



Mage Noir™

A Sourcebook for Mage: The Awakening

War Widow

Rick leaned on a lamppost and tilted his hat down over his eyes. There was no sunlight, so the gesture seemed calculated to avoid seeing the tears of the woman in front of him. She turned away from his apparent indifference, trailing a swirl of early twilight fog in her wake. As soon as she left the circle of yellow light cast by the streetlight, Ferryman stepped out of the shadows nearby. His arms folded across his chest and his posture ramrod-straight, he waited for Rick to speak.

"They're stealing her dead husband's pension. That's all she's got to live on now that he's gone—her and the kid. Twenty years old, and they're stealing all she's got." Rick pushed off of the lamppost, face obscured under the shadow of his brim.

"Is she really your sister, Rick?" Ferryman asked, expressionless but not unmoved. Even if he'd tried to sound sympathetic, it wouldn't have worked; his eyes were too dead for that.

"She thinks she is. Isn't that all that matters?"

"I'll look out for her. I know what she's going through." Rosie had heard the story and volunteered at the first sign the Widow Merchant was in physical danger. Now she sat in her husband's farm truck and held on to the steering wheel with white knuckles. Girl like this didn't belong in a quiet middle-class neighborhood. Of course, neither did the black coupe parked across from the Merchant's address. She slid out of the truck and moved lightly to the coupe, peeking in the window. The license mounted on the steering column told her everything she needed to know about the registered owner: Malone. Howard M. Malone. His filthy resonance was all over the car.

She gripped her husband's dog tags, slipping them off of her neck and kept them clutched in her fist as she crept up to the house. The slimy goons hadn't even bothered to close the door behind them. They couldn't hear her walk into the house; she muffled the sound as she went.

"Mr. Malone told you just what would happen if you went looking for help, Mrs. Merchant. And he's a man of his word." One of the heavies slapped the widow hard enough that she staggered backward, red staining her cheek immediately. One hand went to steady herself; the other rose to her cheek. The second man grabbed her by the shoulders.

"That's no way to treat a lady, boys. Why don't you two pick on someone your own size?" The men turned on short, steady Rosie. They both looked her over, from her smart short hair to the pants she'd never gotten over wearing from her factory days.

"You wanna dress like a man, cupcake? Well that's just how I'll treat you." The more aggressive of the two hauled back for a haymaker and tried to slug her. When he hit her in the jaw, he recoiled like he'd tried to punch a brick wall.

"That's not how you throw a punch, Bruno. This is how you throw a punch." She tightened her little fist around the tags and slammed the guy hard enough in the gut that blood trickled out of his nose. That was about when thug number two entered the scrap, with similar results.

Less than three minutes later both men were rushing each other out the door. Rosie wiped blood from the corner of her mouth and slid the dogtags back around her neck. When she turned, she found herself nose to nose with the widow.

"I don't know how I can ever thank you." Before Rosie could answer, they were kissing, and neither of them could be sure who started it.

A hot second later, the widow broke away, panting. "I, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to, I mean, it's just, what would my family say?"

"Nothing, if you don't tell them." Rosie reached up to the widow's lips and wiped the blood off of them. "You don't have to be alone tonight."

Nightingale hung up the phone behind the bar and leaned heavily on it. "That was Rosie," she told the rest of the cabal. "It's Malone's boys alright. She cleared two of them out, but she's going to sit on the widow tonight in case they bring back reinforcements. Options?" She pushed off the bar and clicked on a radio. Glen Miller started to swing, and she tapped her foot along in time.

"Malone's not afraid to use dirty tricks; he's even got some nasty spirits working for him. He's out and proud and happy to abuse people with his power as well as his magic. He's not going to back down easy." Malone was the worst sort to Clown's way of thinking: an Awakened Objectivist with a small criminal enterprise at his fingertips. He started sketching on a bar napkin what his mind's eye told him the spirits in cahoots with Malone would look like. Jung would have been proud.

Rick smirked without humor and poured himself another snoot of whiskey from the bottle Nightingale left on the bar for him. "If he's not going to go easy, he's going to have to go hard."

"So where's he vulnerable? He's hurting a lot of people—he's got to have enemies, and he's got to have soft spots." Nightingale took the bottle away and set it on the bar back, lightly dancing along to the tinny big band coming through the radio.

"A man doesn't step over the dead that often without making a few dead of his own. I guess I'll go shake up some of the fellas on the other side and see what they have to say." Ferryman hadn't sat down, but loomed behind the other two men across from Nightingale. His squared shoulders, meant to make him look taller, only made him look uncomfortably stiff. Even the sweetheart's gentle movements behind the bar didn't soften his expression. He turned on point and marched out of the Chats with purpose.

"What's got his head so full of steam?" Clown asked Rick.

Rick shrugged. "Taking money from dead soldiers?"

"What doesn't give him a head full of steam?" Nightingale asked sadly. As she watched the door shut behind him, she stopped dancing.

Late night in the Bureau of Veteran Affairs was deserted. That didn't stop Ferryman from letting himself in; it just meant no one would be around to hear or see anything that transpired. And that was okay with him.

He worked his way through a filing cabinet until he came up on the file for Corporal William "Willy" Merchant. A hundred voices cried out to him from the files there. In many cases the file was only thing left of a dead soldier whose body couldn't even be recovered for a real burial.

Ferryman gripped the bullet that had killed him in his pocket, and read through the file. "You here, Willy?"

"I miss my wife." The ghost moaned. "I miss my wife." He was barely more than an echo now.

"I know you do, Corporal, but I need you to try and focus. We need to stop the man that's robbing your wife blind."

"I miss her, I miss her."

He was nearly too far gone to be of any help. Ferryman sighed and rubbed his bullet between thumb and forefinger, the rifling along its length nearly smooth from handling. "This man Malone, he sent some bullies to your house. Where your wife and kid are. Those men were going to hurt her. She's in danger, Willy. I need you to try and focus here. I need your help."

Ferryman felt a chill behind him. When he turned, an ephemeral doughboy with a hole straight through his forehead saluted. "Reporting for duty, sir!"

"Thatta boy, Corporal. Thatta boy."

After another phone call, Nightingale had grabbed her coat and left the Chats in a hurry. "I'm going to find Clown. This is going down tonight! Meet me by the pier in two hours." She threw on her wrap as she hurried to the door. "And Rick, try not to drink me out of house and home while I'm gone?"

Rick shook his head and wobbled a little on the bar stool, staring down at his empty shot glass.

"Clown's wrong about the where and when. Circus isn't at the pier," he said to no one. "But isn't that always the way." He got up, picked his hat up off the bar, and wandered out behind Nightingale but headed in the opposite direction. The Pier would have to wait. He let his feet point him where he needed to go. "I'm on my way, Mrs. Merchant, just like I told you. I'll set this right." Right place, right time? That was old Rick.

So long as "right" meant trouble.

"But Ferryman says..." Clown cut Nightingale off with a wave of his hand.

"You told me what he said, bird. I heard you. A wave of the dead moving in. Catastrophic. Impossible show of supernatural violence. I heard you. It's all about timing."

She sneered. "Don't you talk to me like that, Clown. Don't you get like that with me." She put her hands on her hips and cowed him with a look.

"You're right, you're right. I'm sorry. It sounded better in my head anyway." He sat on a wooden pier and dug a knife into his hand, dripping blood onto the back of the ratty paperback he always carried. The drops absorbed into the cover and an image of Malone's Fate manifested in the air above the book. Like a Dorothy Tanning painting, it was vivid but hard to explain.

"I will be violence of the most ghastly sort." The concept told Clown, who nodded. "But you will be wrong about my place in time as well as in space." The image vanished and Nightingale looked to the urban shaman with her pretty face twisted up in confusion.

"What in the heck does that mean?" She tapped her foot impatiently, and in time to some old USO favorite.

"It means we have to hoof it sister. I thought it was here and in two hours. That means anywhere but here and probably right now."

You can't trail ghosts, exactly, but Ferryman knew where they were going after his energetic exchange with the dead Corporal. Things had been happening on the Other Side: preparations to give Malone what was coming to him. The fact that the dead overheard the lingering threat to Merchant's wife and figured that was where to catch up to him was all the information they needed. They were on the march, and Ferryman wasn't inclined to stop them.

Clown and Nightingale were climbing out of her car as Ferryman pulled up. "Has it started yet?" she asked in a hurry.

"Can't say. We can't stop it, so all we can do is try to contain the fallout." Ferryman replied, moving to the house with purpose.

"That poor woman." Nightingale hurried after.

"Anyone seen Rick?" Clown asked.

The other two shook their heads when a woman screamed.

Three fifths of the Lamppost Cabal pushed into the quite suburban house in time to see Rosie get splashed with blood. The manifestation of two dozen dead men had flashed into existence just long enough to pull Malone and his two armed goons in half before they could riddle the two women full of bullets. Duty done, the ghosts were gone.

"Well that's a fine 'how do you do,'" Rosie said, wiping her face. "I killed the lights getting out of the window. No one could have seen it."

Ferryman grimly went about gathering the body parts onto a rug to dispose of it. Rosie shrugged away Nightingale's fussing and went to get a mop and bucket for the blood on the walls and floor.

"This is what we are," Clown said quietly. "A clean-up crew."

Ferryman gave him a look as he tossed an arm onto the pile. "Quit the philosophy will you, and grab that foot next to you?"

"Where's Mrs. Merchant? Did she see all of this?" Nightingale asked Rosie as she stepped back in from the kitchen.

"I... I don't know. She was here with me just before it happened."

"She decided to have a nap in the closet." Rick said, stepping out of said closet with a white handkerchief and a bottle in his hand. "She'll sleep it off and never know what happened."

"You sure she's not your sister, Rick?" Clown asked for a second time.

"She's a war widow, Clown. She's everybody's sister." Rick answered, tucking the handkerchief away in his jacket.

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MAGE
THE AWAKENING

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Mage Noir

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INTRODUCTION

**Politicians, ugly buildings and whores all
get respectable if they last long enough.**

— Noah Cross, Chinatown



The 1940s began and ended with war. The war that opened the decade was fought with bombs and guns, troops on the ground and in the air. The war ended with a weapon more powerful and horrific than anything the world has seen, and going forward into the Cold War, people felt that another conflict of that magnitude would be akin to Armageddon.

In the meantime, the citizens of the United States rebuild their society. The war didn't touch the country directly, as it did Europe. Buildings did not burn, and no bombs fell on the continental United States. But the losses were palpable all the same. Millions of American men went to war, and thousands upon thousands did not return. Many that did returned changed and haunted, and the music and Hollywood glamour of the rest of the decade could not drown out those nightmares.

And within the shadows of the cities of 1940s America, the Awakened looked for their own answers. Where was the country—the world—going? How had everything changed so quickly? Would this new Fallen World have a place for mages, or had Sleepers outgrown any chance of Awakening?

Mage Noir is a historical setting for **Mage: The Awakening**. In this book, you'll find information on the 1940s—the decade that saw the Second World War, the shocking beginning of the nuclear age, the birth of the Cold War, the country's paranoid obsession with communism and the hard-boiled detective story. You'll find discussions of what the culture of the 1940s meant to mages, and what the Paths and orders were doing during this time. You'll also find

a cabal of mages inspired by the *noir* genre of film, ready for use in your own chronicles.

Themes, Moods and Goals

The theme of this book is *the price of Awakening*. As America Awakens to its potential (both for good and ill), the nation's sometimes naïve view of the world is shattered. Wars aren't fought with guns and tanks, but with tiny particles. People aren't good or evil, but some complex mixture of the two. The world is more than a flat map defining the line between us and them, and a part of who you were has to die in order to join this new reality. Just like mages.

The mood of this book is *cynicism*. Writer and editor Charles Ar dai defines noir as "crime fiction written by pessimists." It's a perfect description of this book—a cynical view of the world of the Awakened. Not all change is good, and not all Awakenings are for the best. Even those that try to make the best of bad situations are sometimes doomed to failure by circumstances they cannot hope to control.

How to Use This Book

Mage Noir is meant to take **Mage** and present it within a specific setting and genre. It is not, however, meant to be a historical text on the 1940s. While we've tried to keep things as accurate as possible, sometimes accuracy just isn't as interesting as we'd like (which might be why we're playing games about mages to begin with), and so we stretch the truth

a bit. You can find plenty of historical fact about this time period online.

Introduction: The part you're reading now.

Chapter One: The Party's Over is a quick tour of the 1940s in America, covering the decade in broad strokes, mostly as it relates to the Awakened.

Chapter Two: The Power and the Glory examines how the somewhat cynical and pessimistic culture of the 1940s changed the attitudes of the Awakened, and what it's like to be a mage in that culture.

Chapter Three: Nice Guys Finish Last examines the Paths and orders of the Awakened in the context of the decade. More specifically, this chapter describes what is like to Awaken in the 1940s, and come to Supernal understanding at this time in history.

Chapter Four: Stories in the Naked City discusses what kinds of chronicles can arise from this genre, and provides examples of the conflicts that work best here. You'll also find tips and techniques for telling **Mage Noir** stories.

Chapter Five: The Weaver-West Papers — This SAS, designed for the cabal found in the Appendix, showcases the themes and mood of **Mage Noir**. In it, the characters must solve the gruesome murder of a young mage by tracking down the papers she died trying to find.

Appendix: The Lamppost Cabal is a group of mages who are products of the time and have banded together to face the future together — and hopefully make a buck in the process.

Inspirations

Below is a list of films, music and other media to help inspire your **Mage Noir** chronicles. Not all of these properties are actually set within the 1940s, but all of them evoke the feel and the atmosphere that we're going for.

Films

The Maltese Falcon (1941): Humphrey Bogart as the definitive hard-boiled detective, Sam Spade, tries to find the definitive MacGuffin. If you're pressed for time and you need to sum up the genre in one movie, this is a good one. The book by Dashiell Hammett is well worth the time, too.

Casablanca (1942): Bogie again, this time dodging Nazis and working within a thoroughly corrupt system in Casablanca, Morocco. Not exactly *noir*, but close enough.

Chinatown (1974): Though set a little before the setting of **Mage Noir**, it's such a great film that we can forgive it a few years. Jack Nicholson is the detective J. J. Gittes, just trying to make a buck as he gets enmeshed in a situation he can't hope to manage.

Saving Private Ryan (1998): While **Mage Noir** focuses more on post-war America, this film is worth a look just so the players understand what WWII veterans might have seen and experienced "Over There."

Music

Just to name a few: Frank Sinatra, Gene Autry, Duke Ellington, Bille Holiday, Bing Crosby, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, Perry Como, the Ink Spots, Ella Fitzgerald, and Glenn Miller. You can very easily find recordings and even video of these artists online, with songs suitable for haunting investigations, murder scenes, raucous clubs and playful banter.

Roleplaying Games

Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium) — Set during the right era, and conveying the right sense of hopelessness. For a more investigation-oriented take, check out Ken Hite's *Trail of Cthulhu* as well.

The Edge of Midnight (Studio 2 Publishing) — Noir with magic (mostly Forces, in **Mage** terms), and with an overarching mystery that the characters *might* be able to solve, though never to correct. Also contains a superb reference list of noir films and other media.

A Dirty World (Greg Stolze) — Stolze rebuilds the One Roll Engine to explore the consequences of actions, and how gaining in one area results in a loss in another. A good exploration of enshrining the give-and-take of noir sensibilities on a mechanical level.

Secrets and Lies (Daniel Bayn) — Takes a hard look at hardboiled detective fiction, picks out the good bits, and focuses on those. Heavily focused on the web of characters that happens in this kind of fiction, and a great resource for building layers of lies and intrigue.

Fiasco (Bully Pulpit Games) — Not specifically noir, but meant to emulate heist and crime films where something goes horribly wrong. This game requires no GM and no preparation, and is defined by relationships and need.



THE PARTY'S OVER



The 1940s were an era of vast change, especially in the United States. In 1940, as Britain was reeling from its defeat at the Battle of Dunkirk, the U.S. concentrated on its continuing recovery from the Great Depression. By 1949, the U.S. was the dominant power in the world, its economic strength had never been greater, and U.S. soldiers and U.S. military might were a deciding factor in winning World War II. The years between saw warfare more terrible than any before, as well as the development of dozens of inventions that transformed the world, from jet engines to digital computers to nuclear weapons. The 1940s were an era of great triumph for the U.S., but that triumph was not without a price. This is the era when many people learned exactly how horrible people can be to one another, how the triumph of good over evil often requires the sacrifice of many lives, and how idealistic and genuinely good people are just as vulnerable to a bullet or a knife in the back as anyone else.

History and Mood

When using the 1940s as a setting, it's worth remembering that in the *World of Darkness*, getting the correct feel and tone for an era matters more than strict historical accuracy. Knowing the exact dates of various events correct isn't nearly as important as conveying the correct mood. Period films are often a far better guide for understanding this era than history books, since these films provide some of the current slang and examples of what sorts of stories best fit in this era.

WWII – The War Over There

World War II and its aftermath dominated the decade. From 1941-1945, more than 13 million U.S. men and women served in the armed forces overseas. However, for people back in the U.S., this war was something they heard about on the radio, saw images of in newspapers and on movie newsreels, and occasionally confronted in grimly official letters which informed them that a child or spouse was dead or missing in action. With the exception of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, there were no attacks on U.S. soil and no civilian casualties. The war was something that happened “over there,” on Pacific islands, various Asian nations and all across Europe, but its effects touched the lives of everyone in the U.S.

Rationing

From 1942 to 1946, the U.S. rationed various commodities needed for the war effort. Tires and gasoline were two of the first commodities to be rationed, but soon rationing extended to automobiles, coal, firewood, sugar, bicycles, shoes, coffee, meat, lard, cooking oil, coffee and all dairy products. Ration cards were a reality of life for everyone, and anyone who attempted to cheat on their rationing to acquire more of these goods faced serious hostility as well as legal penalties. To prevent hoarding, each ration card was only good for a set period of time.

While support for the war was almost universal, so was discontent with rationing, especially since shops often ran out of supplies and holding a valid ration card for a particular good was no guarantee that any of this good was actually available before the card expired. Not unexpectedly, there was also a thriving black market in rationed goods, with

Professional Women in the 1940s

In addition to office jobs and various trades, some determined women also worked in respected and highly skilled professional fields like medicine, law, and the sciences. Such women were very much in the minority, and often faced serious discrimination, but in most states, they could legally hold these occupations and a few women did. For example, Grace Hooper had master's degrees in both mathematics and physics from Vassar, joined the Navy as part of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), earned the rank of Lieutenant and was stationed at a research facility at Harvard, doing groundbreaking work with the first digital computers.

While such women were few and far between, it was perfectly possible for women in the 1940s to be doctors, lawyers, college professors, or even scientists or engineers. However, these women would face frequent prejudice. Sometimes demonstrating superlative skill could turn this harassment into respect, but just as often their male colleagues would consider a high degree of skill as evidence that the woman was either cheating or in some way unnatural.

meat, sugar and especially gasoline being the most popular black market items. Individual farmers and shopkeepers looking to make a bit of extra money provided almost all of the black market in food. However, organized crime held a major share of all black market gasoline. As much as five percent of all gasoline sold during the war was sold on the black market. Stealing everything from ration cards to the gasoline itself, the large criminal organizations that had grown up around Prohibition kept themselves in illegal gasoline and made large quantities of money from its sale. The war benefited all aspects of the U.S. economy, including organized crime.

Gender and the War

Of the 16 million U.S. citizens serving in the armed forces, 98% were men. Almost one in five men in the U.S. was in the military and most were stationed overseas. At the same time, U.S. industrial capacity had to drastically increase to provide for the vehicles, munitions, and other products desperately required by the war effort. The 1940s represented a period of enormous expansion for the U.S. economy, and many of the young men who would traditionally have filled the millions of new jobs created by this expansion were in the military. To make up this difference, women and especially married women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers. By 1945, almost 20 million women were employed, a 50% increase from the number of women employed at the beginning of the decade. For the first time, more married women than single women were working outside of the home, in fields from office to manufacturing to complex technical fields.

However, almost none of these gains in women's employment lasted. When the war ended, the

government as well as employers and unions expected women to give up their jobs so that the millions of men who were leaving the military would have jobs waiting for them. Some women who went to work during the war were able to keep their jobs, but almost all of them faced significant disapproval both from male co-workers and superiors and from other women. Many women left their jobs and many of those who did not were laid off.

The social environment of the United States also changed during the war. With a substantial number of young men overseas, working women were far more visible. In many cities, young men were relatively rare, with young women outnumbering young men by more than two to one in some cities.

Unless they were obviously disabled or engaged in important science or engineering work, any young man who was not in the military was regarded with at least a mild degree of suspicion. More than a third of the 16 million men in the military volunteered, but most were drafted. While there were plenty of perfectly ordinary reasons not to be at war, which could range from flat feet to being an only child, men in their late teens and 20s who remained in the U.S. could easily be accused of cowardice or disloyalty.

Media: Radio & Movies

In the 1940s, television is still a laboratory curiosity, but mass media is already in full flower. For the preceding 20 years, radios had become a regular fixture in U.S. homes, providing music, drama, game shows, news, advertising and a wealth of other programming. Most Americans learned of the progress of the war from Edward R. Murrow, Eric Sevareid and other radio journalists who often reported from very close to the front lines.

However, the 1930s had marked the beginning of the golden age of the film industry, and by the 1940s, almost two-thirds of the American public went to the movies at least once a week.

A number of exceptionally talented European directors and actors like Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, and Marlene Dietrich fled the Nazis and made new careers in Hollywood. This influx of new talent helped make already large audiences even larger. Going to see a movie included far more than just a feature film: There were cartoons for children as well as newsreels that brought images of war and heroic U.S. soldiers home to the public. This was an era when radio was ubiquitous and familiar, and when movies were glamorous and amazing. Everyone listened to the radio, but young people dreamed of going to Hollywood to be “discovered” by a famous director and become a movie star.

Travel

Travel across the United States was easier than it had ever been before, but was also slow, difficult and expensive. DC-3s and similar aircraft offered coast-to-coast air travel, with travel from New York City to San Francisco taking only 15-18 hours. By 1947, Pan-Am even offered non-stop service between New York City and London. However, air travel was also exceedingly expensive. Air travel cost more than twice as much as a train ticket for the same journey. A trip from New York City to San Francisco provided passengers with a sleeper berth, like on a train, but cost more than \$100—around \$1,500 in today’s currency.

Similarly, while America’s love of the automobile was in full force, the wartime gasoline rationing of the early 1940s combined with wartime manufacturing’s focus on military production made new cars a rarity. For most of the 1940s, new cars were unavailable, and so was gasoline for extended journeys. Also, the interstate highway system did not yet exist, and so long distance road travel was considerably slower than it was in the late 1950s. Long-distance travel was faster and easier than ever before, but it still somewhat exotic and unusual.

On the Road

The first incarnation of the U.S. highway system was created during the 20s and 30s, and included the famous Route 66, heading from Chicago to Los Angeles. The towns along this and the other numbered routes became the first beginning of a national road culture, filled with diners, hotels, and truck stops. Unlike the Interstate Highway system

constructed in the 1950s, the numbered routes passed through cities and towns, rather than going around them, which made for slightly slower travel, but also linked the people along a given route together.

Even during the war, small towns along the larger routes experienced a boom as a steady stream of trucks and motorists passed through, stopping at local shops, museums, restaurants and gas stations. Rationing limited this during the war, but trucks carrying important supplies were exempt and so these routes provided jobs and income to residents of the many towns passed through. Especially after the war, people began moving to these towns from other small towns and rural areas that were not located along any of these highways.

Crime and Justice

Modern scientific law enforcement began in the 1940s. In the 1930s, criminals like Bonnie and Clyde, John Dillinger, and Pretty Boy Floyd became widely publicized celebrities, much to the embarrassment of local and federal law enforcement. Efforts to crack down on multi-state crime sprees and criminal gangs who were simply too violent and well armed for many local police departments to handle drew increased funding to the FBI and helped sponsor increased cooperation between the FBI and local law enforcement. These crimes also helped encourage the development of national databases of crimes and of physical evidence like fingerprints. The “G-Men” of the FBI were at the forefront of all of these efforts.

Most local police departments had databases of fingerprints and mug shots, and the FBI had recently completed the first national database of criminal data. However, the infrastructure behind this new era of scientific crime fighting was relatively new, and far from universal. While local police departments shared information with the FBI, they rarely did so with other local police departments.

If a crime or a criminal was sufficiently infamous, or the criminal committed crimes in multiple states, then the FBI got involved and the criminal became the subject of a nationwide search. However, for purely local crimes, avoiding getting caught usually meant simply moving to another state and not committing crimes there. In the 1940s, small-time criminals were as difficult to catch as they had been 20 years before, but anyone who made news by going on a spree was going to soon find the full force of both the FBI and local law enforcement arrayed against them.

Magic and Forensics

In the 1940s, the gold standard for criminal forensics is fingerprints. In this era, a positive match on a fingerprint goes a long way towards securing a conviction, and the lack of the accused's fingerprints at the site of the crime is a strong point in his favor.

Mages who are engaged in any sort of illegal enterprise typically use magical means to disguise their fingerprints. The Death ●●● spell "Destroy Object" cast to affect an area erases all fingerprint traces on objects with a single success. If desired, the mage can instead perform a sympathetic casting of this spell to only erase fingerprints belonging to a specific individual that the mage has some connection to. Alternately, the Life ●●● spell "Two Faces" allows a mage to make her fingerprints unrecognizable. Transforming the mage's fingerprints into those of another person requires the use of the Life ●●●● spell "Doppelganger."

Changing fingerprints traces on objects requires the use of the Matter DD spell "Shape Liquid;" changing these traces so they appear to have been left by someone else requires the spell be cast as a sympathetic spell. With this use, the mage literally causes someone else's fingerprints to replace the existing ones.

Of course, the limited forensic evidence of fingerprinting, blood typing of bloodstains and matching bullets to guns was supplemented by the older evidence of questioning suspects. Miranda rights and similar protections are more than a decade in the future. Instead, some police departments relied upon hot lights and the occasional rubber hose to extract confessions from likely suspects. In addition to such harsh methods, skilled police officers and FBI agents prided themselves on their ability to know if someone is telling the truth or hiding something. This was also an era when eyewitness testimony was unquestioned; if someone who was sober and seems reliable was present at an incident and clearly identifies a person as the perpetrator, then this statement was considered to be more important than any but the clearest and most obvious physical evidence.

Because of the lack of both legal protections and advanced evidence analysis techniques, bribery, threats, and intimidation could also affect testimony, as could a statement from a police chief, mayor or distract attorney to focus the investigation on a particular suspect, or to wrap up an investigation and find a likely suspect as rapidly as possible. Most police and FBI officers were honest and hardworking people who did not give in to pressure to let a guilty person go or to arrest someone they believe is innocent. Unfortunately, a few of them were corrupt and others could be convinced of the rightness of such actions by a fast-talking district attorney eager for a swift conviction.

