetwise
Action: Extended (each roll represents one day's worth of information-gathering)

Description: Whether or not the cell wants to try to take a territory for its own, it's important to know the details of a given area that goes beyond what a travel guide might say. This Tactic assumes that the hunters want to do a little recon to learn the "facts on the ground" regarding a given domain.

The secondary actors work the area from a Social approach. It's a lot about asking questions but keeping those questions from raising suspicions. Ultimately, they're not interrogating the people, just poking around, seeing if any hooks and seeds are exposed. Anything weird going on? Where do the local teens hang out? Any problems recently? Maybe they pretend to be local reporters, or just start up some small talk at a bus stop.

Whatever they learn, they feed back to the primary actor, who is in a central location (usually in front of a computer, maybe even at the local library), doing research. He's specifically going beyond the normal avenues of information and trying to dig deep through archives, newspapers, diaries and the like, trying to hone in on certain things that the secondary actors were told out in the domain itself.

Every success gained is one fact the characters can learn about that neighborhood. It's important that such facts not give away information that is ultimately too clandestine to find using research, though facts shouldn't be useless either. Characters might learn that someone named Duncan Vilsick is in charge of the park conservancy, for instance, or might learn that the park conservancy spends a lot to keep the City Park going, which suggests the Liabilities of that territory (p. 11) demand lots of money.

It's also important to keep this Tactic dynamic and scary. This isn't a safe Tactic. The hunters are going into the lion's den to ask curious questions. They're on uncertain ground, inside the territory of a monster. It could go wrong at any moment. Even the primary actor, if he's discovered, could be exposed.

The cell can continue to build successes for as long as they choose to recon, but note that the Tactic necessitates spending one whole day per roll.

Organizations: The Union is good at blending in and knowing what's up with individual neighborhoods. The Cheiron Group isn't so good at the blending in part, but they have lots of cash and do a lot of recon on territories (either hoping to put up offices or labs there, or using the residents as test subjects, focus groups or even as hunters).

Potential Modifiers: Primary actor is at a library (+1), primary actor has access to good computers (variable; see p. 237, **Hunter: The Vigil**), secondary actors aren't welcome (-1 to -5 depending on hostility), primary actor has bad info to start (-1), primary actor has an inferior library or an old computer (-3).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Something terrible occurs: the secondary actors are exposed, the primary actor crashes the com-

puter, the monsters are now alerted and on the hunt, etc. The Tactic ends and may not be reattempted for at least a week.

Failure: Either the secondary actors just aren't making headway or the primary actor is failing to make use of solid leads. If the overall day's worth of this Tactic fails twice in a row, the Tactic is a bust.

Success: The cell gains one fact per success, as noted above.

Exceptional Success: As with success.

Rapport

Rapport is a system by which individual characters develop positive or negative relations with other characters in a way that has a rules effect in addition to a roleplaying one. Rapport is about the building of a relationship, be it good or bad.

Relationships take time to grow and fade. For example, an interview subject meets a potential boss for the first time—the characters may be in-sync (one definition of “rapport”), but it takes time to build a relationship of trust and respect (another definition of “rapport,” and the one we’re using here). Sometimes it’s a conscious thing. The boss is happy with work performed, feels that it’s done in a timely fashion and that the new employee goes the extra mile—positive Rapport is the result. Alternately, the boss may feel that, as time goes on, the new hire is slipping. He’s lapsing into bad habits and causes some trouble in the work environment—the positive Rapport build starts to trickle away, and may even turn into negative Rapport. Rapport can also be built on unconscious signals: over time, two people may form a friendship or romantic relationship despite flaws and betrayals, and due to some kind of magnetic social effect the two keep positive Rapport with one another (or, one keeps positive Rapport in ignorance while the other lets it stagnate into negative Rapport, making for a very complex relationship).

Rapport is a negative or positive number between one and five, and it represents a modifier to all Social rolls made in interaction with the subject of that Rapport. Negative Rapport is -1 to -5 dice, while positive Rapport is $+1$ to $+5$ dice. This affects all Social rolls *except* those based on Intimidation—Intimidation works in opposition to Rapport. It’s harder for two people sharing positive Rapport to bully one another, and so the positive becomes a negative (if Rapport was $+2$, with Intimidation rolls it’s now -2). And, it goes the other way: having negative Rapport with someone (say, -3) means that Intimidation rolls work well off that negativity ($+3$). Note that Merits like Fame, Reputation and Status have no impact on Rapport. Rapport is ultimately more personal, based on individual relationships.

It is not necessarily a two-way street. It *can* be, but a hunter who builds positive Rapport with another hunter may not find the relationship reciprocated. If Agent Tybalt of VALKYRIE does a series of favors for Marianne Crestwood of the Lucifuge, he may build up a positive Rapport, which means she’s more amenable to his seductions, his lies, his suggestions, whatever (i.e. he gains bonus dice to those rolls). But he may not be so amenable to Social rolls made by her, because she’s done next to nothing for him in return—and,

IF YOU HAVE DAMNATION CITY (AMBIANCE AND ATTITUDE)

Ambiance and Attitude (p. 153, *Damnation City*) are largely for handling entire neighborhood's worth of people (as that book suggests, “playing a hundred people at once”). How can this affect Rapport? On the surface, it probably shouldn't. Rapport deals with individual relationships, not with the overall feel of a given territory's population. Still, you might decide that the modifiers due to Ambiance and Attitude may make gaining positive Rapport easier (Welcoming, Calm, etc.) or harder (Unruly, Riotous, etc.).

in fact, it may even grow to a negative Rapport with him because over time as he sees her for the self-indulgent demon junkie that she really is.

Gaining and Losing Rapport

A player has two ways of handling his character's relationships using Rapport, and both are valid to use simultaneously in play (though the Storyteller may very well choose only one of the two ways, letting the players know which his preferred method is).

Casual Rapport

The first is recognizing Rapport is in flux and, for the most part, unstable. Most relationships are minor, even when they seem major: two long-standing business colleagues may be willing to stab one another in the back for the right price, something they wouldn't consider doing when it comes to family or old high school friends.

Rapport in this way may rise and fall a number of times during a story or chronicle. A hunter character does what a blood slave wants and obliterates the slave's vampire master, earning positive Rapport ($+3$, because it's fairly big) with the now ex-slave. But the hunter eventually tries to get the ex-slave “clean” from the addiction to vampire's blood, and the ex-slave isn't having any of that guff—and so, Rapport drops (down to $+2$). And it may keep dropping as long as the hunter pushes his luck (down to $+1$, and maybe eventually into negative Rapport).

In this way, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether Rapport rises or falls, though certainly players are encouraged to say, for instance, “I'm hoping to earn positive Rapport with this ex-slave” or “I think this will earn me negative Rapport regarding the ex-slave.”

Casual Rapport can only change once per scene (or only once per day, at Storyteller discretion) in either direction. A hunter only needs to record the Rapport possessed in regards to another character (i.e. the Social modifier gained to that hunter's Social roll). Note that once Rapport has been established, it generally replaces the bonuses gained from Social-modifying Merits (like Fame). This is the result of a personal relationship. Those Merits are assumed to work on those who do not possess such relationships.

Deep Rapport

Sometimes positive or negative Rapport is more firmly established—a pair of best friends who've known each other for 20 years won't let little dings and dents affect their re-

lationship. Alternately, a hunter and his immortal nemesis won't be so quick to set aside their eternal enmity just because of a kind word or a common purpose.

This is called *deep Rapport* and is marked by a Merit, as noted in the sidebar. Deep Rapport, having been purchased with experience points, is much harder to sway—whether positive or negative, the expenditure of experience points on the Merit tells the Storyteller that this is a “minted” relationship (though, if the Storyteller feels that the relationship has not yet reached such status, he may deny the Merit's purchase for now).

Possessing deep Rapport with another character indicates a relationship with a strong foundation, whether as friend or enemy. This relationship is therefore harder to shake than Rapport held with day-to-day acquaintances. That being said, abuse to a positive relationship or the dawning of a new day on a negative relationship *can* see levels change. If dots in this Merit—positive or negative—are lost, the character gains back two experience points per lost dot as the relationship moves back toward “center.” Once it reaches center, dots in the opposite Merit (positive from negative, negative from positive) can now be purchased with experience points again, representing a shift in the long-standing friendship or enmity.

MERIT: DEEP RAPPORT, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE (• TO •••••)

Effect: Deep Rapport is purchased in regards to a single other character, and is considered either positive or negative. The Merit can be purchased many times, with each instance indicating a strong beneficial or harmful relationship with a different character.

If this Merit is positive, then the dots taken in the Merit equal the bonus modifier assumed on all Social rolls regarding the other character. Intimidation rolls are an exception; they suffer a negative modifier equal to dots taken in this Merit.

If this Merit is negative, then dots purchased in this Merit equal the dice penalty suffered to all Social rolls regarding the target character, with the exception of Intimidation rolls—Intimidation rolls are more easily performed on the target character, taking bonus dice equal to dots taken in this Merit.

Dots in this Merit must be purchased one at a time, and a player may not purchase more than one dot per game session (potent relationships are built—or eroded—slowly).

Cascading Rapport (Optional)

Block by Bloody Block assumes that many of the main players in the city have Rapport with one another, whether positive or negative. All these relationships are interconnected. Think of it like drops of dew in a spider's web, with each droplet bound to the next by a thin filament of silk. If the web gets plucked and one droplet falls, others may fall.

How the hunter characters interact with the big players (by building Rapport) can affect their interactions with the allies and enemies of those big players. This might be termed a “cascading effect” in regards to Rapport, though it really only goes one step into the subject's personal network. A character possessing Rapport with one subject has a similar but lessened Rapport with the allies and enemies of that subject.

If the character has a positive Rapport with a subject, he now has a positive Rapport with all those that the subject has a positive Rapport with, though it's one point lower (+2 to +1, for example). Secondary negative Rapport is also reduced by one level of magnitude, e.g. from -2 to -1. Secondary Rapport of a weak primary Rapport (+1 or -1) does not have a measurable influence and results in a Rapport of 0.

Example: *Jake Johns, a local Union rep, has been throwing Duncan Vilsick (pp. 17–18) some prey now and again because, for as much as he finds the Abbey disgusting, Jake finds the fiends of the city all the more vile. This has earned him some positive Rapport with Vilsick, a +2 bonus. Looking at Vilsick's character web, we see he has a positive Rapport with the vampire Sarah Haversham and a negative Rapport with Jimarcus Slidell, witch of the Souls' Army (pp. 44–46). The cascading effect allows Jake a lessened positive Rapport with the vampire (+1), but it also translates to a secondary negative Rapport with the witch (-1).*

Example: *The situation is reversed. Jake actually loathes Vilsick, thinks he's more monstrous than the things that prey on*

the city's people. He's made it his life's mission to be a thorn in Vilsick's side, and this has earned Jake a strong negative Rapport (-3) with Vilsick. That puts Jake at odds with Vilsick's vampire buddy, inferring a -2 Rapport with the creature of the night. The witch, though, thinks that the enemy of his enemy is the closest thing to a friend he has—that means Jake now has a +2 Rapport with Jimarcus Slidell.

The secondary Rapport born as a result of this cascading effect can never be greater than what the subject himself possesses. If a hunter has a significant positive Rapport of +5 with a vampire, and that vampire has a lesser-but-still-positive Rapport (+2) with a demon, the hunter's secondary Rapport with the demon is *not* +4, because it's limited by the relationship in place between the vampire and demon. Hence, the hunter can only have a +2 Rapport with the demon as a result of this secondary cascading effect. The hunter could, however, increase his Rapport with the demon directly, not relying on other character alliances.

Is this universal? For the most part, it works in regards to this product where the city is a teeming mass of adversarial tangles and strange friendships. That being said, the Storyteller always has the final say whether or not this secondary effect is in place—but, Storyteller, always be up front and clear as to the reasons why it isn't in play, so a player doesn't attempt to work toward a purpose that can't yield fruit. It's also something best kept to the players' characters, benefiting them above all else.

From the Other Side

Is it possible that a Storyteller character can have Rapport with one of the players' characters? Or that the player characters have a Rapport (hopefully positive) with one another? Certainly. If everybody's comfortable with it, you have two ways of implementing Rapport in this manner:

- Let players dictate their Rapport. If the player feels that his character is growing more or less fond of another individual (player- or Storyteller-based), then that player can suggest a minor (+1/-1) change to her Rapport regarding that other individual.

- The Storyteller dictates everybody's Rapport. This steals a bit of control away from the player and can be seen as the Storyteller dictating how another character is feeling. However, a character's feelings are not always his own, and player and character considerations can be kept separate (a character may accept a lie that a player knows to be deception, or a character can succumb to the wiles of a demon's mind-controlling Dread Power).

Alternately, it's perfectly fair if the Storyteller and players decide that Rapport just isn't meant to work on *them*, but this is something that should be decided before you start using the Rapport system.

Storytelling

Block by Bloody Block is unique in its approach to the setting, and demands a few moments' worth of discussion with the Storyteller on its use.

First, remember that the city is a dynamic beast. The territories are given over to an ebb-and-flow. While this document approaches the setting from a single snapshot in time, it cannot remain frozen in the status quo, because that's dull. The hunter cell isn't the only game in town. Every character and faction in this document is a potential ally, enemy or competitor. The cell wages a long and bloody war against the Better Way in Suburbia? Fine. The rest of the city is given over to its own battles. Miss Nyx of the changelings tries to grab the brass ring of the Nightlife Circuit, while a pack of werewolves fills the gap she left when leaving the Subways. While territories aren't gained and lost nightly, you should make the city feel connected and alive through the push-and-pull of characters and domains.

Also, try to tie a narrative to it whenever possible. This product is seeded with story hooks and attempts to show the relationships between some of the characters. Stories connect these people, and connect the districts to one another. Play off that. The cell will weave in and out of these other stories, and in the process will build their own. They'll earn long-lasting adversaries. They might gain a certain sentimental connection to one domain over another. They'll feel triumphant when they gain a new resource, and they'll seethe when that avenue is lost to them. If you want to connect it to an existing story, do so; it should, however, be done organically. Don't simply switch gears into "conquest mode," but slowly drop in hints that certain factions are making themselves known, and show how they've claimed certain parts of the city as territory. The slow revelation that territories have more to offer than just physical boundaries may urge the hunters to carve out their own niche in the city.

Moreover, this narrative should be veiled in half-truths, whispered rumors and outright falsehoods. The World of Darkness operates *sub rosa*—its grim realities lurk beneath the surface. Monsters don't advertise their presence. Hunter organizations don't make the news (though Network Zero certainly tries!). These groups don't have personnel rosters. Everything the cell knows about the other characters should initially be cast behind a thick haze, and the same goes for what other groups know about the characters. Navigating the territories should be like rowing a boat in the foggy dark—you never know what's out there.

Finally, remember that players think out of the box. They'll have their characters do exactly what the Storyteller doesn't expect. It deserves reiterating: keep it flexible. The elements of the territories and characters contained in **Block by Bloody Block** needn't be set in stone—always be prepared for the characters to switch up the story and change the game on you, and that's not only okay, but it's desirous. The biggest territory grab of all is the one where the players lay claim to the story, which is exactly what you want.

Why?

Why would a hunter cell try to claim territory, exactly?

- Each territory has assets that are both system-based and story-based. Claiming a territory gives the cell a bit of an edge, and claiming more than one helps to sharpen that edge significantly.

- It's good to have a home-base. A territory can represent an area of respite, a great place for the story's calmer moments (including downtime).

- Revenge is a powerful motivator. A fiend has control of a territory, and the cell wants to punish that monster by taking away what it has.

- Many of the monsters are like tumors in these territories, acting as malignant presences that have metaphorically (or literally in the case of vampires) created their own blood flow. Sometimes, it's just about doing the right thing: the cell sees the cancer and knows that the people in that territory suffer for it, so they aim to cut out the cancer. Something has to go in its place, though, which is where the cell comes in.

- In a similar vein, the cell may approach the territory in a way that's less about excising the malignancy and more about redeeming the domain in general. The cell sees that the people there suffer under an invisible yoke or are unwittingly

made to be slaves or the subjects of violence. They seek to redeem the territory, actually improving it to the point where it can more easily resist the depredations of the World of Darkness.

- A "patron" figure is behind their action. A patron needn't be a single figure, but can be any group that pushes the cell to lay claim to a domain. Cheiron may want to expand its interests. The Union may want to "take back" its neighborhood. A vampire group may hire the hunters (openly or through human third-parties so as to veil their identities) to clear out an opposing group. A wealthy family may pay the cell to rescue their daughter from within enemy territory, and in the process the cell will liberate the people there. Note that if a group lays claim to a domain *through* the cell, the cell may still partake of the assets and suffer the liabilities, but so does the patron, be it an individual or a group.

The Territories

Below, you'll find the eight territories offered in **Block by Bloody Block**. First, though, we'll go over exactly how each territory is laid out—not only will this help you navigate and understand each territory, but it should give you some perspective on how to create your own territories out of this mold.

Controlled By: This'll tell you who currently claims the territory. This doesn't mean that other fiends and monsters do not lurk within the territory's borders, but they don't control it or get any benefit from it.

Examples: A handful of real-world examples of this territory in action.

Following that is a general description and history of the territory.

General Modifiers: Each territory is given over to certain rules—modifiers, mostly—that are driven by the conditions within that area. If all the streetlights are blown out, bonuses to Stealth are appropriate, though penalties against Perception are likely. If the domain is home to a well-funded library, Academics, Computer and Occult rolls might gain a bonus. These modifiers are present to any who walk or operate within the territory.

Control Conditions: Want to claim the territory for yourself and your cell? These are the general conditions to do so. They aren't hard mechanical rules that say "if you follow this map, the territory will fall into your control." They're suggestions, and they're certainly not exhaustive. They offer a brief look at a few ways of ousting the territory and claiming its assets and liabilities. Players should be encouraged to come up with unique approaches tailored to their characters' hunter cell.

Assets: Assets—bonuses of some stripe, be they lowered experience costs or free Merit dots or whatever—are available only to the group that has fulfilled the control conditions and can reasonably call the territory its own.

Liabilities: Of course, taking a territory isn't all about cake and ice cream—it's about responsibility, hard decisions and taking the good with the bad. Just as there wait mechanical benefits to taking a territory, there exist system penalties too.

Consequences: Consequences are more about the story and the roleplaying than about the rules: what happens when the cell takes the territory? Each territory doesn't exist in a vacuum. They're all balanced precariously across the spider's web, and plucking one silken strand might upset the other spiders. This section discusses the consequences, both good and bad, of taking control of a given territory.

(You can find information on creating your own territories in the Appendix, found on pp. 69–72.)

Locations

Each domain plays host to several smaller locations worthy of note, and they're listed here—generally, they're story hooks to be dropped into the world. Some come with light rules modifications (dice modifiers, usually), whereas others are geared purely toward the story, characters and conflict.

Bit Players

Just as each domain is home to particular locations, it's also home to a handful of noteworthy characters. These characters are walking story hooks, and exist somewhere in

between non-combatants and combatants. They can become central to the story, or they can be forever lurking on the sidelines. For purposes of this product, we're calling them "bit players," and they have certain rules that apply only to them (see sidebar on this page for more information).

Story Hooks

Each territory has a sidebar of three story hooks—these hooks aren't contingent upon taking control of the territory.

IF YOU HAVE DAMNATION CITY (DISTRICTS, SITES AND SUBJECTS)

Roughly, the districts of **Damnation City** (and the fictional city there, Newcastle) correspond to the territories here, and sites in that product correspond to the Locations that are a part of each territory in **Block by Bloody Block**.

This product assumes that the territories are more robust, and the locations in them are less so—**Damnation City** provides an opposite approach (districts are given less text than the sites themselves). In fact, grabbing the sites from that book (starting on page 274) gives you a whole host of new locations to drop into this product's territories.

Subjects (p. 331, **Damnation City**) make for good "bit players" in each territory.

If you want to roughly convert territories into districts or vice versa, you can assume that some of them can be considered equal (Nightclub Circuit is present in both, for instance, but the City Park has no district equal in **Damnation City**).

Big Fish Character

Every domain has at least one big fish character listed—this is often the "ruling" figure in whatever faction claims control over the territory in question. This character also has relationships (Rapport) with some of the other big fish characters in the city, and these relationships are represented by the character web noted at the end of each write-up.

HOW BIT PLAYERS WORK

Bit players have three stats: Mental, Physical and Social. This number represents the max dice pool (even with equipment) the bit player can have in its given category. If the character's Mental is 4, no Mental-based roll (Wits + Composure, Intelligence + Academics, etc.) can exceed four dice, and the Storyteller may rule that the dice pool is actually less.

If it comes down to combat, bit players are always meant to be fairly weak in a combat scene. Their attack pool is equal to their Physical trait, regardless of how terrible or fantastic their baseball bat or hunting rifle happens to be.

All bit players have a Defense of 2, an Initiative of 4, a Speed equal to the Physical Trait, a Willpower equal to the Mental Trait and a Health score of 5.

Note that non-physical entities (spirits, ghosts, demons, etc.) may have Power, Finesse and Resistance listed instead of Mental, Physical and Social.

The City Park

Controlled By: Ashwood Abbey

Examples: Central Park, New York City; Fairmount Park, Philadelphia; Golden Gate Park, San Francisco; Hyde Park, London

To many, it's an urban oasis: nearly 900 square miles of parkland smack dab in the middle of the bustling, often filthy metropolis. Trees line the paved roadways and walkways. Fountains put on an elaborate show. Duck-boats waddle through man-made ponds and waterways. Walk to the center of the park, and the city can't even be seen; it's all just trees and sky and dappled light drizzled through deep shadow. Ringing the edge of the park are several tourist attractions: the local aquarium, the Orchid Arboretum, the Japanese Tea-house, the Children's Playtime Theater and so forth. It's a haven of (admittedly fake) nature, a place where people come to jog, bike, eat ice cream, paint, hold hands, and play with their kids.

They especially embrace it because it wasn't always like this—everybody remembers that, only four years ago, the place had fallen to terrible disrepair. Junkies gathered under bridges, peddling their poisons as the sun fell. The homeless slept on park benches, gathering around barrel fires. Cryptic graffiti tags marked the walkways and the architecture. The cops stayed away; it was a cancer, but it was contained, keeping the muggers and rapists and sin-peddlers to one easy square.

Five years ago, a private not-for-profit group calling itself the Park Beautification Conservancy took over the stewardship of the park from the city. The group, whose members remain anonymous, signed a five-year contract with the city to assume management of the park's land. The cash infusion was fast—work began on cleaning up the park before the ink had even dried. The Conservancy petitioned the police to get better coverage, but failed. So they instituted their own security force, able to do so because the primary funding for restoration and beautification came from private donors and not taxpayer funds. The effects were not immediate, but certainly swift. Within the first year, the Children's Playtime Theater was back up and running (it had burned down in a fire in the early 90s), the graffiti was gone and the criminal element faded from view, exorcised from the park.

The Park Beautification Conservancy is actually a front for hunters of the local Ashwood Abbey chapter. Abbey hunters lived nearby in the elegant, opulent neighborhoods (all mini-mansions, neo-condos and old world townhomes), and were disgusted by the cesspool that sat only a few blocks away. Never mind that it was home to the criminal element—it was home to the *supernatural* element, too. Two separate

werewolf packs called the park home, prowling the dark forests and cracked asphalt, encouraging the criminal element to remain because the park was apparently home to some kind of sacred whatever, some spiritual crossroads significant only to the mad Lupines (see "The Gallows," p. 15). Having the rotten filth of humanity there apparently worked like having a human shield: they represented a barrier that kept most of the city's populace out of the park and away from the werewolves. Under the aegis of the Conservancy, the Abbey was able to come in—legally—and clean house. They were able to turn the park away from its foul downward slide, turning back into a place of laughing children and burbling fountains.

At least, that's what it is during the day.

At night, the park changes. The Abbey controls everything: the fountains, the lights, the gates. They turn off the lights, leaving on only the ones they need. When the sun goes down, the park turns dark (unlike the rest of the city) and these hunters take full possession of the territory's many acres. For what purpose?

Sometimes, they hunt. The werewolves that once claimed the park made for spectacular victims: once the Abbey controlled the environment, it became a prison for the shapechanging fiends that thought of the park as their domain. Yes, some hunters died—mostly, members of the private security force that comprised the Abbey's on-the-ground members (and it's fine that they died; they were tools, low-Status fools without the pedigree or bank account to ever really make it far within the compact). But armed with silver bullets and with time and the environment on their side, the cleansing only took a few nights. A handful of the Lupines escaped, and a few were taken captive and used in later hunts—like the ones that go on Friday nights.

Every Friday, the Abbey brings in another monster from some other corner of the city. They let them loose in the park, and then its members hunt. Sometimes, the Abbey invites hunters from other organizations if they're into it (like an organized pheasant hunt). Sometimes, they use this to induct new members (the head of the local banking conglomerate found it a "perfect thrill," indeed).

It's not all about the hunt. They use it as a training ground, and they also put on *faux*-occult rituals for rich folk (worshipping a great stone owl that's wheeled out of the Arboretum basement, burning effigies, dressing in bizarre costumes). The park is the Abbey's social stomping ground as much as it is hunting territory: where else to put on their *grand guignol* soirees?

General Modifiers: During the day, Perception rolls are at +3 (everything is sunny and well-lit) and Stealth rolls are



at -3 (everything is sunny and well-lit!). This reverses at night (+3 to Stealth, -3 to Perception) due to the seemingly impenetrable darkness that bathes the park.

Control Conditions: Claiming the park as territory is no easy feat. It's not just that the Abbey controls it; they control it through a proxy organization that has a legal contract with city government. The good news is, the contract is up this year—the bad news is, unless something can be done in the next several months to severely weaken perceptions regarding the Conservancy (i.e. crime returns to the park, someone gets a hefty bribe, tourists stop visiting), the contract renewal is a shoe-in. Going up against them financially will be tough: the Abbey hunters are wealthy individuals, able to combine their resources into a hefty pool. Violence remains an option, but the Abbey hunters don't advertise their identities—only a few are known, acting as the public face (see Duncan Vilsick, pp. 17–18) of the organization when interfacing with other cells. The best approach would be to take them by surprise, when away from the park—or to make a deal with the monsters (werewolves in particular) to help on any attack. Of course, soliciting help from the werewolves means turning the park over to them as territory....

Assets: Those who control the park control the central office (see below), which means they can access the park's gates, lighting, fountains, PA system and so forth. The park is easily defended from exterior forces (most gates and walls are at least Size 5 with Durability 3). In addition, the private security force is up for grabs: they know they're low on the totem pole, and will help out whoever controls the park. Final-

ly, the park also provides a great hunting and staging ground for non-urban encounters: dots in Survival can be purchased at new dots x 2.

Liabilities: To control the park means to pay up. The Conservancy handles operations of the park through private donors. Annual park operations are expensive; assume that if the characters do not possess or cannot raise the equivalency of 10 dots of the Resources Merit, then parts of the park are sure to fall to disrepair. In addition, the Conservancy used money to keep eyes off them. By keeping the park in tip-top shape and by filtering money into the hands of politicians and other lawmakers, they are able to act without scrutiny. If characters cannot manifest the proper bribes, the police or city agents may come snooping.

Consequences: Anyone who wrests control of the park away from the Abbey better be prepared to become a bug-light to terror: Lupines, vampires, drug pushers and gang members would all be thrilled to reclaim the parklands. They won't push their luck, though; defeat once is enough to assure them that the park remains in a competent grip. In addition, the hunters will have made enemies with the Ashwood Abbey—wealthy men and women who have not unreasonable influence amongst others who carry the Vigil. (See Vilsick's character web, p. 17.)

Locations

Central Control Office

The park has an underground central control office, which is basically a room with a control panel hooked up to

a number of not-so-hidden CCTV cameras throughout the park (the Conservancy is happy to have people know they're being watched). The room can hold about ten people, though usually only two security officers or Conservancy managers are on-duty in the room at any given time. The room is locked (Lockpicking roll requires 12 successes) and the door is tough (Size 5, Durability 3). Given only one entrance, it's both a very defensible room and a deadly trap.

The Gallows

The Gallows is exactly as the name suggests—it's where the city used to hang its criminals about 100 years ago. Now, it's a playground for children where no child will play. The playground equipment sits new and unused. However, the area *does* serve as a nocturnal playground for a host of specters, Those Who Were Hanged. These specters murmur and wail, and given that the Abbey hunters really only recognize how to deal with physical threats and not ephemeral ones, they leave the ghosts be as kind of a curiosity (or as part of an initiation for new members). The Gallows apparently represent the "sacred place" the previous Lupine residents were worshiping or guarding or whatever it is they do with such locations.

The Orchid Arboretum

The Arboretum sits at the northeast corner of the park on 27 acres of land. It's mostly indoors, and a good portion of it is given over to hothouse flowers (rare orchids, in par-

ticular). The Abbey's soirees are not all outdoors—especially during winter, they often move their debauched gatherings to the pristine indoors of the Orchid Arboretum.

The Decimus Arch

The Decimus Arch is a large triumphal arch designed by London architect Decimus Burton as a gift to the city back in the mid 19th-century. The stone arch is peaked by a pair of powerful-looking bronze eagles. On the inside of the arch, however, are a series of small inscriptions written in a language that nobody has ever accurately identified. Hunters may find that some witches and werewolves speak their own blasphemous tongues, and may be able to translate.

The Nests

Contrary to its somewhat sinister-sounding name, the Nests are just that: bird nests. Well, hawk nests, actually—the park has been home to countless generations of red-tailed hawks, birds that some Abbey hunters (including Duncan Vilsick) use on the Vigil, subscribing to ancient traditions of falconry.

Bit Players

Carlos Villarosa, Security Head

Mental 3, Physical 6, Social 4

Carlos is the head of the private Conservancy security force, and operates a team of about a dozen men and women, with half that on park grounds at any given time. Carlos is a

STORY HOOKS

- **War's brewing.** The werewolves across the city have decided enough is enough. In the shadows, they mass: too many yellow eyes in the darkness for the Abbey to handle. The lycanthropes will bring hell with them: blasphemous spirits, unheard-of Dread Powers and hungry claws and teeth. Worse, they plan on making the attack in the middle of the day, when the park is full of innocents and chaos can take hold.
- **A monster comes to them.** Doesn't matter who or what it is—demon, witch, psychic, Lupine. What matters is he's battered and tortured, with one eye missing and a few fingers gone. Maybe they'll grow back, but maybe the wounds were cauterized and sealed. The monster's a nobody, but he's got connections, and he tells the characters, "If you help me, I can help you. You'll get an in with my people. Please. Help me have my revenge on these sick fucks." Mechanically, helping him earns the characters a +2 Rapport with all the monsters of this victim's "type." For example, if he's a werewolf, the hunters gain that Rapport with the local werewolves.
- **The characters receive a hand-written and couriered invitation to a party tonight at the Arboretum.** If they go, they find that the Abbey has invited a number of the city's hunters—many of whom have never before been in contact with one another. At first, it goes pretty well, but then the truth comes out: This is a witch-hunt. Vilsick knows that some hunters have been helping the monsters, and this party's meant to root them out—and make them the Most Dangerous Game for the evening. Maybe it's the characters. Maybe it's their friends. Maybe it's somebody they've never met. Can they stand by and let this happen? Other hunters certainly will.

ball-busting, belligerent prick, quick with an insult and quicker with a swing of his baton. However, despite his never-increasing low-man status in the Abbey (or perhaps because of it), his allegiance is up for grabs. Show him respect and pay him some money, and he'll sell out the Abbey in a heartbeat. They treat him okay, but he can smell the disdain on them like the cheap cologne he hoses himself down with every morning.

Myrna Jackson, Werewolf Relative
Mental 4, Physical 3, Social 5

Myrna's not a monster, but she's family to one. She's "kin" to the werewolves that used to run wild in the city park, but the Abbey never sniffed out the connection when they cleaned house of the Lupines and their ilk. She used to work for the Arboretum, but now is the assistant manager of the Children's Playtime Theater. Her alliance is solely to the few

wolves that escaped; she watches and waits for her opportunity to help bring the Conservancy down.

John the Jogger
Mental 6, Physical 6, Social 3

John the Jogger is a serial killer who takes a single victim from the park every year on the Autumnal Equinox, slashing her throat and belly and stuffing her with leaves like a scarecrow. His killings – once a year for over a decade – were always public knowledge, until the Conservancy stepped in. They have John now—just a lowly, pudgy guy in a gray tracksuit—and they use him. When the hunt is on, they let him hunt, too—and they even have a "special" hunt on the Autumnal Equinox where they release a female monster into the park lands, letting John lead the hunt. That helps keep John from killing innocents—and if he *does* kill an innocent, they cover it up. This is a secret



Duncan Vilsick



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 4
Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Occult 2, Politics 2
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Weaponry (Sports Equipment) 3
Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Selling) 4, Socialize (Loose Tongue) 4, Subterfuge (With a Smile) 4
Merits: Allies (City Officials) 3, Allies (Police) 1, Fame 1, Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start 1, Professional Training 4 (Third Asset Skill: Persuasion; Contacts in: Bankers, Country Club, Art Dealers, Nightclubs), Resources 5, Status (Ashwood Abbey) 4
Willpower: 6
Morality: 5 (Duncan has modified his Morality according to the Code; see sidebar for new Code and his Tells)
Initiative: 9 (Fast Reflexes)
Defense: 3
Speed: 10
Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Golf Club	2(B)	n/a	8	Has Specialty (Sports Equipment)
Cavalry Saber	2(L)	n/a	6	Passed down from father; ornamental (-1) already figured in



that the Abbey keeps from other hunters, and even from some of the lower-ranking members within the compact.

Duncan Vilsick, Philanthropist and Murderer

Quotes: *"It gets easier. It gets better, too. It's like eating asparagus or broccoli when you're a child: over time, you acquire the taste as your tongue matures."*

"There's nothing better in this life than to give, give, give. I'm a fount of goodwill toward man. I have been lucky in this life, and so it is of paramount importance to give something—everything—back."

"Tighten the ball gag and unlock the handcuffs. Wave the torch at it—don't worry, it won't bite your hand off. It'll run. They always run when fire enters play."

Faction: Ashwood Abbey (Hunters)

Virtue: Charity. It's not a lie; Duncan really is charitable. It makes him feel great. Part of that is, admittedly, because it earns him such positive attention: people love him for all he gives. But he's convinced himself that it's something more. Something spiritual.

Vice: Lust. One might argue that Duncan's charitable sensibilities serve primarily to earn him myriad sexual partners. He wouldn't argue that, but everybody else would.



John Dennison

Dennison knows that Vilsick is "friendlier" to the bloodsucking fiends of their nocturnal society

+1



Miranda Barthes

Barthes is no soft-touch, but considers Vilsick to be profoundly disturbed

-3



Sarah Haversham

Occasional sexual partners; she "gifts" him her unwanted and exiled vampires

+3



Duncan Vilsick

-5

-5



Jimarcus Slidell

Duncan's tooled around the Projects looking for hunt victims; Jimarcus hates all that Vilsick stands for



Mare's Tail

Werewolves don't really like Duncan much, for perhaps obvious reasons

Background: Duncan Vilsick was born with a heroin spoon in his mouth: his pedigree is far less pristine than he claims. Truth is, his father—a wealthy commercial real estate baron—had a predilection for damaged goods. He liked having dalliances with prostitutes that were scraping the bottom of the barrel in terms of mental and physical health. Vilsick's mother had him, then tried to con the real estate baron into giving her a big payday. It didn't work out so well: The elder Vilsick had the whore killed, then raised Duncan himself.

He wasn't a kind father, and was enormously cheap (one suspects that's how he so easily amassed such impressive wealth), and Duncan swore to never be like that. Of course, he *did* take on his father's lustful peccadilloes, no matter how much he derided his father's crass, ill-concealed lifestyle.

It was actually one of Duncan's cousins that introduced him to the Abbey at the relatively young age of seventeen. Despite what he tells most people, he didn't take to it like "a duck to water." In fact, he found what they did repulsive, but it was the only way to be accepted into the social circles he so admired. Over time, though, it's as he tells all the new hunters: it gets easier, it gets better. Then it gets fun.

Description: Duncan is cold and slick—dark hair combed back and made immovable with gel, skin flawless, eyes clear and blue, smile perpetual with bright white teeth. He dresses comfortably, though—no suits, just designer polo shirts, khaki pants and well-worn \$700 loafers.

Storytelling Hints: You're a friendly guy. Genuinely. It's not a lie. It's not a false front. You *like* people. And that's why it's so disappointing when people upset you, because you held such high hopes for them at the outset. Even the monsters deserve a smile and a kind word. They deserve it because of what you're going to do to them.

DUNCAN'S CODE*

Morality	Sin
10	Selfish thoughts
9	Minor selfish act
8	Injury to another
7	Petty theft
6	Grand theft
5	Intentional mass property damage
4	Go one week without hunting
3	Planned crime
2	Casual/callous crime
1	Fail to make a monster suffer

* changes in bold

Character Tells: Sexual Deviancies (major)

Rapport: Positive Rapport with Duncan means he's *in your life*. He calls. He wants to go out. He wants to take you to dinner, share the wealth, get drunk on champagne, enjoy all the pleasures life has to offer. Negative Rapport means one of two things. If it's a low negative (-1, -2), he just ignores you. You're a buzzing fly; an annoyance. Worse than that (-3 to -5), and he's happy to utterly destroy your life.

Profession: Socialite



Financial District

Controlled By: Nobody—Contested (see below)

Examples: Center City, Philadelphia; Financial District, San Francisco; Potsdamer Platz, Berlin; Uptown, Charlotte; Wall Street, New York City

It's the hub of the city—the nexus of avenues and traffic and trains and people, all coming together to form the beating, bleeding, bleating heart of the metropolis. It's likely the highest point in the city; skyscrapers sit together, forming a deep canyon out of the busy, smog-choked avenues. It's everything: bank buildings, pharmaceutical buildings, city hall, hot dog carts, lines of taxis, expensive hotels—you name it, it's here in this central business district.

It remains perhaps the perfect and purest example of how ignorant the masses are of the shadow war that goes on just outside their door. This territory remains hotly contested, never falling into one group's hands for long—a month, maybe two, then back again. A covert struggle exists in the highest echelons of the glass-and-steel towers, and it carries to street level and into the sewers beneath. Ancient secrets are traded for power. Artifacts from antiquity are exploited to damage enemies. Adversaries are tricked, betrayed, abused, murdered—bodies float down sewer tunnels, blood is mopped up from the floors of executive bathrooms, maddening ciphers are buried in Powerpoint presentations. Three main forces currently vie for supremacy in this one territory, though others sometimes join the fray.

The first is the Cheiron Group. Cheiron has a cluster of Big Pharma buildings only a block from the biggest subway station in the city. All the big names are here: Weide, Jones-Klein-Beauchamp, Barthes. Drug advertising has hit an almost absurd level of penetration in the center of the city. TCG doesn't mind when the monsters war against one another, because frankly, the casualties often end up on Cheiron's many autopsy tables. But here in their backyard it disrupts things. And nothing, *nothing* can be allowed to disrupt business. In this city, Cheiron is represented by Miranda Barthes (pp. 23–25).

The second group vying for control is the First Estate (also mentioned under the Nightlife Circuit, which is a territory that likely borders this one—see pp. 35–40). It's a vampire institution that is a bloodthirsty combination of old-school monarchy and new-school capitalism. To these vampires, blood and money are basically the same—the blood that flows through a human's arteries is like the money that churns through a city's veins. They want a taste of all of it. Blood and money together make for unearthly power. Here, the First Estate is represented by Prince Sarah Haversham (pp. 25–26).

Finally, the third group is a small, rag-tag group of mages known as the Consilium. The Consilium doesn't belong in this world, not at all. They're not businessmen. They're mostly academics, occult scholars, strange old sages with madness in their eyes. So, why do they care about this district? These old and powerful witches claim that five of the skyscrapers within this territory are “shadowy earthly representations” of something called the five Watchtowers. They believe these towers are sacred, and key to... well, something. The end of the world? The dawn of a new age? The return of some lost and idealized civilization? Nobody can really say exactly what is so important about these locations, only that they *are* important. The Consilium is represented by Hierarch Desideratum (pp. 27–29). More information on the watchtowers can be found in the sidebar, on p. 20.

This shadow war isn't bloodless, but it seldom escalates to overt violence. The witches kidnap a prominent blood-slave and break his mind, implanting in it a mote of magic that records all he sees and hears, and replays it back for the Hierarch. But the vampires discover the truth, and instead summon a venerable old blood-witch from a different city, and have her channel a wretched curse through the blood-slave—like a bullet fired back through the gun, it damages the Hierarch and puts her in medical care for weeks. Cheiron, of course, exploits the situation—if they can have an insider tending to the Hierarch, at the very least they might be able to steal a draught of her potent blood, potentially isolating some of the magic contained within the vial of red. It's a constant push-and-pull, a clandestine game of one-upmanship that continues month after month. Like a chess game, each participant has plotted out the moves twenty steps ahead, right or wrong. Sometimes, two will form an alliance against the third, but betrayal is inevitable—and the cycle spins anew.

General Modifiers: Something about this area (the lights, the man-made materials, the great herds of unaware people moving about) creates a very high manifestation modifier for ghosts and spirits (–4). Also, the area is given over to some Social modifiers: the crowd keeps its head down, for the most part, shuttling from one corner to the next with minimal interaction, which incurs a –3 to Persuasion and Socialize rolls. However, Intimidation rolls gain a +3 bonus, because the minds here seem more pliable and people will give in to pressure just to be allowed to escape and live another day. Finally, Drive rolls suffer a full –5 penalty here: too many people, too much traffic, confusing lane changes and kamikaze cabs add up to a stop-and-go motorized nightmare.

THE FIVE WATCHTOWERS

The Hierarch thinks these five buildings are of cosmic significance:

The Charlie Green Tower: Home to one of the biggest mortgage companies in America (and one that's currently picketed daily thanks to predatory lending practices), the Charlie Green Tower is one of the tallest skyscrapers in the city, and the way the sun hits both sides of it (morning, then afternoon) gives it a shimmering, golden glow. Desideratum calls this the "Golden Key."

Church of the Ascension: It's the city's oldest church, a stoic, Catholic affair formed of dark stone and looking quite out-of-place amidst the steel, glass and light. Two years back, though, a terrible fire consumed the inside of the church, leaving it mostly a stone husk—and it remains unoccupied to this day. Nobody knows why the Church hasn't sought to do something with the empty building. The Hierarch calls this the "Stone Book."

The JKB Building: Home to the United States corporate branch of Jones-Klein-Beauchamp, this towering pillar of black glass and metal is where some of the company's biggest successes have been born, specifically in the areas of "mental health" drugs (antidepressants, antipsychotics). The Hierarch calls this the "Iron Gauntlet."

The Museum of History: An outdated four-floor display of science and history throughout the ages—old animatronic cavemen, dinosaur skeletons, scale models of various battles and the like. The real prize is the archive beneath the museum, home to a wealth of priceless artifacts (and Relics, shepherded by a trio of Aegis Kai Doru hunters, all workers at the museum). The witches call this musty, dusty outmoded building the "Lead Coin."

Radio 34: The Radio 34 building was once used explicitly for radio broadcasts, but that's no longer: these days, it's all television, all the time. It's owned by a single network, but that network owns about a dozen smaller networks (all cable), and every one of them films out of this building. One of the most popular shows going right now is actually a children's program called the "Realm of Enchantment"—it attracts a crowd daily who can watch the filming of the show at the ground floor from outside. Hierarch Desideratum calls this building the "Thorn."

Control Conditions: This is easily one of the trickiest territories to control—any attempts to seize it outright will be met with opposition from *three* sides. That being said, one could theoretically maneuver those sides against one another—yes, they're already against one another, but at present their shadow war is slow and subtle. However, the water's on a slow boil and could be stirred to boil over, perhaps removing one or even two factions from the "competition." It's also possible to back one of the current horses in the race and then, after dominating the playing field, eliminating the ally. Whatever happens, consider the fact that these three forces are in relative balance—one makes gains one month, but another will tip the scales soon enough. The cell might be the unbalancing factor that keeps the scales tipped and changes the dynamics of this shadow war.

Cheiron is really the most difficult group to oust—they're a multinational medical conglomerate with numerous buildings in the district. The characters can't rid the area of these buildings, nor can they somehow evict all of Cheiron. They *can*, however, diminish the resources of the Field Projects Division, the "hunter" part of the company (keep in mind, most of TCG has no idea that hunters work amongst its ranks or where their anti-aging creams and prosthetic limbs come from), which helps the cell lock down the domain. And if the cell belongs to the Cheiron Group, they can back TCG and gain control of the territory without ousting them.

Assets: Because the territory is highly-coveted and difficult to claim, the rewards are great for doing so. While no Social Merits come part and parcel with this territory, all of them can now be purchased at half the price (new dots x 1 in-



stead of new dots x 2). In addition, something about being in the center of the city orients one to the rest of the metropolis; each character gains the Direction Sense Merit for free.

Liabilities: The liabilities are few: both Drive and Street-wise are harder to gain now (new dots x 4), because those guarding this territory will have a difficult time practicing these Skills effectively.

Consequences: This area will never be safe: Someone will always want a slice. The easiest solution is, of course, cutting up this territory into smaller ones—this building, that building, the city square, city hall, and so forth. In addition, destabilizing this area too much can genuinely destabilize the city—a lot of money travels through this district, and a lot of people count on that money. If the herd gets spooked, the money drops. When the money in this district drops, it's like a heart that can't get enough blood—limbs start to wither. The economy is already unstable; any precipitous drop can put people out of work, which can raise crime and decay, which only creates a more tantalizing environment for the monsters. This territory is a prime example of how the hunters—even a single cell or organization—can truly help or harm an entire city.

Locations

The Barthes Building

For the most part, it's an office building—fairly bland, nothing fancy, just 30 floors of nothing exciting, right? Except, this is where the Field Projects Division works its grim magic, and all below street-level. The sub-levels of the building are profoundly secure, with keypads, ocular scanners and

a big humming room full of lie-detection equipment. These sub-levels are where one finds the surgical stations, the equipment rooms, physical therapy for “unique” prosthetics and Miranda Barthes' real office.

The Bowler Diner and Deli

Given over to the motif of the bowler hat (not a participant in the sport of bowling), this diner's been around for well over 100 years. It's open 24/7, and has a stable of regular customers that run the gamut from big-dog CEOs to the pretzel cart vendors that work the corners. This is reportedly one of the locations where the three matriarchs of the city (see “Story Hooks,” p. 22) gather in disguise. The purposes of these meetings are uncertain, and the story differs depending on who one talks to—one might suggest that they're honorable war-room meetings between “competing generals,” while another might offer a more conspiratorial bent, claiming that they're clearly trying to push the district into constant conflict for some kind of gain. (Try the pastrami and the homemade pickles, too.)

Bit Players

Gwendolyn Barthes, Rebellious Socialite

Mental 4, Physical 3, Social 8

Gwen is Miranda's daughter. In public, they're a smiling, loving family. In private, they loathe one another. Gwendolyn is an unabashed socialite, a woman who loves the spotlight more than she loves the money—she's a local celebrity, seen at only the hottest clubs in the Nightlife Circuit (pp. 35–40) and always showing up in the gossip columns of the city paper. Here's the thing, though: Gwendolyn is a hunter. She has the

Lover Lips Thaumatech implant (**Hunter: The Vigil**, p. 187) and uses her socialite cachet to get in good with some particularly high-end monsters. It's very rare that Gwen actually does the hunting herself—for the most part, she's recon, a spy for Cheiron. She gets in, dopes them up, learns what she can and gets out. The pro-Cheiron activities are about all Gwen has in common with her mother, and when they talk the Vigil, they're both on-target and truly civil.

Gray Gould, First Estate Lieutenant

Mental 7, Physical 5, Social 5

Gray's a vampire, operating as Sarah Haversham's second-in-command. His appearance is far from normal. His skin is flawless alabaster and his body is too long and too lithe. His joints seem to swing both ways, calling to mind the limbs of a marionette. He is alien-looking, graceful but disturbing. He can mask it for a time, looking more or less human, but generally he doesn't want to. Gray plays at being Sarah's biggest proponent, her truest confidant in a society full of heartstabbing leeches, but it's a carefully orchestrated lie. Right now, Gray's content to be the power behind the throne, but one day soon he's going to make a play for her position—he doesn't plan on destroying her if he can help it, but he'll resign himself to acceptable losses.

Matt Woo, Consilium Assistant

Mental 8, Physical 3, Social 3

Matt's a young magician—a clumsy, socially inept man in his early 20s who went through a pretty rough childhood

(abusive parents, foster homes, bullied at school). The kid's a genius, and can wax poetic and philosophically about magic and the occult for hours—it's the only time he doesn't stammer. These days, he's the everpresent attaché to Hierarch De-sideratum, often fading into the background until needed.

Nasir Shirazi, Hot Dog Vendor

Mental 4, Physical 4, Social 6

Shirazi is an Iranian who runs the most popular hot dog cart in the district—it's dead-smack in the middle of everything, in the middle of glowing billboards and towering buildings and a massive five-point intersection. He's fast, he's cheap and his food doesn't taste like rat hair—in fact, his cart is probably the cleanest in the city. It *gleams*. Shirazi is well placed to see many things, and he is very, very perceptive. Though he doesn't always know to put two and two together, he still picks up on everything that passes by.

Jennifer Bird, Relic Guardian

Mental 5, Social 4, Physical 7

Jennifer's a hunter—she's actually one of the three Aegis Kai Doru hunters that work for the Museum of History, guarding the secret cache of Relics that the museum contains. While the other two hunters (curator Paul Adriano and Professor Eldon Stackhouse) are academics that work in the upper echelons of the museum staff, Jennifer's head of the nighttime security detail—which affords her a lot of opportunity to keep an eye on things. She's stocky, with a square jaw, and has a way with a baton and a Taser. She plays at

STORY HOOKS

- The fact that the biggest players in this district are three women seems to put to rest the theory that big business is a man's game. Here's a curious conspiracy theory, though, that someone puts the cell up to investigating: whispers have suggested that these three women sometimes meet, always late at night, often in secret. Nobody knows why, but the rumor is that they're engineering this conflict to gain some kind of advantage. Does conflict create benefit? Does Cheiron happily use the remains of the "soldiers" lost in this war?
- The cell finds another cell dead: these hunters were Ascending Ones, devoted to the art of *sulha*, the negotiation. They were clearly trying to broker a deal between the three warring factions, but failed. It seems that one of the groups had them executed—but what if that's not true? Evidence turns up that the cell had some success in brokering a deal, and that the three sides were close to agreement. Who shattered the peace?
- It leaks out that someone has discovered something of profound power here in the territory—some feature of the architecture or landscape that cannot be removed. Whoever controls it has a big bid toward domination. That means the three factions are no longer the only ones waging a secret war on this territory—the Loyalists of Thule want to study it, the Aegis Kai Doru wants to claim it, the Lupines think it's some kind of sacred whatsit, the changelings fear it and want to destroy it, and a human cult springs up around it. The secret war threatens to be not-so-secret. Innocent lives are sure to be lost in far greater numbers. Can the cell do anything? Do they want the object, too?

being dumb but she's alarmingly well-read on the subject of artifacts—sometimes, she's able to stump or surprise her two academic cohorts. The Shield and Spear trio (a cell that operates with no name but “The Three”) don't have any interest in claiming this territory for themselves, but they do want to end the witches' incursion, and will one day make drastic moves against the Consilium.

Miranda Barthes, the Silver Fox of Cheiron

Quotes: *“You think I'm a feeble old woman, don't you? My body may appear frail to you, but I assure you, my heart is that of a young man.”*

“Life is short. One must be ruthless. Sacrifice the pawns and knights to take the king—but never sacrifice the queen. She's the one with the true power.”

“Everything is a commodity.”

Faction: Barthes Prosthetics, The Cheiron Group (Hunters)

Virtue: Prudence. Slow and steady wins the race.

Vice: Greed. If Miranda weren't so focused on the power associated with money, her Vice would be Pride—but it's money first, money always.

Background: Most think that she's the oldest living Barthes, the heir to the entire Barthes Prosthetics throne, but that's not actually true—her father, Norman Barthes, still lurks in their mansion outside the city, his 103-year-old body kept alive with various hissing machines and fluid infusions. And Norman still tells Miranda what to do, offering advice in a pinch. She most certainly needs it.

Miranda was never favored to be the one shepherding her company to dominance of the prosthetic limb market—women, frankly, were not meant to control anything according to the Barthes family. Miranda had two older brothers, both plainly more qualified by evidence of their Y-chromosomes, and that was that. Or so she thought. Her brother Nolan turned out to be an epic fuck-up, losing himself in drugs, fast cars and loose women. He crashed his Lamborghini Miura into a drain embankment one night and put himself



Miranda Barthes



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Research, Law) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Politics 3, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Cut Deals) 5, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Backstabbing) 4

Merits: Allies (FBI) 3, Allies (Judges) 2, Professional Training 5 (Subfield Contacts: Field Research, Retrieval, Recruitment, Lawyers, Logo Protection; Third Asset Skill: Persuasion), Resources 4, Status (Cheiron) 4, Thaumatechnology (Biliary Tree of the Cynocephali) 3, Thaumatechnology (Regenerative Nodule) 4

Willpower: 8

Morality: 4

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 9

Health: 7



in a coma. He died three years later without ever regaining consciousness. Her brother Nestor was a bully and a cad, but had a keen business sense and would've taken controlling interest of the company before too long. Unfortunately, Nestor was shot in the back of the head and dumped in the bay. They found his body, but never the gun. (Miranda still has it—a cold souvenir of the one time she got her hands dirty instead of paying someone else to do the job for her.)

She was the only one set to take controlling interest when her father became wheelchair bound (“retired” was his word for it), and now she’s at the top of the corporate food chain.

Description: She’s 71 and has a faint tremble to her—it’s not Parkinson’s, it’s simply that she doesn’t eat enough. But she’s got a handshake grip like a crushing vice, and a steady gaze that never wavers. No matter the hour, Miranda is well-dressed, with shoulder-length silver hair and sleek outfit to match the occasion. She still takes lovers—young bucks, up-and-comers, competitors—and she attributes her smooth skin and longevity to that practice.

Storytelling Hints: Miranda is dangerously over-confident and reckless in her certainty. She brooks no dissension

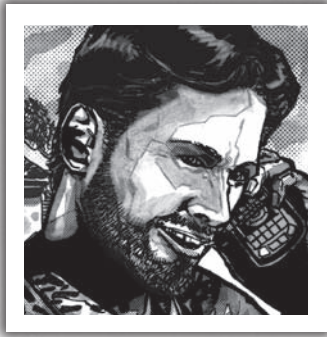


Victoria Weyland

Weyland appreciates the occasional donations Miranda offers (equipment, hunters, money)



Miranda Barthes



Anton Alexander

Anton doesn't know who or what Miranda really is, but she donates to the Better Way



Desideratum

The witch hates her. Thinks Miranda is the epitome of what's wrong with humanity

THAUMATECHNOLOGY ENDOWMENT: BILIARY TREE OF THE CYNOCEPHALI (•••)

This entire bile system (canals, ducts, liver) replaces the hunter's own biliary tree. While Cheiron would have one believe that such a system can be taken only from the notorious (and extinct) dog-headed cynocephali, it actually works the same if surgically extracted from any therianthrope (werewolf, werecat and the like). Particularly dark rumors suggest that such a system can be extracted from powerful Ascending Ones as well, but surely that's just rumor...

Benefit: A character with this implant parses toxins alarmingly well. Assume that any toxin that enters the hunter's body is considered to have a Toxicity of -5 (which renders most poisons inert). In addition, the liver's ability to create new tissue helps weaken some diseases, as well. The hunter gains +2 to any roll to resist disease.

Special: Any time this Endowment must process a new toxin or disease, the hunter's flesh shows prominent jaundice for the next 12 hours. In addition, unless the hunter takes a twice-daily pill (which Cheiron does not provide under their medical plan, and it necessitates Resources •• to purchase), then the character takes a point of lethal damage upon waking due to the intense upsurge of searing bile that blasts up the hunter's esophagus.

or pessimism about her company's eventual triumph of both market dominance and territorial claim. Her power is absolute.