Organized Crime

Al Capone was in prison and Prohibition was nothing more than an unfortunate memory, but organized crime continued to thrive. At the beginning of the 1940s, Frank Nitti was in charge of the Chicago Outfit and like most organized crime in the U.S., they were into labor racketeering, loan sharking, and gambling. However, the war brought new opportunities. In addition to selling black market gasoline, at least on the East Coast, the mob briefly obtained some degree of official sanction. The Office of Naval Intelligence began Operation Underworld a few months after Pearl Harbor. In return for a promise of early release from prison and fewer official investigations into his organization, "Lucky" Luciano agreed to have organized crime help with the war effort. The mob watched for spies and saboteurs in New York and other ports on the east coast, pressured labor unions to prevent strikes, and limit black market theft of supplies vital to the war effort.

Also, as Hollywood movies continued to grow in importance, the mob moved West. Using their influence over several labor unions, the Chicago Outfit extorted money from a number of large Hollywood movie studios, which resulted in a major court case in 1943. Once the war ended, the mob had even bigger plans. In 1945, mob bosses "Bugsy" Siegel and Meyer Lansky planned to make use of the fact that the small desert city of Las Vegas had legalized gambling. In 1947, they opened the first large and luxurious Las Vegas hotel casinos, the Flamingo, which was the first small flowering of the glamour and corruption that late became synonymous with Las Vegas.

The Small Time

Of course, all crime wasn't quite so organized. During the war, millions of young men learned to kill and some of them either found they liked it or had

few other skills. Despite the government's best efforts, not everyone who came back from the war found a well-paying job, and so there were many thousands of young men with plenty of experience in violence and nothing to lose. Some became enforcers for various criminal organizations, others became petty thugs and robbers who traveled from state to state, holding up gas stations and committing other crimes that they hoped were small enough to keep the FBI from looking for them.

Identity and Drifters

One of the facts of the 1940s and of previous decades was that people could easily reinvent themselves. In the absence of national databases, people could largely claim to be whoever they wished. A driver's license was at best a piece of paper with the driver's age, name, height, weight, hair and eye color, and was easy to forge. If someone clearly knew their job, no one worried about checking on degrees or professional certificates from other states. High status professions like law and medicine required relatively rigorous state licenses, but if you could pass the license examination and lie convincingly about your education in another state, you could be a doctor or a lawyer. Also, in small towns and rural areas, many people did not worry about licenses of any sort, at least if the person could do the job, or could fake it well enough.

Unless someone was seeking to become a member of a high status regulated profession, what mattered most was skill, especially in the first half of the 1940s, when so many men were overseas. For most jobs, from dentist, to plumber, ship captain, schoolteacher, or airplane pilot, a convincing history and the ability to perform the job was all that was required. Someone might lose their job if their superiors discovered that they lied about their experience, but if they performed the job sufficiently well, their lies might be overlooked. Almost anyone could cross a state line, change their name, and become someone new. If they were wanted by the FBI or were famous or infamous enough to get their picture in newspapers, their deception was likely to be swiftly revealed, but almost everyone else was safe from discovery.

People who sought new lives ranged from petty criminals or ex-criminals, to drifters, to people fleeing their past. Some people sought to escape angry and jealous spouses. Others wished to leave a life in organized crime, leave their criminal record behind, or escape from some similar disgrace, threat or embarrassment. Although it was always possible that someone's past could come to light, travelling several hundred miles or more, to either a large cosmopolitan city or a remote small town was generally an ideal way to reinvent yourself. Some people did this on

a regularly basis, become drifters who rewrote their past every time they stepped off a train, while others simply tried to cover up a past mistake and build a new and better life.

Wealth and Poverty

By 1944, wages were more than twice what they had been in 1940, and unemployment was a tenth of what it had been. By the early 1940s, the Great Depression was finally over, and people in cities across the U.S. were back to work. However, in 1945 at the height of the war-time boom, one third of all Americans still lived in poverty, and in the South and in many rural areas, far from the large manufacturing cities, poverty remained endemic and widespread.

One of the most obvious differences between the 1940s and the second half of the 20th century was that the U.S. was far less homogeneous than it later became. Differences in wealth and in culture were huge, and the majority of the South still had not fully recovered from the financial troubles that followed their loss of the Civil War. The "new south" is still decades in the future. In the 1940s, the industrial and commercial power of the nation still lies in the northeast and more recently on the west coast. The "old south" was considerably less urbanized than the coasts and also considerably poorer. During the war, the "second great migration" of African-Americans moving from the South to the North was accompanied by a smaller but equally important migration of poor southern white people moving to the factories of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or New York. However, many people stayed in the South, proud of their heritage and history, and bitter about how much wealthier the rest of the nation was.

Segregation and Race

Segregation and prejudice have been a part of life in the US since it was founded. Although slavery had been abolished 80 years before, people of color face extensive prejudice, from the blatant segregation of the South to the economic and social segregation of the black ghettos of Northern cities. However, the 1940s is also the era when racial prejudices and racial barriers are not merely being challenged, but also overturned. In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first black baseball player to be allowed to join a major league baseball team, and a number of other black players soon followed. Robinson was court martialed from the Army in 1944 for refusing to move to the back of an Army bus, and three years later he became a major league baseball star. Then, in 1948, President Harry Truman desegregated the armed forces, an act that earned him the hatred of bigots across the United States.

This is an era when soldiers of all races are being honored as war heroes, but also where tensions surrounding segregation and questions of race are running especially high. The actions of civil rights heroes like Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King came later, as did the biggest civil rights victories, but the 1940s is when segregation started to come to an end, and so is a time both of great hope and increased racial tensions. The 1940s is also the beginning of what became known as the second great migration, where more than five million black men and women move from the South to the industrial cities of the North. This movement also helps spur the growth of a large black middle class in many U.S. cities.

However, while many positive changes are occurring, the day to day realities of life for black people in the U.S. are often quite difficult. Segregation is in full force in the South. In addition to having to use separate lunch counters and drinking fountains, black people also have to use special hospitals or special wings of hospitals, and in almost all cases these facilities are far inferior to those available to whites.

Even outside of the South, black people often face problems simply traveling from one city or town to another. Many towns, known as sundown towns, are deliberately kept all white and had official or unofficial policies of not allowing black people to spend the night there. Entire counties might prohibit black people from renting hotel rooms, forcing them to trade stories and even publish pamphlets listing houses, typically owned by other black people, that allow black travelers to spend the night.

Also, racial divisions in the U.S. encompassed far more than just black and white people. During the war, more than 100,000 Japanese Americans, most of whom are U.S. citizens, are removed from the west coast and placed in camps. At the same time, Japanese Americans living elsewhere in the U.S. and other Asian Americans face significant prejudice both during and after the war, as many people see them as "the enemy" and regularly question their loyalty to

the U.S. Meanwhile, the horrors of the Holocaust cause many people in the U.S. to begin to question the acceptability of anti-Semitism.

New Technologies

The 1940s is an era of vast technological development: air travel, radar, nuclear power, computing and cryptography, and many other fields advanced by leaps and bounds during this decade. Some of these advances, like the development of the atomic bomb, change the world immediately, while others like the development of digital computers are important during WWII, but would have far more impact 30 to 40 years later.

The 1940s is also an era when engineers and scientists are the heroes of science fiction and adventure stories. These advances in science and technology are seen as both the best method of defeating the evils of fascism, and also as the way to build a future that would be better for all of humankind. Many of the new technologies like radar, atomic weapons, and digital computers were highly classified during most or all of WWII, but they change the course of the war and become well known immediately after the war. After the end of the war, this technological optimism and belief in progress continues, but is tempered by a realization of the horrors that advanced technology could produce. Most people still believe that technological progress would create a better world, but WWII showed everyone that these same technologies can also cause unimaginable horrors. However, people in the U.S. also take comfort in the fact that the U.S. is now the technological leader in everything from computers to nuclear weapons.

Cryptography and Computers

During the war, the first digital computers are used by the military to decrypt enemy codes, something that they could do this far better than any person. For the

Dealing with Racism and Sexism

When dealing with topics like segregation, racism or sexism in a campaign, please consider the feelings and experiences of the other participants. It is usually best for the Storyteller to ask all the players if they have any objections to certain topics coming up. When planning a game set in the 1940s, issues surrounding racism and sexism can easily come up. However, if the Storyteller or one or more of the players would find dealing with these issues to be painful or problematic, then the best answer is to downplay these issues. This may not be the most historically accurate way to handle these issues, but the comfort of the participants of the game should always trump strict historical accuracy.

first time in human history, sleepers can crack almost any previous code, a fact that transforms warfare and espionage, at least until other computer users discover how to create complex codes with their own computers. Shortly after the war, some information about these computers and the cryptographic miracles that they could accomplish makes its way into various academic journals. Also, in 1946, the U.S. government completes work on the ENIAC computer, which is the most advanced computer in the world and is first used for scientific research. It is also the first computer to be shown to the press, and stories and speculations about it become wildly popular. The 1940s is the dawn of the computer age, and the public is fascinated by the new “electronic brains.”

The Atomic Bomb

In 1945, the world entered the nuclear era. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki awes and horrifies the world, and alarms the USSR. For the rest of the 1940s, the U.S. remains the sole nuclear power – the USSR detonates its first atomic bomb near the end of 1949. However, even before the U.S. detonated the first atomic bomb, some of the people working on the Manhattan projects supply the USSR with top secret information. The extent of this spying only begins to come out as the 40s ended, but Soviet spies and researchers sympathetic to communism play a major role in the transfer of nuclear secrets from the U.S. to the USSR.

Communism and Anti-Communism

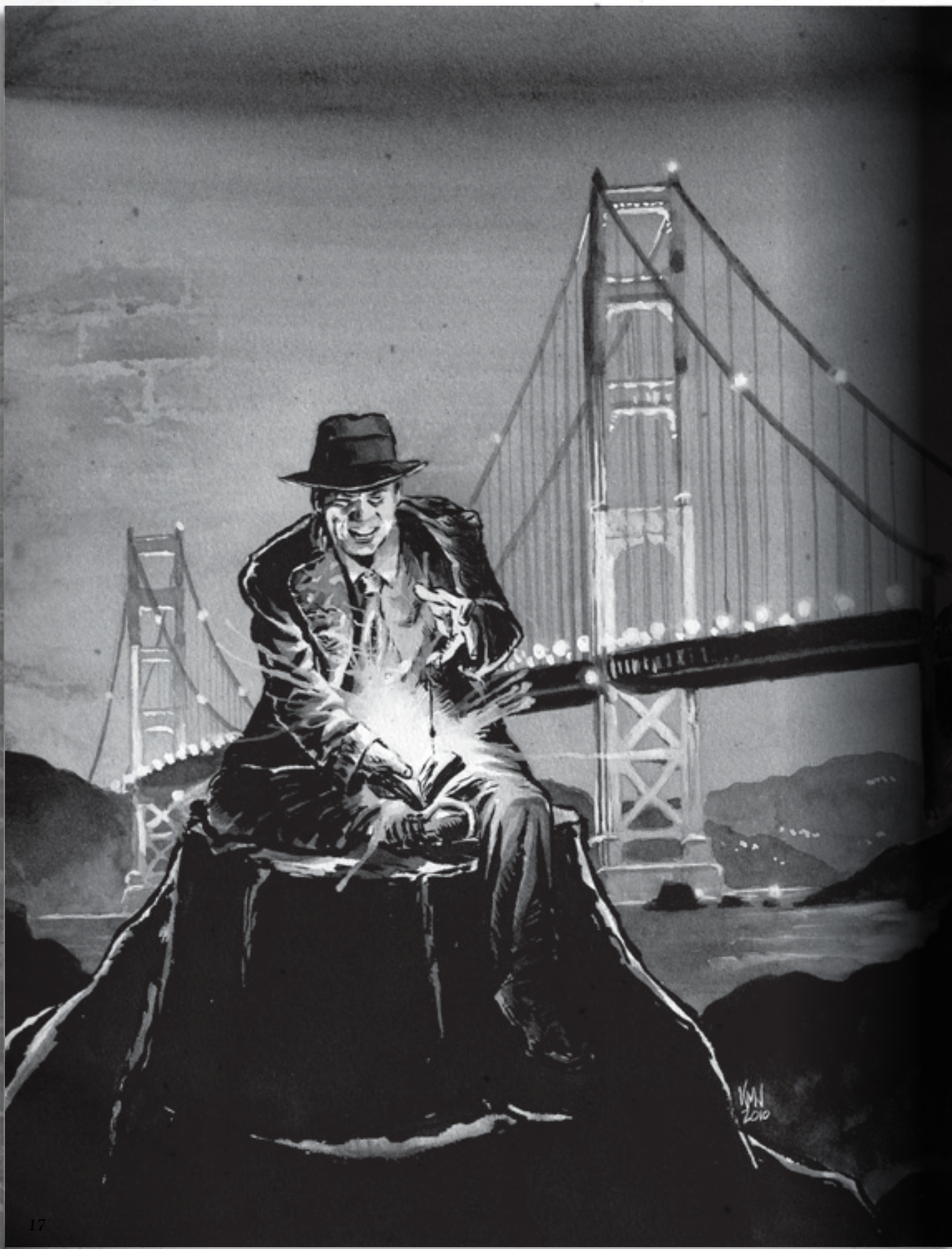
During WWII, the U.S. and the USSR were allies, but this alliance fades swiftly after the war, and by 1948, events like the Soviet blockade of Berlin and the Berlin air-lift help to further increase tensions. These actions also have serious repercussions back in the United States. In 1947, President Truman establishes political-loyalty review boards to seek out spies and communists within the U.S. government. This same year, the House Committee on Un-American Activities begins its first investigations into the entertainment industry. This committee summons a number of prominent Hollywood writers, directors, producers, and actors to testify. The result is the beginning of the Hollywood blacklists. In 1947, 10 screenwriters and directors are blacklisted by Hollywood because of their refusal to cooperate with the inquiries by the House Committee on

Un-American Activities. However, the general public isn't worried about Soviet spies. Many people still think of the Soviets as allies of the U.S. against the threat of fascism, and the U.S. government has little knowledge of the extent of Soviet espionage efforts.

The World Beyond the War

During the war, most Americans think of the rest of the world only in terms of World War II, and after the war, the vast majority of U.S. attention remains focused on Europe, and the Marshall Plan to rebuild it. However, the 1940s is also an era of vast and swift change in the rest of the world. For most of this decade, maps of many nations go out of date on an almost yearly basis. 1949 marks the formation of the People's Republic of China as well as independence for India, and in both nations, independence movements begin during the war. Closer to home, Iceland gains its independence from Denmark in 1944 and East Germany becomes a part of the newly formed Soviet bloc in 1949. From 1945 to 1949, the Indonesian people fight a war of independence against the Dutch and gain their freedom in 1949. With the exception of Africa, which remains largely under colonial rule for another decade, by the end of the 1940s, almost all of the former colonized nations are free. The mid 40s are a time when people in colonized nations from Iceland to Indonesia struggle and sometimes openly fight for their independence.

After the war ends, one of the major affects that these changes have upon people in the U.S. is a renewed confidence and sense of responsibility. Europe is in ruins, and their former colonies are either independent or actively fighting for their independence. The old order, dominated by the nations of Western Europe is clearly over, and when the 40s end, the Soviet Union has not yet shown itself to be the major world power that it would become in only a few short years. Instead, from 1945-1949, the U.S. is suddenly catapulted into the position of being the most powerful nation on Earth. The sun had clearly set on the British Empire, and on all of the European colonial empires. Instead, the U.S. is helping various nations rebuild and is clearly the most powerful and the most technologically advanced nation in the world. Just after the war ended, in 1945, this fact is symbolically recognized with the formation of the United Nations and the placement of the UN headquarters in the greatest of all of the U.S. cities of the day, New York City.



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THE POWER & THE GLORY



Being a mage, no matter the era, means having access to the power of the Realms Supernal and the potential to call down the natural laws of those Realms to change reality in the Fallen World. But mages are subject to the vagaries of their culture, and during the 1940s, the Awakened face different sorts of challenges than the mages of the modern era. This chapter presents some of the ways in which the culture of the 1940s shaped the mages that grew up in that decade. Each section presents a snapshot—a brief quote on the matter from one of the characters detailed in the Appendix—as well as what considerations for character creation the section raises.

Note that we speak in generalities here. It's entirely possible that you read this book and decide that your character has an entirely different take on the culture in which he lives. That's perfectly acceptable. This section doesn't present every possible take on the Awakened of the 1940s, but it should be enough to give your **Mage Noir** characters some direction.

Where Did You Serve?

Between volunteers and draftees, more than 15 million men served in the Armed Forces during the Second World War. Everyone knows someone who went (and perhaps did not return from) Over There, and just as with any war, the returning soldiers carry the stress of what they saw with them. Mages were

capable of dodging the draft better than most, or of using their Arcana to obtain deferments or exceptions, but the Awakened aren't immune to nationalism or patriotism, or feelings of duty. A wartime mage could win battles for his side, and more than one of the Awakened went to the war with the idea that he would single-handedly win the conflict for the Allies and send everyone home.

Of course, that's not the way it happened. The "other" side always had mages, too, which tended to prevent any direct magical assaults on strategic targets. Moreover, advertising one's presence, magically speaking, was asking for a counterattack. The Awakened in the war wound up playing a deadly game of cat and mouse with each other, sometimes deserting just so they wouldn't endanger their comrades.

Home Again

Veteran mages returned knowing that despite their power, humanity was outstripping with technology what the Awakened could reasonably perform with magic (and war was far from the only area in which this was true; see below).

Back home, when the fighting was over, the Awakened learned to cope with the aftermath with the rest of the country. New types of injuries spawned new therapeutic disciplines. Technology

SNAPSHOT:

"You know, we like to talk a good game. 'Oh, we're enlightened! We'll lead humanity out of the dark! No more wars now!' Ha. I'm betting that when Gutenberg printed off his Bible, there was a théarch standing off to the side saying, 'Hey, wait, how'd you do that? That's our thing!' And here we are again."

developed during the war—often as a way to conserve or replicate vital materials—led to the creation of new devices, appliances and even toys. For a returning mage, adjusting to civilian life wasn't just a matter of not being a soldier anymore. Willworkers also had to deal with Sleepers overstepping their boundaries, and dabbling in areas that, up to then, had only been achievable to the Awakened.

Loss

No mage can raise the dead (at least not permanently or pleasantly). The War killed more than 450,000 American military, and any mage that went to war knew someone that didn't make it home. The Awakened, used to feeling in control of their surroundings, don't always cope with loss well, and knowing the extent and scale of the tragedy drove many into depression. It's easy to see where the cynicism of the latter half of the decade comes from; those who have gone to war know exactly how fragile a human life is, and precisely how easily a select handful of people can send thousands more to their deaths.

Some mages (and indeed, some Sleepers) returned home with the knowledge the life is short and delicate, but many others returned home knowing that life is *cheap*. A person with power and a loose or skewed sense of morality can wield terrifying influence and dominate everything around him. A sense of nihilism and postwar depression sank into many of the Awakened following the War, and those are dangerous traits for someone with the power of a mage to have.

SNAPSHOT:

"I watched a man bleed out from a knife wound in the leg. I heard him screaming for his wife — maybe his daughter, I really don't know — over and over, and then he got cold and just twitched, making this little 'hep' kind of noise until he finally died. The guy who stabbed him was a close friend of mine, fellow from Long Beach named Steve Selleck. I couldn't look him in the eye after that. The guy he killed was German, so everyone else thought 'fuck him,' but I read his soul before he died. He was OK. He was just a soldier."

Character Considerations: The War

- Did the character serve in the military? In what branch?
- In what capacity did the character serve? This decision will certainly inform your choice of Skills. At minimum, a former soldier should have Athletics 1, Brawl 1 and Firearms 1 (and these numbers assume that the character hasn't used much of this training since returning).
- Was the character a mage at the time of his service? If so, did he use magic to help his comrades or attack the enemy? What happened? If not, what events from the War now seem suspicious or strange viewed through the lens of Awakening?
- Who did the character lose to the war? How does he feel about it?

Growing Paranoia

After World War II ended the as the Cold War began, a sense of paranoia swept over the country. Mages weren't immune to it, of course; the Awakened were just as susceptible to second-guessing the motives of their fellow human beings as Sleepers. But Awakened society has its own layers of intrigue and secrecy.

Shadow Names

Shadow names are much more important in the 1940s than in the modern age. In this period, learning about a person's past isn't as simple as plugging a name into a computer, and someone can leave a troubled history behind simply by moving a few states away. Many mages, of course, can find a target no matter where he goes, but learning the target's true name makes the process much easier. It's not uncommon in this era for mages to have multiple shadow names. A mage might use one name among his cabal, another in the Consilium at large, a third in written correspondence with his order and a fourth among Sleepwalkers or non-mage supernatural beings. If the mage is involved with the black market or other illegal activities, he might even use a nickname in those circles (which, while it isn't strictly magical, is just another type of shadow name).

Of course, having that many shadow names leads to confusion and a general difficulty in advertising one's services. A mage who traffics in stolen artifacts needs potential customers to be able to reach her. Different mages have different methods of dealing with this problem. One is, of course, to use a given shadow name solely for conducting business. Another

is to go through an intermediary; the artifact dealer might pick up clients through a pawn shop run by a Sleepwalker (or just someone she pays off). Many mages go to great pains to conceal their faces as well, meeting in dark pubs or shadowed alleys. Some even go so far as to wear literal or magical masks, perhaps inspired by the “mystery man” archetype of the era (like the Shadow, the Green Hornet and the Lone Ranger).

Common choices of shadow names also reflect the times. While mythological names never go out of style, it’s a brave mage who would select a Japanese (or, indeed, Asian) or German-sounding shadow name in the 1940s. Naming oneself after the movie and sports stars of the era is common, as is taking names from popular characters or, for the patriotic, the names of generals and other military personalities.

SNAPSHOT:

“Call me Welles, if you have to call me anything. And kindly keep your eyes facing the road.”

The Secretive Nature of Magic

The House Un-American Activities Committee was formed in 1938, and in a few years actors, writers and directors from Hollywood were being accused of planting communist propaganda in American films. Posters of the era urged people to help drive studios out of business, warning of “Fifth Columnists” in our midst and diabolical plots to convert the United States to a Red regime.

Mages of the era might have had communist sympathies just as any other citizen might have, but the Awakened had problems that Sleepers often didn’t. Mages *did* lead double lives, use aliases, and creep around after dark doing illegal things. That meant that if the Federal authorities got wind of a mage, especially one that happened to occupy any kind of high position in society, that mage’s life would be exposed to a much greater degree of scrutiny than it could bear. Mind, Space and Forces spells were all developed to divert attention away from cabals, while Life spells were employed to alter physical appearance, but the problems remained. All it took was one misstep for a mage to be called to testify.

Some mages responded to this by becoming vehement anti-communists, using their magic to help root out communist sympathies (this didn’t tend to work, as magic was not exactly admissible evidence in a hearing). Others went underground, retreating into the dark and seedy back alleys of the big cities, into a world where the federal government’s reach didn’t extend.

SNAPSHOT:

“He got called to Washington. That’s what you get when you’re a college professor, pal. Everyone thinks you’re Red, and even if you ain’t, you might as well be to anybody on the Hill. I don’t know what he’s going to do, because if they call in that crazy friend of his — you know who I mean, the Spanish fellow — he’s cooked.”

Character Considerations: Paranoia

- Does the character have communist leanings? Does he even understand the principles of communism?
- What are the character’s political views?
- Who knows the character’s real name? How many shadow names does the character go by? Does anyone know them all?
- Does the character have a contingency plan for his identity being exposed?

The March of Progress

As mentioned above, the War brought about technological advances in such a small period of time that nearly all Americans, Sleepers and Awakened alike, were awestruck. Just as laymen are generally incapable of appreciating and understanding cutting-edge science, especially on a theoretical level, Sleepers lack the conceptual framework to appreciate and understand magic.

Mages, unfortunately, found themselves watching new materials, techniques, practices and sciences come into existence before their eyes and were left to wonder where Supernal correspondence existed. Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in 1947. This was by no means the first time that anything man-made had done so (bullets and cannonballs, for instance, had been doing so for years), but it was the first time that a human being had traveled that fast. The very event shattered decades of assumptions about what people were and were not capable of doing. This sort of revelation happens fairly frequently as scientific knowledge increases our understanding of the world.

But to the Awakened, this kind of revelation challenges *two* sets of assumptions. Continuing with the example above, when Captain Yeager went on his historic flight that October, the Awakened not only marveled at what engineers and aerodynamic

experts had accomplished, but wondered what this mean for the Arcanum of Forces. Would magic based on sound become easier? More difficult? Would the Masters of Forces need to understand new theories of aerodynamics in order to use flight spells?

Death Unprecedented

Awakened historians pointed out that these kinds of discussions happened whenever significant scientific breakthroughs happened, but any doubt that the world was dealing with a new era ended on August 6, 1945 when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. Tens of thousands died in minutes. While human history had certainly seen casualties in those numbers, never had so many souls been lost in so short a time.

Over the next few years, what the Nazi government had been doing in its “concentration camps” became public knowledge. Once again, the Awakened knew that the world had shifted. Executing prisoners, even civilian prisoners, wasn’t new, but the systematic approach and the viral, infectious ideology that accompanied it was. The mages had to wonder: What did all this mean for magic? Had something in the Realms Supernal changed? If “as above, so below” was truly a guiding principle what did that imply for Stygia, Pandemonium and the Aether?

Mages remain woefully unable to answer these questions. The scope of the questions was just coming into focus; any chance of answering them is years away.

SNAPSHOT:

“Imagine the Underworld now. Just imagine it. If one dead soul in a hundred — hell, let’s call it one in one thousand — becomes a ghost, at the end of the war we have something like sixty thousand new ghosts. Any wonder the Moros have been so damn jumpy lately?”

Science Trumps Magic — Quiet

Before 1943, a mage could cure a bacterial infection with a simple Life spell, and know that, without that spell, the sufferer might well die. Faced with the battlefields of the Civil War or the First World War, mages despaired, knowing that despite their desire — and ability — to end the suffering of the sick, they could only do so much. Yes, soldiers made speedy recoveries from wounds and illnesses that weren’t as bad as they thought (thanks to the intervention of a nearby Thyrsus), but millions still died or lost limbs to infection.

Then Alexander Fleming made his wondrous (and accidental) discovery, and doctors could do with needles and syringes what mages never could. Antibiotics couldn’t cure everything, but they removed the threat of death by infection for a large portion of the population.

This and many other advances in science led mages to a disquieting conclusion: Magic was inferior to science. Science worked the same way every time. There was never a threat of Paradox or Disbelief, because the shard of the Abyss clogging up the soul of the Sleepers didn’t interfere with principles founded on the workings of the Fallen World, no matter how magical they seemed. Many mages fell into a petulant sort of despair, and this gave rise to a style of magic known as “Quiet.”

Quiet magic shunned any vulgarity. If a spell carried the possibility of Paradox, it was inferior. Yes, a mage could use Death to raise the dead as zombies, but why bother? What would the zombies be used for? To kill? Any mage with the skill to animate dead flesh could certainly find a more elegant way to commit murder. To perform menial labor? Do it yourself and leave the dead in peace. This attitude was by no means ubiquitous among the Awakened during this time, but it was widespread enough that it spawned styles of magical instructions, cabals and even a Legacy (described later in this chapter).