Rapport: Hunters may earn positive Rapport with Miranda easily—really, she's quite in awe of those who actually carry the Vigil in a proactive, gun-toting way. She loves the agents of the Field Projects Division (and may try to take one of them, or any hunter, as a lover). Positive Rapport with her allows hunters to gain a tour of Cheiron facilities, and may actually earn them limited access to the conspiracy's resources (though not Thaumatechnology). Slight her, spurn her or say the wrong thing, though, and the Rapport goes negative. Miranda will then use her money to ruin her new enemies—buying out their jobs, their homes, whatever she can do to spend cash and make their lives difficult.

Profession: Professional

Sarah Haversham, Prince of the City

Quotes: *"Greetings and salutations, worms and serpents. Tonight's entertainment—coincidentally, also tonight's meal—has arrived in the iron cage to your left. Blood and circuses, my darling freaks."*

"This is war, you fucking imbeciles. We don't hold back. We don't give quarter. We don't have compassion and hold hands and skip down the sidewalk. We fuck, we feed, we dance, we kill. Now get to it."

"I take great pleasure in what I do. Anybody who doesn't find pleasure in this, there's the door, this is your chance. Because once

you're with me, you're with me. If I don't see a smile on your face, I'll kick a stake in your heart and put a grenade in your mouth."

Faction: The First Estate (Vampires)

Virtue: Hope. In the darkest hours of the night, she's pretty confident it'll all pull through... and in her favor.

Vice: Lust. Vampires are sometimes said creatures trapped in a kind of stasis, and this is true for Sarah: she will forever be clawing past her puritanical oppression.

Background: You'd never know that Sarah Haversham came over with the other Puritans to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In fact, "puritanical" is a word that would probably burn her lips if she spoke it. It's not something she talks about. She also doesn't really talk about how she was seduced by "the dark Devil" in the woods, or how she was dragged into this monstrous existence, eventually herself becoming a tempter in the woods. She doesn't consider those her proudest nights, though sometimes she still dreams of them.

These days, Sarah plays at being something of a cipher. She lies about her origins, blatantly so (telling different stories to different listeners). She claims to have a whole host of strange powers that remain unproven, and further purports to come from some rare bloodline unique to her and her sire. And yet, despite her many mingled truths and fictions, she's a powerful, ambitious figure that's clawed her way to the top of the city's blood-hungry food chain by outmaneuvering, seducing and destroying her opponents. All with great glee—it's earned her many enemies within her own nocturnal society, but she's also accumulated a whole host of wide-eyed zealots who would follow her tumbling into the snapping jaws of Hell.

**Sarah Haversham**

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 4, Occult 3, Politics (Vampire) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry (Stake) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 3, Intimidation (Crazy) 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 5, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge (Herself) 4

Merits: Contacts (Police, Nightlife Circuit, Homeless, Blood Slaves) 4, Resources 3, Status (First Estate) 5, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 5

Morality: 3 (Fixation, Irrationality)

Initiative: 7

Defense: 5

Speed: 13

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Drain 3, Dread Attack (Bite) 3, Ecstasy 5, Impress 5, Read Aura 2 (p. 6), Unholy Attribute (Presence) 2, Unholy Attribute (Strength) 3

Powers of the Blood: See p. 316, **Hunter:** The Vigil

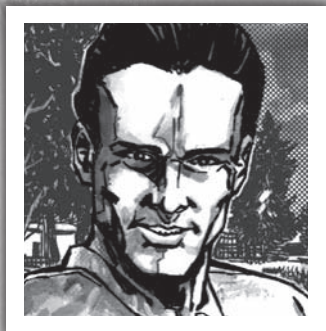


Description: Sarah Haversham is perfectly androgynous in both physical appearance and choice of dress. Most nights, it's some sharp-angled suit or another. Her hair is jet black, cropped close to the skull—but she's not averse to wigs. Her makeup also varies: bombshell one night, faux-ingénue another.

Storytelling Hints: Sarah's personality is a bit of a pinball: one minute she's giddy, the next a screaming, invective-spouting hate machine. She vacillates wildly between moods, and truthfully, she *enjoys* that. It makes her feel alive again, if only for a moment. She has eternity, and she feels it's her job

to enjoy it. Wild peaks of emotion confirm that enjoyment, and give her a perfect thrill.

Rapport: Impressing Sarah can bring one positive Rapport. She likes those who take risks and grab life by the balls. She's also keen on loyalty: one tiny betrayal, real or perceived, will turn her very dark, very fast. Those with positive Rapport find that Sarah doesn't leave them alone: she endeavors to keep them very close, because they make her feel good. Those with negative Rapport are generally below her attention—though, those who reach truly low Rapport (-4 or -5) will find that she'll move Hell and Earth to punish those transgressors.



Duncan Vilsick

Sarah's a game to Duncan, a game he can't quite figure out; he finds it exhilarating



John Dennison

Dennison thinks Sarah's a dangerous, even rogue element, but she is in charge, isn't she?

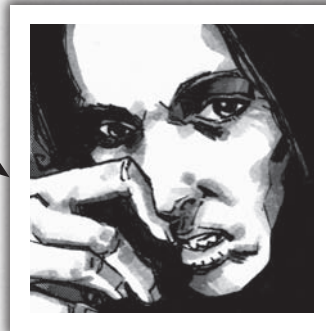


Sarah Haversham



Miranda Barthes

Sarah's tried offering deals to the old harridan, and they never quite impress



Desideratum

The two have no love for one another—their rivalry is a cruel cycle

Desideratum ("Desi"), Hierarch of the Consilium

Quotes: "Trust me, this isn't where I want to be. But this is most certainly where we need to be."

"The magic here is powerful, and the people blissfully unaware. We can't just walk away. We must do anything in our power to keep it from falling into the wrong hands."

"You won't believe how tired I am of all this. It wears at me, it does. I'd do anything to end it—" [snaps her fingers] "—in an instant."

Faction: The Consilium (Witches)

Virtue: Faith. She believes first and foremost in a higher power: magic.

Vice: Envy. Others seem able to work magic with little consequence; why is her life so mired in tragedy, then?

Background: Desideratum (real name: Darcy Danielou) grew up a relative shut-in. She was afraid of the world around her: school terrified her, boys were a bane and the outside world offered troubles that ranged from bug bites to child ab-

ductions. Instead, she lingered in her house, writing poetry and painting pictures. Oh, she went to school, but she took as many sick days as she could. All that changed when Darcy found magic, and she saw her true name written on a wall made of gold-leaf, the letters inked in light.

It changed her. She stepped outside and stayed there. She found that she did not need to write poetry or paint pictures anymore—the *world* was her canvas and blank page, and magic was the brush and pigment.

In some ways, she wonders if it would've been better had she stayed inside. Over the last 20 years since finding the world of occult magic opened to her, Desideratum has experienced a series of tragedies. Her cabal betrayed her early on. A magical "error" in her mystical casting left her with a limp. She accidentally loosed demons that had to be found and cast back into the dark channels of the Abyss. The low points al-



“Desideratum”



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult (Witch Lore) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Misery) 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Hide Emotion) 3

Willpower: 7

Morality: 6

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Dread Powers: Balefire 2, Dement 3, Destiny (Nemesis: Pangloss) 5 (pp. 5-6)

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Ornamental Rapier	2(L)	5	-1 penalty (for ornamental) already figured in



ways dragged the high points downward, and she began to wonder if the grass really *was* greener for other people.

The biggest tragedy, though, came when she and her husband—an older magician known as Pangloss—could not conceive. The failure poisoned their relationship, and she cast him to the winds.

Still, she remains steadfast in the face of adversity, certain that all will work out in the end if she is true to her magic. Her tenacity has given her great strength, but her ascension to the top of the hierarchy wasn't one of struggle—it was one of seeming inevitability, of what she claims must be destiny.

Description: Desi's overall look is dowdy, reminding people of a schoolmarm. Her clothes are usually gray or plain-color dresses that hint at her Rubenesque curves but mostly hide them. She wears no makeup, and often lets her hair simply fall where it may (giving it an untidy appearance). Initially, she seems to carry herself with great confidence, but hints of weakness shine through. While the limp doesn't seem to bother her, she fidgets, bites her nails and twirls her hair.

Storytelling Hints: Desi is tired. She believes deeply that this territory is key, not just for her fellow witches but for her

personally. While she'll not give this feeling away freely, she believes that if she can claim this domain as her own, her inability to conceive a child (which will soon become an issue of age, given that she's in her early 40s) will fade. But she's weary, tired of waiting for her fate to come to fruition. Soon, she knows she may need to take more drastic measures and commit to acts with which she may not be comfortable.

Rapport: Positive Rapport with Desideratum is often gained through proximity—over time, she comes to trust those who are near her and who listen. In this life, she seeks confidants and close friends, people who see through all the magic and power but who are still willing to affirm her destiny. Such Rapport means that she spills her guts, tells her life story and offers aid even when it might put her at some inconvenience. Negative Rapport, usually born through a betrayal of confidence or action taken against her friends, brings a whole different side of Desi to light. She becomes the wrathful matron, a mother figure who will not abide the slighting of her children or her household.

Controlled By: The Black Smoke Pack



Miss Nyx

Desi's helped keep some of her own kind out of the Subways, and Nyx considers Desideratum something of a role model

+2



Desideratum

-3



Jimarcus Slidell

Desi has long sought to get Jimarcus out of his castle to talk to the Consilium, and he tells them to where to stick it

-3



Sarah Haversham

Bitter competitors

Industrial District

Examples: Bethlehem Steelworks, Bethlehem; Callowhill, Philadelphia; The Industrial District, Seattle; Rivergate, Portland (OR)

The air stinks. It's a chemical smell most times, though other times it might be a strong aroma of tires burning or the nose-searing perfume of acrid smoke and steam. It's all gray. It's all dirty. Cranes loom. Haze grips the air. Everything is steel, asphalt, rubber—and a lot of it suffers from a sheen of dark oil and a peppering of black grit.

During the day, the places swarm with people—workers in yellow hats or protective gear hauling beams or cleaning out chemical tanks or pouring ladles of liquid fire into a cast iron pit. At night, the lights come on and the whole place is cast into a hazy orange or jaundice-yellow glow—a hellish, bleary light that washes out every star in the sky. Even then, while the ranks are cut by almost two-thirds, the district is never without its workers—men and women doing eternal scutwork.

Used to be that this whole area was for manufacturing: building ships, cars, storage tanks, steel beams, whatever. Today, most manufacturing jobs have gone overseas, allowing decay to creep in at the edges. The district is ringed by a series of failed factories and facilities, places that have closed up shop over the last decade. The buildings are empty husks, gutted corpses of rust and broken glass. Squatters and gangs carve out small territories here, huddled cabals of addicts and lunatics that can't survive anywhere but the most blasted territory. The inner district isn't failing—to the contrary, it's doing quite well. It's a chemical district, for the most part. They make all kinds of products here—pigments for commercial products, atmospheric and specialty gases, advanced coatings and adhesives, and so forth. It all sounds fine, right? No worries, no concerns. Progress is made. Industry is a beacon of success. That's the large view. The small view—the view from the ground—is that the workers here don't want to be here. They've seen the truth of those stories themselves—this place is fucking *cursed*. They don't put up those “How Many Days Since the Last Accident” signs anymore, because everybody got tired of it never going past two. People get hurt here all too easily—a man lost in a stirring vat of molten plastic, a gas chromatographer suddenly blown halfway through a brick wall, a foreman doing a pirouette off the top of a crane and crashing to the concrete 14 stories below.

The murders aren't as frequent anymore, but how frequent do murders need to be before somebody takes action? Once every couple of months, someone is violently killed, their body torn apart, like they were attacked by a bear or thrown into a machine and pulled out the other side. You'd think with all these killings, they'd shut the place down, bring

in the cops—and they used to do that. But the cops haven't found anything, and shutting the place down only helps to kill an already guttering industry. So the lights stay on, and people continue to die. If they stop, they give up their jobs, their pensions, their security. In this economy, you hold on to what you have.

And who's the one doing these brutal slayings? Lupines. The district is home to a feral pack of tooth-and-claw shapeshifters that hunt the oily asphalt and the steel heights, punishing man for his grotesque indiscretions. A woman known as Mare's Tail heads the pack. To her, this place is a hell created by man, for man. She and her pack are just the attending demons.

General Modifiers: Despite the bright lights, the stink and the haze make Perception rolls difficult, penalizing sight-based Perception rolls by -1 and smell-based Perception rolls by -3 dice. The chemical poison that's seeped into the soil here penalizes Survival rolls by -4 . On the other hand, Science rolls gain $+1$ and Crafts rolls can earn up to $+4$ (both Skills gain the bonus from the myriad of useful and high-grade equipment in this territory).

Control Conditions: A hunter cell has one primary means of controlling this territory, and that involves getting rid of the Black Smoke Pack. Unlike some packs, they don't attack *en masse*, because Mare's Tail knows what can happen (see Mare's Tail, pp. 32–34). Instead, they turn to guerrilla warfare, traps or attacking from the shadows before retreating. The pack shapes conditions to suit its needs before striking—they're crazy, they're feral, but they're also deeply cunning. They will fight, every one, to the death. Even if one of them remains alive with the rest dead, the territory is still theirs—they have the shadows, the ghosts and the spirits serving them.

Assets: Controlling the territory means having occasional access to some quality machine shops and laboratories—both the Crafts and Science Skills can be bought up more cheaply at a rate of new dots $\times 2$. In addition, spending enough time in this area attunes one to the spiritual disruption caused by the Lupines over the course of the last several years, and so the hunters are now considered to possess the Unseen Sense Merit as it relates to spirits. Finally, hunters who create a Safehouse here get two free dots in Safehouse (Traps), provided they first buy up to two dots in Safehouse (Size).

Liabilities: The place may be sprawling and in many ways very defensible, but it has quite a few downsides. For one, persistent exposure starts to poison the characters: unless a character possesses Toxin Resistance as a Merit, after about two weeks the characters will need to check against a daily inhaled Toxicity of 2. That's the physical effect. Unfortunately, the territory confers a spiritual effect, too—it's a dark, blasted

place, and the depredations of the Black Smoke pack don't help. Too much time spent here (again, about two weeks) will incur a mild derangement upon a character—the player or Storyteller chooses from Depression, Fixation or Phobia.

Consequences: First and foremost are the human consequences of taking control of the territory—the workers in this territory will experience a respite once the Black Smoke pack is dead or ousted, but their comfort won't last long. More jobs move overseas, more employees get laid off and there are higher rates of cancer and other diseases. It's enough to drive people crazy. Assume that eventually, a slasher might emerge from within the ranks of the downtrodden workers (or from within the hunter cell) if they're driven sufficiently crazy by the yellow haze, chemical rains, and gray skies. Supernaturally, the physical territory may be theirs, but the Black Smoke pack stirred up both ghosts and spirits, and these often-imperceptible entities still lurk about, occasionally rising up to cause problems for workers and hunters alike.

Locations

The Piquette Plant

They used to make car bodies here, even as recently as ten years ago. But the economy hasn't been great, and people just aren't buying cars like they used to. The plant closed down and is now a boxy, dilapidated industrial coffin. Its windows are mostly blown out (meaning that the floors inside are a minefield of rusty bits and broken glass). It used to be a haven for the homeless: they'd gather in small tribes, hiding out under fallen scraps of metal or pitching tents made from stolen blankets. That ended about six months back. Clearly, they had some kind of immunity from the Black Smoke pack. Nobody knows exactly what happened that disrupted it, but a worker driving into the industrial park passed a stray dog dragging out the remains of a human leg from within the plant. Police discovered four bodies inside, torn to pieces. They buried the report—and the bodies.

The Potter's Field

At the southernmost end of the territory is a wide strip of land that has long been where the city buries its nameless dead, all the John and Jane Does who lost their lives over the years. The field itself has no marked graves, just mounds. It's home to about a thousand such mounds, and each mound is home to anywhere from five to 10 corpses (they stack them, then re-bury). It's also haunted—the workers claim to have seen many a specter wandering those fields, wailing, screaming.

Smith-Novus Labs

Big Pharma's moved into the territory with an all-new building with intense security. This building doesn't represent their main offices (which are actually downtown in the Financial District, pp. 19–29), but does offer a series of labs and testing facilities. Smith-Novus is an American pharmacological company that serves as a mundane competitor for The Cheiron Group (not in the "butchering monster parts" way, but in the "selling high-cost drugs to an unsuspecting populace" way).

Cheiron is attempting to put them out of business on a two-pronged propaganda assault. The first is a public approach, seeding the news with (false) stories about how the

BLACK SMOKE SPIRIT

Quote: [choking, hissing sound]

Background: The spirits of Black Smoke are actually how the pack got its name—one of them served the pack as a "totem spirit," but the territory is home to many such creatures. They're self-hating, vile pollutants—they loathe the humans that created them, for they know they are unnatural.

Description: The spirit looks like a length of human intestine, made of greasy black soot and smoke.

Storytelling Hints: Punish the humans. Punish them for bringing you into this world.

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 3, Resistance 2

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 16 (species factor 10)

Size: 3

Corpus: 5

Essence: 10 (10 max)

Ban: A Black Smoke spirit cannot abide purified water.

Dread Powers: Tendrils 3

Smith-Novus products cause various health conditions from premature ejaculation to deadly strokes. The second is propaganda levied against hunters: Cheiron has seeded the hunter community with vile rumors regarding Smith-Novus, claiming that they're under the control of a board of directors that comprises a number of prominent monsters. What's unclear at this point is whether or not those claims are outright lies or just egregious exaggeration.

Bit Players

Gilly the Toy Man

Mental 3, Social 7, Physical 5

Gilly's one of the district's homeless; if they had a king, it might be Gilly. He's a human heap—even in the hottest summer he's a sweat-soaked pile of rags and blankets. His arms and legs can barely be seen beneath the mound of filthy fabric. Beneath the fabric and in his wheelbarrow, Gilly keeps a col-



lection of toys both new and old (some are worth quite a bit of money, actually). Gilly's not big-time crazy, but his Vocalization derangement (mild) ensures that he constantly mutters what's on his mind. Gilly pretends to be deeply afraid of the "wolves" that he's seen, so much so that he hangs around the workers and refuses to stray too far from where people can see him. But Gilly has two secrets: his brother is actually the plant manager at the pigment company, Metro Colors, and Gilly actually works for Mare's Tail. He helps them isolate victims, he feeds them other homeless and he passes them secrets.

The Burned Man, Mysterious Spirit

Power 4, Finesse 4, Resistance 4

This ghost haunts the edges of the potter's field—nobody knows who he is, only that he sometimes appears as a cloudy apparition that looks sometimes like a swarm of flies, other times like a man whose body has been charred beyond recognition. Some speculate that chemicals in the park burned him, while others think he was just another death caused by whatever it is that haunts the district (i.e. the Black Smoke pack). The Burned Man doesn't communicate beyond all his miserable shrieking. He remains largely in Twilight, but when he feels someone is too near to him, he'll appear and bum's rush them, screaming all the while.

Marrow Wolf, Insane Werewolf

Mental 6, Physical 8, Social 2

The madness behind Mare's Tail is a beast known only as Marrow Wolf (named as such for his propensity to suck the marrow from the bones of his kills). While she'd never admit it, Mare's Tail was once a sane, even sweet woman. Marrow Wolf

was never so inclined. Even as a young man, he was dangerously on the edge—a predator of local neighborhood animals, a bully at school and a sociopath. These days, he rarely spends time out of his wolf form (see "Werewolves," **Hunter: The Vigil**, pp. 318–321) and appears only at night. Despite his sociopathic tendencies, he's truly protective of his pack—obsessively so.

Erika Ridley, Overworked Scientist

Mental 6, Physical 4, Social 5

Erika is one of the top scientists at Smith-Novus. She is single-handedly responsible for shepherding a number of prominent product lines to pharmacy shelves. She's a focused workaholic, but lately she's been suffering from fugues. She blacks out, then awakens, often somewhere else within the labs. Nobody's seen her. The many cameras within the building fail to follow her—they distort and seem to lose her image just seconds before she loses consciousness. After the first time, she found a black mark on the inside of her right thigh—she figured it was a mole or skin cancer, but a doctor confirmed that it was actually ink. Every time she blacks out, another tiny dot tattoo appears next to the others, forming a so-far meaningless pattern. The last time she awoke, she was in the corporate building downtown, in the CFO's office, holding a file full of sensitive financial data.

Mare's Tail, The Wild Woman

Quotes: "This is our hunting ground. You think you can take it from us? You think you can contain what sleeps here? Step across the line and try. Step across that line, and die."

"That's a mistake, thinking me human. I was, once, and am no longer. You're a disgusting breed, a flock of filthy chickens foul-

STORY HOOKS

- The cell is contacted by a woman named Marissa Royce—an unmarried mother of two. She claims that the bestial “wild woman” known as Mare’s Tail is actually her sister, Corrin. Marissa is clued into the truth and wants to save her sister from herself, and she’s willing to pay the cell to do so. The money is pretty good (\$50,000), though eventually the cell might learn that Marissa sold her home to get access to that kind of cash. She wants her sister rehabilitated—“deprogrammed,” she puts it. That means capturing Mare’s Tail, which is no easy feat.
- The potter’s field here is home to many bodies and, as a result, many ghosts. One of these ghosts is said to be in possession of some knowledge or a sought-after Relic. The cell wants what the ghost has, but the problem is one has to pass through this territory to get to the several square miles of unmarked grave mounds, and Mare’s Tail owns this territory.
- Mare’s Tail has no love for hunters. That said, she’s not stupid. Sometimes, as the saying goes, it takes fire to fight fire. She comes to the characters with an offer: they can have free passage and even gain the Assets of this territory (though not full control) if they’re willing to find the hunters that murdered her pack and put a bullet in her head. The cell must bring those hunters to her, where she’ll extract justice from them. Will the cell carry out these very brutal executions? Will Mare’s Tail actually live up to her deal, or will she abandon her sense of honor and betray the cell?

ing your nests. You’re no threat. You’re just an annoying creature, a whimpering meal.”

[rumbling snarl]

Faction: The Black Smoke Pack (Werewolves)

Virtue: Fortitude. She was shot in the head and survived. She can survive anything. She *will* survive anything.

Vice: Wrath. The world has punished Corrin, and now she punishes the world.

Background: Once, things were different for Corrin Royce: yes, she was a werewolf, made so beneath a full moon on a lone country road. But she didn’t lose sight of her humanity back then—she felt that she had a calm heart, a keen mind, a steady hand. She balanced her life as a creature with a wolf spirit and a human soul. She hunted with her pack, tearing free of her clothes and running down darkened city streets and through murky puddles, but she also spent time with her human family (sister, nieces, nephews) and friends from her old life.

That all ended about five years back with the crack of a rifle shot and a silver bullet that tore through the top of her head. Corrin was out hunting with her pack, stalking the alleys of the city for rogue ghosts and spirits, and they were attacked by a cell of hunters. The hunters, positioned on rooftops and fire escapes, rained death from above in a hail of silver. Corrin lay bleeding, gasping in an oily puddle as she watched the rest of her pack cut down in their prime, bullets punching through skulls and spines, wolves grossly contorting in the throes of death while their bodies shifted to human form.

Corrin survived, though barely. That night replayed in her head again and again, a deafening nightmare that always ended in the deaths of her friends. She thought to retreat to her human life to find some kind of sanity, and if she had, it might’ve saved her sanity. But her sister received a threat in the mail, with a blurry Polaroid photo looking down on the death of Corrin’s pack—an image clearly taken by one of the hunters that almost ended her life, and who was now plainly threatening Corrin’s sister. She resolved not to allow her sister to be put in that position and fled her human life entirely.

She’s since carved out a territory in one of the most polluted, foulest districts in the city—it suits her state of mind, and proves to her just how disgusting human beings can be. She has a new pack, now, a gutter-punk crew of madmen, miscreants and murderers.

Description: She was beautiful, once. Now she’s too thin, given over toropy muscles and hard edges. Her dark eyes follow her prey, never blinking, and her teeth clench so hard they might snap. The most striking thing is what earned her her new name of Mare’s Tail: The top of her head, just north of the forehead, is hairless, scarred by a dark, mottled, almost tortoise-shell pattern. It’s where the silver bullet shattered her skull (thankfully failing to hit her brain). Now her dark mane only comes from the middle of her head and back, so she binds it all up in a clumsy top-knot. As a wolf, she looks more like a harrowed wild dog, mangy and rabid. As a half-wolf, half-human, she’s a wretched blur of black fur and blood-stained teeth. In all forms, the top of her head is free of fur, left over to skin and skull.

“Mare’s Tail”

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Leap) 5, Brawl 4, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Strays) 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation (Growl) 4, Streetwise 1

Merits: Disarm 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start 1

Willpower: 5

Morality: 3 (Obsessive Compulsion)

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Fury 2, Gremlinize 3, Lurker in Darkness 5

Powers of Tooth and Claw: pp. 318-319, **Hunter:** The Vigil



Storytelling Hints: She’s filled with hate for just about everybody—even her own pack earns her nips and scratches more than they do her praise. Her anger has long subsumed her grief, but that sadness is still in there, somewhere. She dearly longs to be with her sister, to communicate with her. She leaves her territory on rare nights (birthdays, holidays) to watch her sister from a distance.

Rapport: To earn positive Rapport with Mare’s Tail, you have to be ruthless and awful, ready to stoop to whatever terrible tasks she asks. It isn’t easy. She’s only comfortable around those who are filled with rage, just like her. The exception to that being anybody who reminds her of her sister; they get a free pass. Everybody else is likely to end up with negative Rapport, and that will only end in pain or death.



Duncan Vilsick

He’s a hunter, and worse, a hunter that’s already brought Hell down on some werewolves



Mare’s Tail



John Dennison

Dennison appreciates the beast within



Nightlife Circuit

Controlled By: The First Estate

Examples: Bourbon Street, New Orleans; Red Light District, Amsterdam; Rush Street, Chicago; South Beach, Miami

Think of this domain like a vampire: during the day, it sleeps. The sun is out, and the nocturnal district isn't much: a bum with a hand-truck holding all his worldly possessions, a stalker on a bike, a few bleary-eyed hookers emerging from the mouth of an alley before catching a cab home. Mostly, it's just blowing trash and a few cars.

Then, at night, the monster stirs. It shakes off the cobwebs anew and lurches slowly out of its torpidity. The restaurants open first: all the fancy hotspots and slick upscale foodie porn dining experiences shepherded by celebrity chefs. The dance spots, strip joints and sex clubs open around nine—neon winks to garish life, a dull gut-thumping bass can be felt on the sidewalk and cars and limos pull to broken curbs. But even then, the area doesn't really rouse until the witching hour of midnight. That's when it reaches its terminal velocity. Banging music. Dancing throngs. Money tossed at live nudes. Drugs done in bathroom stalls. Drunken brawls in back alleys. Dark deals done over an expensive foie gras and spun sugar platter.

Point is, characters can find anything they dream of and desire here in the nightlife circuit: greasy spoon diners, sweetly-scummed strip clubs, high-end dining experiences, famous and infamous nightclubs, elite sex shows—the works.

It is perhaps appropriate that this nocturnal district is therefore home to its own nocturnal society: the vampires of the First Estate. The First Estate is a coalition of high-dollar socialite blood-suckers: bankers, art dealers, club owners, wealthy dilettantes, cruel Casanovas and so forth. This is *their* sandbox—the humans merely play in it. In a sick way, the inhuman and human populations have long held a kind of strange symbiosis. The vampires would feed from the humans, but in return those select mortals would be allowed free drinks, free dancing, free access to the coveted private rooms—and when the bloodsucking fiends grew bored of their pet *du jour*, they locked them out of the privileged world once more, casting them back into the long lines and waiting lists.

That symbiosis has been broken over the last year—the unspoken and in some ways unknown agreement between the societies of life and unlife has been lost beneath a surge of blood-hungry ennui. The vampires have enjoyed their privilege. They've stayed off the radar and have been able to hunt freely. As a result, they've grown greedy. For a long time, it was a point of pride amongst them that they hadn't murdered anybody—or, at least, hadn't committed any murders that pinged the authorities or made it to the papers. That's

changed. The club district has grown darker, bloodier. Bodies have been found drained of blood. The temperament of the nocturnal fiends has been pushed to the edge—they're hungrier, meaner, leaner, just itching for a fight.

It'll soon cause the district to boil over. The popularity of the circuit has diminished in some ways, grown in others (some humans are desperate for a little danger, and the threat represented by the nightlife circuit gives it an “authentic edge”), but it's started to draw the attention of the police, politicians and especially hunters.

Strangely, the figurehead at the top of the First Estate pyramid just doesn't seem to care. John Dennison (pp. 38–40) is an ancient monster given over to the comforts that his age and power provide; he's long lost the desire to make any great effort to clean things up. And as his territory plunges into burgeoning chaos, he remains comfortable at his corner table in his favorite Irish bar, St. Finian's.

General Modifiers: Socialize rolls are pretty easy here—everybody's got a certain social lubrication going, so expect to gain a +1 to +3 bonus depending on the hour (the later it is, the more drunken and more social it gets). Seduction rolls (p. 84, **World of Darkness** Rulebook) gain +1 to +3 in the same fashion. The Fame and Striking Looks Merits are both amplified, with both the bonuses and drawbacks doubled. Sadly, Mental rolls suffer a “distraction” penalty from –1 to –3 depending on the level of noise, light and crowd size present (inside a club would be –3, whereas outside the club in a back alley might warrant only a –1). Stealth rolls suffer a hit, too, with a steady –2 penalty; while it might seem to be easy to be stealthy in such dark clubs, too many people are present for it to be truly effective. The only exception to this is Shadowing rolls, which *gain* +2 dice—it's very difficult to perceive if someone in particular is following you when it's dark and crowded.

Control Conditions: A direct assault on this territory is doomed to fail: if alerted, the vampires mobilize quickly and can make collateral damage a threat, even going so far as to holding humans hostage (provided that's something the hunters would care about). Unusually enough, perhaps the best way to take this territory is by doing so subtly and from within. The circuit is itself a cluster of streets and avenues—it's the hunting ground for the vampires and they roam in packs, but do so only at the hottest spots. Should a place within the circuit fall out of favor for a time, it goes ignored for months, even years—plenty of time for a cell of hunters to stake out a mini-territory of their own. Even better, most of the vampires (those kings of secrecy and paranoia) keep their havens and nests entirely *outside* the domain.



Assets: A cell claiming the Nightclub Circuit as territory gains additional Resources, whether they're obtained through a protection racket, by skimming off the top or by actually owning clubs. Assume that the cell has an additional three dots of Resources that must be split amongst the hunter cells much in the same way that Practical Experience is—everyone must agree on the dole. Also, the abundance of crowds allows for Social Merits to be purchased at a cheaper rate—new dots x 1, instead of new dots x 2. Finally, all members of the cell gain the Barfly Merit for free while controlling the territory.

Liabilities: To be clear, the Nightlife Circuit is a district of sin. Gorging on food and drink, seducing the innocent and not-so-innocent, showing off one's colors and clothes and money—it's all about the Vice. Regaining Morality is not impossible, but it's more difficult: Morality costs new dots x 4 now. In addition, only *extreme* actions of Virtue allow the characters to regain lost Willpower—giving all of one's worldly possessions away (Charity) or founding a church (Faith). Willpower regained from Vice works as normal.

Consequences: The Circuit is full of people. At nighttime, the crowds are impenetrable. This has two immediate repercussions for hunters that control this territory: first, any attacks made against the cell are likely to suffer human casualties, and second, the hunters are eventually going to be recognized (+1 to any rolls made to recognize the hunters per 3 months of controlling the territory), whether they like it or not. Another small but in some cases significant consequence is the inability to sleep during the night—the nocturnal hours are when this territory is alive and must be patrolled and controlled. Sleeping normal hours means swiftly losing control of this territory.

Locations

St. Finian's

At the far northern end of the circuit is a blue-collar bar that just plain doesn't belong—it's an Irish joint, a dingy oaken barrel-half bar that remains mostly empty for much of the night, filling up only after the chefs and waiters and club workers get off shift and need a place to drink themselves stupid. The rest of the night, the bar is firmly in the hands of John Dennison, who makes this place his haunt most nights of the week. He and about half-a-dozen blood slaves and loyal vampires are usually hovering around the second floor of the place toward the back (near the pool tables, jukebox and bathrooms). It's the local worker crowd that actually gives Dennison some of his connections with the people of the Nightlife Circuit—waiters and chefs and bartenders represent the lifeblood of the whole territory.

Priceless

Smack dab in the center of the Nightlife Circuit is Priceless—the hottest nightclub right now. It used to be Seafoam, but that burned down about two years back (killing three people in the fire, and another five in the stampede to get out of the burning building). Priceless brings in all the big names. Like any nightclub, it's ill-lit, with most of the lighting composed of geometric (often diamond) patterns projected on the walls, floors and ceilings from various sources. A few interesting things about Priceless: first, there's a pool in the middle of the club that fits about 30 people; second, the basement is a VIP-only tangle of hallways and little rooms with lots of odd pieces of furniture (the vampires love to feed down here); third, the club's

owner, Dimitri Porykov, has a perhaps not-so-unique formula for attracting all those celebrities—*money*. He pays big to get the big names, but he's unfortunately over-extended himself. Frankly, he's on the brink of losing Priceless, and is desperate to make fast cash somehow... the crowds have already noticed that the celebrities have started to drift away.

The Red Horse Hotel

The Red Horse Hotel is a sex club—it operates as a nightclub with Darkwave music, but it's also a live public sex venue. They put on shows of their own, but the guests are also encouraged to get involved or stage their own "performances." It's a females- or couples-only club: bouncers aren't keen to let in a bunch of single men, because in a scant few hours that's all the place would be. Even now, the city continues to try to shut down the club, but it always has a strong cash infusion, and some of that cash finds its way into powerful political hands.

Briarwood

The big thing going is restaurants started up by famous "celebrity chefs," and this one's no different. It's actually one of Thomas Salvatore's satellite restaurants (you can find the cannibal Salvatore on pp. 292–293 of *Hunter: The Vigil*), and it serves only very rare meals: still-beating cobra hearts, various penis and testicle dishes and poisonous creatures rendered (hopefully) inert through cooking, all on the *prix fixe*, changes-nightly menu. The décor is rendered in autumnal colors: reds, golds, oranges. The reservation list is full two weeks out at any given time, though a well-connected individual *might* be able to get a table sooner. It should be noted that Salvatore does not himself cook here, though certainly that's what they want the guests to think; in reality, it's a bunch of wannabe chefs and fastidious illegals working the kitchen. Also, Salvatore's true predilection ("long pig," or human flesh) is never on the menu here—it's only found at Briarwood Farm, his restaurant out in the country.

Bit Players

Esmerelda Santos, Club Kid

Mental 7, Physical 3, Social 6

A thin slip of a girl, Esmerelda plays the part of lost club doll perfectly with hollow eyes and dark makeup, nodding her head to a distant pulsing beat all the time. Truth is, Esmerelda's a hunter, one of the Lucifuge operating with a small cell (Roger Hamm and Shayna Sinclair are the others) inside the Nightlife Circuit. This cell fully accepts that vampires are not to be saved and deserve no sympathies—in fact, Esmerelda herself was once one of those girls allowed a glimpse of the "good life" with a pair of bloodsuckers supping at her neck. When they got bored with her, they tossed her out and left her wanting more. She got over it, and got some friends from within her infernal bloodline—and now, they're wreaking havoc on the vampire's society from within. How? *They're* leaving bodies behind without blood. *They're* writing messages in blood on alley walls and nightclub doors. It's absolutely true that the vampires have gotten sloppy, but this trio of Lucifuge agents is exacerbating the situation night after night, in the pre-dawn darkness. If the time comes that

other hunters try to take control, Esmerelda and the others won't be so keen to relinquish what they feel they've worked for. She is amenable to a deal, though, that allows one cell to control the territory during the day while her and her friends "own" it at night.

STORY HOOKS

- A small cadre of vampires comes to the cell—they want Dennison gone, and they want help from the hunters. They're not willing to cede the territory to the hunters, but they *are* willing to throw a big bucket of money at the characters as a pay-off. Is betrayal in the cards? Who will betray whom? Can Dennison be taken down—*should* he be taken down?
- It's war. John Dennison's missing. Someone has set fire to the Red Horse Hotel. Club-goers have been found at dawn with their throats slit and strange things stuffed into the wounds (jackdaw feathers, gecko skeletons). Odd ciphers have been left behind written on walls. Who's doing this and why? Some mad slasher? The punk asshole, Forty-Four? Maybe a cell of Jagged Crescent Ascending Ones who want to clear the way for their illicit trade? Do the hunters take advantage of the chaos, exploiting the madness to their own ends, or do they try to curtail the chaos, even if that helps put control of the territory back in the hands of the bloodsuckers?
- Omar Scalzi's the way in. If the cell can get him enough cash, they'll be primetime investors in Scalzi's new club (whatever it may be), and it'll give them a foothold in the territory. Of course, they're also going to learn that Omar's got a whole bevy of strange investors, and it puts the hunters in close proximity to some dangerous figures. Is it a worthwhile trade-off?

Omar Scalzi, Serial Club Owner*Mental 4, Physical 4, Social 7*

Omar's a wheeler and a dealer, and some say a total parasite. Nobody knows how he keeps bouncing back, but he does. This is Omar's general arc: he works up lots of money from investors and, flush with cash, opens a new club somewhere in the district. Then he inevitably does all the wrong things (rips out a kitchen to put in a VIP room, pisses off the employees, puts in a too-tiny dance floor), and the club fails inside eight months. Then, for half-a-year, Omar's down on his luck, but somehow, like an idiot phoenix, he keeps rising from the ashes only to immolate himself once more. He's a slick-talker, an ooze-tongued sycophant who will say anything and do anything to convince investors that *this time* is the real deal. Some say he moves drugs or other illicit substances, but so far, no evidence of that's turned up.

Marie McLanahan, Blood Slave*Mental 5, Physical 5, Social 5*

Marie is the polite, smiling business side of John Dennison. She's his blood slave, addicted to the rush of vampire blood and the almost-immortality its taste provides. It's her job to walk into a room full of (sometimes half-feral) vampires and calm them down. She offers assurances, payouts, negotiations, special arrangements, anything to keep everybody happy. It's all little stuff—all the big stuff Dennison promises, well, she's the one who helps ensure that none of the big plans really get into motion. She's a well-rounded individual who rarely flinches in the face of a room full of monsters, which actually makes some monsters afraid of her.

Forty-Four, Vampire Punk*Mental 3, Physical 7, Social 4*

Dennison thinks of this vampire as a cancer in the system, a rogue carcinogen floating around and unable to be truly quashed. He's a wild-eyed anarchist asshole, a guy whose face is more pierced metal than skin, whose tongue is split down the middle, whose back is inked with tattoos of a hundred profanities in dozens of languages. He takes his name from the two Ruger Blackhawk .357 magnums he carries (old model, so they're antiques that he actually rarely fires). Forty-Four is nothing but problems for the status quo within nocturnal society—he gathers up a gang and goes on a crime spree, which spooks the herd. Inevitably, the First Estate bloodsuckers put down all members of Forty-Four's gang, but somehow he slips through and survives to fight another night.

John Dennison

Quotes: *"Gentlemen. Ladies. We have been selling ourselves short. We've no pride, no grace, no bloody finesse. It's time to make a grab at a brass ring once again."*

"Streets are flowing with blood, you say? And that's not a good thing? Well. So it goes. Find me the offenders."

"We've gone and spooked the herd, have we? If the cattle stampede, we'll be crushed. Find the bulls. Cut off their heads, and bring them to me."

Faction: The First Estate (Vampires)

Virtue: Prudence. Dennison's nightly existence vacillates between Prudence (wisely examine all courses of action

before committing to one action) and Sloth (fail to commit to an action because it's easier to do nothing).

Vice: Sloth. See above.

Background: Let's just say John Dennison owed the wrong people money. They knew he was a gambling drunk, a raving loon, a stubborn soul who'd grin through broken and bloody teeth and ask for another pinch of snuff or "one last drop of the River Liffey" on his tongue. The men he owed money to in Ireland were not human at all, and these creatures were torn: Did they punish John Dennison with death, or did they give him a chance to pay back the prodigious sums he owed them? They decided to go with both. They dragged him out of Killarney to the Black Valley at the far end of Macgillycuddy's Reeks. One of the monsters murdered John Dennison by throwing him to the Beast of the Black Stacks, an ancient bloodsucker kept to the furthest flung fringes of settlement, out where the darkness is pure. The Beast always exsanguinated her victims with the nest of fangs one might call her "mouth," but then she'd weep great tears of black blood and vomit some of her own blood into the mouth of her victim. That victim would rise anew, a wretched soul with the blood of the Beast pumping through his dead heart. John Dennison was dead, yes, but now he was given the curse of eternal life: one meant to be spent earning back the sums of money he'd borrowed. That was 250 years ago, give or take a decade.

It didn't work out like they'd planned. Upon being granted the curse of immortality, Dennison found a kind of grim focus, a bloody determination he'd not felt in life. Those who were the children of the Beast of the Black Valley were meant to be second-class citizens in the nocturnal society of the Damned, forever consigned to being worker bees for the true monsters in power. Dennison didn't much like that idea, and led an uprising amongst those other vampires who had come from the poisoned blood of the old hag.

Dennison has fought tooth-and-nail for what he has, finding a place for himself in the New World, in this city. By now, Dennison's grown a bit fat and happy; he won't admit to it, but he's getting old, even for someone theoretically immortal. His tastes have grown refined—he can no longer feed comfortably from the blood of the living and must instead subsist on the blood of monsters (vampires in particular, though he happily sups at whatever fiendish *vitae* he can get into his mouth). Even as his domain has been whittled away to the point that he only controls this single territory (Night-life Circuit), he sat back and let it happen.

His ambitions are small, even though he claims they're big. Really, all he wants is for the lessers within his estimable organization to stop rocking the goddamn boat. They're getting too brash, too bold, feeding wantonly, and that only raises ire. So he's looking to branch out, take a nearby territory (or, if possible, the Subways) where his "people" can go to feed without regard, mucking about in somebody else's nest instead of shitting where they sleep. That's all he wants. Of course, he recognizes that some of his ambitious inferiors are going to get uppity and try to take him out. They've done so before, but he's amassed considerable power and allies since



John Dennison



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 4, Occult 2, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 5, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 3, Socialize 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Allies (Irish Mob) 2, Allies (Nightclubs) 4, Allies (Police) 3, Contacts 3 (Banks, Newspapers, Restaurants), Fighting Style: Boxing 5, Fresh Start 1, Resources 3, Retainer (Marie McLanahan, Blood Slave) 3, Status (First Estate) 4

Willpower: 5

Morality: 4 (Fixation)

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 13

Health: 9

Dread Powers: Drain (Blood) 3, Dread Attack (Claws) 3, Fury 3, Terrify 3, Unholy Attribute (Strength) 2

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Dread Claws	3(L)	12	Spend Willpower to activate; can use in coordination with Unholy Attribute



then. He's managed to put down every coup so far, though in his heart he knows one day they'll catch up to him.

Description: Dennison has a wild, drunken look about him: unkempt sideburns, an eternal stubble, hair that's a little too long and a little too greasy. He's always stuffed into a dusty old double-breasted suit—a bright red kerchief and a shiny gold pocket-watch are the only things on him that look clean and well-kept. His tongue often plays off his fangs. His yellowed, tapered nails click on the bar table in the corner where he so often sits.

Storytelling Hints: Dennison's like a diseased spider in the center of the web. He's all about the big plans, the sweeping gestures, the momentous strategies meant to take back the city one street at a time. But he never moves forward, because it's all just talk. Food is brought to him; he rarely has to go out and hunt up his own meals anymore. He can sit in his

bar, surrounded by men both mortal and immortal who would throw themselves into a crushing maw to save him. Why do anything that risks the comfort? Easier to lie very, very convincingly. For Dennison, words speak louder than actions.

Rapport: As long as it doesn't screw up his comfort levels, Dennison supports a weird sense of honor: if you're on his good side (positive Rapport), he'll do what he promises, provided that there's an expectation that you'll keep benefiting him. He doesn't have friends, exactly, but he has a lot of allies. On the other hand, getting on Dennison's bad side (negative Rapport) earns one a spot on his blacklist. For the most part, he doesn't really *enforce* the blacklist until one of its listed members shows up in his territory—then he sets his men on them to bring him the offender. But provided that his enemies stay off his radar, they're forgotten until they reappear.



Eliezer

This bizarre bearded freak came around and stole a few of Dennison's vampires; Dennison sent the old fool packing

-3



John Dennison

+2



Sarah Haversham

He's a grudging respect for her, and has done her a few odd favors

+1



Duncan Vilsick

Vilsick hides it well, but he's secretly in awe of Dennison's personal power (even if Dennison seems unwilling to use or exploit it)

The Projects

Controlled By: Soul's Army

Examples: Cabrini Green, Chicago; Dragoon Courts, Detroit; Tasker Homes, Philadelphia (aka "The Forgotten Bottom"); Couva da Moura, Lisbon

High-rise and run-down, the city projects are big, low-income public housing units that have fallen to crime, corruption and decay. They're doomed places—cities combat white flight by gentrifying old neighborhoods, which means demolishing these places. Put up by city government (like the Philadelphia Housing Authority), many housing projects end up forgotten—they're un-policed, left to brutal ganglords and desperate drug kings.

This one isn't much different: built in 1967, these projects were intended to hold 20,000–30,000 residents in nearly two dozen high-rises, each over ten floors a pop. At the peak of its population, over 95% of the residents were below the poverty line. Crime rose as a viable way to make money, and so gangs moved in, constantly making violent runs against one another for tug-of-war control over the turf. People died. Big money filtered through the projects for drugs and weapons, but next to none of it ended up in the hands of residents. Cops wouldn't go there—too dangerous, best to leave it and let it burn itself up.

Ten years back, the city realized that it was a failed experiment—public housing simply wasn't a viable solution. Slowly but surely, the city began demolishing the buildings. What are left are only three 16-floor high-rises; for now, the demolition has stopped, but why? The residents got organized, that's what happened. The city didn't care where the people went when they started razing the buildings to the ground—they only gave them six months and \$600 to get out and stay out. Most did; what choice did they have?

Enter Jimarcus Slidell and the Souls' Army. Jimarcus looked around him and saw a land of opportunity—these drab, concrete buildings were like prisons, built to withstand arson and decay. He saw the remaining buildings as his castle and kingdom, all rolled up in one, if he could take it as his own. Problem was, the people were unmotivated. By Jimarcus' standards, they were lazy, complacent "no-goods" (a term borrowed from his grandmother). He decided to get organized. He brought in his gang, the Souls' Army, and started recruiting. Those who joined up got to stay. Those who didn't want any part of it were out on their ass (no six months, no \$600 check) or got a bullet in the head.

And those who *did* join were put to work. Some worked for the gang itself—peddling drugs, running guns, breaking legs, doing drive-bys. Most, though, worked on the buildings themselves or worked for the good of the people. Jimarcus

got a doctor, got people tending to a roof-top garden, set up people to work maintenance and put guards on each floor to keep everybody safe (and in line). It was like a real community (or an army): self-sufficient, contained and more than a little autocratic.

So how was it that Jimarcus was able to get everybody in line so fast? Jimarcus has a little secret: he's got *magic* at the tips of his fingers. Real magic, some "powerful mind-fuck-in' voodoo shit" as he puts it. Jimarcus is an urban sorcerer with a will strong enough that he can implant it in others' minds. Some say he's got the genuine well-being of his community in mind; others believe that he's using them all for some nefarious purpose. No one knows whether it's temporal (drugs, money, violence) or mystical (leeching magical power through the subversion of will).

Needless to say, the demolition of the projects has stopped; any city officials or construction managers who come around get sent home, either with a head full of "new ideas" (thanks to Jimarcus' mind-messing magic) or a chest full of bullets. The police don't know what to do. To take back the projects would require a momentous attack, because the Souls' Army is entrenched. (And such an attack would disrupt the gentrification process and probably put "white flight" back on the city's menu.) Politically, it's best to just leave those three buildings (Buildings 3, 5 and 7) up and squeeze them out over time. Unfortunately, they underestimate Jimarcus' willpower—and his narcissism.

Those entering the projects will find them dark and labyrinthine: while individual apartments are well-lit and kept clean, the hallways themselves are kept in shadow. Worse, he's changed the layouts where possible, diverting some hallways with chain-link fence or busting through apartment walls to create new through-ways. He does this so to confuse any who might attack the buildings, because he knows such an attack is coming. These buildings are alarmingly well-fortified, and he and his "soldiers" know every nook and cranny.

General Modifiers: Non-residents suffer a –2 to their Initiative scores while within the buildings themselves. Perception rolls are at –2 as well, at least out in the hallways and stairwells (the elevators, long-broken, have been removed and locked up tight, leaving the shafts for Jimarcus' men to traverse alone). Tactics rolls, too, suffer a –2 penalty because it's very difficult to get oriented and organized in a place deliberately kept dark and chaotic. Of course, these shadowy maze-like hallways also offer some protection (+3 to Stealth rolls), lots of places to find substantial cover (–3; overturned couches, piles of cinder blocks, coils of fencing material) and tons of improvised weapons lying around (rebar, pipes, con-



duit, pool cues).

Control Conditions: Most methods geared toward control of the projects involve dealing with Jimarcus Slidell and the Souls' Army. Jimarcus controls the three buildings militarily and socially—he has the buildings locked down, and he has the hearts of the people locked down too. A violent attack on the projects will necessitate taking one building at a time, working toward Building 7 (where Jimarcus is usually holed up). Such a protracted siege could take days, even weeks if kept quiet. Removing Jimarcus doesn't immediately dissolve the gang, but it damages it—none capable of stepping up to control the gang (such as A-Mac, p. 44) possess Jimarcus' leadership qualities. The Army itself probably has about 20–30 “soldiers,” but if Jimarcus is knocked out of commission, that number gets cut in half.

Hunters have other potential solutions, of course: legally and politically, the projects shouldn't be allowed to exist as they do, and a protracted effort to get lawmakers onboard could lead to the SWAT siege that's been in planning all along. Even still, if the cops win (and they will, because eventually they'll call in the National Guard), the characters still need to win the hearts of (earn positive Rapport with)—several of the key residents.

Assets: First, the furthestmost building from Washington Avenue and the train tracks (identified only as Building 7) houses Jimarcus' own personal hidey-hole. It's a palace—a lush, pimped-out condo carved out of the middle of these horrible boxy tenement apartments. Hunters who claim this get a significant Safehouse (Cache 5, Size 3, Secrecy 3, Traps

0) The cache translates to a bloody arsenal of weapons—machine guns, pistols, grenades, a few 60s-era flak jackets, boxes upon boxes of ammo, even a mortar tube and a handful of mortar shells. In addition, those who control the projects gain +3 to their Initiative while operating anywhere within the buildings, though the Storyteller may rule that this requires at least a week's worth of acclimation. Those who operate the Souls' Army gang or at least continue their operations gain three dots of Resources (split between the cell members) and each hunter can take a three-dot Retainer (represented as a “soldier” who watches their back and acts as an advisor). Finally, rolls made using the Streetwise Skill gain the 9-Again quality.

Liabilities: At least initially, it's going to be hard to fill Jimarcus' shoes. The residents of the projects are hopelessly devoted to him—assume that initially, the hunters possess a –3 Rapport with all the inhabitants of these buildings. Further, sleeping anywhere in the three buildings is likely to cause nightmares about the end of the world, with the projects serving as a terrible “last stand” (for more information, see the write-up for Jimarcus Slidell on pp. 44–46). This means the hunters don't regain Willpower upon waking.

Consequences: The cops may not attack today, and may never attack, but they keep a distant eye on the place and will note if anybody new takes over. Also, the place used to be home to two or three competing gangs—if they smell new blood over at the projects, they might renew their efforts to take over the territory as well as the hearts and minds of the residents. If any of Jimarcus' army still exists, they might per-

form guerilla attacks on the cell, even if Jimarcus is dead. Oh, and the characters will get to learn the truth behind Jimarcus' terrifying visions and nightmares, and may be the ones holding the keys when it all comes to bear.

Locations

Apartment 1213 (in Building 3)

Nobody lives in Apartment 1213. They can't. Oh, people have tried, but about ten years back, a man enraged by the drugs pumping through his system took a shotgun and killed his wife and two daughters in that apartment. He then went out in the hallway, where a few curious neighbors had poked their heads out. He dragged them back into the room and shot them, too, dumping their bodies against the wall. Anyone he could grab and bring into the room, he would, and there he'd execute them. About a dozen bodies later, he himself was executed: a handful of gang members came in, guns drawn, and riddled him with bullets. Blood was everywhere—the bare light bulb was even dripping with it, casting the room in a crimson hue. They scrubbed the blood away, but it always returns, sometimes for five or ten minutes at a time. In the blood, faces can be seen that are always screaming or weeping in pain. Those who spend more than 12 hours in the room end up with a mild derangement; 24 hours makes that derangement severe. The derangement fades after one week (two weeks for severe). Jimarcus uses this room to punish transgressors—he tosses them in there, locks it up, and leaves them there for as long as he feels is necessary. Sometimes he even lets two people fight it out in there, allowing only one to emerge alive.

The Greenhouse (atop Building 5)

Atop Building 5 is a garden and greenhouse—not much special about it other than it's surprisingly lush, given over to large vegetables and fruits that provide the dull concrete building with a potent burst of color. Just beyond the greenhouse is a pigeon house, and both the gardens and pigeons are community-kept; no one individual tends to them. Characters may find Wallace Wilkins (below) up here, having a cigarette.

The Boiler Room (in Building 7)

Nobody goes down to the boiler room in Building 7, because the boiler room there is terrifying. Mildred Hepburn (below) took Jimarcus down there one time to show him what he was really inheriting by taking over the projects. She pulled away some “concrete” and revealed a second wall beneath, a wall of crooked mortar lines and blood-red brick. Etched into the brick was a language that Jimarcus understood, secret words from the language of a civilization long dead. It told him some of what he already knew: three buildings (“castles”) would be left standing, and one king (him) would come to rule the castles and build an army within them. The brick scripture went on to say that this is something that will happen again and again throughout time—always three castles, always a king and his army. And in the end, something comes and tries to tear those castles down, and the king dies trying to protect them. Jimarcus believes this to be gospel truth, but thinks he's strong enough not to die when the time comes

that his kingdom is under siege. When Mildred and Jimarcus left, they didn't cover up the etched scripture. Anyone who goes down to the boiler room suffers intense terror, a fear that stays with her for the rest of the day—this fear incurs a -3 roll to all Mental and Social rolls until she gets eight hours of sleep.

Bit Players

Wallace Wilkins, Sneaky Janitor

Mental 3, Physical 5, Social 4

Wallace is the handyman at the projects. He's an older fellow, in his late-60s, rarely seen out of his janitor's jumpsuit. He's a gifted man that can fix just about anything. It's Wallace that keeps this place in tip-top shape. It's also Wallace that's spying on Jimarcus and sending back reports to the ruling council of witches (the Consilium, p. 19) in the city. He has no magical inclinations himself (his charmed ability to fix machines is just mundane skill) and keeps his thoughts closely guarded. He plays the role of boring old man, as much a part of the room as wallpaper.

Mildred Hepburn (“Mama”), Elderly Babysitter

Mental 5, Physical 2, Social 5

How old is Mildred, exactly? Here's a clue: she calls Wallace Wilkins “boy.” Mildred—or as Jimarcus calls her,

STANDARD SOULS' ARMY SOLDIER

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2

Merits: none

Willpower: 4

Morality: 4

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
9mm	2(L)	20/40/80	7
Knife	1(L)	n/a	6

"Mama"—runs a daycare inside the projects while the children's families head off to work, whether outside the projects or doing work for Jimarcus. Mildred's been around for a long time, and has been a part of the projects since their beginning. She knows as much as anybody's going to know about the history of these places. Jimarcus doesn't tell anybody, but she was actually a close friend of his grandmother, rest her soul.