SNAPSHOT:

“Who? Oh, right. He’s dead. I shot him in the face while he was waving his arms around looking like a complete idiot.”

Character Considerations: The March of Progress

- Does the character keep abreast of scientific developments? How?
- Where was the character when the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Did she have nightmares or otherwise feel the effects?
- How does the character respond to television?
- Has the character encountered a proponent of Quiet magic? How does she feel about it?

LEGACY — THE QUIESCENT

It's not a Lie. It's a governing principle of the world, and we should just get used to it.

Ideologues from all of the five orders refer to the curse that prevents Sleepers from understanding and remembering magic as “Quiescence.” For years, mages decried this phenomenon — it was a victory for the Exarchs, it was preventing humanity from ascending and Awakening, and it caused potentially lethal Paradoxes. It prevented mages from using their skills to humanity's greatest benefit.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, three mages realized, grudgingly, that Quiescence might have another, beneficial function. It kept mages separate from Sleepers so that Sleepers could manage the world in their own way. Maybe the Abyss was there for a reason?

These three mages were all comrades in arms, having served in France. One of them, Ellis Weaver, was wounded in battle and returned home before the end of the war. Another, George West, was promoted and rode out the war in command bunkers, rather than in the field. The last, Hans “Johnny” Dorfmann, stayed in the field and was present when US forces liberated the Dachau concentration camp in 1945.

When they reunited after the war, they drank and talked and laughed, and finally, after several bottles of bourbon, someone said what they were thinking: Humanity was leaving magic behind. Magic was powerful and amazing, but it was slow, and everything that the three of them could see pointed to the future being all about speed, efficiency and mass production. They could work within that system, they felt, or they could live forever outside of it.

That night saw the beginnings of the Quiescent, a Legacy devoted not to the destruction of magic or its removal from the world, but to the practice of magic that would work *within* the Fallen World. Their magic would be invisible, explainable as coincidence, guiding rather than forcing. Yes, it would be challenging, and yes, they would be leaving behind some of their most impressive abilities. But they would also be safer. As paranoia grew in the wake of the brewing Cold War, the three of them were even more convinced that they were right.

Over the next few years, the three of them trained other mages in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Detroit in their philosophy. They inducted a few into the Legacy, once they were sure that the subject was ready to leave behind the quick power and flashy results that vulgar magic brought. Their philosophy and magical style, known as Quiet magic, proved more popular (and, obviously, easier to adopt than the Legacy), and other mages began spreading it. Entire Quiet cabals, known as “Whispering” or “Sotto Voce” cabals, arose, but the Consilii to which they belong rarely had a sense of who they were or what they were doing. As such, they gained a reputation as being untrustworthy, maybe even Seer plants. This, in turn, drove the Quiet mages even further from the mainstream of mage society.

Schism

In 1948, Hans Dorfmann split from the cabal. In his letter to his friends, he claimed that it wasn't working. It wasn't enough to work magic invisibly. Magic needed to *stop*. With horror, George and Ellis realized that Hans had become a Banisher. Within three weeks, more than 20 Quiet mages across the country were dead. Hans couldn't possibly have killed them all, or so his former cabal-mates thought — not unless he was using his mastery of Space magic to transport himself around.

Ellis and George contacted as many of their followers as they could, but part of the Quiet philosophy was a focus on avoiding easy detection. As such, by the time they could make contact with many potential targets, they were already dead. Wracked with guilt, the two of them stepped back from Awakened society in 1950.

Many practitioners of the Quiet philosophy, though, never having actually met the three founders, were perfectly safe (at least from Hans). They went about their lives in the bleak years of the late 1940s, attempting to live in harmony with the direction that the Sleepers seemed to be taking the world.

The Quiet Philosophy

As mentioned in the text above, the most important principle of the Quiet philosophy is that the mage use no vulgar magic. Every spell the mage casts must be in keeping with the natural laws of the Fallen World. That means that the mage should have some grounding in physics and probably other scientific fields as well, and Quiet mentors often counsel their pupils not to rely on the propensity of Sleepers to shrug off weird occurrence. Yes, Sleeper witnesses might say, “it could happen,” but magic does not occur in a vacuum. The Abyss is always watching.

Beyond that, however, the Quiet philosophy doesn't ask much. Mages aren't expected to follow precepts of non-violence, beneficence or honesty. The founders did endorse living in the Fallen World and not pretending it was something other than it was. Mages have the same choices and opportunities as Sleepers, and sometimes that means taking the dirty money or pulling the trigger.

As might be expected, some mages take the wrong lessons from Quiet. It's easy to hear "do what you have to do" and see that as "do anything you want." This is one reason that Quiet mages have bad reputations in many Consilii. Fortunately, another important precept of Quiet is keeping one's head down and staying out of sight of the authorities, both Sleeper and Awakened.

Quiet Magic in the Modern Age

What happened to the Quiet mages and the Quiescence Legacy? Hans never came for George or Ellis, but the two of them vanished from Awakened society entirely. Their first pupils formed a cabal which remained active into the 1950s (and is detailed in the Appendix to this book), but their whereabouts after that point are unknown. It is probable that, as the paranoia of the 1940s and 1950s gave way to the radicalism of the 1960s, the philosophy simply became outmoded and unpopular. The Legacy, of course, was harder to shed, and so it is likely that a few Liars still live today.

Parent Path: Moros, Obrimos or Mastigos at present, but theoretically a mage of any Path could join the Legacy

Nickname: Liars

Orders: Membership with the Quiescent is meant to be kept completely separate from order membership. Indeed, Liars are not supposed to identify themselves as such in any other context except as it related to Legacy study or business. As such, the Legacy includes members of all five orders. It could, in theory, even include Seers of the Throne, though it would take an exceptional mage to deceive a Liar long enough to join the Legacy.

Appearance: Quiescent mages live on the fringe of society. They favor big cities, where they can fade into the background. They dress simply, and they take

whatever work they can. It's not uncommon to find Liars working as investigators or in other capacities that make good use of the mages' talents for analysis and detection, however.

Background: Many Quiescent mages were war veterans, or at least took a keen interest (widows or wives of soldiers, for instance). Liars often are comfortable with illegal activities, if not directly participating in criminal endeavors themselves. The Quiescent follow a well-defined behavioral code with regards to magic, but the Legacy places few demands on their morals otherwise. In the future, the Legacy's founders felt, morality was best taken in moderation. Too much of it led to being paralyzed, or being manipulated into fanaticism and genocidal madness.

Organization: New Liars are inducted at the discretion of current Legacy members, and always by practitioners of Quiet magic. Once brought into the Legacy and "confirmed" as Quiescent (that is, upon learning the first Attainment) the mentor generally severs regular contact. When the student has progressed to the point of learning the next Attainment, she makes an effort to contact her mentor again.

Suggested Oblations: Spying, following a Sleeper, quiet observation, mixing drinks, cleaning and other menial chores, solving a puzzle

Concepts: Hard-boiled detective, bent (but not crooked) cop, snitch, obsessive peeping tom, haunted war veteran, femme fatale, bookie, well-known fixer, usual suspect, low-level gangster.

Attainments

The Quiescent use Time as their primary Legacy Arcanum, in their quest to forget (or at least distance themselves from) the past and fit in to the future. As befitting the Quiet philosophy, the effects of their Attainments are subtle and not showy — although they would not generate Paradox in any case, the Quiescent remind detractors that avoiding Paradox isn't the point of the exercise. The point is to avoid the notice of the Abyss altogether.

1st: No Past

Prerequisites: Gnosis 3, Time 2 (primary), Science 1, Stealth 1

The first Attainment that the Liars learn allows them to mask themselves from scrutiny into their pasts. A nosy mage attempting to use Time magic on a Quiescent mage finds the attempt frustrated — instead of seeing the target's past, she sees simply a swirl of shadow and hears a rush of sound, with no

form or detail. Likewise, police investigation into the character's past hits walls. People don't remember the character, records go missing, and photos never *quite* look like the mage. In game terms, this Attainment functions much like the Shield of Chronos spell (p. 261 of **Mage: The Awakening**; consider the Potency to be equal to the Liar's Gnosis) except that it is always active and it applies to mundane investigations into the character's past as well as inquisitive uses of Time magic. This Attainment stacks with uses of Shield of Chronos.

2nd: No Present

Prerequisites: Gnosis 5, Time 3

It's not enough to be a man without a past if someone can just come and find you (particularly when one of the Legacy's founders is trying to kill you). This attainment, originally designed to help the Liars avoid scrutiny from the Sleeper authorities, has the added benefit of helping to thwart Hans' lethal attentions (see p. 21). This Attainment allows the Liar to instinctively avoid detection by knowing when and where someone might be waiting for him. The player activates this Attainment by rolling Wits + Stealth + Time. Once active, the Attainment remains in effect for one day. While active, the character cannot be ambushed or surprised. If he encounters a situation in which someone is looking for him with baleful intent, he feels a creeping sensation on the back of his neck or in the pit of his stomach. This doesn't mean he can't or shouldn't enter the situation anyway, and in fact some Quiescent mages state that this Attainment just gives them a warning that things are about to go badly, not a way to avoid such situations. In game terms, the Storyteller should tell the player when the character is about to enter a scene in which someone is lying in wait, but not be more specific than that. What awaits the character might be as simple as an ex-wife's lawyer wanting to serve papers, or as dangerous as a gangster's thug waiting to plug the Liar. If the character turns and leaves, he'll never know the nature of the threat (though of course, the mage could also cast Divination for more information). If the character does enter the situation, the player is considered to automatically succeed on any Reaction to Surprise roll (see p. 46 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Optional Arcanum: Death 3

Everything breaks if you hit it with enough force. Liars with some skill in the Death Arcanum learn

to apply their magic to this principle. With the expenditure of one point of Mana, the player can add the mage's Gnosis to any roll made to damage or destroy an inanimate object, provided the mage does not use vulgar magic to do so. This allows Liars to kick in sturdy doors, shoot out the engine blocks of oncoming cars, and ram their own vehicles through roadblocks.

3rd: No Future

Prerequisites: Gnosis 7, Time 4

The future is a phantom. Any reasonable predictions about where humanity as a species was going evaporated along with nearly 80,000 citizens in the wake of the bombing of Hiroshima. The only future worth discussing is tomorrow—not the “tomorrow” that science fiction writers insist will bring flying cars and world peace, but the day after today. This Attainment allows the Quiescent to manipulate the immediate future to their benefit. Roll Manipulation + Science + Time, and spend one point of Mana. If the roll succeeds, the player may narrate one beneficial change in circumstance for her character. The more elaborate the change, though, the longer it takes. A change in circumstance that helps her win a fight (the enemy runs out of bullets, the cops arrive) might only take a turn, whereas one that changes the mage's life entirely (becoming fabulously wealthy, finding true love) might take years. In play, the best use of this Attainment is one that the player can clearly define and that is doesn't “break” the narrative, so the Storyteller has full veto rights. Since so few mages have or ever will have access to this Attainment, the full scope of the power it grants is unknown.

Optional Arcanum: Death 4

Applying knowledge of weak points isn't limited to inanimate objects. A Quiet mage with this level of skill can find the weak point in a living being, applying potentially fatal force to an attack. The player spends one point of Mana to add the mage's Gnosis to an attack. The attack can take any mundane form (punch, stab, gunshot) but cannot be magically enhanced in any way. A humane mage can use this power to knock out troublesome opponents quickly. A less humane mage can walk into a room with a gun and kill everyone in it in a few seconds.



NICE GUYS FINISH LAST



America has awakened to a hard-boiled world, and even those who signed the Watchtower during the 1940s find the changes disconcerting—they enter magical society being told the Paths are like this and the orders like that, only to find those comfortable illusions shattered a few years later.

PATHS

Acanthus

In an uncertain, unstable decade of selfishness and cynicism, where every Sleeper is looking out for his own survival even when not openly at war, mages on the Path of Enchantment find themselves oddly removed from the concerns of their fellow Awakened. Luck trumps all circumstances, and the Acanthus can follow their Path sure that their talents will keep them safe. Together with the Mastigos, they are the least personally affected by the changes sweeping the world.

Cassandra Syndrome

True hermits are rare among the Awakened, and being assured of personal safety is not the same as being assured of the safety of your loved ones. The forewarning that the Time Arcanum grants serves only to prolong the pain; most Acanthus spend the first half of the 1940s knowing (thanks to Divination, Prophecy and other such spells) that something truly terrible is coming. Some try to avert it altogether, lending their magic to the isolationist movements of the early decade. When the war arrives and becomes real after years of being a lurking potential future and alarming

spell result, it's almost a relief to the Acanthus who have been plotting the converging probabilities leading America, finally, to war. The pressing concern then is to keep as many loved ones safe through the war and the hard years after it – the Acanthus' natural talents in the Arcana are excellent at predicting trouble and avoiding it for the mage herself, but notably weaker at protecting others unless the mage is on hand at the moment of crisis. Many Acanthus become obsessed with guiding their chosen few through the war safely, those who do not succeed becoming embittered at their lot, and enter the second half of the decade consumed by a vicarious pessimism, withdrawing from social contact apart from small groups of hard-won friends such as their own Cabals and a few carefully guarded Sleepers. The stereotypical Acanthus of later decades, a free-living, carefree fey presence, is replaced in the 1940s by the stereotype of a brooding Cassandra figure, cursed with knowledge of just how badly stacked against humanity the odds really are.

A Case of Dumb Luck

Those Enchanters that involve themselves with the criminal underworld of the 1940s, on either side of the law, quickly find themselves becoming infamous. In a world with no recourse to authority, where shadowy conspiracies of interests rule and a man can be killed for sheer expediency without anyone batting an eye, an Acanthus is uniquely protected. Frames don't fit, stoolies fail to squeal and button men fail to find their targets. The hard-boiled Acanthus isn't as effective at resolving matters as her Mastigos counterpart, but she's far more likely to survive and, when

all else fails, to remove her opposition with a minimum of fuss. For a vengeful Enchanter, the lack of authority and ease of making a misstep offers ample opportunity for cursing, and those that cross the Enchanter find the same trouble landing right on their own lap instead.

Tokens

As in any protracted war, superstition soon emerges among the soldiers of all sides as they confront their shared experience and attempt to bargain with their fears. Anything from a shared marching song to a lucky lighter can resonate with Arcadia, and the Acanthus are deluged with new symbols and potential magical tools. Some such items even turn out to be genuinely magical when examined and are highly prized by Acanthus, especially of the Free Council. A rare few are even Arcadian Artifacts, pieces of Arcadia trickling across the Abyss under the extreme stresses Fate and Time are under when the destinies of so many change daily. Several Acanthus themselves Awakened during the war as chance survivors - the GI shielded from an explosion by a rock, or the nurse who left a building moments before it was leveled - and they often latch onto mementos of the occasion as a magical tool, even before they can be identified and trained by an order.

Sharks in the Sand

While war rages elsewhere, the greatest temple to Arcadia in America is being constructed out in the desert. Thanks to California's criminalization of gambling, Hollywood's high-rollers are forced out to Nevada. The Acanthus are there right from the beginning, tugged by Destiny to Las Vegas in the initial mob-fueled expansion from sleepy desert town to modern Babylon. Many forces are at work in the desert of 1946, both pro- and anti-gaming, and the Acanthus who chooses to involve himself faces a tightrope act between wanting the town to become the city he sees in his magic and keeping it from falling into true corruption. Too little crime, and the hotels will not be built; too much, and the games will be rigged so far as to be mockeries of the Supernal. Add other supernatural beings - especially vampires drawn out of their usual isolation by the prospect of a brand-new city - and sabotage by mages ranging from mob-connected Arrow to Scelesti Acanthus, and the Enchanters trying to see their utopia built face exciting times.

Mastigos

America in the 1940s is shaped by the reaction of her citizens to the war, its lead-up and its aftermath. Those reactions are not always obvious and certainly aren't always laudable; some cling to dogma even as they feel it crumbling, while many see the end of innocence the war represents as the end of morality and act accordingly. Fear drives the U.S. onward, and no one understands fear quite like the Mastigos.

Having broken their own inhibitions and mastered their own weaknesses, mages on the Path of Scourging challenge others to break their own, a delicate challenge in the charged atmosphere of 1940s America. Direct confrontation—spurring Sleepers and mages of other Paths to question their deeply-held beliefs by openly flaunting those beliefs—might be the easiest route in times of peace, but the years surrounding and during the second world war are no place for antimonists. Warlocks who openly question American values make easy targets for their enemies, and are often accused of witchcraft, communism or just plain sedition. Newly-Awakened Mastigos serving in the war find themselves quickly disciplined when they return from Pandemonium knowing, deep in their souls, that all orders are a form of slavery.

Nothing Is True

Warlocks abide by a subtle creed, however, and they are used to triumph over adversity. Those young Mastigos that thrive in the 1940s do so by changing tactics, shifting to indirect means of showing the cynical truth of society. The most popular method among the Path is to use the media.

The news is everywhere. Newspapers are increasingly owned by large media groups who are doing their best to buy up the burgeoning radio and television outlets. The armed forces stationed abroad and the public at home rely on the news for their understanding of what the other is going through, and those making the news can influence thousands with their own biases - one major media group publishes decidedly pro-fascist opinion pieces in the years before America enters the war, paid for by donations by wealthy Germans. The authors of dime-store novels use their words to illustrate the cynical age, and the masses flock to the cinema to watch their heroes negotiate the amoral maze of thriller plots. War correspondents face daily danger and sometimes pay with their lives to show ordinary Americans what is happening across the sea.

Mages on the Path of Scourging are active at all levels of the media, using their skills and magic to navigate the tides of propaganda and reinforce the messages they approve of while encouraging the masses to question those they find wanting. Other Warlocks settle for using their abilities to become princes of propaganda, able to make defeats seem like grudging victories and bury atrocities with a stroke of the pen. The need for subtlety is always present, however, especially after the war concludes. Towards the end of the 1940s, Sleeper authorities begin to crack down on media voices; a Mastigos who goes too far in a 1946 movie script can find himself blacklisted in 1949. Most Mastigos propagandists are clever enough to realize that the game is up and retire, finding other outlets for their talent.

Everything is Permitted

Not every Mastigos wishes to draw the Sleepers' attention to the condition of the American spirit, being far too busy using it for their own ends. When you can read minds, conspiracies hold no fears, and a disciple of Space has a plethora of ready-made alibis. Warlocks are psychologically predisposed to deal with the cynical new world and thrive in its murky corners. Mastigos do especially well playing to the vices of others. Unscrupulous Warlocks can become kings and queens of the underworld, providing just enough of the forbidden to lead Sleepers into exploring their own vices and shattering societal chains.

All Are Equal

The Mastigos aren't just concerned with breaking moral boundaries, no matter what their fellow mages might sometimes say—the urge to break the rules applies to unjust dogma as well, and Warlocks are among the foremost proponents of civil rights. America has made some progress in the ongoing struggle for equality, but there is much work yet to be done. Homosexuality is still illegal. Racial discrimination among workers in the munitions factories of the south is banned because the industry needs every worker it can get, but the tension flashes into race riots during the war. The Congress of Racial Equality is founded, but achieves little. Warlocks encourage the attempts at change, work to diffuse potential riots before they start and use their influence in the new media to promote empathy for people of different races.

Moros

Death is transition: the changing of one state of Matter to another, in society as much as in life. The end of one thing is the start of another. America dies at Pearl Harbor and emerges, reborn, at V-J Day. Moros understand the shift in history the war represents and are the best placed of the Awakened to accept and weather the transformation of the country. Death may be painful at first, but the change it brings lasts far beyond the temporary agonies.

The Lands of the Dead

Estimates of war dead go up to nearly 78 million; half of those were civilians and half of those from starvation and disease rather than direct violence. The U.S. losses were only around 400,000, under 2000 of which were civilians. The numbers do not diminish the very real pain America feels at its losses, but instead illustrate the agony of the rest of the world. Servicemen are trained and then plunged into living hell for years at a time before returning home to an America which, on the surface, really hasn't changed all that much at all. To a young man returning from Europe, where he has seen one shattered corpse-city after another, main street America might seem like heaven itself. Yet America died just as surely as Japan or France did; as noted by one typically dry-witted Necromancer, it just left a prettier corpse.

Little wonder, then, that more Moros Awaken than any other Path in the 1940s.

American Necromancers are keenly aware of just how easy they have it—their colleagues in countries that saw open fighting face so many ghosts that it seems the Underworld has burst open into the Fallen, and laying them to rest when they become belligerent turns into a full-time job. Most new American Moros during the war Awaken overseas and develop durable emotional bonds to any Consilii that find them. Even into the 1960s, there are still veteran Necromancers using the Space Arcanum to visit the fields of battle, doing their part in quelling the restless dead in assistance to the local willworkers.

Repatriation

The Underworld is a continuous realm. When entering it, an explorer finds herself in a death-aspected underground labyrinth heavily inspired by the area of the Fallen World used

as a departure point. This means that the war dead – after giving their lives in misery – regain some semblance of consciousness only to find themselves trapped far from home in an afterlife alien to them. Pentacle lore holds that ghosts are mere shells left behind by the souls of the dead and are not properly thinking beings, but Moros who enter the Underworld of foreign battlefields are sometimes moved by pity or patriotism to sooth the cries of the war dead and fulfill their final wishes.

The practice of transporting ghosts from one part of the Underworld to another is called “repatriation.” In ideal circumstances, it’s done alongside the return of a body from overseas for internment in a U.S. cemetery. In this ritual, a sufficiently powerful Moros summons the individual’s ghost from the Underworld, binds it temporarily to the body and returns it to the land of the dead once the body has returned to the U.S. Unfortunately, “sufficiently powerful” means a Master of Death and the method requires the family of the deceased to act at the appropriate time. Most repatriations don’t enjoy that luxury, instead taking the form of pilgrimages through the Underworld led by Cabals of Necromancers, leading ghostly refugees to areas where they will be comfortable. These journeys are extremely dangerous, undertaken by Moros who wish to commune with Death for personal reasons, or who Awakened on the battlefield and knew the people they are “rescuing” in life.

The Machinery of War

Even before Pearl Harbor, America is a powerhouse in the war, converting automobile factories to production of munitions and selling (or, rather, leasing) supplies to the Allied nations that are taking an active part in the global conflict. The still-new processes of mass production are turned to crafting weapons of war, and mages on the Path of Doom are fascinated. It’s easy to underestimate how alien the vast industrialization of cities like Detroit is for those living there, but the advancement of mass-scale manufacturing changes the U.S. into something from the science fiction pulps, transforming the communities taking part as much as the materials they take in. New materials are developed, new technologies harnessed and innovation catapulted ahead. Moros with an interest in using the Matter Arcanum to craft find themselves in high demand. Each is kept busy learning how to use the new synthetic materials in imagos and looking for echoes of Stygia in the new steel mills and assembly lines.

Obrimos

The Mighty like to think of themselves as drivers, not the driven; in charge of their own destinies, builders of their own legacy and the deciding leaders among the Awakened. No one leads an Obrimos where she does not wish to go. With the force of the Aether behind them, no petty forces of the Fallen World can push a Theurge off-course, or so they said before the 1940s.

Obrimos who Awaken before or during these years will later describe feeling overtaken, swept up by changing world events and carried, willing or not, at breakneck pace towards an uncertain ending. They feel as though their Path is no longer under their control, as though the storms of conflict in the Fallen World have somehow caused the Aether to become so violent that casting a spell drawing upon it is like reaping a whirlwind. The traditional roles of the Obrimos are changed beyond recognition, the symbols they channel become debased and their legendary faith is tested to destruction.

And then there is the bomb.

Tainted Symbols

It’s a problem of symbolism, in the end.

The Aether is gold, red and white. It’s lightning, thunder, predatory birds and great cats. It’s fire, electricity, radiation and the tides. It’s Orichalcum—perfected gold—and the sun in all her forms and symbols. It’s the strong man, the inspirational leader with the holy power to inspire loyalty and lead.

Both sides in the war have Obrimos participants. All armed forces, to an extent, resonate with the Aether. The American eagle, the stars and stripes: these are powerful Obrimos symbols, and mages who awaken while servicemen can be justifiably proud of them.

The Nazis and the Japanese both use solar symbols as their banners. German shock troops are adorned with lightning bolts. The ideologies of National Socialism and the Empire call to the Obrimos. While there are supporters of fascism among all Paths, it becomes a stereotype among the Awakened that the Mighty are sorely tempted by the certainty totalitarianism offers. To be clear, only a minority of American members of the Path actively turn traitor, but all Theurgists recognize that the enemies of America have the Supernal on their side, just as much if not more so than the U.S. does, and that recognition gives American Obrimos who Awaken before the war pause. Some are sobered by the realization that the Supernal takes no sides in the wars of men, and may find that they

have a duty to go against the instincts of their Path for their country. For those who Awaken during the war, the Aether is especially traumatic; to be confronted with the symbols of the enemy while undergoing an Awakening is harrowing, and there is a measurable spike in the numbers of Obrimos Banishers Awakening during the war years.

Matters do not improve after the war. Those Obrimos who did support the enemy now face returning home as pariahs, if their former Consilii will allow them back at all. For those that stayed, the members of the Path have a very real problem in how magical tools and symbols are received. Aspects of the Aether that they relied on are now tainted in the eyes of the Sleepers; an Obrimos may be seen as a fascist if his tools are found, and the Sleepers have no time for Holy Leaders any more. The damage even extends to some of the Obrimos themselves—unable to bring themselves to use the symbols they now associate with horrors, they search for new ways to channel the Aether. Their experiments are largely dependent on order—the Mysterium's Bricoleurs develop modern equivalents of traditional materials and forms for

use in magical tools, and the Obrimos' need drives the rise of techné in the Free Council—but most Obrimos eventually settle for rededicating new magical tools in traditional materials, changing designs to hide the fascist imagery and even using the now-abandoned tools as sacraments for casting ritual spells, finding a use for them even as they are destroyed.

From Politician to Pulpit

Since the Depression, the United States had become increasingly secular, and the leaders and heroes it put its faith in gained their power from the ballot box rather than the Bible. Media moguls, giants of the business world, industrialists and presidents were the new role models, and Obrimos feeling the call of their Path to leadership early in the 1940s became secular community leaders and men of vision.

The war sees the faith of the people reverse. The trend of secularism vanishes as America finds its conscience in need of salvation. Church membership skyrockets in all denominations

The Destroyer of Worlds

The atomic bomb changes everything. The flash of nuclear fire heralds the end of the World War and the start of a 40-year Cold War that will see the U.S. live under the fear of destruction on a daily basis. Rumors that most of the major nations are working on atom bombs are widespread throughout the war, ever since Einstein realized such a thing was theoretically possible. When the news of Hiroshima breaks, the Awakened rush to make sense of the development, level credit (or blame) for the bomb at one another and incorporate it into their understanding of the world. Opinions are as varied as the mages who hold them, but broadly speaking, the Adamantine Arrow see the bomb as the very antithesis of their order: a hugely indiscriminate weapon that can only be the product of their opponents in the Praetorian Ministry. The Free Council and the Guardians of the Veil try desperately to discover whether any scientists on the Manhattan project were known to them. Obrimos of all orders feel the Aether roaring in newsreels of test blasts and wonder what it means that the most potent symbol of their Path is a weapon. Masters of the Forces Arcana develop spells to produce or

cleanse radiation, while the Acanthus—fearing the worst after their experience with World War II—cast their Prophecies trying to determine if humanity has any future at all with such weapons in the world.

The bomb is *not* the product of the Seers of the Throne. Reaction to its use deeply divides the Praetorian Ministry as many Seers believe it reveals a "glass ceiling" to the cycle of escalation. That said, the Seers are quick to adapt to the Cold War. It all comes down to the development of the Russian bomb—like the American project, it is free from Pentacle involvement, but this time the Seers *are* involved. Pylons of Praetorian Seers attempt to stop other nations developing nuclear weapons in order to encourage America to impose its will on the world by threat of force. The Russian bomb is developed quickly and the great standoff of the Cold War begins, much to the joy of the Panoptic Seers who latch on to the paranoia that ensues. Ultimately, though, no matter how well Panopticon leverage it, the development of the atomic bomb was a Sleeper innovation. Eventually, the Awakened even admit it.

while politicians become increasingly derided, business leaders become associated with fascism and atheism becomes a sign of communist leanings. Theurgists reclaim their role as holy men and women, inspired by the divine, clinging to the heavenly associations of Aether as the uncorrupted core of their Path even as the Sleepers turn to religion's comfort after the trauma of war.

Wings of Angels

While most Theurgists eventually return—with reservation—to the use of tools that resemble their old ones, the search for new resonances with the Aether leads some Obrimos down unusual routes. Powered flight comes of age during the war as the technology behind fighting aircraft matures. The U.S. uses the years before it enters the war to build the world's largest air force in the USAAF. Fighter pilots and bomber crews are the elite soldiers of the Twentieth Century, celebrated for their vital part in the war effort. They touch the sky and rain down fire; little wonder the Mighty are drawn to aviation.

Even after the postwar demobilization, the “Obrimos flyboy” is a frequent character in Consilii across the country. With pilot's wings as magical tools (standing in metaphysically for the “weapon” of the aircraft itself), he feels the Aether calling at high altitude and speed, defying gravity through the application of Forces and unleashing heaven's fury in bombs. Just as interest would naturally begin to wane in aviation, the sound barrier is broken and the fad returns in force. With the smaller Cold War air force, however, it becomes harder for a mage to take up a life in the cockpit and maintain their magical life as well. Most winged Theurgists go into civil aviation and the development of passenger jets instead, while the few who remain as military pilots fight to be included in the programs that will lead, in the decades to come, out of the Earth's atmosphere and into the heavens.

Thyrus

In times like these, people focus on what they truly want when death might arrive at any moment, and what they usually want is one another. The passions of humanity come to a boil in the 1940s, driving changes to sexuality and physicality that will never be reversed despite the best efforts of repressive thinkers. The passion and desperation of the war is felt on the other side of the Gauntlet,

too, as entire new hosts of spirits are spawned by the conflict. For the Thyrus, this is their promised time: mages on the Path of Ecstasy see their ideas take firm root among the Sleepers, are kept busy negotiating the changed Shadow and then fight to defend what they've won against conservative backlash as the 1950s dawn.

Passion Play

The war sees thousands separated from their partners under great stress, both servicemen and their wives left behind relieving their needs with those around them. Even homosexuality begins the long struggle to become accepted. Thyrus see the population beginning to abandon the Lie as it governs their bodies and become enthused, encouraging the sexual awakening of America and preaching that what the body wants cannot be wrong.

The sexual liberation proves to have limits; the paranoia of the postwar years means that people try their best to fit in and reject difference. Any sexual behavior outside of marriage is seen as a weakness for Communists to exploit. There are attempts to improve public understanding: The first Kinsey Report is published at the end of the decade, but progress is slow. The Thyrus don't give in. Mages hide homosexuals; promote the work of Kinsey and other academics, help women's groups and try anything to hold on to the advances of the early 40s.

Shadow War

War is not the sole preserve of humans. The conflict that engulfs the physical world has grave repercussions on the other realms of the Fallen World: The Astral Realms churn with dream-worlds of massacre, fascism, duty, fear and pride while the Underworld fills to bursting with the ghosts of the slain. The combination of heightened passions and rapid development produce perfect conditions for the inhabitants of the Shadow: New choirs of spirits, spawned of humanity's turmoil and invention, appear all over the American Shadow and take their place in the eat-or-be-eaten hierarchy, integrating with and sometimes entirely displacing more “natural” spirits. The sites of particular atrocities bleed and become Wounds, tainting the Essence of the newcomer choirs. The Gauntlet becomes thin in places, forming Verges where the unwanted children of the 1940s can enter the physical world and influence mortals.

The Thyrus are not werewolves—they do not believe new creations of Shadow are necessarily

wrong (not even wound-tainted spirits or hybrids), nor is it a sacred duty to divide Shadow and Physical. The changes leave plenty of work for just researchers of the ecologies of Essence, let alone those who seek new allies and servants to summon. The wise Shaman keeps updated with local changes in the Shadow and chooses sides carefully, noting which new inhabitants of the other world will be useful to her and which she can safely bar from influencing Sleepers.

The New Animism

Thyrus who associate with servicemen during the war quickly notice one repercussion of the war; an upsurge in animist behavior. Items of equipment which individuals rely on for their survival, especially vehicles, begin to take on personalities in the minds of the protected. Pilots decorate their planes with elaborate nose-art, giving their vehicles idealized female personalities in what—to the Shamans watching—seems like a ritualized marriage between man and machine. Ships, tanks, even individual guns are named and given personality by their crews.

The Shadow responds accordingly; the roused spirits of the devices feed from the devoted Essence generated and are likely to respond to the subconscious wishes of their crew. More than one fighter-plane spirit resembles the woman depicted plane's nose (although usually as a nightmarish mix of that form and the vehicle itself), and answers to her name.

The difficulty with the new animism is that it is unintentional. The crew of a gun turret on a battleship doesn't know that by naming their guns and investing their hopes in it they're creating a hungry being in Shadow that relies on them continuing to "worship" the gun. The spirits created are notoriously jealous, and do not take the reassignment of their crews well—nor the end of the war. The majority of such spirits end up starved of Essence, becoming prey for larger Shadow entities in the post-war years, but Thyrus tell cautionary tales of returning veterans stalked or even possessed by their former creations.

ORDERS

Adamantine Arrow

The Adamantine Arrow thrive on being tested through adversity, but "Existence is War" is only the first lesson a young Arrow must learn. Individually, members of the most martial order do well in the 1940s, especially during the war itself, but the order as a whole is paralyzed.

The Arrow do not fight for the order's sake, but in service of their oaths. "Enlightenment is Honor" and "Service is Mastery" are two more of their core values, and the order takes their values very seriously. What they are not suited to is a global war. Individual Arrows are pulled by their oaths in many directions, and the lines of student and mentor in the order are broken as some Arrow feel duty-led to war while others remain at home. Isolated Arrows fighting alongside Sleepers find themselves less able to affect the outcome of the war than they would if they were more organized, effectively neutralizing themselves.

There are new weapons to master and strategies to learn as the war drags on, keeping the Arrow busy. The indiscriminate nature of many of those weapons finds devoted Arrows regarding them warily, and the massive civilian casualties inflicted on both sides makes the order sick at heart. There are still things to be learned about insertion, supply lines, the urban landscape as battlefield, the use of aerial and amphibious combat, and the use of propaganda in war along with many other aspects of the conflict. The Arrow take every opportunity to seek out those lessons: they serve as front line combatants but also ordinary sailors, nurses, strategists and a hundred other roles.

Unfortunately, because they are so embedded, Arrow combatants find themselves conflicting with fellow members of the order, honor-bound to fight in support of their Sleeper comrades. Such clashes happen so often that the Arrow begins to believe they are being deliberately guided toward one another by unknown enemies.

The end of the war is dissatisfying on both fronts as the European theater falls largely to America's erstwhile allies in the Soviet Union and Hitler ends up dead at his own hands. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are an unprecedented moral disaster, representing untold civilian casualties lost for a mere demonstration. Many high-ranking Arrow refuse to believe there was no supernatural influence on the decision to use the atomic bomb (given how perfect a rebuttal of

the order's philosophies it was), and hunt through the chain of command responsible looking for Praetorian agents.

In the post-war years, the Adamantine Arrow struggles with its place in the new Cold War. There is clearly a place for warriors in defense of their people, but the Adamant Sages are wary of the order being debased again. Initially, the order experiments with increased contact between members of different Consilii, gathering the opinions of Adamant Sages and First Talons across the world regarding the order's place in the world. Should they fight the wars of Sleepers, or concentrate on the enemies of the Awakened? If two groups of Arrow are forced into conflict through their oaths, how can they settle the matter with honor? In 1948, these contacts culminate in a grand caucus of all Arrow members in Tibet, where the order makes the decision to withdraw from mortal wars, to concentrate on the Exarchs and the Abyss as their true foes and to learn as much of the weapons of mass destruction as they can. As word of the caucus' decision trickles out, the order finds itself reinvigorated and with a refreshed sense of purpose, ready to meet the challenges of the 1950s and gain strength from them.

Brotherhood of the Demon Wind

The wandering onizake swordsmen (for more information see *The Adamantine Arrow*, p. 157) undergo a typical experience for an Adamantine Arrow Legacy in the 1940s, complicated by their heritage. The Brotherhood has always been a far-flung, loosely-organized Legacy, traveling the world as individuals or in mentor-student pairs fighting for causes that appeal to them. As Mastigos they have unique ways around the restrictions upon travel that the war brings. It is in the cultural trappings of their praxis that the Brotherhood finds difficulties, in a time when racism against the Japanese to be not only accepted but encouraged. In fact, more onizake spend the war in the internment camps of the U.S. than fight for Japan in the war, but the handful of duels between Brothers and Western Dragon members that stumble across them in the Asian jungle are legendary. Those in the camps stay for the sake of the Sleepers imprisoned alongside them, applying justice and suborning the larger gangs as servants and potential recruits.

Free Council

The youngest order is in a period of transition, finding their place among the Pentacle at the cost of much good will. Enough years have passed since the Great Refusal that the original members of the Free Council are now beginning to pass away into death or retirement, leaving the Assemblies to be swayed by younger voices. With them passes the memory of the Nameless' conflict with the Seers of the Throne, the knowledge of how close the Nameless cabals came to destruction and the gratitude towards the Diamond orders for becoming the Pentacle. The new breed of strategos sees only the current victories against the Seers and the increasing extent to which the Diamond relies on them. They are now in a position to make decisions, they reason, without the approval of the older orders; moreover, they are in a position to make demands. The Free Council is the order of relevance in the atomic age, and to hell with anyone else.

There is much to be proud of. Although it claims the Supernal can be found in all aspects of Sleeper innovation, the Free Council all but abandoned research into Sleeper occultism in the early 1930s. Instead, it focused on technological and scientific change, and has found more than enough innovations for the Cabals that will become known as The Cutting Edge to examine. The order's greatest work is the development of techné, the melding of traditional magical styles with modern symbols and technologies. Mages of all Paths flock to the Libertine's lorehouses, especially Obrimos and Acanthus, and the Free Council is only too happy to bask in their appreciation, tripling their membership in American Consilii while similar efforts among other orders such as the Mysterium find little success.

Another mark in the Libertines' favor, as far as the younger Awakened are concerned, is that excluding a few quickly denounced cases, the Libertines are the only order free of the taint of fascism. The philosophies of America's enemies are incompatible with the Libertine creed—the order is fond of pointing out that they exclusively fought on the side of "right" while other orders are left questioning their moral certainty. Libertines are second only to Adamantine Arrow members in joining the war effort, and American Free Councilors join their European brethren in the field long before Pearl Harbor. They are assisted and directed by the remaining members of the original Libertines, who are busily guiding the more combative elements of the order against traitors. When the

Operation Oracle

Almost as soon as the Nazi regime falls in Europe, rumors begin to emerge of secret groups of Axis officials having survived the war and hiding out in locations as varied as Argentina and main street America in a sort of precursor to the “hidden reds” that will dominate the American imagination for years to come. As early as 1946, films noir such as “Notorious” depict the protagonists facing organizations who are secretly Nazi cells. The tales are fantastical, but the American government actually *did* (in the later stages of the war) offer Nazi scientists, engineers and other key personnel secret amnesty. The government judged their worth to U.S. science so high that allowing them to stand trial or vanish into the hands of the other Allied nations was insupportable.

The Sleeper effort (“Operation Paperclip”) is mirrored by a parallel endeavor among the Awakened that insiders half-jokingly call “Operation Oracle.” Oracle is the collective name for dozens of concerted efforts by the American Free Council and Silver Ladder to help willworkers caught on the wrong side of the war escape to the U.S. and take up new Shadow Names within the two orders. The operation requires the coordination of dozens of cabals, daring expeditions into still-warm warzones and the evading of Pentacle Cabals that are unaware or disdainful of the program’s goals. The Silver Ladder takes part, asserting that Awakened are above Sleeper politics (although cynics say they’re really just take part more out of a desperate need to recruit). The Free Council has a more pragmatic view of saving the most brilliant members of “their order,” not letting the Silver Ladder know that the men and women they’re recruiting are actually Seers of the Throne. It will be the last time the two orders cooperate to such a degree,

and will be seen as a major reason for the bad blood between Ladder and Council for the remainder of the Twentieth Century.

Opposed by dissenting members of the two participating orders, the death blow to the operation comes when the Guardians of the Veil reveal the truth about the “Free Councilors” being recovered. By the end of the decade, stories circulate among the Awakened about just how many Seers of the Throne from the Pantechnicon Ministry have been provided with false identities as Libertines, and how many of those turned out to not be quite as contrite as their liberators hoped. Operation Oracle collapses amid Silver Ladder protests that they were betrayed by their Libertine partners.

Awakened historians concede that the results of Operation Oracle are mixed; both orders involved lost a great deal of respect among the Awakened community and the cabals that took part are punished by their peers. The founding Libertines who led the initiative have now effectively spent their remaining political capital and drift away from the public eye into obscurity and retirement, while Consilii all over the U.S. play host to Nazi théarchs who are being allowed to retire in peace. As for the Seers, the over-focus on Pantechnicon that Oracle represents is theorized to be one factor in Panopticon becoming a Great Ministry. And, as the very most cynical commentators point out, it certainly is strange that the Libertines should find out about their missing cousins just when those mages are becoming inconvenient to the Exarch-cult of *espionage*.

Seers of the Hegemonic Ministry approached the Nameless cabals at the turn of the century and the Great Refusal was issued, official history has it that the decision to side with the Diamond orders was unanimous. Official history is bunk—enough Nameless joined the service of the Exarchs and escaped the attempts on their lives long enough to go into hiding, but the 1940s sees several of them break cover. Outwardly working for the European fascist regimes, these renegade scientists and occultists make up the leadership of a minor Ministry called Pantehnicon, devoted to rule of the world by technological superiority. The Free Council uses the war as cover. It's not that they mind upsetting the plans of fascists, but they're out to take their forgotten rivals down for good.

Threnodists

As an example of the spirit of experimentation and the melding of scientific development and magic, this strange Legacy (also known as the "Wailers;" for more information see *Legacies: the Sublime*, p. 107) sees an explosion of membership during the 1940s. Scientific theories about the nature of reality become better known among Sleepers and begin to see physical results in invention. Exclusively recruiting scientists, Threnodists believe that Pandemonium is the quantum substrate of all reality, and that individual consciousness—in fact, all of existence—is an illusion. Hearing voices in radio static and cheerfully breaking the laws of time and space they study, the Legacy comes under the unamused eye of the Guardians of the Veil, whose attempts to stop the Wailers from demonstrating their techniques to Sleepers fall on deaf ears.

Guardians of the Veil

The world slides deeper into chaos with every passing year, but the Guardians of the Veil keep their faith in trying times. The smallest and most secretive order spends much of the 1940s struggling to adapt, as change after change to society and technology seems designed to make their holy mission more difficult.

The cinema and the newspaper were bad enough, able to transmit ideas across the nation, but the Guardians stationed Cabals in New York and Los Angeles to keep watch over both industries for supernatural interference. The rapid expansion of radio as the 1940s dawned, quickly followed by the television, leaves those Cabals dangerously overworked and the order in

a state of emergency; the time between an event being witnessed and it being shown to the nation (or even the world) shrinks, and Guardians watching the developments worry about a time when live broadcasts will put the supernal at risk. Fortunately, censorship and the need to keep wartime secrets mean reports are checked before being sent and live broadcasts kept to a minimum for long enough that the order can get used to the idea that the threat is never going to go away. Just in case, though, several Cabals of the order spend the 1940s purging the media of mages they are unhappy with and promoting the use of special effects in television and cinema to the masses, playing up the "magic of the silver screen" and the idea that what is shown is simple trickery.

Worse for the Guardians is the effect the war and its attendant paranoia have on the Labyrinth: As hundreds of thousands of people move around the world taking part in the war or supporting efforts, it becomes a near-impossible task to keep targeted occultists properly mazed. The order is not up to the task of infiltrating the U.S. army to track every individual of interest and ensure they don't come into contact with the occult. The best the Guardians can do is put informants in back-office positions where they will hear reports of supernatural occurrences in the war and be able to send a Guardian to investigate, but the order would prefer to be able to prevent rather than cure. The state of the Labyrinth does not improve after the war, even when the veterans have nearly all returned; any single keepsake picked up in foreign lands could be a magical heirloom, any random encounter with a native could have been an inhuman being—worse, the culture of America is rapidly conditioned to distrust and report secret societies to the authorities.

Ironically, the new authorities and the watchfulness of the public that cause the Labyrinth to nearly collapse have proven to be the Guardians' salvation. The Guardians' intelligence plants become the Office of Strategic Services, the first coordinated intelligence agency in the U.S.. The Guardians find having actual—rather than cult-granted—legal and military authority to investigate wherever they are needed to be extremely useful. When the OSS becomes the CIA after the war, the Guardians within the service transfer along with it and begin the order's long love affair with espionage agencies. The remaining cult-style Labyrinths can be protected from within the system, and Guardians planted in the CIA and FBI have legal powers that obviate the need for most low-level use of magic in their investigations.

The Eleventh Question

Pariahs among their own order, the “Sherlocks” of the Eleventh Question are investigators who can examine the evidence of a scene and know, via their attainments, whether a theory of what transpired is true (for more information, see *Guardians of the Veil*, p. 166). Their legendary devotion to the truth above and beyond the needs of the Veil keeps them at arm’s length from their fellow Guardians, but in times like these, they find themselves in-demand. Members of the Question do not do well in structured environments where they are unable to follow their hunches, so do not usually follow their peers into the intelligence agencies or media. Instead, they operate as archetypal Awakened private detectives. The rest of the order tolerates the Question, knowing that they will be brought cases and hear things that the legal authorities—and the Guardians within them—won’t.

Mysterium

Magic is alive, and anything alive can be wounded. The Mysterium have spent centuries carefully gathering what traces of the supernal realms they can find into their Athenaea. As Europe tears itself apart, the order must face those storehouses’ being breached by accident or design. Just as the American and European order once “liberated” cultural artifacts and treasures from native mages in the Nineteenth Century, the American order sets out to “rescue” as much knowledge as possible from the front lines, at the same time as mystagogues loyal to those nations seek to do the same. The perception of Nazi Germany as being obsessed with the occult is really a case of the victors writing history—just as many British mystagogues are obsessed with taking French artifacts across the channel only to be beaten to them by American Cabals. Not all the knowledge sought was material, either. The Egregori, living repositories of knowledge among mystagogues, are sought as recruits and kidnap victims by all sides. After the war, the order continues to turn on itself as active theft changes to bitter recriminations and largely ignored demands for the return of assets. A few wits in the order point out that what was once spread across hundreds of Athenaea is now concentrated in a handful of super-sized bases in America and England, ripe for destruction by the Seers, and the end of the decade sees a few repatriations of low-level items.

The desperate effort to hold onto everything the order has already acquired puts other concerns at a lower priority. The war sees large numbers of people traveling through until-now lonely corners of the world, and sometimes a troop deployment will uncover a promising ruin or disturb a Temple Guardian that the Mysterium can then send resources to investigate. Archaeomantic expeditions in the 40s have more of a flavor of a smash and grab raid for artifacts before a rival group of mystagogues can arrive than a careful archaeological dig. The Bricoleurs, the faction of the Mysterium that looks for ways to apply modern symbols to magic and updates the order’s knowledge of the Sleeper sciences, is constantly frustrated at the lack of resources left to them at a time when the Free Council is (sometimes literally) stealing their thunder.

The bitter arguments caused within the order are inflamed by the heretical sect of mystagogues known as the Jnanamukti, banned since the 1930s but not yet stamped out, who published tracts blaming Sleepers for the chaos engulfing the world and advocating using the Stalinist and Nazi regimes to kill as many Sleepers as possible in defense of magic. Publicly, the order as a whole is repulsed by the heretics, even those Mystagogues that remain loyal to fascist countries, and members who perform acts of terrorism and mass murder against Sleepers under the cover of the war are sought out and destroyed whenever possible.

Daksha

The Daksha are a well-known example of a Mysterium faction that side with the fascists. Obri-mos in origin, the Daksha take after Theosophical ideas of the 1920s and seek to return their bodies to the higher-evolved state of the Atlantéans. The physical changes the Legacy creates—the hermaphroditic Daksha have a third eye on the back of their head that can see through time—make them the subject of gossip throughout the Pentacle (for more information see *Legacies: the Sublime* p. 23). Their beliefs, both entirely racist and from the same Aryan supremacy school as Hitler’s, make their siding with America’s enemies a foregone conclusion, and most Daksha in the U.S. spend the years before Pearl harbor promoting “peace” to local Consilii before quietly leaving when war breaks out. They are suspected of being the backbone of the Jnanamukti terrorists, but the order never manages to prove it.

Silver Ladder

The Silver Ladder has a goal: a perfect society, ruled by wise, brave mages united in a single Consilium, leading the Sleepers to enlightenment. The Awakened Nation. Atlantis Reborn. All those trapped within the Fallen World uniting to smash the Abyss and take the Heavens from the Exarchs.

The 1940s, then, represent an abject failure for the order.

The Awakened are splintered and divided, lost to the obsessions of their orders. Even the Ladder is caught up in the Sleepers' war. Before the atrocities committed come to light, many théarchs are tempted by fascism as a short-cut to ordering the world beneath a ruling elite, and the Japanese following the commands of their divine emperor are bittersweet enemies for the Ladder at best. It's not so much that the Sleepers follow their leaders, just that they follow those leaders. The Ladder, for the most part, try to hold onto what's left of their home Consilii, try to organize Convocations within the U.S. to present a united front to foreign mages and do their best to lead the Awakened that stay behind. The few who take up arms and involve themselves in the war do so out of a perceived need to bring it to an end quickly. The world cannot be ruled by a madman, and the sooner fascism falls, the sooner the Ladder can build a proper society out of the rubble.

Unfortunately, post-war Sleepers don't seem interested in putting their faith in any leaders at all. Those théarchs pretending to religious authority find that they keep and even grow their flocks, but those who prefer secular roles find themselves met with suspicion. Those who focus entirely on guiding the Awakened are frustrated as the rest of the Pentacle fail to organize themselves.

Choosing to interpret the disdain for authority among the Sleepers as a disdain for local authority, an increasingly large faction of younger théarchs seek to mend the world from the top down. The popular metaphor among these willworkers compares America to a mage with an obligation to guide and help the Sleepers, which in these terms would be the rest of the world. This movement approves of and promotes developments such as

the Marshall Plan that cast America as the world's superpower, taking charge and leading the rest of the world. The New York and Washington, DC Consilii are flooded by Silver Ladder mages from across the country, angling for a part in the creation of the United Nations. Any dreams of a trickle-down Awakened Nation are dashed by the end of the decade as it becomes clear the public will not accept a world government, no matter how benevolent. The Cold War sees any opportunity to unite the sleepers cut off seemingly forever.

Lords of the Inanimate

The Lords, known as Animists, are a Thyrsus Legacy of théarchs specializing in interaction with the spirits of objects (for more information, see *The Silver Ladder*, p. 164). Animists are at the forefront of efforts to deal with the remaining spirits created by Servicemen's anthropomorphizing their equipment (described above in "The New Animism"), taming as many of the entities as possible and safely integrating those that remain into existing choirs. They are kept busy rousing and interviewing the spirits of new technologies, researching how they can be used for the advantage of the Awakened, and competing with one another to be first to speak to particular devices.

Seers of the Throne

The Pentacle of the early 1940s do not fully understand their opponents in the service of the Exarchs, but understanding will dawn—too late—by the decade's end. It isn't through lack of effort (the Guardians and Free Council are just as fanatical in their hatred of the Seers as they will be in later years), but rather lack of visibility. The Seers at the start of the decade are almost synonymous with the Hegemonic Ministry, sponsors of fascism and the brutalization of sleepers by one another using politics as a weapon. Hegemony also has the distinction of being the faction within the Seers that invited the Nameless to join them, so as far as the Free Council are concerned they are clearly the most important aspect of the Throne. When America goes to war, the Pentacle mages taking part think of themselves as opposing the

Exarch's servants; they are the heroes fighting the Seers' plan for humanity. When V-E Day dawns, incautious mages celebrate, thinking that they have defeated the Seers of the Throne along with their Sleeping puppets. That is their mistake. Other Pentacle mages see Seer involvement in the Axis weapons programs beyond Hegemony, and focus on "Pantechnicon" as the new face of the enemy. That is their mistake.

In truth, the loss of the Axis nations and what they represent is a terrible blow to Hegemony, but the Ministry had been collapsing from the inside for years—ever since the Great Refusal of the Free Council cost the lives of most of their leadership. Hegemony sponsors the use of political power by some Sleepers to make the lives of other Sleepers miserable, no matter what the doctrine involved. The Internment of Japanese-Americans and the racism toward black servicemen pleases them just as much as the horrors the Nazis commit. When America and Great Britain sell Russian rebels back to Stalin, the Ministry knows its future is secured. They are grievously injured, but they will be back.

If the Seers seem to have vanished to the Pentacle in the post-war years, it's because they are too busy fighting one another. Hegemony's loss is the gain of several other Ministries. Two in

particular stand out: Panopticon, a cult devoted to paranoia, surveillance and espionage as a means of controlling the population; and the Pantechnicon. The Pantechnicon is a small Ministry founded by splinter Hegemons, Seers from other groups and the remaining traitor Nameless who promote the use of technological superiority as a means of imposing one's will. Both they and Panopticon are catapulted into a head start over the dozens of other Ministries by the atomic bomb, and both make excellent use of the growing Cold War. In the end, Pantechnicon cannot sustain the growth in numbers of Seers it requires in the face of aggression from the Free Council and rival Seers and its members disperse to Hegemon, Panopticon and even the Pentacle. Free of opposition, Panopticon take the prize: a place among the Great Ministries of the Throne, and the elevation of their patron Exarch to the most divine station in the Seer's picture of the supernal. By the time the Pentacle realizes that a great shell-game has been played, the House of UnAmerican Affairs Committee has opened its doors, Duck and Cover cartoons are being prepared and an Iron Curtain is built, cutting Europe in half. Hegemony were the Ministry of the World War, but Panopticon are the Ministry of the Cold War. Welcome to the 1950s.