Petrushka Kirov, Former Escort

Mental 2, Physical 4, Social 6

The projects are predominantly African-American, but a small contingent of the residents is comprised of immigrants: Russians, Albanians, a few Poles. Petrushka was once a high-price escort in Moscow, but is now exclusively Jimarcus' woman—or so he thinks. Truth is, the dead-behind-the-eyes girl is a drug addict, which has killed what few scruples she once had. For the last two months she's been cheating on Jimarcus with his second-in-command, A-Mac (below). This is no hooker with a heart of gold; she's grown cold, emotionless, and has always been more than a little conniving. She's also not that bright (the drugs haven't helped), so one day, she's going to slip up. Jimarcus really loves her, and when that happens, the whole of the projects may have hell to pay when his pride is taken for a ride.

Anthony ("A-Mac") Mack, Conflicted Lieutenant

Mental 5, Physical 7, Social 3

Anthony's loyal, and it's not a false front. He's a big, broad-shouldered bull-dog, with a tattoo that reads "Souls' Army" on the back of his neck. He'd take a bullet for Jimar-

cus. He would kill anybody that Jimarcus needed dead (and has killed, again and again). So when he slept with Petrushka, it wasn't something he did intentionally. He doesn't have designs on the throne, so to speak. He's just a dumb, stupid man who realizes his own failings but cannot seem to get past them. He prays that Jimarcus never finds out, but one day, Petrushka's going to blow it. She's going to mouth off and give it all away just to hurt one of them, and then it's ruined. Anthony doesn't know what to do. He's thought of killing her, but she's also whispered in his ear that maybe Jimarcus should be the one to catch a bullet—after all, if Jimarcus dies, he'll die a martyr. Isn't that the legend the man deserves?

Jimarcus Slidell, King of the Castle

Quotes: "You a part of this man's army, son. I got your back long as you got mine. Rest of the world can eat a dick and die, way I see it."

"It's morning, man. Don't fuckin' bother me. Talk to me again, and I'll boot your teeth down your throat."

"I got dreams for this place, brother. I see a well-oiled machine, churnin' and burnin' better than any gang or government up in this city. It's some glorious shit. Hey—you wanna hear a joke? I got a funny one."

Faction: The Souls' Army (Witches)

Virtue: Prudence. Jimarcus doesn't fly off the handle. He's got a temper, sure, but it takes a lot of pushing to re-

STORY HOOKS

- The hunters' prey heads to the projects, and either earns protection from Jimarcus or simply hides among the populace. The cell now has to go in there to extract their prey. It's made all the more complex when the cell discovers that Jimarcus' army has a few Ascending Ones among them, and they want to kick up "negotiations" among the cell, the prey and Jimarcus.

- Someone commissions the hunters to take out Jimarcus. Who's setting them on the task? Probably a compact or conspiracy, but the city's other witches hold no love for this iconoclastic thug either and may try to get hunters to do their work for them. The patron wants it done a specific way: they want the hunters to go in undercover, become a part of his army and learn about the man and his secrets before they go blasting him off this mortal coil. Can they do that? What happens when they too become entranced by Jimarcus' powerful charisma and mind-manipulating magic?

- Jimarcus' bad dreams are right on target, and now it's a zombie apocalypse. A significant portion of the city's humans (or at least those from nearby territories) are dead, but the kind of dead where they're up and walking around and trying to wrench tasty brains from smashed skulls. What caused it? Bird flu? Comet? Cheiron experiment gone awry? Whatever the reason, Jimarcus is now the keeper of five powerful, very defensible buildings—and the cell is trapped there with him. Jimarcus sees himself as the king of the world, now, being the keeper of a truly safe place. But the danger from the zombie attack is less about the zombies and more about the perils born of other human beings...



Jimarcus Slidell



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Gun Repair) 2, Investigation 3, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Larceny (B&E) 4, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Fast-Talk) 3, Streetwise 4

Merits: Inspiring 4

Willpower: 7

Morality: 3

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Dread Powers: Agonize 2, Destiny (Nemesis: Ascending Ones) 3 (pp. 5-6), Terrify 2

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
AK-47	4(L)	150/300/600	11	n/a
.38 Snubnose	2(L)	20/40/80	9	n/a
Brass Knuckles	1(B)	n/a	5	(Uses Brawl)



ally see the mercury pop out of his thermometer—most of the time, Jimarcus thinks and acts with a cool head.

Vice: Pride. Jimarcus is small and boyish, but don't let his appearance fool you. He's a proud rooster, chest all puffed out, certain that one day he's going to rule the world.

Background: Jimarcus was a thug at an early age. Left with his grandmother by a pair of drug addict parents who didn't want the responsibility, he was pushing all kinds of poison at the ripe young age of 11 years old. He was always a little guy, but had a big mouth—and he could talk or joke his way out of damn near any bad situation. This kind of charisma put him off the charts and up the ladder, but he got tired of working for dopes and dumbasses and decided to move out on his own instead.

Magic made that a hell of a lot easier to accomplish, and Jimarcus has to thank his near-death for his power in life. Not long after forming his own gang—Souls' Army—some

gangbangers put out a hit on Jimarcus, throwing five mean hunks of lead into his chest during a drive-by. It nearly killed him, and left him comatose for over a month. That month of torpidity is when Jimarcus found himself climbing to a tower made of iron and writing his name in a terrible, haunted book. When he awoke from his coma, his magic was there, and he used it to carve out a brutal niche in the city's gang culture.

It was inevitable, he feels, that he return to the projects where he was born, and he has great pride in what he's created. He thinks it's a mark of honor that the army comprises those who are willing to work and those who will take their own pride in what Jimarcus has created. Anybody who doesn't want to work, who doesn't have any pride of their own—well, they can get gone or get dead.

Description: Jimarcus is a pretty small guy, bony and no taller than five-foot-seven. He walks around shirtless or with a blood-red wife-beater (red and black's the colors of the

Souls' Army) overtop a pair of baggy khakis. He doesn't wear much jewelry: just one gold ring on the ring finger of his left hand, encrusted with tiny diamonds (according to Jimarcus, it's proof that he's "married to the projects"). The ring is actually a magical focus for Jimarcus—it grants him +1 to all Dread Powers rolls, but if it's taken away, those same rolls suffer a -2 penalty.

Storytelling Hints: Proud as a peacock, cocky as a rooster. Jimarcus is loud, charismatic and often times hilarious. When it gets down to business, he's still laughing, cutting up, even as he's putting a bullet in some chump's temple. Only time he's dreadfully, deadly serious is in the morning, until a few hours after getting up. Jimarcus suffers from terrible nightmares that place him as the doomed king of the projects, trapped within

Building 7 as an infinite throng of the decaying undead shamble endlessly toward his home. At the end of every dream, his kingdom falls and he is torn to pieces by the undead masses. Those dreams stay with him for the first hours of the day, and it makes him cranky enough to smash a bat against someone's head if they bother him.

Rapport: Positive and negative Rapport with Jimarcus doesn't really move beyond the walls of the projects, largely because Jimarcus himself rarely moves beyond those same walls. Positive Rapport means a character gets to walk freely within the three buildings, and high Rapport means being able to access some of Jimarcus' resources (soldiers, weapons). Negative Rapport means either being blocked from entering or being killed on sight.



Sarah Haversham

She's come calling a few times, and Jimarcus has given her some soldiers for "odd jobs"

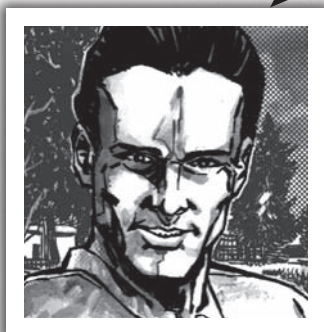


Iggy Bayani

Jimarcus doesn't see Iggy as competition, and in fact thinks the Filipino thug might be a good ally to set up shop in a nearby territory, so he provides him with info, maps and money

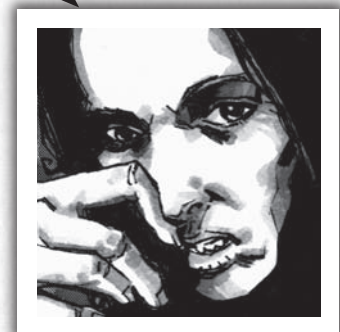


Jimarcus Slidell



Duncan Vilsick

Their relationship isn't exactly reciprocal; Duncan has less hate by dint of having less interest



Desideratum

He's told her where to stick it one too many times; she was open to an alliance once, but no longer

+3

+2

-3

-3

Suburbia

Controlled By: The Better Way (Slashers/Cult)

Examples: Bucks County, outside Philadelphia; Framingham, outside Boston; Richmond, outside London; San Fernando Valley, outside Los Angeles

The suburbs embrace their homogeneity. Roundabouts and cul-de-sacs feature cookie cutter houses—two-car garage, postage stamp lawn, in-ground pool, two floors, beige or yellow or taupe siding. On the other side of town, one might find the same thing from 50 or 60 years past—boxier homes given over to pastels and a whiff of art deco. In between lie the chain restaurants, the big-box stores, the strip malls and the parking lots.

It's a bedroom community. Few people actually work here; most commute into the city. It's often believed that the suburbs are a white community, and that's true to a point, but it's really a community about *classism*, not racism. This is where the upper-middle-class reign supreme—color isn't as significant as long as one can pay to play. If you meet the unspoken, never-noted requirements, you have access to the best schools, roads without potholes and a diligent police force.

It's near the city without being the city. It has limited connection to public transit; just a single train stop. Very little is within walking distance. The population density is well below what one would find anywhere in the metropolis, which means the crime rate is low (even if the traffic rate remains high).

They're also well-marketed. The suburbs don't get much a lot of press; when negative stories arise, they get squashed. The tales and images rising from Suburbia show smiling faces in feature stories—a cat that can play the piano, a rising basketball star, the biggest tomato.

It's all a façade. Decay exists beneath the surface in Suburbia, always just pushed out of sight. Teens rebel and go mad, given over to potent antidepressants and snorting their ADD meds. Crime lurks beneath the surface; meth has invaded, embraced by a populace who just needs that extra edge to do better at work or to get a little extra cleaning done at home. House developers are corrupt, building their new, same-style homes with materials far below code. The many flavors of abuse are widespread: reported instances of date rape are down, but *actual* date rape is up, as is domestic abuse. Abuse of prescription medications is through the roof. Nobody sees it, and at the same time *everybody* sees it. Instead of acknowledging the rot in the log, they simply turn it over so a better side is showing.

One group doesn't turn away from it: the Society for the Better Way (or simply "The Better Way"). This community group is unaffiliated with any church, and in fact has members

from all churches. The group's membership is easily in the dozens, now—all totally unpaid volunteers. Their message and aim is simple: they point out the hypocrisy and negativity present in their community while striving to fix it. The Better Way does as the name suggests: they point out that there surely exists a better way to do things. Be nicer to one another. Embrace courtesy. Pick up a piece of trash off the street. Say something nice to a neighbor. Do a favor. Pass it on. And above all else, *smile*.

It sounds great, and in many ways it is. Their group works. Their improvements are undeniable. But, just like Suburbia itself, a sinister rot lurks beneath the smiling faces and neatly pressed clothes.

The Better Way is a cult. Most don't see that side of it, but when you join, you learn. They perform "love bombing" to bring in those who are starved of attention and affection, giving love that is wholly conditional. Fall in line with the cult and you are adored and treated with respect and warmth, but buck the trend and go against the grain, and you earn immediate scorn and reprisal.

They gather in gymnasiums and living rooms, uttering strange, non-religious self-affirming prayers and poems over and over again. They consult one another instead of old friends and family. They shop at the same places and eat at the same restaurants. They reward those who reward the community, and spurn those who will not. Even teenagers are getting in on the deal—the Better Way Students is a sub-group of the larger body, a clique within the schools that notes its members via the cornflower-blue wristbands they wear. They do not glimpse the entirety of the cult-like behaviors, but they have their taste of it. Some teenagers need to be loved and wanted by their peers, and this group is a perfect outlet for that.

Oh, and the Better Way kills people.

It's true, at least for the topmost members of the Better Way, all of whom are slashers. It seems strange that they'd be rampaging killers, but ultimately they're not. The leadership of the Better Way, represented by Anton Alexander, knows that to bring such goodness into this world is difficult. To constantly give and give is taxing, and it goes against our biological urges. Anton has come to understand that a kind of balance must be struck for some people. Those who truly sacrifice for the community must be given something—or, in this case, must *take* something—in return.

So Anton kills. He does not kill here in Suburbia; that would only draw negative attention. Nobody who is a part of this community deserves to die. But the city is home to a million wasted lives—the wayward homeless on the street, the debauched executives who live and work above the clouds



and everybody in between. To give so much of himself, Anton seeks to express himself with gleaming knife and hatchet. It's not something he does often, only a few times a year (though it's happening more often).

At first it was just him, but he saw the signs in others among the Better Way. They were having a hard time fully giving themselves over to the improvement of community and society. The negative side threatened to come crawling through. Whenever Anton senses this, he takes them to the city and shows them the secret. Together, they murder. It's not random: they don't murder those who appear to do good. They murder those who are worthless or cruel, who take more from society than they give. And it feels good. They revel in the blood: It's a powerful release.

Right now, the Better Way only has about seven slashers among their numbers, but more are sure to come of it. The rest are just followers; they serve the society with unwavering devotion. Those who fail to give such devotion are pushed into it by programming or brainwashing tactics—and, if that fails to work, they're blacklisted. They're left to the wolves, and a subtle propaganda campaign is set against them. Soon, Anton believes all of the community will join, or at least embrace, the Better Way. Why wouldn't they, after all?


General Modifiers: In Suburbia, everything's eerily well-lit and many corners are watched by stoplight cams or CCTV. As a result, Stealth rolls suffer a -2 penalty. Streetwise rolls suffer a similar -2 penalty (the neighborhood quashes any "urban" influence). It's also pretty clean. The façade of a happy, safe, organized community makes Survival rolls difficult; those

rolls also suffer -2 dice. Of course, "clean and well-lit" adds up to a $+2$ bonus for Perception rolls. Most of the people in the neighborhood are politically-oriented (locally and beyond), so Politics rolls gain $+2$.

Control Conditions: The Better Way is entrenched, with members far and wide. This means that putting a claim to Suburbia necessitates a war on two fronts. First is the war against Anton and his slashers. These upper echelon cult leaders represent a dangerous – though subtle – physical presence. They're patient, like a trapdoor spider: When the time is right, they emerge from the shadows and stab, bite, hack, shoot. They always try not to kill anybody here, but if given no choice, they'll certainly make do.

The second front of this war is for the minds of the residents. The Better Way is insidious, and has the devotion of many citizens, but some of them have been coerced. Amongst the locals is also a not-so-vocal contingent of people who think that the Better Way adherents are weirdoes and hypocritical crusaders. But it's important to note that simply destroying the leadership of the cult doesn't actually diminish it, and may instead make it stronger. The members of the Better Way have the ear of the police (and many *are* police). They've developed a deep connection to local politics. Hunters here—especially those who are strangers—walk on unsteady ground.

Assets: Assume that taking the territory leads to another dot of Resources for one of the hunters, because they can tap into some manner of money-making (real estate, protection rackets, bodyguard duty). In addition, each of the hunters gains two dots in Allies, geared toward one of the following:



police, politicians, fire department or teachers' union. Finally, Suburbia presents lots of opportunity for (sometimes very fake) social maneuvering and pandering: both the Persuasion and Socialize Skills now only cost new dots x 2 to purchase

Liabilities: Suburbia has a very distinct criminal underground unique to this area, but just because it exists doesn't mean it's easy to come by—Skills with an illegal bent are harder to gain (new dots x 4), and this includes Firearms, Larceny and Weaponry.

Consequences: The monstrous consequences are low: taking this territory doesn't seem to ping the radar of most creatures that stalk the darkness, as they wrote off the suburbs a while back. The problem is really a *human* one. The Better Way is a brainwashing cult with slashers at its fore, but it actually does some good for people. Removing them from the equation allows the festering rot to begin all over again: crime rises, abuse continues, madness creeps in at the edges. Unless the cell can take over the *good* work that the cult does, they'll find that the territory slowly starts to fall apart.

Locations

Goner's Arcade

It's an old-school arcade like you don't see much of anymore. It's filled with old school machines (pinball, Galaga, Zaxxon) and new stuff (DDR, Mario Kart Arcade, digital jukebox) in the space of an old busted-up bowling alley on the edge of Suburbia. It's a haven for miscreants and malcontents, the types of teenagers and hipsters who think the Better Way should shove its head up its ass. One of their regulars, Dale Burnham, has gone missing (murdered by Anton outside the territory limits), and that's freaking them out. Another weird thing: there's an old video game machine in the corner, and sometimes it *goes haywire*. The screen flashes, shudders and shows some kind of weird cipher. Everybody assumes it's a machine error code: maybe it is and maybe it isn't. Whatever the case, Goner's Arcade is where Mitch Goldberg and his Network Zero crew hangs out (see below).

Central County East High School

Recently renovated, the local high school is a three-story Fort Knox of a high school. The building is fortified, loaded to bear with cameras and metal detectors and RFID badges so the administration can track individual students if they need to. The third floor, near the home ec lab, is where one can find the student offices of the Better Way Students Organization, which has actually displaced the student council as the ruling body for each grade level.

Creative Creations Candle Store

It seems like an inauspicious little candle store, but to the Better Way, it's the front line in a war against invasive commerce. The Better Way supports small business, but that's the last thing Suburbia's been about over the last ten years—all the big-box stores have pushed out the little guys. Recently, one of the Better Way members (Lydia Turner, below) opened her own store selling her own homemade candles and some bakery goods made by other Better Way members. Business isn't great—generally, the only customers are Better Way cultists who care to support the cause.

491 Cherry Lane

The neighborhood kids say it's haunted, or that a monster lives inside, or that a serial killer murders people there. It's a run-down Victorian at the dead end of the road that looks nothing like the clone-stamped homes that line the rest of the street. Plants grow wild—ivy and wisteria compete to see which one can first choke out and tear down the structure. Raccoons and possums frisk around the porch late at night, while during the day the place is home to an impressive colony of feral cats. The Better Way has tried to buy the property, tried to get it condemned, pushed to get it torn down or covered with a big black sheet or excised from the town maps—*anything*. But always there's resistance, because someone actually lives there, someone very old and very wealthy. That's not to say the place *isn't* haunted—it is. Moans escape from the cracked windows at night. Shadows without much shape move past windows. Occasionally, blood (“Oh, surely it's just rusty water”) drizzles down the downspouts.

Bit Players

Mitch Goldberg, Young Conspiracy Theorist

Mental 6, Physical 4, Social 4

Mitch graduated from high school last year. He was always a good boy, a good son whose parents want to give him the world. They think with his camera skills, he should go to film school in the city, maybe try to make his way in that industry. That's not what Mitch wants—at least, not anymore. He used to be a big fan of Hollywood, but that's all over with now. He's seen it. He knows something's up. Mitch has slowly grown more and more obsessed with conspiracies, the occult and the certainty that monsters walk among us. He's joined up with Network Zero, and brought a bunch of his buddies along, too. They're convinced that something's up with the Better Way, but have no proof yet. But he'll get it if it's the last thing he does, and it just might be if he's not careful—Mitch makes occasional forays into the city to meet with other Netzo hunters, and doesn't realize that Anton Alexander has been shadowing him for the last three trips.

Lydia Turner, Perky Shop Owner

Mental 4, Physical 3, Social 6

Lydia's pretty high up in the Better Way, and she's got enough weight to throw around in the group that she can more or less *make* people come to buy her candles and cookies and other junk. Lydia isn't a slasher (yet), but her life is weighing on her. Running a store that nobody buys from isn't easy. Being chirpy sweet and a courteous neighbor is hard on her soul. She's taken to drinking in the evenings, and Anton and the others see what's happening to her. They're planning on inviting her into the city soon. They want to teach her how to vent that stress.

Efrem Mendoza, Desperate Outcast

Mental 4, Physical 6, Social 5

Efrem doesn't belong here. He knows this because he's been told this—sometimes to his face, and one time on a note wrapped around a brick that made its way through his front window. Some seem to think he's an illegal immigrant just because he comes from the city, but that's bullshit. He was born

in this country. His parents, while not affluent, were reasonably well off. He's got his own landscaping business, and yes, some of his employees *are* illegals—but, up until recently, everybody in town was just fine with using them to cheaply get their yards mowed and trees planted. Then the Better Way gained ground, and they start pulling some kind of down-low propaganda campaign against him and his people. They asked him to join, and in typical Efrem fashion he told them where they could cram the idea. Now his life is falling down around him. He can barely make his mortgage payments on a pretty nice new house. His wife is threatening to leave him. He's had to put his two kids into public school. He's thought about getting into local politics, but all efforts have been stymied... probably by the Better Way. He's getting angry and desperate.

Leigh-Ann Alexander, Anton's Wife

Mental 5, Physical 3, Social 5

Leigh-Ann is Anton's wife. She doesn't work, instead managing their household—she's good at both bookkeeping and laundry, and she's a very perceptive woman. So perceptive that she knows exactly what her husband does. She's come to terms with it: Anton's a good father, he provides his family and community with wealth and love, and the people he kills are worthless. Leigh-Ann could never do that herself, and she hasn't let Anton know that *she* knows, but she's comfortable with all of it. Hunters looking in from the outside may think that they can get to Anton by telling her the truth, but ulti-

mately she'll betray the hunters, leading them right into her husband's deadly hands.

**Anton Alexander,
Architect of Death**

Quotes: *"I love this community. I grew up here. My family isn't just my wife and daughter. My family is all of you wonderful people."*

"Since I'm among friends, I want to speak plainly: this town has pockets of sickness, and our work is the medicine that will cure it. Ours is the better way."

"You're trash. You're vile, execrable garbage—a bottom-feeder, a scum-hungry mud bug. I am going to gut you. I am going to spill your poison. I am going to purge you from the community record, you piece of shit."

Faction: The Better Way (Slasher, Cult)

Virtue: Justice. Doing the right thing is paramount, even at the cost to yourself. The greater good is the greatest thing of all.

Vice: Pride. Doing the right thing is paramount, except Anton can't be convinced that anything he does is the *wrong* thing. His self-righteousness blinds him.

Background: The way Anton tells it, his parents were paragons of morality, people who were righteous without needing the church, who were good and honest farmers with a strong moral compass. And, to a degree, that's true. Anton

STORY HOOKS

- Someone's been leaving bodies on the cell's turf. The bodies are cut up with various knives and saws—all elegantly done with purpose and clarity. Investigating the murders, the hunters track it back to Suburbia, where they encounter the Better Way cult. It's likely to be a troublesome encounter: The group is entrenched, they protect one another and they seem to have genuinely made headway toward an improved community. Anton's also an influential man, and if he senses the characters sniffing around, he might come to them offering favors. If they turn those down, he'll offer only death.

- One of the Better Way slashers has gone rogue. After all, it's difficult to contain psychopaths, and now one of them is killing in Suburbia, leaving bodies around and drawing unwanted attention. Anton doesn't know which one it is. He arrogantly believes he could never be caught himself, so he approaches the cell and asks them to step in and investigate. He's willing to pay handsomely for them to "fix" the situation, or at least identify the killer for him so he can handle it himself.

- Really weird shit is going on. That arcade machine has been offering up its weird ciphers lately. The house at Cherry Lane is starting to make really disturbing noises (like a high-pitched shrill whine). People have seen things lurking down beneath sewer grates. Mitch Goldberg's caught some really strange shadows and flickering lights in the sky on video. Something's coming. Is it ready to enter this world because of the Better Way? Have they purposefully summoned something? Or did they do so unwittingly, calling to earth some mad spirit or demon because of their oppressive and occasionally murderous ways?

usually leaves out the part where they used to lock him up in the barn for hours or even days when he was bad. Several times he almost starved to death. Being locked in an old dusty barn late at night does things a child; the skittering of rats, the creak of boards and the wind howling through a knothole can create some intense images in a young mind.

He thinks he's put it all behind him. He graduated high school with honors, went onto become an architect and eventually ended up designing many of the homes that make up the residences of Suburbia. It was when he discovered the deep corruption in the real estate and home-building markets that he conceived of the Better Way. He didn't want to be privy to such favor-mongering. He wanted to do honest work, like his parents.

He formed his group, but found stiff resistance from his old boss, a local real estate developer named Nick Barone. Barone

was out in the city with his mistress, and Anton surprised Barone just as the man was getting into his car to head home after a night of hard eating and drinking. He slit the man's throat and put Barone's head through the driver's side window before fleeing into the night. The rush was empowering.

These days, Anton's got a wife and daughter (Leigh-Ann and Antonia, respectively) and will do anything to protect them. His daughter—age five—is his proudest achievement in this life. She can do no wrong. He loves her unconditionally.

Description: When he's just Anton, he's a tall, fairly good-looking man—a well-trimmed beard, nicely-groomed hair (with just a tinge of silver coming in at the edges), dark and handsome eyes. His voice is a comforting baritone. But when he's in slasher mode, Anton dons a black hooded sweat-shirt, a pair of dirty and blood-spattered jeans and a filter mask (like the ones worn at construction sites).

Anton Alexander

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 1, Politics (Local) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Chase) 3, Brawl (Grapple) 3, Drive 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (County Commissioners) 2, Allies (Cult) 5, City Knowledge 1, Contacts 3 (Police, Fire Department, Health Department), DirectionSense 1, Fame (Suburbs) 1, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Iron Stamina 3, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Morality: 2 (Megalomania)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 4

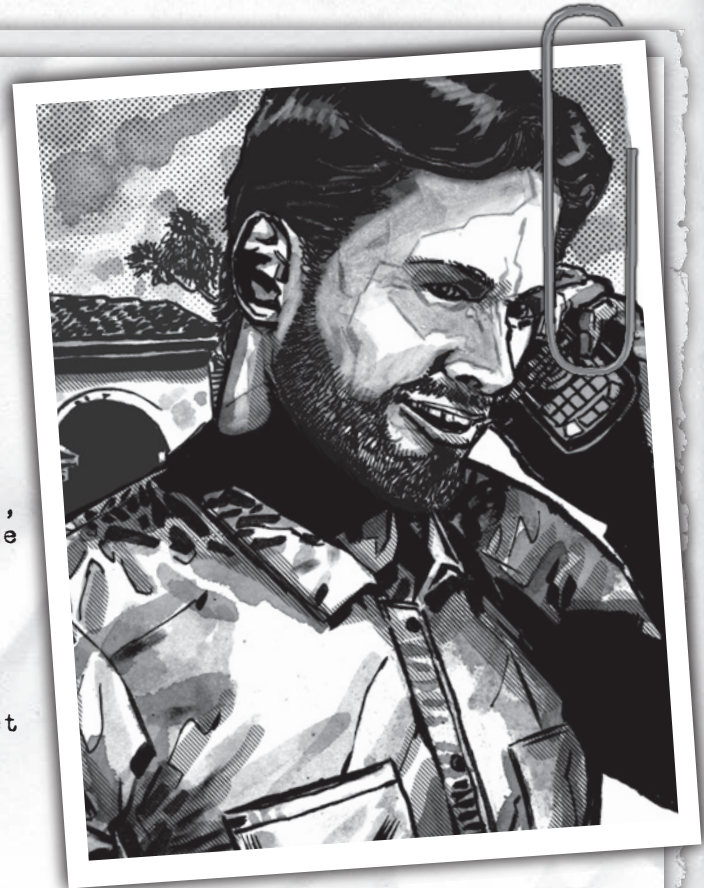
Speed: 16

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Impress 2

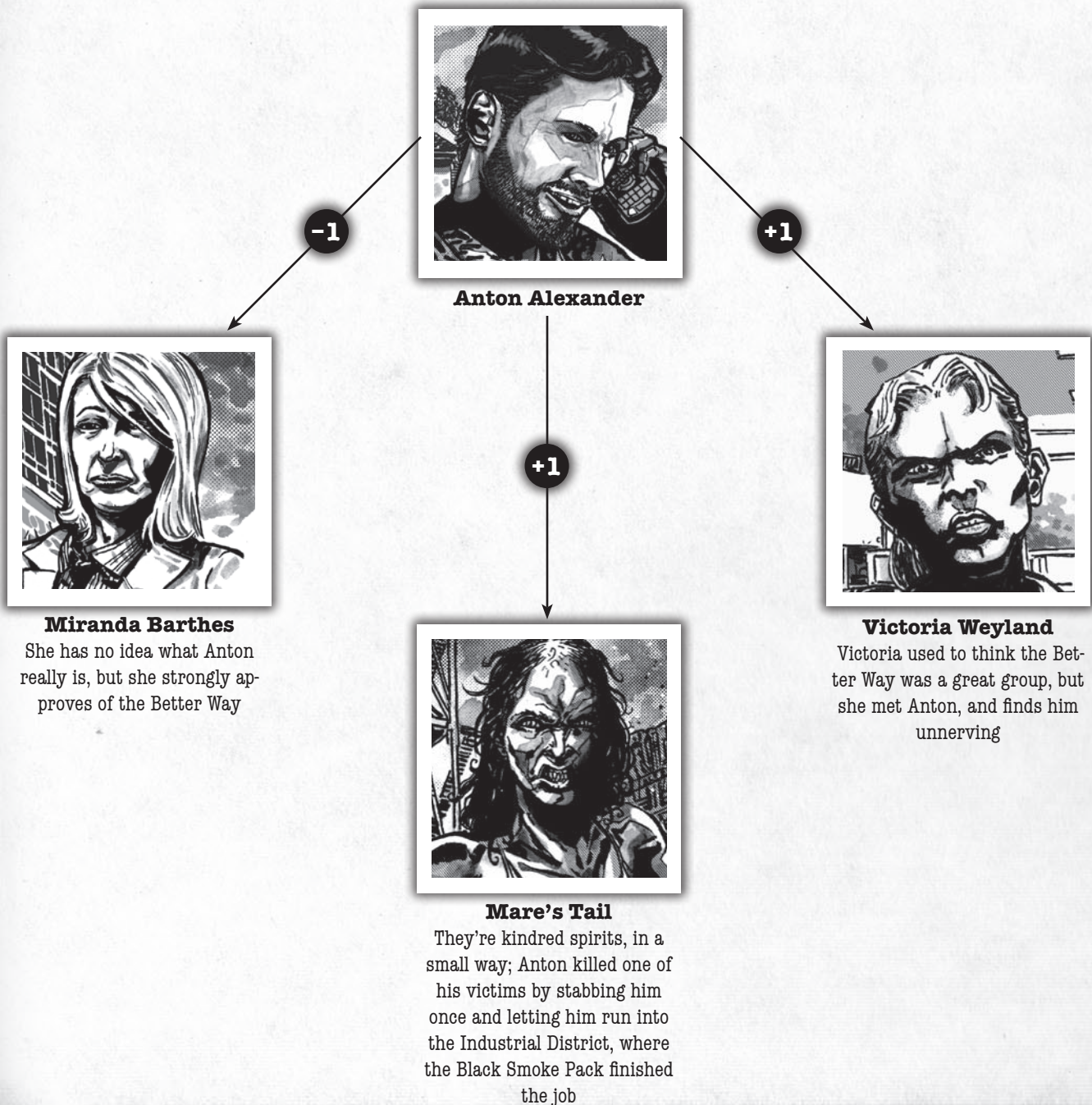
Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Large Bowie Knife	2(L)	9



Storytelling Hints: Anton's a psychopath, but he believes that what he's doing is the right thing. He believes his murders are righteous, that his work as a scourging agent and architect of death is just. Sometimes, a wooden beam is rotten or flawed, and you can't leave that beam in the house, lest the structure collapse. He sees himself as simply fixing errors. Those who meet him in the course of a normal day have a hard time sensing the serial killer within; Anton appears warm and friendly. Prolonged exposure, however, shows his "love bomb" technique—he loves you immediately, giving new members and friends the shirt off his back if need be. But one tiny mistake and he turns, castigating the person until they work to re-enter his good graces.

Rapport: As noted, it's easy to gain both positive and negative Rapport with Anton—serve him, the cult and the community, and it goes positive. Do anything against the community interests and it turns negative. Positive Rapport leads him to help a character enter the community—he introduces them to important people, helps them to secure loans or gets rid of their problems. Negative Rapport is just the opposite: he attempts to ruin that person (like he did with Efrem Mendoza) in the face of the community. Strong negative Rapport means he's going to try to stab someone to death.



The Subway/Train System

Controlled By: Black Blossom Court (Changelings)

Examples: Berlin U-Bahn, The “T” (Boston), London Underground, New York City Subway, Tokyo Metro

Beneath the city is a labyrinth, a tangle of dark tunnels and dead-ends. Some of these subways have been there for a long time. Once they served as access tunnels or drainage channels, but now trains punch through the darkness, blasting down the shadowed tracks at 50, 60, 70 miles per hour. The trains run most hours of the day and night, rocking tubes filled with a wildly diverse cross-section of humanity: club kids, late-night workers, early-morning lunatics, priggish socialites, piggish bankers, drunks, homeless, housewives, cops.

The tunnels themselves are bleak, black passages. The water drips forever while rats scurrying about and tribes of the homeless gathering in niches around the warmth of exhaust vents (some have lived so long in the dark that their eyes have grown pale, adjusting to the shadows).

It’s easy to believe that this is No Man’s Land, that nobody really owns or controls the subways and their tunnels. A monster’s or hunter’s passage is all but guaranteed: nothing stops them from using the tubes to traverse the city in relative safety.

Of course, that’s given them some ideas. How perfect would it be to claim the subways, to put a sentinel on each train, to ensure that none shall pass without tithing to the master?

Some have tried. They’ve all failed. A pack of vampires gets uppity, and a few of its members are dragged into the darkness or pulled onto an empty train car that wasn’t there before. Hands rip at them from shadows, a straight razor slices out of nowhere or hallucinations encroach like an army of demons. Then they’re tossed out at the next stop or thrown into a dumpster just as the morning light is about to pierce the city’s steel and glass canyons.

Who’s protecting the subways? Who’s keeping the peace between factions that think they can war in the tunnels and on the trains?

It’s a small group of changelings, actually—a rag tag bunch calling themselves the “Black Blossom Court,” shepherded by a morose girl-queen calling herself Miss Nyx. Despite what it may seem, they don’t guard the subways out of some misguided sense of honor or humanity. No, they claim the subways because they’re dark, out of the way places—perfect for rejects, lunatics and self-hating fiends who’d rather stay away from the harsh light of either sun or moon. Plus, all those people! Herds upon herds of unsuspecting fools, all so easy to toy with, to make slaves of and then discard! Miss Nyx hates herself, but loves the power she has over the numb

minds of most of mankind, and gladly abuses her abilities in favor of momentary happiness gained largely through the discomfort of others.

Miss Nyx doesn’t hold court on any one train, station or tunnel: she has her people everywhere, both other changelings who worship at her feet and those so-called “ensorcelled” humans who have been entranced by her myriad powers. If someone wants to speak with her (which is strange, because few even know she’s there), she doesn’t bother arranging for a time and a place. She just makes the people jump through hoops (“Leave 13 blue roses on Track 9 at the Watcher’s Market Station, and be sure to wear a pair of blue suede shoes, as well.”) to meet her.

Recently, Nyx has grown weary of hiding down here. She knows the subways are a coveted territory, and she’s ready to give it up in trade—she wants a new niche, a new playground, and is willing to cede the trains and tunnels to whoever will give her a nice slice of domain above-ground.

General Modifiers: Riding the subways often enough is like Streetwise 101; a character overhears things, sees gang symbols, identifies easily who belongs to what neighborhood. While riding the subways, assume that characters can gain a +1 to Streetwise rolls. Stealth is blissfully easy in the dark tunnels (+4) but difficult on the mostly well-lit trains (–4). Free wi-fi access allows a +1 to Computer rolls (using laptops or PDAs), but ironically, the cell signal in the subways sucks so bad that a call can’t be kept on the line for more than five seconds. Nobody seems keen to chat on the trains, so Socialize rolls suffer a –2 penalty, but Intimidation rolls gain +1 due to cramped quarters, unpleasant lighting and an expectation of abuse and mugging. Note, too, that traversing the dark tunnels isn’t easy—the Storyteller is right to occasionally call for heavily-penalized (–3 to –5) Wits + Composure rolls to try to find one’s way through the darkened maze.

Control Conditions: It’s actually pretty easy to take control of the subways—Nyx wants to give them up. If someone can offer her something, especially a hunk of territory above ground, she’ll probably take it, abandoning the tunnels within a few nights. Taking her out, on the other hand, is tricky: she knows the tunnels quite well, and all her changelings gain +3 to Initiative due to this intense familiarity. Think of her like a trap-door spider: she hides, and strikes only when she has the upper hand.

Assets: Taking control of the subways means getting an automatic free dot of Allies (Homeless), and buying further points in Allies (Homeless) has a reduced cost of new dots x 1. Controlling the subways also grants a +3 Initiative to those who are able to hold onto the territory—the shadows

and the confusing tangle of tunnels and train maps can be quite advantageous to those who know how to work it. Plus, there's free transit.

Liabilities: Most hours of the day and night, excepting maybe the wee hours between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M., the characters will be in a crowd—the subway trains are usually pretty full, full enough that Merits like Fame and Striking Looks have increased drawbacks: attempting to recognize the characters gains +3 (not +1) for those characters who control the territory and thus spend perhaps inordinate amounts of time on the trains. Also, controlling the subways means spending a lot of time there—some Skills are very hard to practice while spending so much of one's time in the dark tunnels or lit trains. Assume that any Mental Skill (except Computer and Investigation) cost three more experience points to raise when buying a new dot: going from zero to one dot would mean paying six total instead of three, while going from four to five would mean paying 18 total instead of 15.

Consequences: As noted, taking control of the subways isn't really that hard, but *keeping* control will be. The vampires want this place, and they want it badly. They're willing to renew efforts to claim it, because it's an ideal hunting ground—at 3AM, a few bleary-eyed drunks or addicts filled with sweet toxic blood are *so easy*. Also, when Nyx goes, she takes her small cadre of entranced transit police with her, which means that the transit police are no longer necessarily friendly to any controlling "owner." Messing around on the subway with violence can be dangerous, because anything that can be construed as an attack on mass transit can just as easily be spun as a "terrorist incident," which brings local and federal law enforcement (and potentially Task Force: VALKYRIE) into the equation.

Locations

The Graffiti Gospel of the Dead Line

The tunnels are home to dozens upon dozens of dead ends—tunnels that once were started but never finished, or tubes that were walled off at a certain point and left to disuse. One, though, is unique: at the dead end waits a lone train car. Its windows have long been busted in. It's now a home to blind rats, hungry spiders and a colony of bats. The train—called the "Dead Line" by those in the know—has been there since the subway first opened in the 1920s. The train is covered in graffiti, but few realize that the graffiti changes in accordance to whoever is looking at it. Those who have questions to answer or problems to solve can go to the Dead Line train and examine the symbols painted there in an effort to try to get some direction or a part of a solution. Those who don't have specific questions find that the graffiti may speak to problems they hadn't consciously brought to the surface: family issues, guilt over a murder, fears about an almost-forgotten enemy. Attempting to examine and decipher the symbols (which may necessitate one or several Wits + Occult rolls) is troubling, though: those who do so gain a mild derangement or hunter Tell (Storyteller's choice) for one week after visiting the Dead Line train. It must be noted that the Black

Blossom Court protects the entryway that leads to the train, only allowing those through who have positive Rapport with Miss Nyx. Some may wonder: Does this "gospel" somehow connect to the one scrawled on the chest of the (supposed) angel, Eliezer (pp. 65–67)?

The Playground

It isn't just about tunnels. Sure, the subway system's got a lot of them, but tunnels are big—wide and tall enough to fit a whole train. The system also has no end of smaller hiding places—doors that seem to go nowhere, stairs that lead down to more stairs, access hallways that are half-collapsed, rooms that appear to have never had a purpose at all. One such an area is considered the playground for Nyx and her Black Blossom Court—between the White Line and the Black Line sits a whole area accessible only by a locked door (one door on each side). The area between, though, is huge: giant fans circulate air as part of the ventilation system, a few computer servers sit beneath a grimy veneer of dust pumping out wi-fi while an unused but functional console monitors the trains and tracks and stations. The Black Blossom Court owns this place. If anybody needs to get in to check anything—transit police, subway admin—they have to go through Nyx. This is also where the Court holds morose little parties or mad rev-els. Sure, Nyx holds court on any train you can find her, but this is where she really gets down to business—playing with the minds of her human toys, trying a whole host of strange drugs, giving deranged pep talks to those gloomy, masochistic changelings who call her queen.

Bit Players

Darnell Hopkins, Lead Transit Cop

Mental 5, Physical 5, Social 3

Darnell Hopkins is one step below the head of the transit police in the subways—think of him as the "on-the-ground leadership," since his superior is in an office somewhere downtown and has no idea what really goes on down here. Darnell, depending on who's looking at him, is either a good man hopelessly devoted to protecting Nyx, or he's her mind-raped thrall who'd throw himself in front of a speeding train to save her. It might be both. Darnell thinks of himself as her big brother, even though he's a 6'5" black dude from a poor family and she's a weird little white girl who comes from... wherever weird little white girls come from. Darnell makes sure things work out in Miss Nyx's favor whenever possible.

Verm, Feral Vampire

Mental 4, Physical 7, Social 2

Verm's a vampire, a hideous, deformed vampire. He's naked most hours of the night, crawling through the darkness of the tunnels with about as much presence of mind as a hungry dog or a lost cat. Nyx feeds him like a pet. Those who cause her or the subways trouble (some banker gets grabby with the women on the train, some thug tries to steal some kid's iPod, a cell of hunters come sniffing around) might end up dragged into the darkness and thrown to Verm the way one throws a hunk of steak to a chained-up Rottweiler—except Verm isn't chained up.

Cataract Sally, Deranged Victim*Mental 5, Physical 2, Social 3*

Miss Nyx is capable of guilt. She doesn't show it, and it doesn't really *alter* her behavior any, but guilt lurks within her gut, a secret acid forever burning. Sally was once a fashion model—up and coming, not anybody you'd know—that Nyx felt it necessary to toy with, again and again. Nyx's manipulations left Sally lost to hallucinations most hours of the night, convinced that she was hideous and that everyone hated her. The abuse went too far, and one night Sally put out a cigarette in her left eye and had to be rushed to the emergency room. Then, like a kicked animal that has grown used to its abuse, Sally returned to the subways—no longer hallucinating, but her mind plainly broken. She's homeless now, just one of the others. But Nyx, when she has a free moment, sneaks down and takes care of Sally, giving her food, money, clothing. Nyx doesn't want anyone to see this behavior.

Kenny Sixes, Freakish Representative*Mental 6, Physical 4, Social 5*

Kenny is Nyx's right-hand-man, a tall, freakishly thin slip of a boy with two sixes for eyes (think the way an LED or LCD readout on an alarm clock glows). He is a changeling

like Nyx, some half-human creature that crawled his way out of a broken fairytale land. Sixes acts as Nyx's representative; instead of meeting with her, most get to meet with Kenny. His job is to be politely and obliquely obstructive to other people's wants. In fact, Kenny's got his own agenda down here in the dark: he doesn't want to leave the subways, and is fearful that Nyx is going to sell out their subterranean kingdom. He'll try to sabotage a deal wherever possible.

**Miss Nyx,
Queen of Dolor and Despair**

Quotes: "Oh, boo-hoo, wah, wah. Baby doesn't like being punched in the eye and chained up in front of his queen? Lick my boot to say you're sorry, little baby."

"I am weary of these trains. My ears ring with the rattle. My nose is forever filled with the smell of piss and axle grease. I want something bigger. Something shiny. Can you help?"

"Eventually, I suspect you'll all betray me. That's all right. Then the pain will be over, either for you, or for me."

Faction: The Black Blossom Court (Changelings)

Virtue: Charity. To those who deserve it, Nyx'll give the moon.

STORY HOOKS

- Nyx is ready to give it up—she's been offered a deal that will allow her to share some of the Nightlife Circuit if she's willing to hand over the subways to the First Estate vampires (see Nightlife Circuit, pp. 35-40). The hunter cell hears of this potential deal, and knows when it's going to go down. Do they try to dissuade one side or the other from taking the deal? Do they use it as an opportunity to try to off both parties on a speeding subway train? Will they do anything when Nyx is inevitably betrayed by the vampire lords?

- A coalition of compacts and conspiracies (possibly shepherded by VALKYRIE, or maybe put together by Malleus Maleficarum) decide to reclaim the subways. They fear a terrorist threat, and don't want such a precious city resource in the hands of monsters. Those who aren't with them are plainly against them, and casualties (both innocent and not) are expected. Are the hunters on the side of the bullying coalition, acting as a part of it? Do they sabotage it from within or form their own coalition in response? Or do they join with the monsters to help keep the subways and the people in them safe?

- The real truth emerges: Nyx doesn't want the subways anymore because she's tired of the burden. Those who control the subway must abide by an ancient pact—a "pledge," she calls it—with the city itself. In the deepest reaches of the forgotten tunnels of the subways is a tunnel that goes nowhere—or, more specifically, it goes somewhere very bad. Light doesn't shine there, but if you listen very closely, you can hear something growing, like the sound of vines twisting around one another. Sometimes, things emerge from this impenetrable shadow, strange fairy tale creatures with a terrible bloodthirst or a need to destroy men's minds. Whoever protects the subways must never let these things out into the light—and that's something Nyx doesn't exactly make clear when she's doing the deal.

Vice: Lust. It's not really about sex, though that figures into it. Nyx just has lots of urges and desires, and she's impatient about getting them fulfilled.

Background: Nyx doesn't know much about who she was before—and claims she doesn't want to know. Secretly, however, she wants to know how it all happened, how it is that her memories hold the faintest glimmer that she was once a normal girl with hopes and dreams and friends at school and a pair of loving parents. She wants to know if it's true that she was taken away in a black carriage bounding down a muddy road between two towering walls choked with thorns and roses, or if that's just a dream, a crass justification to make herself feel like she's not really the monster. Sadly, Nyx is willing to believe she's always been a monster out of some twisted fairy tale, and that her dreams of having once been human are just to save her flagging sanity.

Nyx is the head of a rag-tag group of changelings, a dozen or more grief-struck lunatics who are happy to remain under-

ground and hide from the rest of the world. Once upon a time, Nyx was just like them, and found herself elevated to the top of their mad ranks by virtue of being crazier than the rest of them. Lately, though, Nyx has started to re-evaluate her situation. She's still a sad creature, forlorn over a life lost that might be an illusion, but she's no longer comfortable with hiding. Her sadness and madness have come together to form a perfect partnership, and it's time, she thinks, to bring this to the surface. She wants to carve out a niche for her and her crazies that doesn't necessitate that they hide underground in the dark tunnels and trains of the city's subway system. That's her goal: to ditch this territory in favor of a better one. She's still weighing her options, but certainly the Nightlife Circuit (pp. 35–40) is just the kind of place Nyx would like to get a hold of and choke the life right out of it.

Description: Hunters will, for the most part, see Nyx as just a normal girl, though she's still pretty strange-looking. She's pale and pasty, and wears rags and tatters of fishnets, silk



“Miss Nyx”



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 4, Survival 1, Weaponry (Straight Razor) 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Vermin) 2, Empathy (Sadness) 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Homeless) 3, Danger Sense 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Quick Healer 4

Willpower: 5

Morality: 5

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Dread Powers: Clamber 3 (p. 5), Drain Willpower (Inspire Lust) 3, Hypnotism 2, Lurker in Darkness 3

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Straight Razor	1(L)	n/a	6	n/a



and leather. The only constant bit of clothing is her stone-washed denim jacket with a Huey Lewis and the News logo in sequins on the back. Nyx overdoes it on the dark makeup, and seems to feel that her hair is the best place for artistic expression (mousse-spackled and fire-red one day, pale blue and hanging in front of her eyes like a curtain the next). If she uses her Dread Powers or if hunters have Endowments that allow them to look through a monstrous masquerade, they will be able to see her true form, which is a photo negative of herself, as if she doesn't naturally exist in the visual spectrum of this world.

Storytelling Hints: Nyx hates herself. She won't admit it, so she often puts herself in situations that earn her hatred or create enemies. Since she can't always act upon her self-hatred (how would that look in front of her sycophants?), she sometimes has to act out her hatred on others. She's not really comfortable with torturing people or killing them, but

she's more than happy to humiliate them, to subvert their will and make them do her bidding (all the better if she can do it without using her Dread Powers, but she's more than happy to dip into her mystical repertoire if need be). Sometimes, Nyx cuts herself with her straight razor, and the dark cuts and scars show up as inverse spots of bright light on her shadowy flesh.

Rapport: It's a bit odd—if Nyx has positive Rapport with a character, she dimly recognizes that by liking those people, they have power over her, so she tries to stay away from them. When she's in their presence, the Rapport is there and works just fine, but she's not a happy kitten. She doesn't like to be liked, and doesn't feel comfortable enjoying the company of others. Negative Rapport works the other way—she tries to surround herself with those who have no power over her, who seem to dislike her. Sometimes, she hopes to reward those who despise her; other times, she simply aims to punish them deeply.



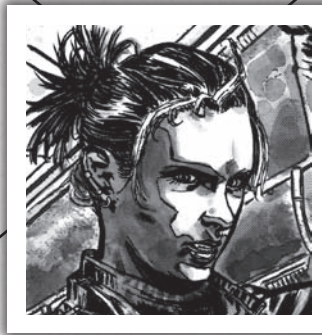
Tom Booth

She actually has Booth convinced that she is, or was once, a demon of sorts—both share an appreciation of making somewhat diabolical “deals”

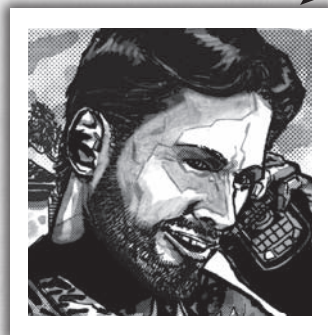


Desideratum

The witch has a grudging respect for this girl, and suspects she's some kind of gutter sorcerer



Miss Nyx



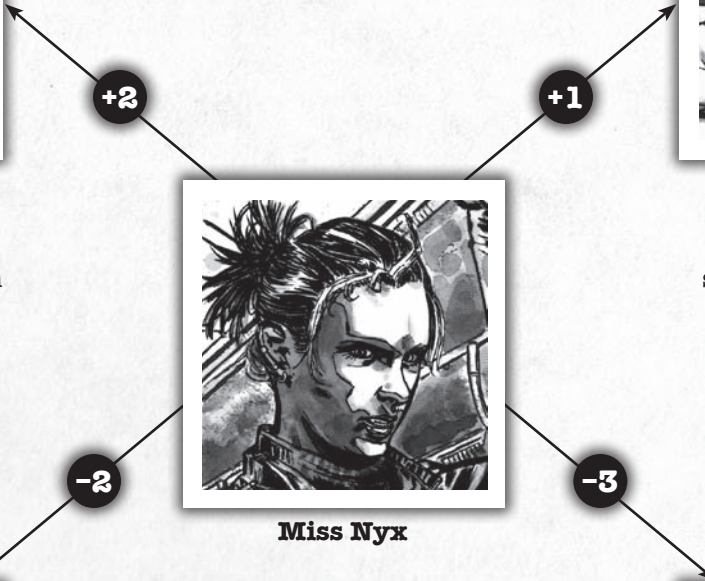
Anton Alexander

She sees his zealots putting up posters and ads in the subways for their suburban “paradise” and toys with them unmercifully



John Dennison

She's sent more than a few of his hungry vampires home missing blood and pieces



The University

Controlled By: The Haven (Demons)

Examples: Columbia University, New York City; Temple University, Philadelphia; University of London

Academia just doesn't look that good these days, especially not here, in the city's chief university. Not enough money is coming into the university system, not from public funding, and not from private. Buildings haven't been updated in decades, and many would probably fail code violations (but it's cheaper to pay off an inspector than to invest the cash into fixing the problem). The library has the most up-to-date books... if it's 1989. The classrooms have mold problems. The dorm rooms are like concrete coffins. The only modernity one will find around campus is from the computer labs dotted around the area and the handful of fast food joints that ring the university.

The university is a sprawling heart of academic decay: the main urban campus comprises a liberal arts college, a medical school, a law school, and a host of other specialized programs, all on eight city blocks (about 50 acres), almost 8,000 apartments and nearly 20,000 students. It's stuck in one of the worst neighborhoods in the city, and while few will admit to it, the crime easily bleeds into campus life. Not enough streetlights and too few campus police (who aren't worth much of a damn anyhow) mean that muggings, drug deals and sexual assaults creep up year after year. It doesn't affect admission, though—even if they did release that data, the fact remains that the university hands out scads of scholarships and remains a very inexpensive alternative to those who live within the state.

The shadows are long and dark here on campus, and that's only the ones the students and faculty can see. Grim forces work behind the scenes, too, ensuring that some who walk the university's halls are little more than puppets.

The infernal has taken root here. About two decades back, a greater demon known only as Tom Booth took a job here as one of the custodial staff. Few know why he gravitated toward this university in particular, but speculation has flourished. Some say that deep beneath the university grounds in the old tunnels is a gateway to Hell itself, and that Tom waits on this earthly side to help his diabolical brethren squirm free from that shattered realm. Other stories claim that the library is home to a secret cache of old demonological tomes—powerful grimoires that could be used to both summon and banish creatures like Tom, and that Tom protects these books to ensure that no one can find them.

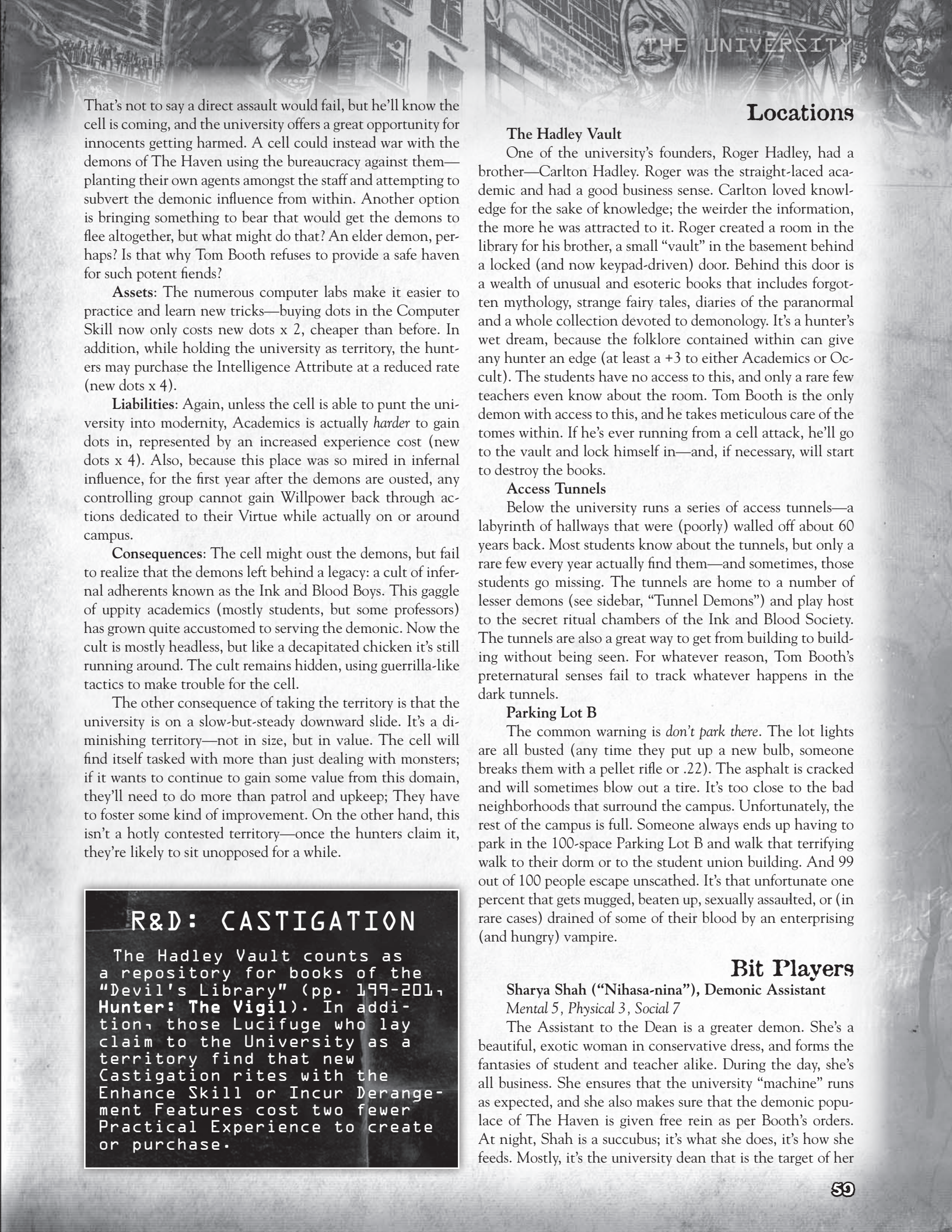
Whatever the true reason, Tom's here, and he's made sure to make it a place very friendly for demons. Amongst the

infernal fiends, the university is actually known as "The Haven." Booth helps lesser demons hide in the shadows and prey on the unwary, and he assists greater demons with blending in, often helping them secure positions working somewhere on staff or faculty (in fact, the Assistant to the Dean, Sharya Shah, is herself a greater demon—see *Bit Players*, pp. 59–60). Frankly, it's a playground for the infernal. Demons—once thought of as *daimons* or *daemons*, creatures of wisdom and knowledge—can offer easy bargains to desperate students, and find a certain kinship with the hierarchical and esoteric academic world. Fact is, students have so much they want: a good grade "earned," a teacher punished, a rival diminished, a body improved, romance inspired. So many Vices waiting to be fostered, and so many demons lingering in the dark, eager to help.