STORIES IN THE NAKED CITY



THE HARD-BOILED MOOD

The hard-boiled movies and stories of the 1940s are largely tales of crime and criminals, and while that's perfectly possible to do with **Mage**, not everyone wants their chronicle to be a crime drama. However stories of magic can be just as cynical as stories about crime. Regardless of the details of a particular chronicle, several common aspects of crime dramas fit perfectly into a **Mage** chronicle: revelations from the past, loyalty to comrades, betrayal and cynicism.

Revelations From the Past

One of the tropes that was regularly used in the 1940s was someone's past coming back to haunt him. In the films of the day, this typically involved the revelation of some serious crime that the character committed years or decades before. However, while this could be the case in a **Mage** scenario, there are many other possible options. Perhaps the guilty mage dabbled in Abyssal magic before becoming permanently tainted and has kept her experiences a secret. Perhaps a mage joined a left-handed legacy, even learning the first attainment, before realizing exactly how corrupt it was. Alternatively, perhaps the mage helped their mentor become an Abyss-tainted monster or bought his survival by turning over a trusted ally to the Banishers.

One of the ways that people in this era hid secrets was by changing their name and moving to a different state. Recordkeeping was far less extensive in this era, and in many cases, establishing a new identity was easy. The same is true in mage society. While some mages

are too famous or infamous to disappear, many younger mages merely need to change their Shadow Name, move somewhere new, and perhaps disguise their appearance a bit. After accomplishing this, the mage would be safe from consequences of their past mistakes or misdeeds, as long as he doesn't draw too much attention to himself or encounter anyone who knew them.

However, when someone who knows the mage's past appears, maintaining secrets becomes far more difficult. Blackmail, murder and escape are all possible and can all make for exciting scenarios. If a Storyteller wishes to run a campaign where these sorts of secrets are an important part of the chronicle, she could require that every character have at least one dark secret in either their mundane or magical history. Perhaps the character was a criminal before he Awakened, maybe the character belonged to the Seers of the Throne or the Banishers, or maybe the character simply made some terrible mistake that resulted in death or ruin.

In a **Mage** chronicle, the tension need not come about from the secret coming out or being about to come out. Instead, an opportunity to make the secret vanish entirely could also make for a wonderful scenario. Perhaps a Logophagist (**Legacies: The Ancient**, pp. 131-140) learns of the character's secret and offers to make it vanish from records and memories. Of course, in return for this valuable service, the Logophagist also needs extensive help in making some other important piece of information vanish. Yet the truth always comes out. No matter how well-buried the truth is or how convincing and well-supported the lie, the truth is always eventually revealed, and both the nature of this truth and how the person confronts its revelation are equally important in determining their fate and the nature of their character. Attempting to keep past misdeeds hidden nearly always results in continuing wrongdoing, while bravely facing the consequences could redeem a character.

Loyalty and Betrayal

The question of how much loyalty to a friend, a partner or a mentor is worth to someone can work as well for mages as for private detectives and petty criminals. In most hard-boiled stories of the day, people are in large part defined by their comrades and mentors. Any mage who is part of one of the Pentacle Orders is going to have all of these, and even an independent mage is likely to have at least a few close companions, either magical or not. In addition, anyone who fought in WWII is going to have war buddies who at some point either saved the mage's life or had their life saved by the mage. These wartime bonds with both Sleepers and other mages are powerful and backed up by the almost universal conviction that unswerving loyalty to your comrades-in-arms is one of the most important traits of an honorable person.

Of course, everyone has a price. In a world where no victory comes without a cost, there are times when the only way to save dozens or even hundreds of lives may be to betray a loyal friend.

Betrayal for a selfish reason is generally considered unforgivable in the harsh morality of hard-boiled stories, and even altruistic, life-saving betrayal taints the person who committed it. However, stories about what could be important enough to cause someone to betray their comrades raise the sorts of difficult questions that can make for powerful roleplaying. One character's price might be saving the lives of their family, for another it might be the chance to find a powerful artifact or even a book from Atlantis. The lure of fame and status may be sufficient for one mage, and for another, the chance to save the lives of several dozen children might be worth dooming a loyal and unsuspecting comrade to a terrible fate.

A Band of Brothers

One obvious way to form a cabal of mages for your chronicle is to have it consist of a group of ex-soldiers or other people swept up in the chaos of World War II, who Awakened during the war and then decided to stick together. There are a number of possibilities: Hospitals with staffs of doctors and nurses caring for officers and enlisted men. The crash of a transport ship with sailors, engineers, and medical staff. A USO ball with a mixture of battle-weary soldiers and world-weary celebrities. While armies were segregated by race and gender, it's not impossible for a mixed group of mages to collectively find their lives impacted by the Awakening.

One good example is a situation where all the characters are prisoners of war in a German camp. In a camp containing several thousand people, having half a dozen prisoners Awaken in response

to some impressive supernatural event is far from impossible. Perhaps the characters Awakened in response to some powerful supernatural event or object involving Nazi magic. Most POW camps were not racially segregated, and so both white and black mages could have shared this experience. Also, a few dozen women, mostly nurses, were captured and imprisoned in both German and Japanese POW camps, where they provided what medical services they could to the other prisoners, and they too could Awaken.

Perhaps after their Awakening, these POW mages got in contact with one another and attempted to engineer a mass escape from the camp. They may realize, however, that even their combined magic was insufficient to do anything other than allow the mages to safely escape, leaving all of their fellow prisoners behind. At this point, they decided to stay and spent the time working together to use their magic aid and protect the other prisoners until Allied forces liberated the POW camp. Even if they were only Awakened for the last few months of their imprisonment, this experience could create lasting bonds between these mages. Alternatively, maybe they used their magic to escape and must now bear the collective guilt of abandoning their unawakened fellows, many of whom later died in the POW camp.

Prices Paid

Nice guys (and gals) finish last, and there's no guarantee that someone heroic idealistic, and good-hearted won't end up dead on a battlefield or in a back alley. While evil can definitely be defeated, it could wreak a great deal of havoc and kill innocent people first.

The end of the war and the post-war years were a time of optimism and triumph, but both were tempered with an awareness of the price paid for victory. Almost 60 million people died in the war, including almost half a million U.S. soldiers. Returning GIs know all too well that victory over evil requires terrible sacrifices. After the celebrations are over, many of these ex-GIs have been doing their best to forget the horrors they had witnessed—and sometimes committed. For some, the only path to forgetting lies at the bottom of a bottle.

This embittered realism extends well beyond events that deal with the war; it is also common in the films and the novels of the day, and can easily be a part of any 1940s **Mage** chronicle. Victories should not be easy, and more importantly they should not be without a price. In these trying times, idealists are not merely wrong, they are often doomed; someone who seems too innocent to survive usually is.

SETTING

Almost every **Mage** chronicle is city-based. The cabal is likely to be based in a large city and may well visit other large cities. The 1940s was an era when cities and especially big cities were booming—New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Detroit, St. Louis, Boston, and to a lesser extent San Francisco and Washington, DC were the cultural and economic centers of the U.S. People flocked to major cities, seeking jobs, fame, hope and most of all a new and better life. Rural areas were considered slow and dull, and increasingly behind the times. Some people considered cities to be more corrupt than small towns and rural areas, but others believed that darkness could be found in all corners of the world.

Of course, the choice of city will have a huge impact on the campaign. If the cabal is based in one of the largest cities in the U.S., then the characters will have dozens of other mages to interact with. In this era, ambitious people and dreamers—those most likely to *Awaken*—moved to cities like New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. Also, once they *Awaken*, many mages move to these large cities, both to seek out the company of other mages and to have greater mundane and magical opportunities. Both because of the opportunity for finding rare artifacts and hearing unusual tales from sailors, the major ports that received ships from all across the world were popular homes for many mages. In the 40s, New York and Los Angeles were the two biggest, but Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and San Francisco were also major ports.

In contrast, smaller cities that are not major centers of commerce or manufacturing are growing and thriving, but they are not the focus of national attention. Mages who move to cities like Kansas City, El Paso, Spokane, Hartford, Seattle, or dozens of other medium-sized cities are likely to either have the city to themselves, or to share it with at most one other cabal. These cities give the characters a great deal of freedom, but also seriously limit their opportunity for political and social advancement within the *Pentacle*, unless they manage to find or accomplish something sufficiently impressive that their efforts draw other mages to their city.

Out of the Big City

While the characters' cabal is almost certainly based in a city, much of the U.S. population still lives in small towns and rural areas. Scenarios set in these locations can provide a change of pace for a chronicle. The characters face a mixture of isolation and poverty that is profoundly different from anything they've seen in cities.

Few people own cars. In more remote areas, some people still lack both electricity and running water,

and none of them have the many opportunities for upward mobility offered by cities. In many rural areas, if someone becomes seriously ill and lacks the money and the means of transport to get to an urban hospital, they must make do with medical care that is decades out of date. Even during the height of the wartime boom, hunger remains a periodic problem in the poorest rural areas, especially in the South. Travel to rural portions of the South and Midwest can also be a way to introduce the characters to some of the vast contrasts of life.

Of course, the question then suggests itself: Why would a group of hard-nosed and ambitious urban mages travel to a remote and likely impoverished rural area? The easiest answer is that they are looking for someone or something. Such locations are ideal hiding places for mages or other individuals who wish to disappear from the authorities or to avoid pursuit by groups like the *Seers of the Throne*. In addition, artifacts, grimoires and similar items can remain lost or hidden in the country for a century or more, while similar items in cities are likely to be discovered. A chance glimpse of a newspaper article describing the discovery of some oddity in a small town could have the characters setting out, hoping to arrive before some rival mage does.

Such locations are also excellent for horror stories. Many of the poorest rural areas were also exceptionally isolated. Unless one of the characters can use *Space magic* to teleport, if the characters' car breaks down, they might be stranded with no way to contact anyone else or to travel by any means other than walking or riding a horse. Severe weather can make such areas even more isolated, especially since most local roads are still unpaved. Snow or heavy rain could easily trap characters in a small town for a week or more. This isolation may allow the characters to discover some local supernatural mystery, or get involved in some mundane investigation.

A rural rooming house might hold the ghost of a murdered patron who is seeking vengeance against the current owner. Perhaps some sort of demonic cult or abyssal horror plagues the small town. Remote small towns and farming villages may hold all manner of horrors.

Hitting the Road

Of course, instead of visiting isolated small towns, the characters could also simply take to the open road. Even a causal pleasure trip along Route 66 could become a gateway to adventure. Chance encounters could lead to meetings with other mages, overhearing snatches of a conversation, or even being stalked by *Banishers* or *Seers of the Throne* who are lying in wait for unwary travelers.

Storytellers who are looking to create an unusual and challenging chronicle could set most or all of it on the road as the cabal drives from one town to the next. Perhaps the characters have been framed by an important mage and now powerful people in several Orders are certain that the characters committed some terrible crime. To both avoid capture and clear their names, the characters take to the road, running from the mages pursuing them and seeking clues about the enemy who framed them.

LIFE DURING WARTIME

One of the most important choices for a chronicle set in the 1940s is whether to start it during or after WWII. Characters could start either at war or helping the war effort at home, or the campaign could begin after the end of the war, as the characters struggle to deal with both their Awakening and their re-adjustment back to civilian life. In either case, the events of the war will greatly impact the campaign.

Secret Enemies and Enemy Secrets

The war can also influence the choice of antagonists in your chronicle. Although suburbanization and aggressive conformity all began in the 1950s, fear of secret enemies was still a significant factor during WWII. Especially in the large manufacturing cities of the East Coast, rumors of Nazi saboteurs were not uncommon and often not completely unfounded. During the early 1940s, Nazi U-boats were known to have dropped off several groups of saboteurs in areas ranging from Florida to New York. All known saboteurs were captured within a few days of landing in the U.S., but their presence made many people wonder how many others might have arrived undetected. More people worried about foreign agents in the U.S. than feared that their neighbors might secretly have been recruited by the Nazis—but such fears could still be useful to the Storyteller.

If a group of Banishers or Seers of the Throne learned of a cabal of mages in a city on the East Coast, they might plant rumors and evidence that these mages were secret Nazis. Such incriminating material could turn the cabal's community against them and attract the attention of the authorities. Naturally, this sort of tactic could also be used by the characters against a group of Banishers or Seers of the Throne. The fact that mages are by their nature rather secretive makes

them ideal targets for this type of ploy, especially since magic can be used to concoct both physical evidence and memories. Even a single fingerprint found on a bomb used to damage a factory might be enough to direct large amounts of official attention toward the fingerprint's owner.

Although a plot involving Nazi saboteurs no longer makes sense once the war is over, Nazi secrets can still drive a campaign. After the end of WWII, there were many rumors about secret Nazi technology, and dozens of German scientists were brought to work in the U.S. In addition, Allied soldiers found many tons of gold, artwork, jewels, and other valuable items that had been plundered and hidden by the Nazis. In a **Mage** chronicle, there's every reason to believe that Atlantean artifacts, lost grimoires, and other wonders might now be arriving in the U.S., either in official shipments of Nazi treasures, or in the steamer trunks and rucksacks of GIs returning from the war. More than one scenario could easily begin with a rumor of an Atlantean artifact coming into the U.S. in the hands of a Sleeper with no idea of its true value. That said, imbued items can be used by Sleepers, and some of these items are exceptionally powerful. Mages interested in acquiring a particular cache of ancient and powerful imbued items might face a Sleeper—or worse yet, a sleepwalker—who has learned to use these imbued items and is ready to defend his claim to them.

In addition to valuable Nazi artifacts, at least a few Nazi mages came to the U.S. after the war, and many of them are precisely as unsavory and dangerous as they are suspected to be. Although rumors of the Nazi Party being controlled by evil, Abyss-tainted mages are false, a number of hideously amoral mages found that membership in the Nazi Party served as a useful cover for their more distasteful activities. Some belonged to Abyss-tainted legacies, but members of other Legacies, including both the Devourers of the Flesh (**Adamantine Arrow**, pp. 160-163) and the Carnival of Melancholy (**The Silver Ladder**, pp. 182-185) also found membership in the Nazi Party and especially the SS to be exceedingly useful.

Using their magic to bend minds and forge documents, some of these mages fled to the U.S., where they now attempt to carry on their various horrors. Some disguised themselves as war refugees, often by stealing the identities of legitimate refugees. These monsters strive to remain hidden, but their activities may attract the characters' attention. There might be entire cabals or even extended networks of such mages, some of whom seek to dominate the Sleepers around them and eliminate other mages who might oppose them. Of course, hostile mages aren't the only threats that could come over from Europe. Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, spirits, and other supernatural dangers have found their way to America.

Hatred in your Chronicle

Racism could become a feature of a chronicle. Powerful mages have several ways to prolong their lives, and so many of the leaders of the Orders remember life in the 19th century, and a few may even remember slavery. How do such people react to the presence of an ambitious young black or Asian-American mage? If none of the characters are people of color, perhaps they have a mutual friend or ally who is a young mage of color who is seeking a position of power within their Order. The characters may encounter unscrupulous mages who attempt to discredit and disgrace their ally and anyone who sides with him.

Race isn't the only issue that you can deal with in this fashion. Some older mages may not appreciate politically ambitious female mages. Also, this was an era when homosexuality was a shameful secret. It was considered either a serious moral failing or a mental illness, and homosexuals faced blackmail, disgrace, and possible imprisonment. Perhaps one of the characters or someone they know is homosexual and is being blackmailed by someone who discovered this person's secret and threatens to reveal it. These events could happen either among ordinary people, or within the society of mages and instead of money or less heinous favors, the person might be blackmailed into aiding Nazi spies or the Seers of the Throne.

Weird Science

Some of the new technologies, especially nuclear energy and digital computers, seem miraculous to many who hear about them, and some of these projects may involve something more than ordinary science. Some may incorporate one or more imbued items being used by sleepwalker scientists. Perhaps one or more of the scientists or engineers involved in the project was actually a mage, a spirit-possessed Sleeper or another equally exotic being.

Computers and cryptography are of great interest to many mages. Although Mind spells can break any code, it's possible to use powerful magic to make a code *almost* unbreakable by magic. That said, almost any

code created before the 1940s can eventually be cracked using even the primitive computers of the 1940s. Mages who wish to crack an ancient cipher enchanted against magical code-breaking might be able to use a computer to crack it, even if it had previously been unbreakable by both mundane or magical means.

Dealing with the Law

In the 1940s, the state of law enforcement and evidence gathering is such that magic can easily fool law enforcement officials and the experts they consult. Handily, magic can also uncover the truth in cases that baffle the police and the FBI. These facts create both problems and opportunities for scenarios that include mysteries involving crime and criminals. When a mage is confronted with a murder or other crime that the police cannot solve, she can usually solve it with Time or Death magic. However, in many cases, learning the truth is only the beginning. Just because the mage knows who committed a crime doesn't mean that she can prove it in a court of law. Without a confession, fingerprints, eyewitness testimony or other evidence, a mage is unlikely to be able to use mundane means to convince the police to arrest someone, much less obtain a conviction. Naturally, unscrupulous mages can fake evidence, using Mind magic to force a confession or Matter magic to alter fingerprints. But what happens if the mages later find out that the murderer killed the victim because the victim was planning to kill the murderer's family?

If the characters wish to work within the law, they will need to use the knowledge their spells provide to gather evidence in a way that allows the police to do their jobs. Then again, in the World of Darkness, some crimes don't *have* mundane explanations. What happens if the murderer was a mage who used magic to conceal what really occurred? In this case, the police are baffled, but the characters know that powerful magic was involved and that they have a rogue willworker to catch.

Alternately, maybe the killer was a ghost, a faerie, or a Seer of the Throne who used magic to either commit the crime or to conceal his identity from the authorities—but couldn't hide the truth from mages. In this case, the characters know the truth about the crime, but they also can't go to the authorities, even if they have clear (supernatural) evidence. In fact, the Guardians of Order will want the characters to destroy any evidence that shows the crime was committed using magic. If the police use circumstantial evidence (perhaps planted by the killer) to accuse someone innocent of the crime, the mages are going to have difficulty exonerating her if they also can't help direct the police at a more likely suspect.

Crime-solving scenarios could be something that the characters stumble upon, or they may seek them out. Perhaps a cabal sets itself up as a detective agency, a team of freelance journalists or even a law office. Such

a cover would be an ideal way for the Guardians of Order to keep any eye on any incidents of obvious magic that may need to be contained, or for members of the Adamantine Arrow to keep track of any threats by the Banishers or Seers of the Throne.

ANTAGONISTS

In addition to crooked cops, hidden Nazis and other dangerous Sleepers, the same magical threats found in the 21st century exist in the 1940s. Seers of the Throne, Banishers, and mad, Abyss-tainted mages are just as common and as dangerous as they are later. The characters' cabal may find that they share their city with some of these twisted and deadly mages, or they may only encounter them when they travel, but sooner or later, every willworker is going to encounter enemy mages.

The Seers of the Throne

The 1940s are a time of great change for the Seers of the Throne. Prior to World War II, Adepts of Time within the Seers could see that Germany, the United States and the Soviet Union would all have major roles to play in the coming years, and several pylons within each nation attempted to use their influence to control the destinies of these nations. However, the innate resistance of Sleepers combined with actions by other mages, spirits and other supernatural beings served to foil these attempts. The Soviet leaders who were pawns of the Seers were killed in various purges, while internal political conflicts rendered the Seers' efforts in the U.S. fruitless.

The Seers in Nazi Germany had somewhat greater success, but were forced to use their Profane Urim and various mind-control abilities extensively in order to attempt to keep control of Sleepers who were at best semi-sane fanatics. Over-reliance on mind control drove several Nazi leaders further into delusions and paranoia, hastened the fall of the Third Reich, and inadvertently and pointlessly increased the scope of the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis.

At the same time, many other pylons wanted no part in such risky gambles and instead sought to solidify their positions on a smaller and far more controllable scale by focusing their efforts on individual cities. As a result, at least in the United States, the Seers of the Throne is an organization that is made up of a number of independent local branches that are only loosely unified.

The Seers are concentrated in large industrial cities. In some of these cities, their influence is fairly minimal; in others, they have a great deal of control over both local politics and law enforcement. Pentacle mages have learned to tread lightly in cities where the Seers maintain a high degree of control, but in most cities, their control is far from perfect, and intrigues between Seers and Pentacle mages abound.

In the 1940s, the Seers in each city are far more independent than they later become. The fact that rapid travel and communication between cities requires the use of magic, which can potentially be traced or intercepted, has helped to limit the influence of even the most powerful Seers. In general, the Seers that hold power in a particular city are free to do as they wish, as long as their efforts and plans do not obviously conflict with the overall goals of their Order.

The Seers' local focus also means that outside of cities, Seers of the Throne are quite rare. Some regularly venture into towns and rural areas in search of powerful artifacts, mystical knowledge, or rumors of dangerous

Changing Paradox

Although the magical realities of Paradox and Disbelief were the same in the 1940s as in the present day, the social and psychological realities are quite different. People in this era had less exposure to the mass media and in general had considerably less formal education, especially in the sciences. As a result, many people had very different ideas about what might be impossible or improbable. Well-educated urbanites cause Disbelief upon seeing exactly the same oddities as do the people in the modern day World of Darkness. However, in rural areas and among less educated people, the supernatural is still very real.

Events that mimic magic and supernatural tales from folklore, such as ghostly apparitions, poltergeists, curses, faith healing and the "evil eye" often do not provoke Disbelief in the undereducated and credulous. Instead, such events simply cause many people to shake their heads and agree that the victim of these events could have avoided his fate. It's important to remember that rural people and less educated urban people are not in any ways stupid or naïve, but many of them lived in worlds filled where miracles, curses, ghosts, faeries and similar phenomena were a rare but accepted part of life.

Pentacle strongholds, but many ignore everything that happens outside the city limits. In addition, most pylons and cabals are quite jealous of their power and usually do not welcome Seers from outside pylons or cabals. While they have no choice but to welcome high-ranking Seers, Seers from other cities who are not in positions of high authority often face suspicion and loss of status unless they can prove both their loyalty and usefulness to the local pylon.

The Disciples of War

A number of ambitious Seers have become convinced that constant warfare is the fastest and most effective way to improve humanity. In addition to their service to the Exarchs, these Seers have also taken it upon themselves to help by sowing the seeds of humanity's discord. Some of these mages are professional military officers who only feel fulfilled when they are at war, but most are fervent ideologues who firmly believe humanity needs to continue to fight in order to fulfill the Exarch's desires. These Seers believe that humanity is at its best in wartime, and point to the significant advances in technology as proof that continued wars would serve to improve cooperation, advance technology and enhance economic activity, while also culling the weak and the unfit.

Since even Adepts lack the power to start another world war, these mages work on a smaller scale. Some journey to the Astral Realm and attempt to enhance various social and cultural conflicts, while others attempt to use covert magics to sow confusion and increase tensions in the hope of sparking riots and escalating existing conflicts to the point that they eventually erupt into wars and other large-scale conflicts. At the end of WWII, these Seers have two primary centers of conflict in the Western world: Berlin and Washington, DC.

Berlin is at the center of U.S.-Soviet tensions, and the Disciples of War do their best to increase these tensions. Inside Washington, these Seers work to increase fears about Moscow and communism, while also ratcheting up racial tensions. Meanwhile, some Seers in colonial and recently decolonized nations attempt to transform colonial tensions into open rebellions and civil wars. In the mid-1940s, these Seers are involved in the Indonesian war of independence against the Dutch as well as the continuing violence between Hindus and Muslims in the aftermath of Indian Independence.

Banishers and Mad Mages

The dangers of the Abyss are just as likely to corrupt mages in any era. Corrupted mages are a clear and obvious threat to both Seers of the Throne and Pentacle mages. Some could hide in the anonymity of large cities, but eventually their unsavory activities become clear and they are hunted down. As a result, many of these mages become drifters, wandering from one city or town to another, wreaking havoc and then leaving. If they can use magic to conceal their identity—or at least their current location—these mages can freely wander from city to city with little risk of discovery before their departure. Unless the investigating mages have some form of sympathetic connection to the drifter, the outsider will be almost impossible to find. Often the only way to keep track of a Banisher's movements is through a list of her various murders and atrocities.

Some mad willworkers become the way they are through profound isolation. A mage living in an isolated rural location might go for years before encountering another of their kind. If she believed her powers were inherently corrupt and become a Banisher, she might attack and kill any mages who traveled through her town. Sometimes, a solitary Banisher may find a local apprentice, and perhaps even create a small, murderous cabal that takes it upon itself to destroy all mages and other supernatural beings that visit their town or any nearby towns. Unless they are unfortunate enough to find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, characters are unlikely to encounter such a cabal. At the Storyteller's discretion, these characters could easily run into such a cabal while attempting to discover the fate of one or more vanished mages.

Alternately, perhaps a mad mage finds an equally mad apprentice or two, or more likely warps and twists other locals who Awaken, convincing them of the necessity of various heinous actions, including submission to the Abyss. While a single mage can have difficulty controlling an entire town, a small cabal may be able to manage it with moderate ease, transforming an isolated town into a twisted hell for the Sleepers who live there. Some of these mages might work openly, risking Paradox and Disbelief for the chance to lord their powers over Sleepers, while others hide in the shadows, using covert magic to bend the town and its inhabitants to their will. Mages traveling through may notice the magic or they might simply become suspicious about the fear evident in the eyes of the inhabitants. Perhaps a desperate Sleeper even attempts to tell the characters the town's dark and terrible secrets.



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KIM
2010

THE WEAVER- WEST PAPERS

SCENES: 5 MENTAL: ••• PHYSICAL: •••• SOCIAL: ••••



Introduction

She was petite and rosy-cheeked, with the kind of sweet doe eyes that never landed on another living creature without loving it immediately. And she's rotting away on the floor of your bar and all you can do is promise, promise that you'll make someone pay for it.

"The Weaver-West Papers" is a short story meant to highlight the impact and shadows of a noir-style story for use with Mage Noir. Built in the style of a high-drama short story, this SAS should drag the characters along through the shadowy streets of the 1940s urban landscape at breakneck speeds with a terrible choice ahead of them and the dead and dying behind them.

The story itself is broken into four major scenes with an optional fifth scene available. Each scene has a focused spotlight for one character in the Lamppost Cabal found in the appendix. While any character can be involved in every scene, this SAS allows for special advantages to the character taking up the spotlight. (See Spotlight Scenes below.)

Treatment

After a beautiful student of George West drops dead of gruesome Vulgar magic on the floor of the Chats, the Lamppost Cabal is compelled to chase after the papers she died trying to recover. As the papers pass from hand to hand with the cabal in hot pursuit, the real meaning behind them (and the forces that want them) comes into question, leading the cabal to have to make an unconscionable choice at the end of the story.