Make no mistake: Booth is the one in charge. Somewhere in Hell's hard-to-grasp hierarchy he seems to lurk above these other fiends, and it gives him some kind of malefic authority. But despite seeming to be just a creepy scarecrow of a man pushing a broom, he also carries some authority over humans, too. Fact is, Booth hates people, and he likes to make them do his bidding—anything to humiliate these hairless apes. For the last ten years, he's put together a false *Skull-and-Bones* society called the *Ink and Blood Boys* (though it includes female members). It's a group whose origins supposedly date back 200 years, but that's just a lie Booth spins to give it some sense of historicity. More on this group can be found on p. 60.

General Modifiers: Here's a grim irony: Academics rolls *suffer* here. Any such roll made using university resources take on a -2 penalty because it's all outdated, outmoded information. The computer lab, on the other hand, is one of the university's strongest resources, and so Computer roll using the college's resources gain +2 dice. Medicine rolls using hospital resources also gain +2 dice. Meanwhile, campus resources in places like the computer lab or the hospital are poorly secured, and all *Larceny* rolls made against standard campus security gain the 9-Again quality.

Control Conditions: At any given time, the university is home to a half-dozen or more greater demons, and three times as many lesser demons. They have the place in relative lockdown: they control campus police, they control the administration and they have eyes and ears everywhere (students, custodians, maintenance, teachers). A direct assault is doomed to fail because the university is so sprawling—by the time the cell gets to Booth or any other demon, the cops are probably on their way. Booth is preternaturally aware of what goes on around campus—it's like he's bound to it, somehow.



That's not to say a direct assault would fail, but he'll know the cell is coming, and the university offers a great opportunity for innocents getting harmed. A cell could instead war with the demons of The Haven using the bureaucracy against them—planting their own agents amongst the staff and attempting to subvert the demonic influence from within. Another option is bringing something to bear that would get the demons to flee altogether, but what might do that? An elder demon, perhaps? Is that why Tom Booth refuses to provide a safe haven for such potent fiends?

Assets: The numerous computer labs make it easier to practice and learn new tricks—buying dots in the Computer Skill now only costs new dots x 2, cheaper than before. In addition, while holding the university as territory, the hunters may purchase the Intelligence Attribute at a reduced rate (new dots x 4).

Liabilities: Again, unless the cell is able to punt the university into modernity, Academics is actually *harder* to gain dots in, represented by an increased experience cost (new dots x 4). Also, because this place was so mired in infernal influence, for the first year after the demons are ousted, any controlling group cannot gain Willpower back through actions dedicated to their Virtue while actually on or around campus.

Consequences: The cell might oust the demons, but fail to realize that the demons left behind a legacy: a cult of infernal adherents known as the Ink and Blood Boys. This gaggle of uppity academics (mostly students, but some professors) has grown quite accustomed to serving the demonic. Now the cult is mostly headless, but like a decapitated chicken it's still running around. The cult remains hidden, using guerrilla-like tactics to make trouble for the cell.

The other consequence of taking the territory is that the university is on a slow-but-steady downward slide. It's a diminishing territory—not in size, but in value. The cell will find itself tasked with more than just dealing with monsters; if it wants to continue to gain some value from this domain, they'll need to do more than patrol and upkeep; They have to foster some kind of improvement. On the other hand, this isn't a hotly contested territory—once the hunters claim it, they're likely to sit unopposed for a while.

R&D: CASTIGATION

The Hadley Vault counts as a repository for books of the "Devil's Library" (pp. 199-201, **Hunter: The Vigil**). In addition, those Lucifuge who lay claim to the University as a territory find that new Castigation rites with the Enhance Skill or Incur Derangement Features cost two fewer Practical Experience to create or purchase.

Locations

The Hadley Vault

One of the university's founders, Roger Hadley, had a brother—Carlton Hadley. Roger was the straight-laced academic and had a good business sense. Carlton loved knowledge for the sake of knowledge; the weirder the information, the more he was attracted to it. Roger created a room in the library for his brother, a small "vault" in the basement behind a locked (and now keypad-driven) door. Behind this door is a wealth of unusual and esoteric books that includes forgotten mythology, strange fairy tales, diaries of the paranormal and a whole collection devoted to demonology. It's a hunter's wet dream, because the folklore contained within can give any hunter an edge (at least a +3 to either Academics or Occult). The students have no access to this, and only a rare few teachers even know about the room. Tom Booth is the only demon with access to this, and he takes meticulous care of the tomes within. If he's ever running from a cell attack, he'll go to the vault and lock himself in—and, if necessary, will start to destroy the books.

Access Tunnels

Below the university runs a series of access tunnels—a labyrinth of hallways that were (poorly) walled off about 60 years back. Most students know about the tunnels, but only a rare few every year actually find them—and sometimes, those students go missing. The tunnels are home to a number of lesser demons (see sidebar, "Tunnel Demons") and play host to the secret ritual chambers of the Ink and Blood Society. The tunnels are also a great way to get from building to building without being seen. For whatever reason, Tom Booth's preternatural senses fail to track whatever happens in the dark tunnels.

Parking Lot B

The common warning is *don't park there*. The lot lights are all busted (any time they put up a new bulb, someone breaks them with a pellet rifle or .22). The asphalt is cracked and will sometimes blow out a tire. It's too close to the bad neighborhoods that surround the campus. Unfortunately, the rest of the campus is full. Someone always ends up having to park in the 100-space Parking Lot B and walk that terrifying walk to their dorm or to the student union building. And 99 out of 100 people escape unscathed. It's that unfortunate one percent that gets mugged, beaten up, sexually assaulted, or (in rare cases) drained of some of their blood by an enterprising (and hungry) vampire.

Bit Players

Sharya Shah ("Nihasa-nina"), Demonic Assistant
Mental 5, Physical 3, Social 7

The Assistant to the Dean is a greater demon. She's a beautiful, exotic woman in conservative dress, and forms the fantasies of student and teacher alike. During the day, she's all business. She ensures that the university "machine" runs as expected, and she also makes sure that the demonic populace of The Haven is given free rein as per Booth's orders. At night, Shah is a succubus; it's what she does, it's how she feeds. Mostly, it's the university dean that is the target of her

TUNNEL DEMONS (LESSER DEMONS)

Quote: *[wet, throaty croaking]*

Background: These gluttonous fiends are kept to the tunnels below, lurking in darkness, waiting for prey to come stumbling into the maze.

Description: For the most part, they're considered Twilight familiars (p. 166, **Hunter: The Vigil**), but will manifest upon discovering human prey. Even when manifesting, they look like fat, shadowy shapes—misshapen tumors that vaguely suggest something toad-like. Lights reflect off their globular, wet eyes.

Storytelling Hints: Dumb and hungry, that's all you need to remember.

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

True Name: They all share a single True Name—they're called the Decarabia.

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 3, Resistance 4

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Size: 3

Corpus: 7

Essence: 10 (10 max)

Ban: The Decarabia must stop to eat vomit, even licking the floor for minutes after the vomit's been cleaned up.

Dread Powers: Dread Attack (Barbed Tongue) 2, Lurker in Darkness 1

Special

See familiar powers under Castigation, p. 166, **Hunter: The Vigil**.

lustful predations—Edgar Rivers is a married man with three kids (one of whom goes to this school), but most nights he “works late” and has a tryst with Shah that he cannot escape. Those who fall prey to Shah’s maneuverings find themselves deeply enervated after sex with her: the following day, they cannot regain Willpower, and in addition suffer a –2 penalty to all Mental rolls (they feel both foggy and given over to distracting fantasies of Shah). Those who dare to speak of their trysts with her do not fare well—most end up missing, perhaps thrown into the tunnels for the demons that lurk there.

The Ink and Blood Boys (Generic Member)

Mental 3, Physical 4, Social 6

The cult provides an elite “in” for privileged students that are either not that intelligent or just can’t be bothered to expend the effort. The cult functions as both an expression of behind-the-scenes favor-mongering (its members work exclusively to help other members), but also as a vehicle for the worship of Booth and other demons. They worship the infernal, and commit immoral tasks (certain to slowly erode

Morality) put forth by the fiends. In return, they’re granted good grades, the prettiest or handsomest lovers, and the best parties.

Timothy Midwood, Ink and Blood Boys Student Leader

Mental 3, Physical 6, Social 6

Timothy’s the student leader of the Ink-and-Blood Boys. Midwood is a middling student and a cocky jock prick who gladly abuses his position at the top of the food chain. Once, Timothy might’ve had a soul or a shot at being something of his own man, but that’s long left him. He’s given too much. He won’t ever know the value of a day’s worth of work, and as the days go on, his soul is eaten in patches.

Candace Taylor, Abused Girlfriend

Mental 5, Physical 3, Social 6

Candace Taylor (a sophomore) is Timothy Midwood’s defeated and abused girlfriend. She’s the target of his head-games and intense passive-aggression, and suffers from his insults and (rare) compliments. Luckily, she’s growing wise to it and starting to get a backbone. Part of that is because

STORY HOOKS

- The demons are riled. A plan comes together. Strange symbols end up all over campus—campus police thinks it's some kind of hate crime or gang symbol, while the students figure it's just a frat prank or a viral marketing thing. That's all wrong. They're infernal sigils taken from the pillars of the palace of Lucifer's temple, Pandaemonium. This entire time, Booth has been building to this: he's summoning an elder demon, the creature above him in the hierarchy, some kind of archduke or president or general in the abyssal army. Can the characters get on campus and figure out the symbols before it's too late? Even if they claim the territory, what happens when they find out the ritual's already half-complete and that the elder demon's already starting to come through into this world?
- The Brotherhood of St. Athanasius—part of the *Malleus Maleficarum*—has set its sights on the university. The hunters of that conspiracy know that the school is home to a nest of demons, and these extremists aren't too thrilled with that idea. So they're going to burn it all down. The cell catches wind of this only one day before the awfulness goes down. What do they do? Is there any chance to stop it or lessen it?
- The Hadley Vault might be considered the real prize of this territory, but its utility goes beyond the expected. Really, this room can serve as a powerful Macguffin for any game. The Aegis Kai Doru may want some ancient Relics and grimoires contained within; the Loyalists of Thule may want it to complete their research; the Null Mysteriis may want desire some of the more scientific or pseudo-scientific tomes; and the Lucifuge may want the demonological texts, either to send to Milan or to burn so they don't fall into the wrong hands (some rumors persist that Tom Booth was actually *summoned* to the university by an older, maddened Carlton Hadley). With so many hunter groups potentially competing over the Hadley Vault, it makes for a tense conflict.

she's starting to figure out that something really weird is going on—Candace is a smart girl, and before too long she'll puzzle out the truth about demons. Really, she's almost a hunter, and will soon pick up the candle so many others have in the past. Can she find others like her on campus, and will her curiosity get her killed?

Tom Booth, The Thin Man, The Bone Demon

Quotes: "I'm nobody. Just a man with a broom."

"I see. You want something. You want to **know** something. I can make that happen for you. I am a... man that knows things."

"That's a difficult question to answer. My services do not come cheaply. Take this card. Call this number from a campus phone, and someone will tell you where to go from there. The only things I ask you to bring are a fountain pen and an empty inkwell. Fail to bring these, and you'll suffer repercussions. Now, if you'll excuse me, duty calls."

Faction: The Haven (Demons)

Virtue: Faith. His memories of Hell are uncertain, and his sureness of purpose remains tenuous, so it's best for him to

just give in, to accept that what he's doing is right regardless of what his mind sometimes tells him.

Vice: Pride. Tom thinks he's better than everybody else. He thinks he's better than the demons beneath him and the humans *way* beneath him. He knows he's not at the top of the cosmic ladder, but he's deluded himself into thinking he's pretty close.

True Name: Caacrinolaas-Labolas

Fiendish Flaw: The Imperfection (p. 284, **Hunter:** The Vigil)

Background: Tom Booth hates you. He has always hated you, though you may never know it. Humanity, to Booth, is disgusting and ignorant, a giant squirming mass of fools. This hairless ape is the creature that claims dominion over the Earth? This is the being supposedly sculpted out of the fundament, made from God's hands to represent God in this material world? The meek shall *truly* inherit.

Tom doesn't remember precisely how he got here, and he's not sure it matters. But this is the story he'll tell to those who are worth hearing it: he believes that he was a being of pure knowledge, an angel of wisdom who saw that the actions

Tom Booth

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 5, Computer 3, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Occult 5, Politics 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 4, Stealth 4, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Allies (University Administration) 3, Danger Sense 2, Eidetic Memory 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Holistic Awareness 3

Willpower: 7

Morality: None

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Dread Attacks: Absorb Knowledge 1 (p. 5), Confuse 3, Sleep 2, Strange Form (Many tongues, many eyes; +2 to Intelligence, +2 to Wits) 2

Bans: May not witness a book being destroyed (ban of torment); May not lie to questions posed using his True Name (ban of task)

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Razor Mop	O(L)	5	Mop handle has razors embedded in the wooden tip



of God were not wise at all. God was bent on making mistake after mistake, and only Lucifer was willing to illuminate such divine errors with an eye toward correcting them. And for speaking up, for daring to try to make things better, Lucifer was cast into the deepest pit. Those loyal to him (like Booth) fell willingly into that forever abyss, taking out as many angels as possible with bloody swipes of shadowy blades. In the impenetrable darkness, Booth was a teacher to other demons, and taught them how to find the cracks in their prison so that they could escape into the world that God had made.

The thing is, sometimes Booth actually has flashes of his earliest time, and it's nothing like the stories he tells—rather, he remembers being a weak, sniveling thing conjured out of shadow in a Persian temple somewhere, and summoned again and again throughout the centuries so he could teach forbidden secrets to those sorcerers who dared to call upon him.

He remembers turning the tables on one such sorcerer and escaping into the world before being cast back into nothing. He remembers coming to this university, getting a job, and basking in his detestation for humanity's weaknesses.

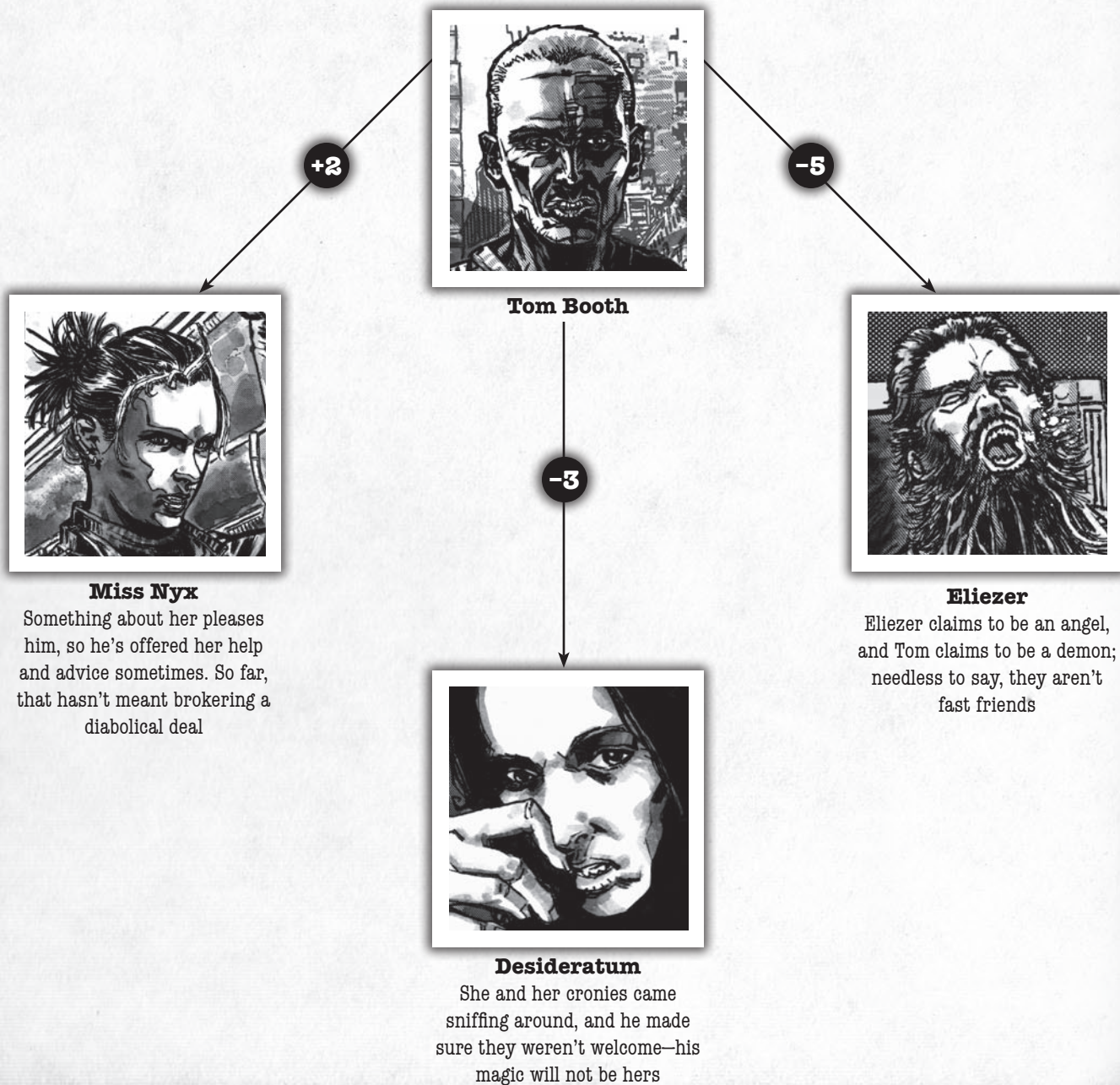
Booth actually works at the university; it's no lie. He's a janitor, and has been for the better part of ten years. He has a small apartment just off-campus, living amongst the students just one street over from Fraternity and Sorority Row.

Description: Booth is a scarecrow stuffed in a janitor's jumpsuit, a skeleton swaddled in ill-fitting human skin. He's too tall, too thin, has too many angles to him—cheekbones that might cut, elbows like bony spurs, big teeth that are flat but sharp. This is not his imperfection (see Fiendish Flaw, above), though. No, Tom hides his infernal imperfection well—his back is riddled with puckered craters. They're like acne scars, but deeper and more numerous. Hunters who

glimpse him out of the corners of their eyes might see his infernal nature writ large: Booth is truly skeletal, with wings made of tiny delicate bones (like the bones of a bird's foot) bound together with dark silk. If Booth manifests his Strange Form, this form gets weirder: his pockmarks manifest mouths that whisper secrets and blasphemy.

Storytelling Hints: Booth speaks in calm, clear tones, sounding too erudite to be a university janitor. He's usually very good at concealing his utter loathing for humanity's weaknesses, but once in a while he fails (mechanically, he fails a Resolve + Composure roll) and it comes out with a sneer and a few harsh words. Generally, making deals with Booth is a perilous proposition: he wants what you have. Girlfriend, money, beloved diary, whatever it is that a person claims nearest and dearest, Booth wants a part of it. His deals often end in him getting what a character loves most.

Rapport: It's difficult to foster positive Rapport with Booth, but not impossible. First, you have to be smart. A person who does something Booth doesn't expect or who somehow outsmarts him is a character that Booth respects—and they're few and far between. Second, it doesn't hurt to be friendly toward demons. Booth's created a haven for the infernal here—being determined to send them back to Hell is not a good way to get on his good side. Earning positive Rapport with Booth means he might actually throw the character some information or a favor without asking for anything in return, and that's a rare feat for a demon. Negative Rapport is easy to earn, however. One wrong word, one dumb action and Booth dismisses the person. The deeper the negative Rapport, the more Booth is going to try to screw that character with convoluted deals and no-win situations. He enjoys outsmarting the foolish and taking what they have.



The Others

The city is home to some characters and factions that, at present, have no claim to territory or only lay claim to a relatively worthless postage stamp of the metropolitan area. These forces work in parallel to the cell, most likely, trying to reclaim some territory of their own. That means these groups might eventually run headlong into the hunter cell. Will they compete? Destroy one another? Forge a tenuous alliance?

Iggy Bayani, Machete-Wielding Motherfucker

Quotes: "Time to take back our shit."

"Sometimes, man, you got to fuck things up. You got to make waves. Cut off some hands, maybe some heads, you know?"

"What'd you say about my lolo? Say it again and I'll cut out your tongue."

Faction: Pinoy Asero (Mortal Street Gang)

Virtue: Justice. Iggy has a very strong sense of right and wrong—too bad that sense is totally screwed up.

Vice: Wrath. Every day is another small revenge for Iggy; any perceived slight, and he'll get his vindication one way or another.

Background: Iggy's got two big families—the first is his real family, his *blood*. Iggy's got four brothers and three sisters,

Iggy Bayani

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry (Machete) 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Family) 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, City Knowledge 3, Fighting Style: Two Weapons 3, Fresh Start 1

Willpower: 6

Morality: 3

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Two Machetes	2(L)	na	7	See Fighting Style





Iggy Bayani

+2



Jimarcus Slidell

Jimarcus is the fucking king of this biz; they scratch each other's backs now and again

and they all have a herd of children. Iggy's not the head of that family, though. His *lolo* (Filipino for "grandmother") is the matron in charge of the family, and Iggy's completely in awe of the old woman.

The other family is Iggy's gang—a mixed Filipino and Hispanic gang, the Pinoy Asero. Iggy's top dog in that group; they're not a big gang compared to some of the others throughout the city, but what they lack in size they make up for in spirit. They've earned a rough reputation for being completely batshit. They don't carry guns—only machetes, knives and other bladed weapons. They rarely kill, but they often chop people apart, leaving them to limp home without a foot or a hand or either ear.

They don't have territory outside a single block just north of the Projects. But the Pinoy Asero, they're hungry for something bigger. The strange thing about Iggy is that he's *this close* to becoming a hunter. He's seen things. He knows something's going on. But so far, he's not had direct contact with the monstrous factions. That'll happen soon enough. And when it does, Iggy'll be sure to wade into the Vigil with his crazy eyes and rusted machete.

Description: Iggy's built like a steroid-pumped bulldog: short, stocky, muscles bulging, veins popping. Iggy's got dusty skin and small, dark eyes, with a sneering frown that's always twisted, as if he were baring fangs.

Storytelling Hints: Iggy's a pressure cooker about to explode. He's intense. *Too* intense. Say the wrong word to him or give him a funny look, and Iggy obliterates the idea of personal space, getting nose-to-nose (or as close to it as he can manage) and growling threats that he's happy to carry through. All of that fades, though, when he's with his real family. When Iggy's with them, he's all soft tones and respectful gestures.

Rapport: Most straight-forward way of getting on Iggy's good side is to do favors for either of his families, and after that, Iggy's a loyal hound whose primary contribution is one of added violence. Unfortunately, it goes the other way, too—negative Rapport with him usually induces violence as well, but in this case he brings it to bear against those who have slighted him or, worse, his family.

Eliezer, Angel of the Gospel of Vitiare, Prophet of the Void

Quotes: "Things are only improved when they are broken and rebuilt."

"Reduce the finite to the infinite to be shown the path to resurrect the Demiurge."

"I am a thousand mouths of mercy, a million hands of hate. I am both the wisdom and the waste. Read my flesh and taste my blood. Become one with the Dead God. Amen."

Faction: The Army of 318, also known as the Children of Vitiare or the Children of Vitiation

Virtue: Faith. Eliezer is an embodiment of pure faith, a creature born of the belief that everything he does is the proper thing, a thing of undeniable fate.

Vice: Wrath. Eliezer believes strongly that one should never make an enemy of an angel, and all his anger is *righteous*.

Background: This is what Eliezer believes true about himself: he was child to Nimrod, grandson to Cush. His father was the son of an angel, and Eliezer was both son and servant to his *nephilim* father. He was given to Abraham to be the head of Abraham's household, and helped to rescue righteous Lot from the plains outside Sodom and Gomorrah. Eliezer has memories of helping destroy those men who would dare to capture and rape the angels. For this act, Eliezer believes he was given a great gift and elevated, becoming an angel in service to the Lord and Father (allowed only to do so because his blood contained a spark of the divine thanks to his half-angel father, Nimrod).

These days, though, Eliezer is plagued by a terrible truth: God is dead. His bloated corpse smothers Heaven with its rot. Eliezer doesn't know how it happened. Honestly, he remembers very little between becoming an angel and now, and isn't entirely certain how he came to this corrupted land of men.

What he does know is that he cannot go home; he's trapped here. And he believes that God's death is surely an impermanent condition. That said, stirring the deceased Demiurge to life is no easy task. To do so, the world must be destroyed and remade, signifying God's own death and eventual resurrection. The snake is biting its own tail, but it must be forced to open its jaws and undo the circle.

Eliezer

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Destroy) 3, Investigation 5, Medicine 2, Occult (Gnostic) 5

Physical Skills: Brawl 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 3

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Giant 4, Inspiring 4, Meditative Mind 1, Strong Back 1, Strong Back 1, Strong Lungs 3

Willpower: 8

Morality: None

Initiative: 10

Defense: 4

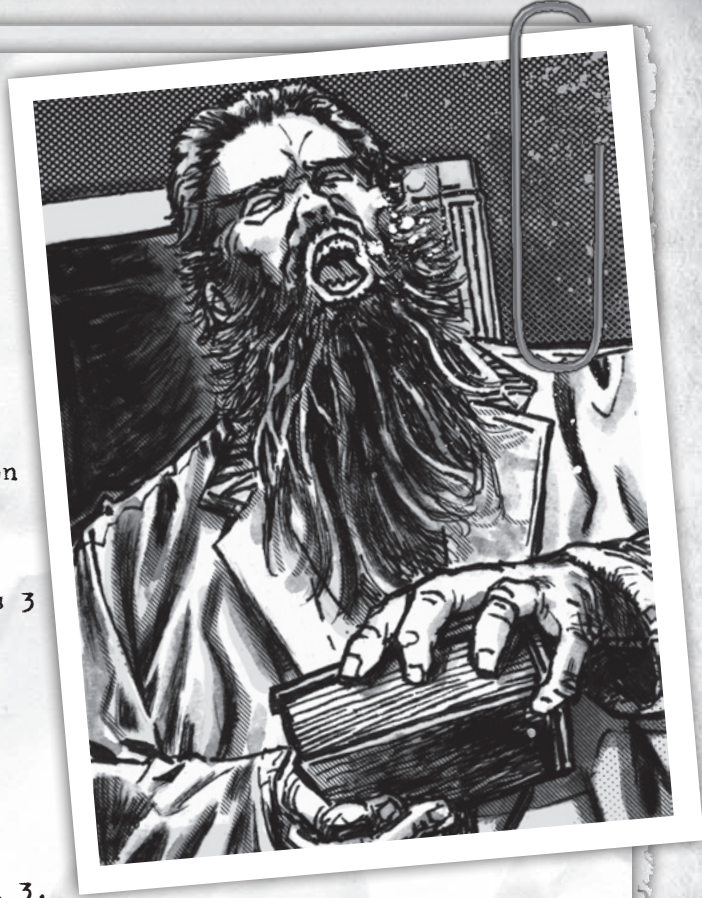
Speed: 13

Health: 11

Dread Powers: Crushing Blow 3, Damnation 3, Ignorance of the Flesh 3 (suffers vulnerability to Relic weapons), Judgment of Guilt 5

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Crushing Fist	0(L)	n/a	9	See Crushing Blow (p. 278, Hunter: The Vigil)
Fire Ax	3(L)	n/a	11	n/a

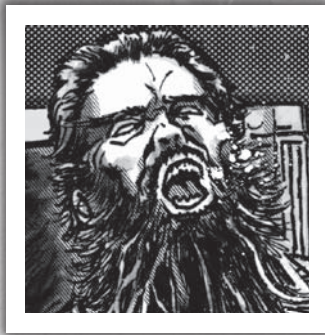


Eliezer therefore is building a small army, and with this army he hopes to march across the land (starting with this city) and destroy it. His sacred number in Hebrew is 318, and so he claims that his army must feature 318 soldiers working in his service. Right now, he only has a tiny fraction of that number. He seeks to spread his influence across the city, but that necessitates finding a territory in which to build his temple.