"Man with a Gun": This SAS contains one action scene meant to spotlight Rosie. In this scene, wherever the characters might be, a man with the same dead eyes as Rosie's husband bursts on to the scene with a gun. He might be crazy. He might be hired by the cabal's enemies to kill them. He might be part of a future story or the end of an old story.

"Shattered Frail": "Frail" Emily Steward staggers into the Chats and dies. She has only enough time to transfer her need for the papers to the cabal, sending them tearing around after them. This scene is meant to spotlight Nightingale in her role as a mind reader and sympathetic leader.

About the Storytelling Adventure System

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

www.white-wolf.com/sas

“On the Wire”: On a lead from Frail, the cabal seeks out a lone member of the Mysterium by the name of “Wire” Alan North. Wire is a bookseller and sympathetic to the Quiet even if he isn’t a vocal member of it. The trouble is finding him. His bookshop, so they say, moves from one part of the city to another at random patterns only the city itself understands. This scene is meant to spotlight Clown, forcing him to talk to the city to get an idea of Wire’s whereabouts.

“It’s Always a Trap”: With a name to follow, the characters head to find Gungel at one of his known haunts. What they find instead are six powerful Adamantine Arrows torn apart by dizzyingly vulgar magic. This is a chance for Ferryman to investigate the dead and determine what’s gone on here. But the scene is a trap: a backlash triggers as soon as the characters use any magic at all. A fight ensues.

“Look to the Woman”: After fighting an abyssal trap left for them (presumably by Gungel), the cabal chase after the insane Guardian, now sure that the papers have some considerable magical value. The apparent climax of this scene should be a dramatic fight with Gungel. However, in reality, that’s only the lead-up. Once they defeat Gungel, “Ice” Lorna Jackson appears to catch up to the cabal to reclaim the papers. Rick, reacting on instinct, takes a peek into the future, and sees something terrible. Ice has every intention of using the papers for their real purpose: to build an artifact that destroys human technology and makes it non-functional. With an artifact like that, and worse yet, the means to create more, mages could toss humanity back to the stone age and set themselves up as gods. Whatever the characters decide to do with the papers, people are going to suffer.

Theme

There are no heroes, just survivors. If there is such a thing as a good guy, he’s bleeding out in an alley behind the police station. At the end of the night, the only people left standing are the people smart or selfish enough stay in the gray because black and white is for chumps.

Mood

One step behind. The bad guys know what they’re dealing with, who they’re dealing with and how to get what they want. The cabal is almost completely in the dark. They should spend the adventure feeling one step behind the plot, barely able to catch their breath. It’s a foot chase they can’t win, but have to finish anyhow.

A Chapter in Your Chronicle

The political and mystical ramifications of finding and dealing with the Weaver-West Papers could lead to endless ripples in an ongoing chronicle. It may be an introductory story, leaving the characters with an immediate sense of distrust or fear if they choose to destroy the papers or safeguard them. It may lead to a long series of dastardly adventures as the greedy characters try to build the artifact the papers outline. Or it may be the cataclysmic cap on a chronicle with the characters’ decision changing the course of history.

A Story By Itself

As a standalone story, “The Weaver-West Papers” is ideal for establishing the beats of short fiction of the era. After the characters make a decision at the conclusion of this story, the Storyteller and players should take some time to discuss ‘what if’ scenarios based on their choice. Take that time to create a free-form epilogue to reward the players.

BACKSTORY AND SET-UP

Shortly after Dorfmann, Weaver and West established their Legacy and the foundation of the Quiet movement, they talked over the wisdom of taking a more active hand in guiding the sorts of technology that could be left to mature in mortal hands. Ultimately, they agreed that magical efforts to limit mundane society and development were actually worse than any vulgar magic a mage had ever created, and that if the Fallen World was to grow into its own, it wasn’t the right of mages to decide how.

But that decision didn’t come before they managed to work out the blueprints of a machine: an artifact capable of dampening mundane science and rendering it inert. In theory, the machine could be set up in a town, fine-tuned, and suddenly telephones and electric writing for seven square miles would just stop functioning. Worse still, some part of the machine’s function would render it a vulgar act of magic to restore the lights or phones. In theory, any number of these machines could be created. With enough mages working together, there would never be another atom bomb.

The three men quickly realized that the machine was too dangerous to exist. But they also realized that there might, in some future, be a time when humans created technology far more terrible than the machine. They hid the knowledge of the artifact in a collection of treatises on being a Quiet mage in the hopes that if the artifact

were uncovered, it would be in the hands of mages sympathetic to their ideals.

Skip ahead several years. The papers are now in the hands of Ice, a visionary and a greedy woman. She holds on to them as a symbol of her position of authority in the budding movement more than anything else... until Frail comes from out of town to study her mentor's papers. She discovers the instructions within, and logically tells Ice about it. After all, she's a recognized luminary. She decides two things immediately: she needs to make sure no one else knows what's in the papers, and ensure that no one will come looking for them from her again. So, she arranges to have Gungel steal the papers, kill Frail, and make herself look like a hapless victim, while stealing the papers back in secret. That way, she can decipher them and build a machine herself, shifting the balance of power to her, forever.

Set-up

This SAS is written with no particular city in mind; all that matters is that it's not a welcome environment. If it's sunny, make it glaring and abusively hot. If it's cool, make it rainy and bleak. Like the characters created for this adventure, the setting can be dropped anywhere into your existing chronicle. Just don't forget to draw on sensory details that fit the city you've dropped the story into. San Francisco has to have moody fog and Pittsburgh has to have the feel of rust under your nails and in your lungs. Don't be afraid of sweet or pretty details to start. Anything pretty can turn ugly with a shadow cast over it. Like Walter Neff tells Keyes in *Double Indemnity*, "How could I have known that murder could sometimes smell like honeysuckle?"

Assuming that you're using the characters provide in *Mage Noir*, the action of this story should start in the Chats, Nightingale's nightclub and the cabal's sanctum. If the players are creating their own characters from scratch, that's fine; they've got to drink somewhere, don't they? Important clues to move one scene to the next have a few routes to reach them, so that one failed roll doesn't stop the story dead. If your from-scratch characters don't have the magic necessary to, say, read minds, you're not out of luck.

Storyteller Mechanics

The Spotlight Scene

The leads of noir don't always win. Quite often they lose and lose spectacularly. They work alone or only grudgingly with one another. After all, who can you really trust? But in order for this SAS to go

smoothly, give the players certain mechanical benefits for sharing the spotlight:

Each scene is written with a certain spotlight character in mind. During that scene, the character under the spotlight loses like anyone else, but when they win, they win big. As a result, spotlight characters gain an Exceptional Success on three successes instead of five.

If you aren't using the Lamppost Cabal, it's just a matter of deciding which character you'd like to hit with the light. But the important thing is not to gum up the story by just telling the players who the spotlight character is. Show them by hinting in the scene set up. There's suggestions of that in the scenes below, but if you have to come up with them on your own, try to borrow details from the character's theme or design, possibly from the description of their nimbus and work it into the opening.

Show, don't tell. Your secret's out as soon as the spotlight character hits three successes anyway, but in the meantime, letting the cabal lean on the one they suspect is the key character will make the story more compelling.

THE CAST

Man Holding a Gun

QUOTES:

"Don't make me let in the sunshine, angel."

"I'm not here for you, baby, so cool your heels."

"Highbinders and hinky hoods. I oughta dust the whole mess of you."

VIRTUE: Justice. The man is here for a reason, and he's as serious as a Chicago Overcoat. Whatever he's here to do, it involves killing one of the characters, and nothing is going to stop him.

VICE: Sloth. Because he's so driven (and frankly, not that bright), everything else falls to the wayside. He's not looking to live through this; he's just looking to take as many sons-a-bitches with him when he goes.

BACKGROUND: Something broke this baby long before he stepped on scene and he's never been the same. Wherever he came from, whatever happened, in the end it doesn't matter. He's just another cat with cold, dead eyes and a gun in his hand.

DESCRIPTION: He's a gorilla in a cheap suit and a hat that's been sat on one too many times. His five o'clock shadow's up past its bedtime. He wobbles on his feet, but one thing ain't moving, and that's the gun in his hand.

STORYTELLING HINTS: He's not here to explain. He doesn't work for anyone (that he knows of), and there's no evidence anywhere on him as to why he's here. Scrying, mind reading and the like only say one thing: he wants to kill and nothing is going to stop him.

That said, mages are remarkably obnoxious when you hand them absolutes. If talked down or subdued, he can be used as fodder for other storylines down the road. He's a completely blank slate—no memory, no trace, no sympathetic ties.

REAL NAME: Unknown

CONCEPT: The Red Herring

VIRTUE: Justice

VICE: Sloth

ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

SKILLS: Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Firearms 4 (Tommy Gun), Larceny 2, Stealth 2 (Darkness), Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2

MERITS: Contacts 1, Fast Reflexes 2, Resources 1

HEALTH: 7

WILLPOWER: 5

MORALITY: 6

SIZE: 5

SPEED: 10

DEFENSE: 3

INITIATIVE: 8

ARMOR: 0

NOTES: Derangement – Manic Obsession, Equipment – Tommy Gun (3L, +3 for Full Burst)

Frail

QUOTES:

"This, this text within a text is brilliant! Unbelievable in fact, but what does it... oh. Oh my God."

"I'll tell you everything I know. The truth, it's just, it's too terrible to bother hiding. It's too terrible to bother with anything, anymore."

"...papers... Weaver-West. ...Hands of the enemy. The end. Everyone in danger."

VIRTUE: Hope. For any Quiet mage who knows her, Frail is one of the reasons to keep going. She's a beacon, a reason to go on. She believes so completely, so unflinchingly in the possibilities of mankind that it's hard not to feel better when she's smiling and telling you how it is.

VICE: Pride. Frail is right. Her belief has been reinforced by the love and admiration of her peers so completely that she actually believes the hype around her.

BACKGROUND: Emily Awakened in the middle of a church service in Topeka, Kansas while the preacher gushed about the ingenuity of man and American. Her Awakening told her something secret: that God was not an old man on a mountain. God was everyone and everything. Humanity was and made God, and she understood herself to be a shepherd, humble in the face of God, humbled by the masses.

When she met George West while chaperoning a team of children to Bible School, she knew immediately she had found someone she could follow for the rest of her life.

DESCRIPTION: Frail is small and delicate, her demeanor gentle and her movements graceful and slow. Her eyes are as wide and as blue as the Midwestern sky and her hair seems spun out of sugar and sunlight. This kid wouldn't know a hateful word if you slapped her in the kisser with one. Even in death, she's got a kind of sorry sweetness, like a critter just too delicate to live in the realities of the Fallen World.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Before she died, people who knew her would have described her as an inspiration, a sweet thing who could get cross and certainly knew how to yell with the best of 'em, but never had a cruel thought run through her mind. Whatever the truth is, is entirely up to the you.

REAL NAME: Emily Steward

CONCEPT: The Catalyst

VIRTUE: Hope

VICE: Pride

PATH: Obrimos

ORDER: Free Council

LEGACY: Quiescent

ABILITIES: Seek Sympathy (6 dice) – Her death should inspire the cabal to action, and draw their attention.

Wire

QUOTES:

"Hmm? What? Ah! Yes! I have just exactly the book you're looking for. Baby, let me lay it out for you: This is going to make you goofy."

"You buzz me up, and I'll tell you what's the wire. Get it? 'Cause I'm Wire? Why aren't you laughing?"

"Lit? Sure I'm lit. Mickey Finn and I had a good long chat before you got here. That doesn't change the fact that this information is completely on the level."

VIRTUE: Fortitude. Wire takes his licks and gets knocked around, but he keeps bouncing back. He knows that high he hits is obtainable again; he's just got to hang on long enough to get there.

VICE: Gluttony. He wants it all. Anything Wire doesn't know is something he desires like no other, and he'll put himself out every time if it means getting his mitts on a piece of choice information. It's nearly gotten him killed more than a few times and even he knows it's how he's going to get killed.

BACKGROUND: Alan North has always been light with his fingers. His daddy was a peterman (a safe cracker) and Alan was raised in the family tradition. He was also raised an addict, but he went for the horse when his father went for the booze. At seventeen years old, they had him break a vault. When he got in, he found a book people aren't supposed to read. Forbidden knowledge poured into his still-malleable brain and he Awoke immediately. Since then, he gets a buzz any time he comes across a new bit of information. That's the dragon he'll be chasing for the rest of his life.

DESCRIPTION: Wire is, as one would expect, tall and lanky. Instead of gesturing when he's excited, he whips around wildly with his rubbery limbs. He hasn't been straight since he was fourteen years old and has all markings of a hop-head. If he's too lethargic, he's got an upper to fix that. If he's too hyper, and he notices, well, there's something to smooth him out.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Flail excitedly when you're up, and slouch and slur your words when you're down. Offer anyone who asks a little taste, whether that's of what you're on, or what you know, but you've got a habit to feed, so anything more than a taste is going to cost. If you know the lingo of the lowlifes of the era well, really heap it on with Wire. He digs what the Quiet mages are doing, but is waiting to see which way the wind blows before he joins up.

REAL NAME: Alan North

CONCEPT: The Rat

VIRTUE: Fortitude

VICE: Gluttony

PATH: Mastigos

ORDER: Mysterium

LEGACY: None

ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

SKILLS: Academics 2 (Research), Investigation 3 (Odd Details), Medicine 2, Occult 3, Politics 2 (Anecdotes), Science 2, Athletics 1, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

MERITS: Contacts 4, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Resources 2

HEALTH: 7

WILLPOWER: 5

MORALITY: 7

SIZE: 5

SPEED: 10

DEFENSE: 3

INITIATIVE: 5

GNOSIS: 3

ARCANA: Mind 3, Space 2, Time 2

ROTES: Mind — Aura Perception (●), Augment the Mind (●●●); Space — Correspondence (●), Scrying (●●); Time — Temporal Eddies (●), Augury (●●)

MANA/PER TURN: 12/3

ARMOR: 0

Gunsel

QUOTES:

"I'm going to lay this out just once for you kid, because I'm generous like that. You can't change the world, you can't change the way things have always been done and trying to creep around like a rat in the wall tells me everything I need to know about your character."

"This world is a clip joint, and I'm the one rigging the tables. And I'll do that any way I please."

"But why are we hiding from them? Their lives are shit, and more important, their lives are cheap. Strictly coffee-and-doughnuts. Strictly."

VIRTUE: Faith. Gunsel believes without a shadow of a doubt that he's right. About everything. That the Quiet mages are full of crap and that anyone who isn't doing what he wants is doomed. He carefully rearranges facts, people, and even reality to make that true.

VICE: Wrath. If you can prove him wrong, and he can't do anything to change it, he will make himself feel better once he's standing over your smoking corpse.

BACKGROUND: Gunsel grew up a child of privilege among lowlifes and comen. His father ran a mid-sized gang that afforded them considerable wealth, but no real status. They lived among the rich and powerful, but everyone knew where their money came from. He was entitled but an outsider. His Awakening while beating a housemaid to death gave him just the chance he needed to make them all pay.

DESCRIPTION: Gunsel isn't a pound shy of 350. He wears his weight as authority and carries himself more like a gluttonous king than the overweight lowlife he

really is. He dresses flashily but cheaply because he wants to look the part but hates to part with the lettuce to do it right.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Everyone disgusts you just a little bit, and you have trouble hiding it. You'd be a lazy glutton if you weren't so violent and quick to anger. Never stop snacking or drinking, put your hands all over any tomato that passes close enough to be grabbed and do it with a grin. You know you disgust them, and that amuses you. Hence your shadow name, meaning either a hired gun or a cock sucker, depending on context.

NAME: Warren Pardux

CONCEPT: Overgrown Bully

VIRTUE: Faith

VICE: Wrath

ORDER: Guardians of the Veil

PATH: Moros

LEGACY: None

ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4, Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

SKILLS: Investigation 2, Occult 1, Politics 1, Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Survival 1, Intimidation (Physical Bravado) 3, Subterfuge 2

MERITS: Allies 1, Contacts 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Giant 4, Resources 2

HEALTH: 10

WILLPOWER: 8

MORALITY: 5

SIZE: 6

SPEED: 10

DEFENSE: 2

INITIATIVE: 6

GNOSIS: 4

ARCANA: Matter 3, Death 3, Forces 3

ROTES: Matter — Augment Accuracy (••), Unseen Aegis (••), Armor Piercing (•••); Death — Forensic Gaze (•); Forces — Kinetic Blow (••)

MANA/PER TURN: 13/4

ARMOR: 3 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

Ice

QUOTES:

"Listen, sister, I know exactly what you're going through. I've been there. No, really, I've been exactly where you are now. You have my support, you know that. Now the question is, do I have yours?"

"It's natural for me to want power. It's my nature, I'm bred for it, and more importantly, I Awakened to it. That doesn't mean I don't see the value in subtlety."

"I've safeguarded the Weaver-West Papers since they were written. Their significance to the larger political movement cannot be understated. I need them back. Won't you do your part?"

VIRTUE: Prudence. Ice doesn't make a move without calculating six moves ahead. Nothing is entered into blindly. The outside world sees her as thoughtful and considerate.

VICE: Envy. There isn't anything someone else has that, on some level, Ice doesn't want. Power, money, information, magic, science. If someone can do it and Ice can't, she wants not just to take it away from them, but to possess it herself. This need makes her creative when it comes to greed over more esoteric concepts like magic and fame.

BACKGROUND: Lorna Jackson was the youngest of three sisters. Their father, a wealthy widower did the best he could for his girls, was quickly overwhelmed and spoiled them rotten. His eldest became a roundheel, sleeping with anything that would hold still long enough. His second became an addict to anything she could smoke, drink, or inject. Lorna chose to be the good girl, but quickly discovered that good girls don't get much attention. Her eldest sister left one night and her father squandered a small fortune trying to bring her home while trying to keep his middle daughter clean. Lorna realized the only way to protect her future was to see that her useless sisters were put down. After hiring a hitman to take care of the eldest outside her boyfriend's flat, she strangled her remaining sister herself. It wasn't until the next morning, while being coddled and cooed over in her feigned grief that she Awoke.

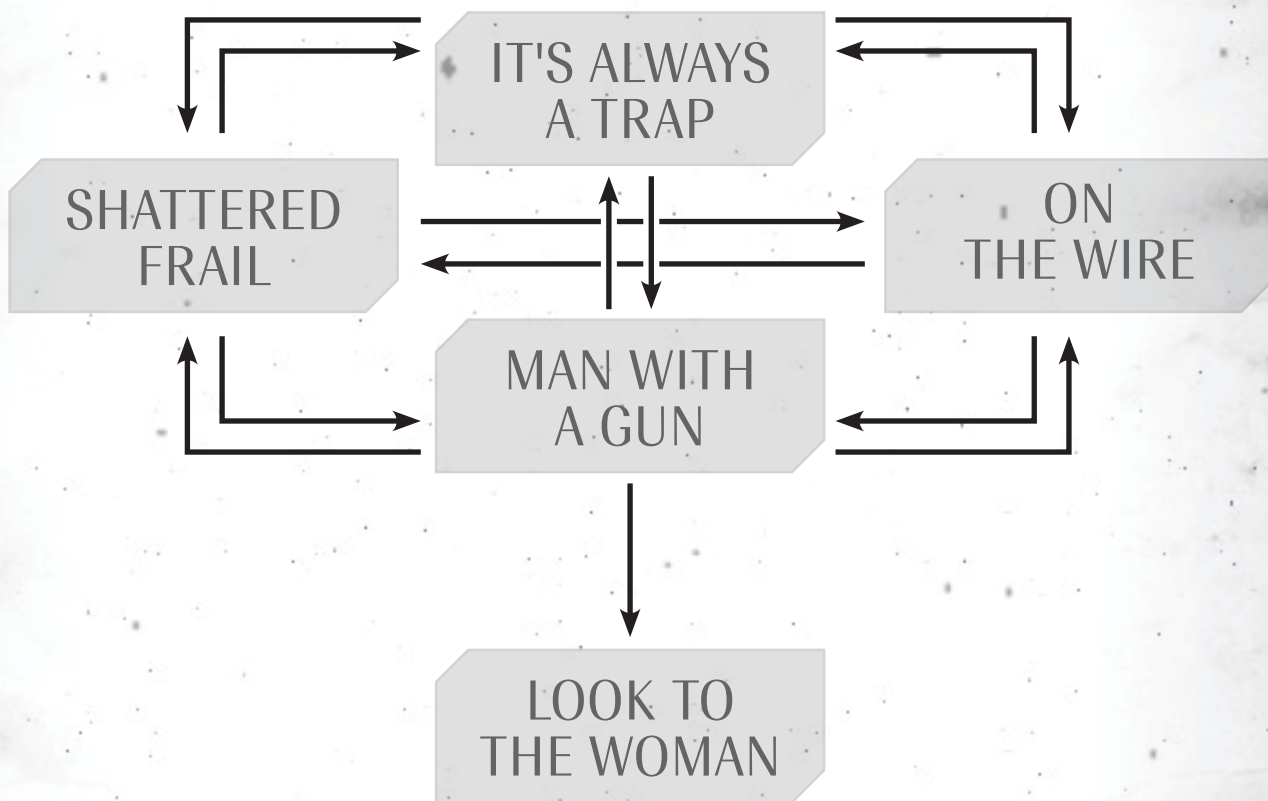
DESCRIPTION: Ice is tall and slender with a proud chin and the sort of elegance you can't buy. She's easy on the eyes and smiles like she understands everything you've got to say. She's a honey trap, and everyone who sees her wants to get their fingers sticky.

STORYTELLING HINTS: You are apparently a creature of delicate nobility and warmth. It's a totally political act. If the social climate changed and you needed to become a hard dominatrix, you wouldn't bat an eye. You wear whatever mask you must to get the job done.

REAL NAME: Lorna Jackson
CONCEPT: Black widow
VIRTUE: Prudence
VICE: Envy
ORDER: Guardians of the Veil (Masquerading as a Free Council)
PATH: Mastigos
LEGACY: None
ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4, Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3
SKILLS: Academics 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Politics 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 3, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize (Political Gatherings) 2, Subterfuge (White Lies) 3

MERITS: Contacts 3, Resources 4, Striking Looks 4
HEALTH: 7
WILLPOWER: 7
MORALITY: 6
SIZE: 5
SPEED: 10
DEFENSE: 3
INITIATIVE: 6
GNOSIS: 3
ARCANA: Mind 4, Space 2, Fate 2
ROTES: Mind — Augment the Mind (•••), Befuddle Mind (••••); Space — Finder (•), Conceal Sympathy (••)
MANA/PER TURN: 12/3

Scene Flowchart



MAN WITH A GUN

Mental • Physical • • • Social • • •

Overview

The man enters, focused on his one goal: to shoot the place up and kill the cabal. The cabal can attack, try to reason with him or handle it any number of other ways, but the real key here is for you to get Rosie into the limelight. She has a chance to talk him down and get something out of the random violence. Life is cheap, action is fast and bloody, and the reality of the Fallen World is that sometimes, people are just plain dead inside. This scene spotlights Rosie. This scene can be placed at the beginning of the SAS to set tone, or between two other scenes to change the pace and shake things up.

Description

(As an opener or on a low point between scenes.) Like any truly terrible day, this one starts quietly. The Chats won't be open for business for a few hours and the cabal is casually hanging around in the lull between big trouble and big wins. The air itself feels hushed by a gentle atmosphere of order and peace.

(In between tense scenes.) Things are bad, they always are, and everything tells you that they're going to get worse. You tell yourself if you can just catch a minute—just one—then maybe you'll have the strength to go on. One look at your cabal mates tells you they need the time just as much as you do. A sort of silence settles over you. An orderly hush that makes the moment still. Maybe, maybe everything is going to be okay after all.

(When Rosie makes eye contact with the Man.) You know that look. When the war spat your husband out in pieces, handed you some twine and told you to put him back together without glue, you saw that look in his eyes. This man is haunted, lost, maybe even soulless thanks to whatever he saw before he burst through your doors. He's a walking shell and he wants to die... but not without taking you with him.

Storyteller Goals

The main goal for you here is to rattle Rosie's chain, dragging up memories of her husband's tragic end and give her a chance to shine both in roleplaying and mechanically. If a couple of characters get shot up in the process, all the better because it'll be Rosie who patches them up (once she can pull herself together).

Be sure to focus the man's actions on Rosie. Have him catch her by the door, crowd her in a corner and shoot anyone who tries to play hero. Make sure he makes eye contact with Rosie and don't hold back in the description of the horrors he's seen.

It is possible the other characters might drill him full of holes before Rosie can make any kind of big sweeping decisions. No problem. If you want, ignore the Man's health levels for just long enough for Rosie to decide to save him... or to kill him herself.

Character Goals

For most of the cabal, the goal here should be to stop the guy without getting too shot up. For Rosie, it's more than that. This guy is perfect evidence of your greatest fear: that the war destroyed the men of the Fallen World. Dealing with him—violently or compassionately—is all on Rosie.

Actions

Talk Him Down

Rosie is a Life and Forces mage with some power behind her. There are about a dozen ways she could kill or incapacitate the guy, and if that's the player's choice, feel free to allow Rosie's player to play with her sheet as much as she likes to get the job done.

However, there is another option, though Rosie isn't exactly built for it. She can try and talk the guy down, make him give up the gun, and let the cabal help. She believes there's nothing she can't do, after all, and this might be her one chance to do something for a man so much like her husband. As if it could make up for the way she failed him.

DICE POOL: Manipulation + Empathy

ACTION: Extended, each roll is one thirty seconds of banter with a goal of ten successes.

HINDRANCES: Afraid for their lives, the cabal threatens the crazed man with their own guns (-1). While trying to talk down the crazed man, Rosie keeps a weapon as a barrier between them (-2).

HELP: Rosie tells the man about her late husband (+3). Rosie shows him her husband's dog tags (+1). The rest of the cabal put their weapons down (+1).

Roll Results

DRAMATIC FAILURE: There is no talking the man down, but instead of opening fire on the cabal again, he turns the gun on himself, splattering his brains everywhere. Rosie should roll three dice against degeneration; she couldn't save her husband, she couldn't save this man, and it's all her fault.

FAILURE: Rosie makes no progress toward her goal of ten successes. In his frustration, the man fires on the other cabal members again.

SUCCESS: Rosie makes ground in getting the man to put down his gun.

EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS: In addition to the successes made toward the total, Rosie has reached deep inside and found some part of herself that really resonates with the

room. The cabal members each receive a willpower point, empowered by Rosie's moment. This bonus point cannot go over their total dots in Willpower.

Consequences

Rattled or emboldened, the characters are left with a shell of a man to help or abandon. Or else, they're left with a body to report or dump. In all likelihood there's damage to the Chats they're going to have to repair (or at least explain away) and wounds to lick before they can carry on with the story.

SHATTERED FRAIL

Mental • • • Physical • Social • •

Overview

Frail staggers into the characters' lives and drags them into the story by dying in their arms. She's had a terrible, vulgar curse cast on her that is rotting her alive from inside out, leaving her literally speechless. If the players want to know what's going on, it's up to Nightingale (the spotlight character in this scene), to draw out the knowledge Frail was so desperate to share. Knowledge she was willing to die for.

Description

It's a sparse but dedicated crowd tonight, and they ate up Nightingale's last set. She's riding high and her good feelings are hard for the rest of the Lamp-post Cable to ignore. Even Ferryman's feeling like he should smile just a little.

Then she staggered in the door. Like a newborn fawn on wobbly narrow legs, she walked a crooked line through the front door of Chats and toward the bar. One look at this sweet kid says someone's got her snowed or marked for the rub out.

(Description of Frail's condition.) The curse is a bad one. From the spot on her lovely pale throat where it took hold, and creeping out through her blood stream something's rotting this dish from the inside out. Her eyes say her mind is still sharp. She tries to write you a note, her finger tips crumble as she tries to hold a pen. With what's left of her, she touches her temple and looks pleading, begging to contact what's left of her before it's too late.

Storyteller Goals

The goal of this scene is to evoke sympathy for Frail's tragic death and get the players started chasing the Weaver-West Papers.

If the players aren't taking the emotional bait immediately, remember this doe-eyed doll has six dice to evoke sympathy, resisted by their resolve. Success on Frail's part means they can't help it; they're affected by her death.

Additionally, as with any Storyteller character, members of this cabal with their fingers on the pulse, can roll Intelligence + Politics to get an idea of who she is and what she does.

What Frail Knows

- The Weaver-West Papers are a missing treatise on the importance of Quiet, handwritten by Weaver, West and Dorfmann.
- Wire, a Mysterium member sympathetic to the Quiet, can probably help.
- For the past few years, they've been in the hands of a Free Council member named Ice who safeguarded them. They're now missing.
- Dorfmann was a part of the writing, so it's a rare sympathetic tie to him. No one knows why his name isn't a part of the document's moniker.
- They aren't what they seem. There's a hidden meaning buried beneath the philosophical discussion.

Character Goals

In this scene, the characters should want to know what this sweet kid was willing to die to tell them. Because of her mind-to-mind contact with the young Obrisos, Nightingale should be particularly influenced by the events and therefore particularly passionate about seeing the story through to the end.

Actions

For Nightingale, using Telepathy (Mage: The Awakening, p. 212) is the simplest and cleanest way to get the information Frail is trying to broadcast. Her successes on that roll translate directly to the number of turns and therefore, the pieces of information she can garner with the casting of the spell.

But it's a little more complicated than that. In order for Nightingale to get those pieces of information, Frail has to stick around. And that's where the rest of the cabal comes in. With a combined effort, the other characters must stave off the curse medically as long as they can. (The curse was cast by a powerful enough mage that unweaving it will take too long and healing her magically is equally difficult. Assume the spell's potency to be around 10 successes.)

So, first, Nightingale rolls to determine how many turns her Telepathy works, and from there, the characters know how many turns they need to meet or succeed. If she rolls an Exceptional Success as the spotlight character, she automatically gets a point of Essence back.

Stabilizing Frail

DICE POOL: Intelligence + Medicine, which can use the teamwork rules.

ACTION: Each roll buys Frail another three or four seconds of life (a turn) and Nightingale another chance to probe the other woman's mind.

HINDRANCES: No medical supplied (-2). The Cabal is trying to hide the scene from the bar crowd (-2).

HELP: Rosie and the others have some basic medical supplies around; they are prepared with tools (+2).

Roll Results

DRAMATIC FAILURE: Their efforts fail. Frail dies immediately and Nightingale gets no chance to make her roll.

FAILURE: The turn is wasted, and Nightingale gains no information as time slips away.

SUCCESS: One piece of information is provided to Nightingale through Telepathy.

EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS: Nightingale gets two turns of contact for this roll instead of one.

Consequences

The sad truth is, no matter what the characters do, Frail's going to (literally) fall apart on them. It's really only a question of how much information she can impart before she's gone.

If for some reason the cabal blows it entirely, you can have Ice contact them immediately following the death to say she knows that Frail was looking for her stolen papers and that Wire might be a good person to check with.

ON THE WIRE

Mental • • • • Physical • Social • • •

Overview

Either by contact with Frail's mind or through talking to Ice, the characters learn that Wire is the man with the information they need. Finding him is the problem. He's a man of the city, his sanctum moves from day to day and there are only two ways to find him: know where he's going to be ahead of time, or ask the spirits of the city to tell you. This scene spotlights Clown.

Description

It must have been raining before the Lamp-post Cabal hit the city streets in search of Wire—the concrete has that moist, dirty smell. The few people they pass on the streets grow hushed as the cabal go by, like they instinctively know they're interrupting or don't want to be overheard.

(*Finally entering Wire's sanctum.*) This place is somewhere between a bookstore and an apothecary, Wire's got something to scratch more than one kind of itch. The place smells like poppies and herbs and makes you a little dizzy.

Storyteller Goals

Ultimately, you want the players to catch up with Wire to get an idea of where to go next. He knows Gungel to be the most gung-ho about destroying anything and everything associated with Quiet magic and is only too happy to tell them about him, especially if they tell him how poor Frail died.

The real trick to this scene is getting to Wire in the first place, and it'll require some clever negotiations with the spirit world to get it done.

Character Goals

Once the cabal finds Wire, it's up in the air who will do the talking to get as much as they can out of him. But up to that point, it's all Clown's show.

Actions

Summoning Spirits

This is a chance for Clown to put his money where his mouth is. He's heard of Wire and how to find his traveling sanctum. More importantly, he knows if he wants to prove he's Quiet, he's going to have to convince the spirits to help without magic.

To get things rolling he will need to use magic to summon them into an acceptable location, but after that, negotiations are key.

DICE POOL: Manipulation + Persuasion, extended

ACTION: Each roll reflects an offer and counter-offer in the negotiation with the spirit, taking about thirty seconds each.

HINDRANCES: The city spirit has been summoned to a place not well suited to its nature, (-2). Clown is not being respectful, (subtract a number of dice equal to the spirit's rank).

HELP: Clown offers to sacrifice essence to the spirit, (+1 per roll). Clown offers the spirit something 'interesting' or creative in addition to the essence it's going to cost him. (+1 to 5)

Roll Results

DRAMATIC FAILURE: Clown accidentally insults the spirit. It vanishes and he'll have to start over with a new spirit.

FAILURE: No successes are added to the total. Additionally, future attempts are at a cumulative -1.

SUCCESS: Successes are added to the total. Twenty successes are required to convince the spirit that it should tell Clown where to find Wire's shop.

EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS: In addition to the successes gained with this roll, Clown earns back a point of Essence in the exchange.

Consequences

If Clown fails (or if the players are playing a home-made cabal with no spirit mages in it), it's possible for them to contact Ice or a mentor for a better idea on how to find Wire. Ice will need to be convinced with a similar negotiation to the one above, with offers and counteroffers relevant to Ice's character and motivations.

Once they find him, a social roll or two, or just good roleplaying will get Wire talking. He knows a great deal about the papers, and may be able to fill in the cabal on information they missed in Nightingale's Telepathy. He knows something else, too: A Guardian of the Veil by the name of Gungel wants to destroy Quiet magic completely. If anyone in town was going after the papers (which Wire seems to think might be somewhat mystical themselves), it's going to be Gungel or members of his cabal.

IT'S ALWAYS A TRAP

Mental • • • Physical • • • Social •

Overview

With a successful Politics or Streetwise roll, or contact with someone savvier in the Consilium, the cabal can discover Günsel's likely location: The Sunset Club is Günsel's night club and his cabal's main hangout.

On arrival, the characters will find Günsel's cabal gruesomely murdered with vulgar magic. It will be up to Ferryman to figure out what went on. Each body has a piece of story to tell—a part of the puzzle.

As soon as Ferryman finishes his work, however, the strain on local reality collapses, and the tapestry rips. Two abyssal creatures are waiting... as if the whole scene was a trap for anyone snooping.

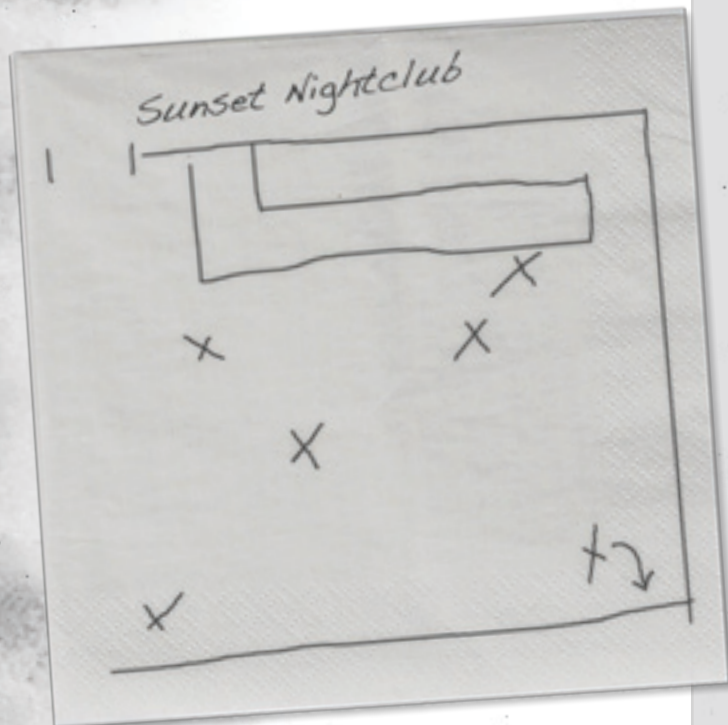
Description

The Sunset Club is a dump where the gin's watered down, the women are workers and any palooka can lose his green by facing the wrong direction. It's popular because the waitresses wear very little

clothing and the bartender's a pretty-boy Mastigos who makes drinks you had to come back for.

Or, he used to. Now, he's dead, along with the rest of the Sunset Cabal. The tables, chairs, and fake palm trees have been tossed around like a little hurricane came in here and had a dance with a tornado. The bodies of the cabal are strewn about the place like raw meat. Red spray covers the walls and ceiling and one thing's for sure, not even a pack of assault rifles could do this kind of damage. It had to be magic.

(When the Abyssal arrive.) Suddenly the whole place feels dark and slick. A matching pair of crawling, shining horrors slip like ink out of the tear in the Fallen World. They're all legs and shadows and they want your soul.



Clues on the Bodies

- One man was torn apart with Forces and Death magic.
- He knows it was the boss that killed them, but can't figure out how the boss got so powerful. He would never have been able to do something this terrible.
- He overheard the boss talking to somebody about the possibility of building some impossible artifact.
- He overheard the boss talking about the tools and materials for building something "big and powerful."
- He saw the boss went deeper into the sanctum, through a false wall behind the bar.
- He saw the Free Council woman Ice in the club more than once recently; and thought it was strange.

Storyteller Goals

Disgust the players with what people are willing to do to get their hands on the papers. Lead them to question why anyone would want a manifesto this badly. Give Ferryman a chance to gather the information needed to go on to the next scene. Set up a fight to bang the characters up a bit so they're a little spent for their final confrontation.

Character Goals

For Ferryman, respecting and answering to the dead is a life goal and this scene should be no different than any other. Moreover, the nature of the deaths here is such an affront to all that Quiet magic stands for, it demands action be taken.

For the rest of the cabal, surviving the Abyssal assault and closing up the rip ought to be enough of a goal.

Actions

Examining the Corpses

Before the fight starts, give Ferryman a chance to examine all six bodies. Tell him he has one roll per body, since their time is running short and Gungel is already way ahead of the cabal. He's welcome to use both magic and mundane measures to decipher the scene.

DICE POOL: Per spell or Intelligence + Investigation

ACTION: Each roll reflects a quick scan of one of the bodies, about a minute or two.

HINDRANCES: Ferryman is physically disgusted by the scene (-1). They delay investigating the bodies (-2). Anyone has moved or disturbed the scene (-3).

HELP: Ferryman treats the bodies respectfully (+1). He successfully got information out of the previous corpse (+1, cumulative).

Roll Results

DRAMATIC FAILURE: Whatever information that body may have held is lost forever and it is possible Ferryman will be haunted by the dead mage for failing to speak for him.

FAILURE: Ferryman misses a clue. He is at a -1 die on his next roll.

SUCCESS: Ferryman gets a clue from the body.

EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS: Ferryman not only gets a clue but he can either automatically pull a clue from a body he failed on (so long as it wasn't a Dramatic Failure), or skip a roll on the next body.

Minor Abyssal Horror

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 5,
Resistance 5

Willpower: 10

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 5

Speed: 18

Size: 8

Corpus: 13

Consequences

Depending on how many bodies Ferryman successfully examined, the characters now have a broader picture of the events in the Sunset Club. More importantly, they should have a lot more questions about Gungel, the real nature of the papers, and what Ice may or may not have to do with things.

They should also be at least somewhat beaten up from the fight.

If Ferryman misses the clue on body number six, give all the characters Investigation rolls to notice the false wall behind the bar, or possibly Wits + Composure to notice that the door is partly open. You want the characters to follow Gungel to his inner sanctum.

LOOK TO THE WOMAN

Mental •• Physical •••• Social ••

Overview

This is the final conflict with the apparent villain of the story. He's violent, hates the cabal and everything they stand for and wants to destroy them. Even still, it's five on one, and in his rage he'll make a lot of mistakes. They will defeat him.

Which is when the real problem starts. At some point during or immediately after the fight, Rick (the spotlight character,) feels a desire to cast Postcognition on the documents (Mage: The Awakening, p. 260). He's always had knack for getting visions he doesn't want, why not try for one he does want? Their real purpose unfurls before him.

Before the characters have much of a chance to breathe, Ice arrives on the scene. They know she knows what the papers are for. They know she was involved. Do they hand the papers over? If not, then what? It's this choice that signals the end of the story and, possibly, the start of a new, darker tale to tell.

Description

(Rick's Vision) It's as if the papers themselves take you to what they want you to see. It's a dimly lit back room with the smell of cigarettes and coffee in the air. Rick's heard enough about the men who started the movement to know them by description, and there's no debating who these three are. West's haggard face. The outline of Dorfmann pacing back and forth in the cramped room. Weaver lying on a small cot up against the wall with an arm over his face.

"So it works." West says, tugging at his collar even though his tie has long since been removed.

"It works, and if it were built, it could destroy human technology for miles around." Weaver confirmed.

"Und worse," Dorfmann spat. "It would not be so hard to make many. Do you realize what this could mean?"

"I think we all do." West said darkly.

"We destroy the notes. We destroy all records." Weaver tossed off lightly.

"And if they build a bigger bomb? If they build something bigger than the A-bomb. Something that could destroy the whole

world and none of us can throw pixie dust enough to stop it?"

Dorfmann went quiet and crossed his arms sullenly.

Weaver shook his head. "It isn't our right."

"I'm not saying we build one. I'm saying we hide the possibility of building one somewhere, so that someday, if it's needed, really needed, someone with more wisdom and grace than the three of us can decide what to do."

"Then we're agreed?"

Dorfmann turned his back and walked from the room, but voiced no warning or tried to stop them.

"We're agreed." West said.

The vision ends.

Storyteller Goals

Fighting Gungel should be violent and crazed. Have Gungel taunt and abuse them. Call into question everything the characters believe.

Rick's vision should coincide with the arrival of Ice. Her façade won't hold up long. Upon seeing the papers, she'll get demanding. However, she has no idea the cabal isn't responsible for the carnage upstairs, so she won't make an effort to just take the papers.

She's not shy about what happened, and is happy to tell answer any detail they missed along the way: Her plan to have the papers stolen. Her murder of Frail. Her plan to have the cabal killed. She underestimated the cabal, and she's willing to admit that, and offer them a piece of everything she's going to have if they'll just turn over the goddamn papers to her.

She'll beg, plead, and seduce, but ultimately, if the characters stand firm, she'll leave with the promise that she'll finish one of those artifacts one day. One day soon.

Character Goals

Stop Gungel, reclaim the papers, deal with Rick's horrifying vision, and make a choice as to what to do with the papers once they understand their true nature.

Actions

Most of the action in this scene is the fight with Gungel. If he's attacking with magic, it should be the most brutal things you can come up with. If he's attacking physically, he should go all out. He wants to spread the pain, as well, so if it looks like he's going to finish off one of the cabal as he fought, he'll turn his attention to someone else. He wants them all to suffer.

AFTERMATH

Gungel and his cabal are out of commission, one way or another. This is a terrible blow to the old guard and anti-Quiet movement.

West's favored student Frail is dead, and with her, a lot of hope. The cabal now knows that Ice is the mastermind of the theft of the papers. Proving it to the Consilium at large, will be another matter.

If the characters handed them over to Ice, she's willing to share, sort of. She'll send the cabal off on dangerous mission after dangerous mission to retrieve the materials necessary to build one of the machines. If they get killed in the process, well, there are always other suckers.

If they keep the papers, they can expect reprisal from Ice, her allies, and anyone else who catches a whiff of what the papers have hidden within them.

If they destroy the papers, every time the Cold War reminds them Russia has a nuclear bomb aimed at the US, they've got to ask themselves... Was it really their call to make?

SCENE: Man With a Gun

p. 54

MENTAL: •• PHYSICAL: ••• SOCIAL: •••

HINDRANCES: The cabal points guns (-1) Rosie has a weapon, (-2)

HELP: Rosie talks about husband (+3).

Dog tags (+1).

Cabal puts weapons down (+1).

STORYTELLER GOALS: Shake up Rosie

CHARACTER GOALS: Talk the guy down, don't get murdered

SCENE: Shattered Frail

p. 55

MENTAL: ••• PHYSICAL: • SOCIAL: ••

HINDRANCES: Attempt without tools, (-2).

Hide the scene from bar crowd, (-2).

HELP: Prepared with tools (+2).

STORYTELLER GOALS: Hook the players on your line, give the characters a need to see the story through to the end.

CHARACTER GOALS: Keep the dying woman alive long enough to see what was worth dying over to share.

SCENE: On the Wire

p. 57

MENTAL: •••• PHYSICAL: • SOCIAL: •••

HINDRANCES: Summoned to place against its nature, (-2).

Clown is disrespectful, (- die equal to rank).

HELP: Clown offers essence, (+1 per roll).

Clown offers interesting sacrifice, (+1 to 5).

STORYTELLER GOALS: Get the cabal to Wire to find out more about the papers and who might have them, but make it interesting.

CHARACTER GOALS: Deal with the city spirits. Deal with Wire. Figure out where to go next.

SCENE: It's Always a Trap

p. 58

MENTAL: ••• PHYSICAL: ••• SOCIAL: •

HINDRANCES: Ferryman disgusted by the scene, (-1).

They delay investigating, (-2).

Disturbed the scene, (-3).

HELP: Treats the bodies respectfully, (+1).

He piece of info from previous corpse, (+1 cumulative).

STORYTELLER GOALS: Leave the characters with more questions than answers, and maybe make them a little afraid of Gungel when they confront him in the next scene.

CHARACTER GOALS: Figure out where to go next.

SCENE: Look to the Woman

p. 60

MENTAL: •• PHYSICAL: •••• SOCIAL: ••

STORYTELLER GOALS: Pound them with Gungel. Reveal the nature of the papers.

CHARACTER GOALS: Decide what to do with the papers. Survive.



APPENDIX:

THE LAMPPPOST CABAL



The phrase is “between you, me and the lamppost.” Most people use it to mean they are about to say something in confidence, something they expect the other person not to repeat. But on the dirty streets, among the Awakened and the supernatural, the phrase has another meaning. It means that a small cabal of mages already knows the information that is about to be passed along. That means the information is for sale.

The Lamppost Cabal is composed of the ideological descendants of the original Quiet mages, Ellis Weaver, George West and Hans Dorfmann. While none of the Lamppost mages studied under these luminaries directly, they hold the precepts of Quiet magic close to their hearts, and all of them eschew vulgar magic except in truly dire situations.

The cabal operates in a kind of gray zone in the city’s Consilium. They are not officially recognized as a Consilium cabal, and that means that the Consilium can deny knowledge of the cabal’s activities. Likewise, four of the five of them belong to orders, and so can draw on the advantages that membership provides, but none of them have enough status in their respective orders to demand much responsibility or recognition. The Lamppost mages are information brokers, thieves and investigators. They aren’t picky about their currency—money, favors, knowledge are all accepted—but sometimes they take jobs just because one of them feels they should.

The cabal’s ultimate goal is in line with the Quiet philosophy: to join the future of humanity and live in accordance with the natural laws of the Fallen World. The criminal laws of the Fallen World don’t concern them as much, but if humanity as a whole ever starts respecting them, then so will the Lamppost.

What City?

We haven’t specified where the Lamppost Cabal operates, because they are meant to embody certain tropes of the genre, not to be representative of any particular city. If you have access to **World of Darkness: Chicago** or **Boston Unveiled** and wish to insert the Lamppost into the histories of those cities, you can easily do so.

Beyond that, however, the Lamppost simply lives and works in “the city.”

Chats

(Sanctum Size • • , Security • • • •)

Chats is Sarah’s nightclub. The club plays jazz or swing, normally, but Sarah’s been known to dip into other musical genres when she feels whimsical. The Security takes the form of crowd noise—listening to a casual conversation in a loud club is difficult. The place is small and intimate, and as much as the cabal loves it, they all know they might be called upon to leave it at a moment’s notice. Rick, in fact, has had visions of the club burning, though he hasn’t shared them with Nightingale.

The name of the club, Chats, refers both to casual conversation (“Just having a chat”) as well as the group of birds to which nightingales belong.

The Cabal

The mages of the Lamppost are experienced, and each has 50 experience points.

Nightingale

QUOTE: "I'm on."



BACKGROUND: Sarah Singer joked from her teens that she was destined for show business. With a name like that, she said, what else was there? She loved jazz, but could sing almost anything, and when the war broke out, she auditioned for and joined a USO show troop. She spent much of the war performing for the troops, and

she thought of it as a job, a stepping-stone, and possibly a way to meet a movie star and make it to Hollywood herself.

And then one night, she started reading the minds of the men in the audience. *I just want to meet my little boy before I die... I never told her I loved her before I went away... If I say how I feel, we'll both be discharged... I watched my friend die, and I couldn't help because I got scared...*

These men were broken by what they had seen and done, and Sarah Singer could do nothing but smile and sing. But as she did, she realized it helped them forget. As they watched her and thought of her, their pain faded. At the end of the show, she signed an autograph for a GI, and she Awakened.

Sarah met Hans Dorfmann after returning home, and although initially distrustful (he was German, after all), she became enamored of his philosophy. She took up with one of his pupils and joined the Quiescent Legacy. Once she met Rick and Clown, she agreed to let them use her nightclub, Chats, as their meeting place and sanctum. She took the shadow name "Nightingale" (for use with the Lamppost, though she also uses others) both for the songbird, and because she identifies with the famous nurse Florence Nightingale.

DESCRIPTION: Nightingale is beautiful and voluptuous, with long, dark hair and a smoldering gaze. She perpetually wears a half-smile, and she speaks slowly and gently, putting those around her at ease. When singing at her club, she favors gray or ivory dresses, but she dresses more practically when out and about with her cabal.

Her seldom-seen Nimbus is music. A haunting song rises, and those who hear it realize it is singing their secrets to them softly and sadly.

STORYTELLING HINTS: If the Lamppost has a leader, it is Nightingale. She is less a devotee of the Quiet philosophy than Clown or Rosie, but only because her true goal is to help heal those whose minds and souls were damaged in the war. In her heart, she knows that the country will never be the same again, and that everything, including music, is just going to keep changing. She worries about the wars and deaths that she sees on the horizon, but when she feels overwhelmed, she tells her bandleader to play something snappy and she launches into song again.

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: Passport (not hers; she found it in the dirt after a USO show in England)

REAL NAME: Sarah Singer

PATH: Mastigos

ORDER: Free Council

LEGACY: Quiescent

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Occult 2, Politics 2, Science 1

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics 2, Firearms 1, Larceny (Concealment) 1, Stealth 1

SOCIAL SKILLS: Empathy 3, Expression (Singing) 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Nightclubs) 2, Streetwise 1

MERITS: Fame 1, High Speech, Resources 2, Sanctum 6 (shared), Status (Consilium) 1, Status (Order) 2, Striking Looks 4

WILLPOWER: 5

WISDOM: 7

VIRTUE: Hope

VICE: Pride

INITIATIVE: 4

DEFENSE: 2

SPEED: 9

HEALTH: 7

GNOSIS: 3

ARCANA: Mind 3, Space 1, Time 2

ROTES: *Mind* — Augment the Mind (•••); *Space* — Finder (•); *Time* — Augury (••)

LEGACY ATTAINMENT: 1st — No Past

MANA/PER TURN: 12/3

ARMOR: 3 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

Mage Noir

NAME: *Nightingale*
 REAL NAME: *Sarah Singer*
 CHRONICLE:

CONCEPT: *Hopeful Torch Singer*
 VIRTUE: *Hope*
 VICE: *Pride*

PATH: *Mastigos*
 ORDER: *Free Council*
 LEGACY: *Quiescent*

Attributes

POWER	Intelligence	●●○○○	Strength	●●○○○	Presence	●●●○○
FINESSE	Wits	●●●○○	Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●●○○
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●●○○	Stamina	●●○○○	Composure	●●○○○

Skills

MENTAL (-1 unskilled)

Academics	●○○○○
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	●○○○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	●●○○○
Politics	●●○○○
Science	●○○○○

PHYSICAL (-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	●○○○○
Larceny (<i>concealment</i>)	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

SOCIAL (-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●●●○○
Expression (<i>singing</i>)	●●●○○
Intimidation	○○○○○
Persuasion	●●○○○
Socialize (<i>nightclubs</i>)	●●○○○
Streetwise	●○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

MERITS

<i>Fame</i>	●○○○○
<i>High Speech</i>	●○○○○
<i>Resources</i>	●●○○○
<i>Sanctum (shared)</i>	●●●●●
<i>Status (Consilium)</i>	●○○○○
<i>Status (Order)</i>	●●○○○
<i>Striking Looks</i>	●●●●○
	○○○○○

FLAWS

Size <i>5</i>
Defense <i>2</i>
Initiative Mod <i>4</i>
Speed <i>9</i>
Experience <i>50</i>

ARCANA

Death	○○○○○
Fate	○○○○○
Forces	○○○○○
Life	○○○○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	●●●○○
Prime	○○○○○
Space	●○○○○
Spirit	○○○○○
Time	●●○○○

HEALTH

●●●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
■□□□□□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●●○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARMOR

Type	Points
------	--------

PROTECTIVE SPELLS

Name	Points
<i>Armor: 3 ("Misperception," Mind ●●)</i>	

ROTES: *Mind* - *Augment the Mind* (●●●); *Space* - *Finder* (●); *Time* - *Augury* (●●)

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: *Passport* (not hers; she found it in the dirt after a USO show in England)

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

Rick

QUOTE: “We’ve met. It’s OK if you don’t remember me, though.”