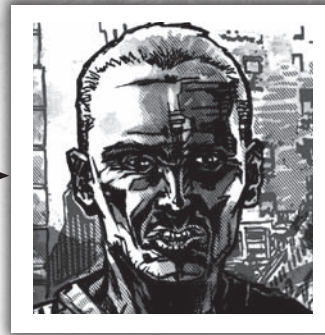
How is it, exactly, that Eliezer is gathering such an army? First, Eliezer can grant those who serve him great power. Second, he holds none of his soldiers to any kind of moral compass, allowing them to indulge in whatever behaviors they like. Why? In Eliezer's view, angels are not bound to ethical doctrine. They are free to commit any action they choose. Hence, those who *serve* the angels are encouraged to do as they so desire. As a bonus, any mayhem they commit contributes to the inevitable destruction of the city and the world.

Description: Eliezer's huge, a giant man with a great round belly and a primal black tangle of beard that lies atop his protruding gut. His eyes are milky white, utterly without pupils, and his teeth are all filed to needled points. He wears whatever clothes and rags he can swaddle about his lumbering form. His prodigious torso is covered with a new gospel, the so-called Gospel of Vitiare (or the "Book of Vitiation"). This apocryphal gospel details a story of Jesus foretelling the future to Lazarus, saying that one day the Holy Father will die but the world will continue to live "like maggots on the dead skin of the Lord." It tells how everything must be destroyed before it—and God—can be reborn.

Storytelling Hints: The man, or angel, or whatever the hell he is, doesn't seem to have *moods*, per se. Usually, he has a faint smile, as if he knows something everyone else doesn't. Even when he's smiting someone with a crushing hand or "elevating" one of his chosen army with swollen power, he still wears that

**Eliezer**

-5

**Tom Booth**

Angels and demons are seldom buddies, and Eliezer's starting to make trouble over at the university

erie half-smile. Further, Eliezer will not (or cannot?) lie, and he has a grave distaste for the hunters of the Lucifuge.

Rapport: Good luck getting positive Rapport with Eliezer. The only way to do that is to join his army; doing so, however, earns the aid of Eliezer, which is no small feat. Negative Rapport is similarly hard to gain, though: Eliezer just doesn't care enough. Oddly, those who really earn his ire are the truly moral (and he seems to be able to sense those with Morality 8 or higher), because they weakly cling to a sinking ship and want to save a world that cannot and should not be rescued.

Victoria Weyland, Rationalist and Fundamentalist

Quotes: *"The cancer must be isolated, its victims quarantined. The rabidity of our subjects is not to be held against the subjects, just as it is not to be held against the dog who suffers from it. But, please remember: a rabid hound must still be put down."*

"We are where we are today because we left the caves, built fire and hammered arrowheads from flint rock. Our weapon is our intelligence, the ability to discern fact from fiction, to separate the mundane world from the myths that we are so often sold."

"Science is the flawless pyramid, and from the apex of that pyramid shines a bright and clarifying light. We are that light."

Faction: Null Mysteriis (Hunters)

Virtue: Temperance. Most nights, Victoria's mind is an emotionless computer, calculating strategies and statistics to determine the most pragmatic outcome.

Vice: Gluttony. Sometimes, temperance fails. This sin is Victoria's greatest secret: in her quiet hours, when nobody looks, she overeats. She knows it breaks her image as someone who values prudent decision and moderate behavior, and she hides it expertly.

Background: Victoria comes from a healthy, loving background... at least, in theory. Her mother was a doctor of obstetrics, and her father was a renowned psychotherapist. Both treated Victoria like she was an experiment, a trial-and-error test of how best to raise the perfect child. They were cold and clinical. Sure, they told her that they loved her, and while it was true, they only told her so to see if it elicited a reaction: did love improve their daughter's concentration, schoolwork and social connections? Or was it sometimes better to with-

hold love? Victoria's childhood was one scientific trial after another, always done with the best of intentions.

Victoria grew up a vehement atheist, so certain was she that anything religious or supernatural was poison to a rational mind. So when her father was murdered in a grisly ritualized fashion (a murder never solved, and even to this day Victoria ponders how it was that his skin was entirely removed and preserved in packets of damp cheesecloth), Victoria couldn't parse the irrational act. She sought meaning, and only became more devoted to her rationalist ways.

The Null Mysteriis—in particular, Alexander Watt's Rationalist theory (p. 121, **Hunter: The Vigil**)—is a natural home for Victoria. Unfortunately, they're simply not devoted enough for her – too much pure study, not enough action. Victoria approaches anything purportedly paranormal as something purely biological, but harmful in the way that cancer is or the way that insects might destroy a crucial crop yield. Her approach involves study, yes, but it also involves an approach equal to chemotherapy or pesticide: she seeks a way to eradicate the plague, not simply to understand it. To her, it's a scientific approach, a medical treatment. To others, it's a violent pogrom, which is a criticism she utterly fails to comprehend.

At present, she has no territory within the city from which to operate this pogrom. She, of course, seeks to rectify that. When necessary, she'll make deals with more extreme hunters (perhaps the characters, depending on their approach to the Vigil) to help clear the way for her to take a slice out of this tumor-ridden metropolis.

Description: Little about Victoria could be considered attractive: she's oddly-shaped, a person seemingly cobbled together of mismatched parts. Much of her gives off the impression of a praying mantis ready to pounce. Her face is a scrunched-up, sour mug, as if she's just tasted something irritating and bitter. She has a faintly bulging potbelly that contrasts sharply with her wan arms and brittle stick legs, all awkwardly bundled into an over-starched lab coat.

Storytelling Hints: Icy and rigid, Victoria is a dogmatic rationalist, and will not tolerate talk about anything even remotely magical or religious. To her, religion is unambiguously a poison, and nothing good has ever arisen from it. In fact, she believes

Victoria Weyland

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Academics (Proof) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Science (Theory) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Expression (Explaining Theories) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge (Spot Lies) 3

Merits: Eidetic Memory 2, Mentor (Alexander Watt) 5, Professional Training 2 (Contacts in Psychology, University; new Asset Skill is Expression), Resources 3, Status (Null Mysteriis) 3

Willpower: 9

Morality: 5

Initiative: 7

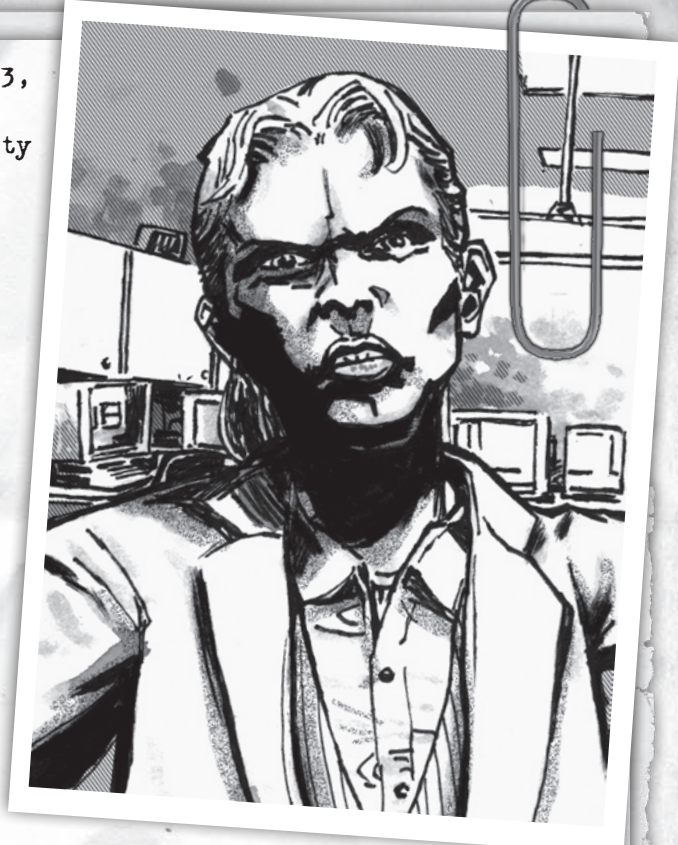
Defense: 2

Speed: 8

Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
.32 revolver	2(L)	20/40/80	5	She takes time (1-3 turns) to aim



that religion is what has helped mankind unknowingly propagate the disease that is the infestation of aberrant creatures.

Rapport: Victoria only really cares for those very few who are on board with her ideas. Those who do appear to value a

moderate, restrained Vigil will find that she knows how to cultivate a strong working relationship. Anybody else (i.e., those who gain negative Rapport) is only in her way, and will be removed from that equation in the most efficient way possible.



Victoria Weyland

+1



Miranda Barthes

Weyland's not an open book, but she answers questions and makes things pretty transparent when Barthes wants to know something

Appendix: Territory Creation

The territories found in **Block by Bloody Block** aren't meant to be exhaustive. A given city has a wealth of possibilities that simply can't be presented here. Chinatown? Little Saigon? Little Italy? The Fashion District? The Trendy Neighborhood? The Gentrified Slum? As much as we'd love to detail each and every possible territory in your city, we can't.

However, we can give you the tools to help build your own territory. **Hunter: The Vigil** offers lots of customization for your games (creating new hunter organizations, new Endowments, new antagonists and so forth), so it's only natural that you should enter into the story with the ability to create your own territories.

Obviously, it's recommended that you try to nail down the territories in your city before your game begins, but sometimes the story makes new demands. Players bring new ideas to the table, or may (gasp!) know something that you don't. One option is that you leave room in your city (and your schedule) to design new territories before each session, giving yourself enough time to hash out what the story or the players need. The other option is to involve the players at some point during the session—before, during or after—and have them help you create the territory. This latter approach serves to get them invested in a particular territory, because they helped to conceive it. Plus, it takes some weight off of your shoulders, allowing them to bear some of the burden of world-building. Given that the players ultimately have just as much responsibility over the story as you do, it's not untoward to suggest that they be involved in helping to design the setting a little bit. Just make sure that they give themselves reasonable challenges. They're not designing territories to be easy or difficult; they're designing conflicts that above all else need to be *interesting*.

With all that being said, let's get down to brass tacks and create some territories.

The Territory Itself

You have an idea for a territory. The Docks. The Museum District. The Sewers. Before you dive deep into territory creation, ask yourself a few questions.

Is it necessary?

This may sound strange, but is taking the time to add this territory necessary? This product lists a number of territories already, but it doesn't assume that the city comprises only these areas: it assumes that these are the only areas *important* enough to control. These domains have some advantage. Monsters desire them for some practical purpose or out of some abstract desire. Equally significant is that hunters can find some merit in not only taking these territories away from the monsters, but also in claiming the domains for themselves. Does your new territory bring something new to the table? Does it beg to be added to the game? If you find yourself struggling to come up with new ideas, locations, story hooks, and characters, maybe it's not an ideal choice.

Does it fill a niche?

The territories presented here aim to avoid redundancy. Ideally, each has its own stories and antagonists bound to them, and that's important. If a territory ends up covering the same narrative ground as another, offering similar conflicts and concerns, then it only muddies the vision of your game. While this product aims to add some strategy to how a hunter cell operates in a given city, it still puts story above all else, and if throwing too many territories into the game makes the big picture too homogeneous, avoid it.

Now, *any* new territory can have a unique angle and fill a niche, certainly. Some might take more work than others, but you always have some way of making it unique. Do you feel that you need an area that best represents the urban decay put forth by one of the Prometheans from **Promethean: The Created**? Are you desperate

IF YOU HAVE DAMNATION CITY (PRIMACY AND BARONY)

Damnation City and **Block by Bloody Block** assume that the characters are controlling portions of the city quite differently. **Primacy** assumes that the vampires remain in their distant, vaunted halls and tombs of power, separate from the cattle they rule. The territories here must be taken on the ground, from hunter cells who have to get their hands dirty to do so.

The **Barony** model, however, is very much about taking territories and sites by playing into the nightly neo-feudal politics. That necessitates a more "hands-on" approach by the vampires, and is more in line with what this product presents.

Both modes can be applied against a city created with **Block by Bloody Block**, of course, but doing so necessitates merging the ideas present in both products.

to use the Chinese Tongs? If the territories here don't cover all the story angles you've got going on, then you know you need a domain for your dangerous religious cult to brew their spirit-possessed nerve agent or to throw flowers to their blind, fat sorcerous leader.

Is it big enough?

A territory needs to be big enough to warrant its existence, whether in size or importance or both. If the stories present are "big" enough, then it's a good idea to ascribe to it the status of an official territory. Physical size still merits consideration, though. Is a single house or building worthy of the status? Probably not, but then again, consider just how big a fancy apartment building could be. Take a look at the Eureka Tower apartment building in Melbourne—this luxury skyscraper has over 550 apartments. Assuming that, on average, an apartment is probably home to two people, you're looking at over a thousand residents, and a thousand *stories*.

Points of Reference

The aforementioned Eureka Tower brings up a good point. For this product, you're creating broadly applicable territories that can theoretically apply to any city, real or imagined. For that reason, it's important to come up with some real world analogs. The best analogs are ones that your players are familiar with. If they've never heard of the Eureka Tower, then the reference falls short. If your players are from Philadelphia, it might help to say that this territory is similar to the Murano building that's going up, a 42-floor luxury condo tower. Alternatively, if your game is set in Philadelphia, feel free to say this is the Murano if you so choose. Part of the freedom of **Block by Bloody Block** is that by using archetypal territories, you free yourself a little from having to always access real world details.

Describe Me

A territory's isn't just a stat block or a map. Each territory is its own entity, a dynamic beast with a beating heart and pumping blood. The area has its own look, its own feel—the way the skyscrapers form a canyon, maybe, or the way the sun rises and turns the one side of the street into a hot mirrored wall of bright light. It has its own smells. (Parts of Philadelphia, for instance, smell like sweet chemicals, while other parts smell like hot garbage.)

Consider writing up a handful of paragraphs, or even just phrases, that exemplify the territory and give your players a sense of what's all around them. Encourage them to ask questions. A player should be allowed to ask, "Is there a park bench somewhere on the street that I can see?" or "Do I see a businessman with a nice watch that I can steal?" And you, as the designer of the territory, should know the answer. An industrial district won't have park benches or businessmen wandering around, but the financial district or the city park will.

Theme and Mood

Theme and mood might result from your description, or you might choose to start with them. Does your territory give itself over to a specific theme and mood? It's okay if they don't (a given territory may see many themes and moods come into and out of play, especially depending on the actions of the characters), but if you do, you may have a stronger territory at the outset.

Looking at a territory like Suburbia, you might suggest that there exists a distinct mood of "oppressive perfection," and that the domain and its residents embody a theme of "perfection has a very high cost." Members of the Better Way strive for perfection, but Anton Alexander and his inner circle have to vent their frustrations as brutal slashers. To them, the suburbs are as perfect as a gleaming, well-honed knife, and that's more than a little scary. It sets a

tone. It puts forth an idea. When the cell goes to such a place, it should be distinct enough that even if they can't necessarily speak the theme and mood out loud, they know *something* is different and unconsciously feel (through your narration) the change.

Again, it's not important you explicitly state a theme and mood, though do so if it helps. It's just a good idea to have a handful of themes and moods in mind.

Organic Systems: General Modifiers

Each territory is governed by a series of small rules and modifiers, but these aren't assigned arbitrarily. They should grow organically from the descriptions you've put forth, and will likely pair nicely with any theme and mood you've laid down. The rules should make sense in context.

Say you're looking at creating a Gentrified Slum domain, meaning a slum that the city is going to "revitalize" with little regard for its current residents. (You don't want to use The Projects because you feel that's too limited; you want a whole neighborhood under the yoke of gentrification.) They'll put up new buildings and tourist-friendly services and help to revamp the historical value of the neighborhood, which will ideally cause property value to rise. That leaves the neighborhood's present inhabitants behind because they can't afford it. In many cities, it's a racial issue, because the city wants to combat white flight, and most of the residents who are left behind are African-American, Hispanic or another immigrant group.

For a mood, you're going with "palpable tension," because these many blocks are on the edge of total desperation. These people are going to lose their homes. So, as a theme, you put on the table the idea that "you can only push people so far." Here, the people have been pushed, and now the territory is on the cusp of violence. The modifiers are in play for anybody acting within the territorial borders.

The rules need to speak to this. So, you put forth the following:

- Social rolls suffer -3 if the characters don't live here. This reinforces the idea that the locals have grown suspicious of outsiders.
- Some Social Merits like Fame fail to work here unless that Fame is bound up into the neighborhood somehow (the child of a famous local jazz singer might get a pass, but a local weatherman might just earn jeers and insults).
- Gangs are big here, and the neighborhood offers lots of nooks and crannies in which those gang thugs can hide. So you rule that both Stealth and Streetwise rolls gain $+2$ dice. Alternately, consider that rolls might gain 9-Again or even 8-Again; these are different than bonus dice as they tend to guarantee a greater level of success on dice pools that are already large (see p. 66 of **Hunter: The Vigil** under "Benefits of Risk" for more information on that subject).
- If you're of the mind that there exists a kind of "supernatural aura" that pervades everything, you might rule that the intense air of near-violence going on here actually grants additional modifiers, like $+2$ to Brawl rolls or -2 to Resolve and Composure rolls.

Again, it's important that such rules fit with the groundwork you've laid out for the territory. Saying that the Gentrified Slum territory offers $+3$ to Academics rolls doesn't make much sense logically or thematically.

Elements of Control

Block by Bloody Block isn't just about providing a setting that can be dropped into your city (though it functions that way, if that's all you need). It's about measuring power through territorial control. Like the way gangs take over a city, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, both the monsters and hunters of the World of Darkness grab influence in their respective cities by claiming domains.

Who?

Someone controls the territory at present, presumably. Who? We're not talking an individual, here, though we will get into individual characters. At this point, this is a general "who," a group of monsters within a larger subset. For example, the Black Blossom Court changelings control the Subways—not "all changelings," but "this one group of changelings."

Once more, you're aiming to organically tie this to description, theme and mood. Going back to the Gentrified Slum as an example, it doesn't make a lot of sense that some haughty "star chamber" of science-obsessed sorcerers controls the place, and if they do, they probably won't be able to hold onto it for long. On the other hand, suggesting that a group of thug werewolves (something that is both "gang" and "pack") stalks the streets of the slums makes total sense. Or you can go another way and say that the territory has recently fallen into the hands of a cabal of big-money bloodsuckers who are ultimately responsible for draining the vibrant life out of this district, and they've set the neighborhood on the path toward merciless gentrification.

Why?

Why choose to claim the territory? What's the value? It needn't be something totally resources- or mechanics-driven, though it can be. The club of fat, white rich vampires wants money and blood. That's it. The thug werewolf pack, though, gains little from the actual control, but continues to control it because this is *their* territory, and these are *their* people. It's a point of pride that goes well beyond reason, driven purely by motivations of character.

How?

It's not easy to take control of a territory. So how did the current "keepers" manage to do so? They didn't just march in and put up a

flag atop the highest building. The gang of Lupines took control, and keeps it through their brutal physical presence. Anybody who says "boo" gets dragged into a dark alley and torn into unrecognizable chunks of meat and clothing. The vampires, though, take control without ever stepping foot into the territory—they simply buy their way up, around and into the neighborhood, snatching out mortgages and leases and exploiting city loopholes. Only once they control it do they even cross the territorial lines physically.

This also leads into the question of how exactly a hunter cell or organization can take control. A territory isn't tied to one guaranteed method of control. Players and their characters are more inventive than you (they are many minds, you're only one), and they'll come up with solutions you as Storyteller have never considered. Still, it's important to define a few ways that the cell could take control, and what ways are going to be easier and what ways are going to be harder. In the Gentrified Slum, is it easier to win the hearts and minds of the residents by ousting the gentrifying influences? Is it merely necessary to get rid of the old controllers? Can the hunters mass a bigger bankroll than the vampires, or can they bring a bigger gang to the streets than the Lupines? What works? What doesn't?

Pluses and Minuses

Each territory is governed by a series of mechanics that are unique to that domain's keepers. Why doesn't every member of the territory gain access to these mechanics? It's the difference between the renter of an apartment and the landlord of the building. The landlord gets the rent checks. The landlord has access to all the locked doors (and all the apartments). The landlord knows the layout intimately. On the other hand, he also has a lot of bills to pay. He has a bucket of responsibilities. He gets woken up at 3AM to a belligerent phone call from someone whose sink drain is clogged because they tried to put a hambone in the garbage disposal.



In the Gentrified Slum, the keepers might gain additional Resources dots because lots of money is coming into the area from developers. Alternately, Streetwise rolls might suffer (-3) because the residents keep their doors closed to the characters or might knowingly perpetuate lies.

On the other side of the coin, if the characters are taking control of the territory by winning hearts and minds, the mechanics at stake might be totally different. They might gain Social dice when dealing with the residents (or gain some free Specialties related to the neighborhood), but might *lose* some Resources dots while they control the territory, because it's earmarked toward keeping out the gentrifying influences.

Consequences

Block by Bloody Block assumes a very cause-and-effect relationship within territories, and between domains and their given keepers. It's a push-and-pull dynamic. It's not so dramatic that a butterfly flaps its wings downtown and Suburbia falls to the hands of reanimated corpses, but it does assume that every action has a reaction and that every choice comes with some consequence and even sacrifice.

Controlling a territory is valuable for a hunter cell or a cabal of monsters—it offers certain benefits. But this isn't a video game; once a territory is locked down, it's not off the board. In fact, sometimes claiming a territory amps up the complexity and conflict. Say the characters manage to oust the current lords of the Gentrified Slums and now control the territory. The conflict doesn't just end: Influences both mundane and supernatural make the claim more than a little troubled. In the Gentrified Slums alone, consequences might include:

- The ousted keepers making a revenge run against the characters.
- Banks and rich mortals buying up buildings and real estate critical to the cell's control.
- A race riot.
- A pushback from local gangs.
- Increased interest from local cops.

Keep in mind, consequences needn't be purely negative. The characters might earn new allies as a result (including the aforementioned gang). By ousting the Lupine thugs, maybe they earn some respect from someone like Duncan Vilsick (pp. 17–18), or even from another rival Lupine pack.

Also, negative consequences shouldn't be cruel and unending. Don't punish the players (and by proxy, their characters). You're looking for good, interesting conflict, not to endlessly batter them with challenges that take them away from their current story.

Streets and Stories

The most important thing about your territory is the many stories it creates and supports. We can't quantify it with systems, but every territory isn't just one story, it's a *hive* of possibilities. The players probably won't take advantage of every story you've brought up as potential, but they'll grab hold of some and they'll also add their own stories to the record.

Big Fish and Bit Players

Each territory is home to at least one big fish character, someone who is more or less "in charge" of the territory. Their story should be fresh, and should come alive with its own themes and moods (and tying those themes and moods to those of the territory is even better).

Crucial to this character is the story of how he and his people took control of the territory in the first place. With the Gentrified Slum, you might suggest that the wealthy vampire who leads his cabal of greedy bloodsuckers is someone named Archer Adams, a giggly old dandy who is a dyed-in-the-wool racist. His secret motivations have nothing to do with money, but are based off of old-fashioned hatred. The way he came to power in this neighborhood is a secret story fraught with callousness, so much that even his fellow bloodsuckers might blanch at the torments he's heaped upon the residents of the territory.

The bit players are every bit as important, and feed into the larger story. They're not all allies of the big fish, and may be competitors, firebrands, parasites and so forth. One bit player here might be Salvatore DiMaggio, Archer's confidant (and a secret competitor for the cabal's leadership). Another might be Vonda Richmond, a vocal activist in the territory who advocates a non-violent approach, but is growing wearier of her efforts failing. A third bit player could be Cracker Jack, a local Lupine gang tough who wants to burn the place down.

Each character is a story, no matter how you create it. Each is a doorway, too—a way for the characters to work their own stories into the neighborhood's conflicts.

Location, Location, Location

You also want to come up with a handful of "mini locations" within the territory, like The Laundromat, The Tunnels, The Bell Tower, The Video Arcade and so on.

These locations are tied to the overarching story as well as the theme and mood of the territory, and each has its own story. In the Gentrified Slum, you might have locations of, say, Murder Alley, the Community Center and the Bellwether House. Murder Alley's where Cracker Jack and his gang drag their enemies and tear them asunder. The Community Center is Vonda Richmond's pet project, a place she can't quite seem to get off the ground. The Bellwether House *was* a local cheap apartment building for some local families, but developers bought this "historical property" out from under them, jacking rent through the roof so they could oust the families and redevelop it as a touristy bed and breakfast.

You can ascribe certain modifiers to individual locations where appropriate. Murder Alley, for instance, might have no lights, making Stealth rolls easier (+3) but Perception rolls based on sight harder (-3).

Story Hooks

What's a story hook? It isn't a whole plot, but the *potential* of a plot. A given territory should be home to at least three good story hooks, and each hook should suggest a conflict and a few different ways of dealing with it. Each hook won't necessarily be used, but each *can* be. If the hunters are floundering or growing too comfortable, throw one of the hooks at them.

An example hook for the Gentrified Slum territory might be:

- Vonda Richmond is on the edge. She knows now who's got the neighborhood in a noose. She wants to do some harm. She's on the edge of tossing aside her ideas of peaceful protests in favor of something more violent. Does the cell steer her toward violence, letting her and her people do the dirty work? Can they not bear to see an innocent rush forth into danger? Or is she worth bringing into the Vigil, to show her what's *really* going on?

You can look out over the city and see what you want to see. Maybe you see the bright lights, and it gives you hope. Maybe you see the tall buildings casting their powerful shadows, and it makes you feel small. But high up, it's not that you can't see the forest for the trees—it's that you can't see the trees for the forest.

Best way to see what's really going on? Turn away from the bright lights, big city, and sit down at this card table right here and roll out a map. Take this box-cutter, and just start hacking it up. Slice-slice. The docks go to the bloodsuckers, the banks, too. The projects, we don't know who has them because we can't get close. The park falls to the beasts, and the highways to the jackals. Slice-slice. You cut the place to ribbons, then soak it in blood, because that's how they got what they got—by soaking the city in blood, theirs and everybody else's.

And this right here? This tiny piece, this shitty little nowhere piece that's half the size of a postage stamp? That's your cut. That's your part of this god-forsaken city. You content with that? You satisfied leaving the fatty cuts and the sweet meats for the monsters to fight over? Maybe you are. But I'm not. So gear up, because it's liberation time.

— LCpl Erwin Emerson (ret.), leader of the Crusaders of Night cell

This book includes:

- Systems to run a **Hunter: The Vigil** chronicle on a larger scale, reclaiming parts of your city from various supernatural factions
- Eight urban territories, complete with story seeds and Storyteller characters, ready to be dropped into an existing chronicle or modified to your troupe's tastes
- Storytelling advice on how to create your own territories, as well as running a **Block by Bloody Block** chronicle