BACKGROUND: The mage calling himself “Rick” seemed to spring into existence on November 26, 1942—the same night *Casablanca* premiered in New York City. Despite the fact that the film is recognized as a classic in the modern age, at the time it was only moderately popular. Rick, however,

knew brilliance when he saw it.

Already practicing something like Quiet magic before it had a name, Rick lived invisibly among the Awakened of New York for years before meeting Clown. While Rick wanted very much to join the Quiescent Legacy, Clown wasn’t sure how to instruct a Trickster in the Liar’s ways (since Rick had a relationship with Time magic that was more intuitive than Clown’s). They settled for forming a cabal, and when their travels led them to Chats, they knew they had to include Nightingale in their endeavor.

Rick seldom talks about his past. His cabal-mates have learned that he came from a small town, and that his parents were blue-collar and hard-working, but they aren’t sure if that means they made cars in Detroit or farmed corn in Nebraska. Rick is a master at moving attention away from himself in conversation, and asking him direct questions just makes him uncomfortable. Clown jokes sometimes that Rick fell out of the screen at the Hollywood Theater that night, and when he says that, Rick just smiles and whistles “As Time Goes By.”

In the cabal, Rick is the point man. He’s harmless-looking and affable, and he makes a good go-between because everyone knows him anyway. He refuses to break his word once he’s given it, even if doing so is dangerous to him, because he needs people to know they can trust him. This has caused some friction with Ferryman, who doesn’t share his view of honesty, but the two have learned not to make or break promises for the other.

DESCRIPTION: Rick is in his 30s, but has a young face and a seemingly perpetual tan. He has blond hair and brown eyes, and wears ill-fitting suits with the tie hung around his neck rather than actually tied.

Rick’s Nimbus, like much else about him, is a mystery, but Clown claims to have seen it, and says that it reminded him of the smell of gin and the tinkle of piano keys. Clown isn’t always honest, though.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Rick is a cipher. He’s lost and lonely, and he adopted the persona he saw in a film because he liked it better than his own. Rick is a constant presence in the city’s supernatural scene, and although he has the backing and support of his cabal, he also knows how fleeting that is. His comrades know that he dreams the future, but they don’t know that he hasn’t told them even half of his visions. He’s is happy being Rick. He doesn’t want to be Cassandra instead.

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: Shot glass

REAL NAME: Unknown

PATH: Acanthus

ORDER: Apostate

LEGACY: None

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics (History) 2, Investigation 1, Occult (Omens) 2

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 2

SOCIAL SKILLS: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Loosening Tongues) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

MERITS: Contacts (Criminal, Police, Occult) 3, Dream 3, High Speech, Occultation 2, Sanctum 6 (Shared), Status (Consilium) 1

WILLPOWER: 5

WISDOM: 7

VIRTUE: Prudence

VICE: Envy

INITIATIVE: 6

DEFENSE: 3

SPEED: 10

HEALTH: 7

GNOSIS: 1

ARCANA: Death 1, Fate 2, Forces 1, Time 2

ROTES: *Death*—Soul Marks (•); *Fate*—Interconnections (•), Exceptional Luck (••); *Forces*—Receiver (•); *Time*—Perfect Timing (•), Postcognition (••)

MANA/PER TURN: 10/1

ARMOR: 2 (“Fortune’s Protection,” Time ••)

Ferryman

QUOTE: “Bite your tongue. He was an enemy, but he’s dead, and that means he deserves a moment of your time.”



BACKGROUND: Lindsey Barrows was on the front lines in Italy when he took a bullet in the shoulder. It wasn’t bad, he thought—sure, the medic couldn’t get the bullet out, but he stopped the bleeding and the wound never got infected. But Lindsey got transferred to an office job, confirming deaths and sending out telegrams. The work ate at

him as it did all his colleagues, and his supervisor advised him to find an outlet. Lindsey had always been fond of boxing, and as soon as his shoulder healed up, he went back to hitting the bags.

The problem was the bullet. Lindsey worked his shoulder too hard and knocked the bullet loose, and it wore against an artery until he started bleeding internally. One night after a workout, Lindsey collapsed and died.

Back on the battlefield, Lindsey saw the corner. He approached, knowing that if he rounded it, he’d be shot again. He doubled back, circled around, caught the soldier pointing his rifle at the corner, and stabbed him in the neck. And then he took the bullet out of the gun and wrote his name on it—the bullet that, in reality, killed him. He woke up on the floor again, bleeding from the shoulder, with the bullet in his hand. The official story was that he’d cut himself open to get at the bullet, but Lindsey, now a Moros, knew the truth.

He kept the job sending out the telegrams as long as he could, and when the war ended he returned stateside and met up with a pupil of Ellis Weaver. Weaver’s pupil trained Barrows in the Quiescent Legacy, teaching him that respecting the war-dead was part and parcel to the new world that Sleepers had created. Taking this to heart, Lindsey took the Shadow Name “Ferryman.” After his schooling was complete, he began to drift through the country, eventually winding up in a diner chatting with a man who called himself “Rick.” Ferryman, looking for direction and seeing something of a kindred soul, joined the Lamppost cabal as their muscle.

DESCRIPTION: Ferryman is short, stocky and wears a constant frown. He isn’t angry all the time, or so he says, but his body language and demeanor seem to say otherwise. Ferryman keeps his military haircut, wears comfortable clothing, and scores the bottoms of his shoes to give him better traction. He always carries a gun, but is happy to give it up if asked. He would prefer to fight without it.

Ferryman’s Nimbus is a feeling of oppressive heat and the sound of gunshots. Corners also seem dangerous and close when his Nimbus flares.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Ferryman is adamant about respecting the dead, especially those who fall in battle, and though he is occasionally called upon to kill, he never leaves bodies lying haphazardly in the street or anywhere they are unlikely to be found. He owes them that much, he says.

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: The bullet

REAL NAME: Lindsey Barrows

PATH: Moros

ORDER: Adamantine Arrow

LEGACY: Quiescent

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics (Research) 2, Investigation (Death Scenes) 1, Occult 1, Science 1

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics 1, Brawl (Boxing) 3, Firearms 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

SOCIAL SKILLS: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation (Imposing Posture) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

MERITS: Fighting Style: Boxing 4, High Speech, Sanctum 6 (shared), Status (Consilium) 1, Status (Order) 1

WILLPOWER: 5

WISDOM: 7

VIRTUE: Fortitude

VICE: Wrath

INITIATIVE: 6

DEFENSE: 3

SPEED: 11

HEALTH: 7

GNOSIS: 3

ARCANA: Death 2, Life 1, Matter 2, Time 2

ROTES: *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•); *Matter* — Alter Accuracy (••), Shape Liquid (••); *Time* — Perfect Timing (•)

LEGACY ATTAINMENT: 1st — No Past

MANA/PER TURN: 12/3

ARMOR: 2 (“Unseen Aegis,” Matter ••)

Rosie

QUOTE: “Don’t ever say ‘can’t.’ Not to me.”



BACKGROUND: Mary Erma Guinness was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Raised a farm girl, she learned that hard work was a cornerstone of the American character. She did well in school, but she never considered her education to be essential. Instead, she learned from her mother how to cook and keep a house, and from her father how to pay the bills and manage time and money.

She married the son of a neighboring farmer at age 19, and they built a house between their families’ properties in preparation for their own children. But then the war broke out, and her husband was called up. She could have stayed on the farm, but the call went out for women to come to the cities and work the factories in the men’s absence, and Mary responded, becoming a Rosie the Riveter like so many of her contemporaries.

When her husband returned home, she could see that something was wrong right away. He was distant and irritable. He would flinch if she came too near, and he had terrible nightmares that he refused to discuss. She tried to help him. She kept the household running smoothly. She told her mother and her sisters-in-law about her struggle, but they had no answers (and indeed, her husbands’ brothers and her own brothers were going through much the same things—those that had come home at all). One evening, she came home from visiting her mother to find her husband dead. He had walked out into the fields and shot himself.

Mary nearly succumbed to despair herself. She fell to her knees and picked up her husband’s gun. She thought to follow him, but then she stood up and raised her fist, reminding herself that she *was* strong, and she had been even before she’d met the man she loved. She walked away, Awakened, with no fire or lights welcoming her to the Aether, just a quiet realization.

Rosie left the farm again for the city, and eventually met up with Free Council mages and, through them, Nightingale. She joined the Lamppost Cabal mainly because she identified with Ferryman and his own demons from the war, but she has come to enjoy her role.

DESCRIPTION: Rosie is barely five feet tall, but is muscular and wiry. She has curly brown hair and fiery blue eyes, and her manner is honest, straightforward and bit blunt. She came to enjoy wearing pants during her time in the factories, and continues to do so in her new life as a mage. When the Free Council holds meetings, though, she dresses “properly,” and Rick chides her about her “Sunday best.”

Rosie’s nimbus surprises those who know her. Most Obrimos have bright, colorful, warm Nimbuses, showing their connection to the Watchtower of the Golden Key. Rosie’s, though, is a simple hum, a harmonic sound that quiets all around it.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Of the Lamppost, she has the most difficulty adjusting to city life and Quiet magic. She understands the need for it out of practicality, but the philosophy of it seems a little flighty for her. She still thinks of herself as married, but has taken female lovers since joining the cabal, a fact she keeps to herself. In her heart, she is afraid that the War broke the men of the world, and she imagines she sees the same haunted look in the eyes of every man that she saw in her poor husband’s.

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: Husband’s dog tags

REAL NAME: Mary Erma Getty (née Guinness)

PATH: Obrimos

ORDER: Free Council

LEGACY: None

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics 1, Crafts (Repair) 3, Investigation 1, Occult 2, Science 1

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics (Tireless) 3, Brawl 2, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

SOCIAL SKILLS: Animal Ken (Farming) 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 1

MERITS: High Speech, Iron Stamina 2, Sanctum 6 (shared), Status (Consilium) 1, Status (Order) 2, Strong Back

WILLPOWER: 6

WISDOM: 7

VIRTUE: Faith

VICE: Gluttony

INITIATIVE: 5

DEFENSE: 2

SPEED: 10

HEALTH: 8

GNOSIS: 2

ARCANA: Forces 3, Life 3, Prime 1, Time 1

ROTES: *Forces* — Nightsight (●), Control Fire (●●●), Sound Mastery (●●●); *Life* — Self-Healing (●●), Healing Heart (●●●)

MANA/PER TURN: 11/2

ARMOR: 3 (“Unseen Shield,” Forces ●●)

Mage Noir

NAME: *Rosie*

CONCEPT: *Passionate Farm Girl*

PATH: *Obrimos*

REAL NAME: *Mary Erma Getty*

VIRTUE: *Faith*

ORDER: *Free Council*

CHRONICLE:

VICE: *Gluttony*

LEGACY: *None*

Attributes

POWER	Intelligence	●●○○○	Strength	●●○○○	Presence	●●○○○
FINESSE	Wits	●●●○○	Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●●●○	Stamina	●●●○○	Composure	●●○○○

Skills

MENTAL (-1 unskilled)

Academics	●○○○○
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts (<i>repair</i>)	●●●○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	●●○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●○○○○

PHYSICAL (-1 unskilled)

Athletics (<i>tireless</i>)	●●●○○
Brawl	●●○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	●○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth	●●○○○
Survival	●●○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

SOCIAL (-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken (<i>farming</i>)	●●○○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	○○○○○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise	●○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

MERITS

<i>High Speech</i>	●○○○○
<i>Iron Stamina</i>	●●○○○
<i>Sanctum (shared)</i>	●●●●●
<i>Status (Consilium)</i>	●○○○○
<i>Status (Order)</i>	●●○○○
<i>Strong Back</i>	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○

FLAWS

Size <i>5</i>
Defense <i>2</i>
Initiative Mod <i>5</i>
Speed <i>10</i>
Experience <i>50</i>

ARCANA

Death	○○○○○
Fate	○○○○○
Forces	●●●○○
Life	●●●○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	○○○○○
Prime	●○○○○
Space	○○○○○
Spirit	○○○○○
Time	●○○○○

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
■□□□□□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARMOR

Type	Points
------	--------

PROTECTIVE SPELLS

Name	Points
<i>3 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ●●)</i>	

ROTES: *Forces - Nightsight (·), Control Fire (●●●), Sound Mastery (●●●); Life - Self-Healing (●●), Healing Heart (●●●)*

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: *Husband's Dog Tags*

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrsus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

Clown

QUOTE: “*What a piece of work.*”



BACKGROUND: Joseph Pershey was a philosophy student from Oregon who obtained a deferment as a conscientious objector when he was drafted. His family and most of his friends promptly shunned him, figuring him for a coward. Even when every other boy from his hometown came home in a box, it didn't seem to soften them up.

Joseph didn't mind that much.

He had never liked his town anyway, and his relationship with his family was strained at the best of times. He went to San Francisco and lived poor, sometimes homeless, for a time. His Awakening came when he saw a street preacher pointing out “angels,” and he realized he could see them as well. But they weren't angels, they were spirits of the city, moving and dancing and eating in a circle of life that he had never imagined.

Joseph joined the Mysterium shortly after, and spent his time studying the philosophies of both Sleeper and Awakened. He felt that he was on the verge of something important, some intrinsic connection between the progress of the Fallen World and the growth of the Abyss. He said, occasionally, that if he could understand what he was really looking at when he saw Disbelief or Paradox, he could end it. This somewhat arrogant view prompted a fellow mystagogue to remark that Joseph fancied himself the savior of the Awakened. Joseph responded by paraphrased Nietzsche — “I refuse to be a savior. I would rather be a clown.” The nickname stuck, and Joseph chose to embrace it and use “Clown” as his shadow name.

Later, Clown met Rick, and the town fell into a strange relationship. Both were eccentric, and both refused to talk much about their own pasts. Finally, Clown told Rick everything about himself, figuring that Rick would follow suit. Rick only said, “That's interesting,” and Clown knew he'd been beaten. The two formed a cabal and later joined Nightingale to become the Lamppost.

Clown is a kind of urban shaman. He deals with the spirits of the city, which is difficult to do while remaining true to Quiet principles. He notes, though, that spirits aren't bound by any laws of the Fallen World, and so as long as he gives a spirit a friendly environment, he can communicate with them without actually using magic. Like many a shaman before him, he is exempt from many of the laws of the societies he is part of, but uses this privileged position to guide others.

DESCRIPTION: Clown is tall, gangly and sports a small potbelly. He wears dark suits but colorful ties and, sometimes, socks, despite what that tends to make others say about him.

He never makes circus jokes (though Rick has been known to do it for him), but instead views himself as a Shakespearean “clown” — a free-minded worker and philosopher.

Clown's Nimbus is the scent of rain-washed pavement and a sudden hush in conversation.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Nietzsche isn't the most popular philosopher at the moment, but that's because his writings were subverted by the Nazi regime, as Clown is happy to explain. Clown has a good grasp on cerebral philosophy, but is still getting a handle on dealing with real people (as opposed to spirits). He comes across as *weird* (unlike his friend Rick, who just comes across as pleasantly odd), and he finds that people tend to smile nervously and leave when he tries to enlighten them. Clown isn't sure how he feels about that. The shaman's role is an important one, but maybe it would better to be respected? Or at least liked?

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: Copy of *Ecce Homo*

REAL NAME: Joseph Pershey

PATH: Thyrsus

ORDER: Mysterium

LEGACY: None

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics (Philosophy) 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Spirits) 2, Politics 3, Science 1

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 1

SOCIAL SKILLS: Empathy 2, Intimidation (Weird) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

MERITS: Barfly, Contacts (Spirits) 1, Destiny (“A prophet is never welcome in his own country”) 2, Dream 2, Eidetic Memory, High Speech, Sanctum 6 (shared), Status (Order) 1

WILLPOWER: 6

WISDOM: 7

VIRTUE: Temperance

VICE: Pride

INITIATIVE: 6

DEFENSE: 2

SPEED: 9

HEALTH: 7

GNOSIS: 2

ARCANA: Fate 1, Life 2, Spirit 3, Time 2

ROTES: *Fate* — Winds of Chance (•); *Spirit* — Exorcist's Eye (•), Spirit Tongue (•), Lesser Spirit Summons (••); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•)

MANA/PER TURN: 11/2

ARMOR: 2 (“Ephemeral Shield,” Spirit ••)

Mage Noir

NAME: *Clown*
 REAL NAME: *Joseph Pershey*
 CHRONICLE:

CONCEPT: *Urban Shaman*
 VIRTUE: *Temperance*
 VICE: *Pride*

PATH: *Thyrus*
 ORDER: *Mysterium*
 LEGACY: *None*

Attributes

POWER	Intelligence	●●●○○	Strength	●●○○○	Presence	●●○○○
FINESSE	Wits	●●○○○	Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●●●○
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●○○○	Stamina	●●○○○	Composure	●●●●○

Skills

MENTAL (-1 unskilled)

Academics (<i>philosophy</i>)	●●●○○
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●●○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (<i>spirits</i>)	●●○○○
Politics	●●●○○
Science	●○○○○

PHYSICAL (-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	●●○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

SOCIAL (-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation (<i>weird</i>)	●●○○○
Persuasion	○○○○○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

MERITS

<i>Bartly</i>	●○○○○
<i>Contacts (spirits)</i>	●○○○○
<i>Destiny</i>	●●○○○
<i>Dream</i>	●●○○○
<i>Eidetic Memory</i>	●●○○○
<i>High Speech</i>	●○○○○
<i>Sanctum (shared)</i>	●●●●●
<i>Status (Order)</i>	●○○○○

FLAWS

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	9
Experience	50

ARCANA

Death	○○○○○
Fate	●○○○○
Forces	○○○○○
Life	●●○○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	○○○○○
Prime	○○○○○
Space	○○○○○
Spirit	●●●○○
Time	●●○○○

HEALTH

●●●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

□□□□□□□□□□□□
■□□□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

●●○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

ARMOR

Type	Points
------	--------

PROTECTIVE SPELLS

Name	Points
2 ("Ephemeral Shield", Spirit ●●)	

ROTES: *Fate* - Winds of Chance (●); *Spirit* - Exorcist's Eye (●), Spirit Tongue (●), Lesser Spirit Summons (●●); *Time* - Momentary Flux (●)

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: *Copy of Ecce Homo*

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

Antagonist—Johnny

QUOTE: “*I was wrong.*”

BACKGROUND: Hans Dorfmann was born in the US to German immigrants, and that meant that when war broke out, his family suffered their share of stigmatization. Hans enlisted, and of course went through some hazing from his fellow GIs, but when he went to war he was well-regarded because he spoke the language and knew the culture. Already a naturally gifted marksman and skilled in Space magic, his Army training combined with his powers as a Warlock made him deadly.

In 1945, Hans and his fellow soldiers marched into the Dachau concentration camp and liberated it. Hans had been careful to avoid overuse of magic while at war (since he'd heard from his friends Ellis and George that the enemy had mages, too, and it was wise to avoid calling mystical attention). But when he saw Dachau, he made an exception for the Nazi soldiers running the place, tearing them apart with Space magic. The resulting Bedlam Paradox left him nearly incapacitated until he was taken from Dachau, and he was discharged soon thereafter. He wasn't the only soldier, he was told, that was given a medical discharge after seeing the camps.

Hans returned to the United States and reunited with his friends, joining them in their quest to integrate magic and the future of the Fallen World. He helped them to shape the Quiescent Legacy, and trained other Mastigos. And then he, like Ellis and George, faded into the background.

But Hans never quite got over what he saw in Europe. Maybe it was the atrocities that the Nazis committed, or maybe it was fallout from his descent into Bedlam, but Hans Dorfmann grew hateful of people in general. The world was too diseased to survive, he thought, and though he tried to resist this cynicism, he eventually gave up. Humanity had to be allowed to destroy itself properly, and that meant that the Awakened needed to be put down. Hans Dorfmann had become a Banisher.

He started by picking off the mages he'd trained and the other Awakened that he had met through his comrades, but he couldn't find them all. The Quiet mages were difficult to find, obviously, since they used magic sparingly and vulgar magic only in emergencies. But Hans has the training of a soldier and a sniper, and he knows how to be patient. He chooses his targets based on their involvement with the Fallen World. Mages that take too great an interest in Sleeper affairs get the first bullets, as do mages that train others in Legacies.

Hans' name isn't a secret, but he obsessively cleans away sympathetic connections and is almost impossible to track by magic. Most mages refer to him simply as “Johnny,” and the phrase “Johnny's in town” is enough to make the Awakened, especially the Quiet, go to ground.

DESCRIPTION: Johnny is tall and muscular, with close-shaven brown hair and dark, haunted eyes. He smiles easily, but his smile is hollow. He speaks with a faint German accent, though he sometimes uses the Universal Language spell to shed it temporarily.

Johnny's Nimbus is a strong chemical odor and a sudden shortness of breath.

STORYTELLING HINTS: Dorfmann is a kind of boogeyman for the Quiet movement, and a good way for other mages to demonize it—apparently the kind of amoral magical self-denial that the Quiet mages practice drives them to become Banishers. This is untrue, of course.

Johnny became a Banisher for his own reasons, and latched onto an extremist view of Quiet philosophy as a crutch. Nevertheless, it's not the first time Banishers have been used as a scare tactic against an unpopular sect.

Johnny himself might be a fanatic, but he's also a methodical killer. He plans his kills for weeks before pulling the trigger, watching multiple mages at once, usually from a different country. He chooses his targets based on how dangerous he thinks they are to the Fallen World, but he can come up with a justification for any mage he wants to shoot. Johnny prefers to take a minimalist approach to using magic in his kills, as he finds it means that his targets are more likely to underestimate him. He always has multiple escape routes and standing portals ready, and some of those portals are traps leading to decidedly dangerous areas. Johnny knows that sooner or later someone will manage to beat him, but he fully intends to kill as many mages as he can before that.

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: Flask embossed with brass

REAL NAME: Hans Dorfmann

PATH: Mastigos

ORDER: None (Banisher)

LEGACY: Quiescent

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

MENTAL SKILLS: Academics 1, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Science 2

PHYSICAL SKILLS: Athletics 1, Brawl (Grappling) 2, Firearms (Sniping) 5, Larceny 2, Stealth (Remaining Still) 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

SOCIAL SKILLS: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

MERITS: Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, High Speech, Language (English, native German), Meditative Mind, Occultation 4

WILLPOWER: 6

DEFENSE: 4

WISDOM: 2

SPEED: 12

VIRTUE: Justice

HEALTH: 8

VICE: Pride

GNOSIS: 5

INITIATIVE: 9

ARCANA: Death 3, Fate 1, Forces 1, Mind 3, Space 5, Time 4

ROTES: *Death*—Corpse Mask (••); *Forces*—Influence Sound (•); *Mind*—One Mind, Two Thoughts (•), Incognito Presence (••), Multi-Tasking (•••); *Space*—Correspondence (•), Omnivision (•), Spatial Map (•), Scrying (••), Ward (••), Ban (•••), Destroy Threads (•••), Co-Location (••••), Safe Keeping (••••), Worlds Collide (•••••); *Time*—Temporal Wrinkles (•), Acceleration (•••)

LEGACY ATTAINMENT: 1st—No Past, 2nd—No Present

MANA/PER TURN: 14/5

ARMOR: 5 (“Untouchable,” Space ••)

Mage Noir

NAME: *Johnny*
 REAL NAME: *Hans Dorfmann*
 CHRONICLE:

CONCEPT: *Fanatical Killer*
 VIRTUE: *Justice*
 VICE: *Pride*

PATH: *Mastigos*
 ORDER: *None (Banisher)*
 LEGACY: *Quiescent*

Attributes

POWER	Intelligence	●●●○○	Strength	●●●○○	Presence	●○○○○
FINESSE	Wits	●●●●○	Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●○○○
RESISTANCE	Resolve	●●●○○	Stamina	●●●○○	Composure	●●●○○

Skills

MENTAL (-1 unskilled)

Academics	●○○○○
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	●●●○○
Investigation	●●●○○
Medicine	●○○○○
Occult	●●○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●●○○○

PHYSICAL (-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●○○○○
Brawl (<i>grappling</i>)	●●○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms (<i>sniping</i>)	●●●●●
Larceny	●●○○○
Stealth (<i>remaining still</i>)	●●●○○
Survival	●●○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

SOCIAL (-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●●○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

MERITS

<i>Disarm</i>	●●○○○
<i>Fast Reflexes</i>	●●○○○
<i>High Speech</i>	●○○○○
<i>Language (English, native German)</i>	●○○○○
<i>Meditative Mind</i>	●○○○○
<i>Occultation</i>	●●●●○
	○○○○○

FLAWS

Size	5
Defense	4
Initiative Mod	9
Speed	12
Experience	50

ARCANA

Death	●●●○○
Fate	●○○○○
Forces	●○○○○
Life	○○○○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	●●●○○
Prime	○○○○○
Space	●●●●●
Spirit	○○○○○
Time	●●●○○

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

GNOSIS

●●●●●○○○○○○○○○○

WISDOM

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	○
5	○
4	○
3	○
2	●
1	●

ARMOR

Type	Points
_____	_____

PROTECTIVE SPELLS

Name	Points
<i>5 ("Untouchable", Space ●●)</i>	_____

NOTES: *Death* - Corpse Mask (●●); *Forces* - Influence Sound (●); *Mind* - One Mind, Two Thoughts (●), Incognito Presence (●●), Multi-Tasking (●●●); *Space* - Correspondence (●), Omnivision (●), Spatial Map (●), Scrying (●●), Ward (●●), Ban (●●●), Destroy Threads (●●●), Co-Location (●●●●), Safe Keeping (●●●●), Worlds Collide (●●●●●); *Time* - Temporal Wrinkles (●), Acceleration (●●●)

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: *Flask embossed with Brass*

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrsus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

Mage Noir

NAME:
 PLAYER:
 CHRONICLE:

CONCEPT:
 VIRTUE:
 VICE:

PATH:
 ORDER:
 LEGACY:

Attributes

POWER	Intelligence	OOOOO	Strength	OOOOO	Presence	OOOOO
FINESSE	Wits	OOOOO	Dexterity	OOOOO	Manipulation	OOOOO
RESISTANCE	Resolve	OOOOO	Stamina	OOOOO	Composure	OOOOO

Skills

MENTAL (-1 unskilled)

Academics	OOOOO
Computer	OOOOO
Crafts	OOOOO
Investigation	OOOOO
Medicine	OOOOO
Occult	OOOOO
Politics	OOOOO
Science	OOOOO

PHYSICAL (-1 unskilled)

Athletics	OOOOO
Brawl	OOOOO
Drive	OOOOO
Firearms	OOOOO
Larceny	OOOOO
Stealth	OOOOO
Survival	OOOOO
Weaponry	OOOOO

SOCIAL (-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	OOOOO
Empathy	OOOOO
Expression	OOOOO
Intimidation	OOOOO
Persuasion	OOOOO
Socialize	OOOOO
Streetwise	OOOOO
Subterfuge	OOOOO

Other Traits

MERITS

_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO

FLAWS

Size _____
Defense _____
Initiative Mod _____
Speed _____
Experience _____

ARCANA

Death	OOOOO
Fate	OOOOO
Forces	OOOOO
Life	OOOOO
Matter	OOOOO
Mind	OOOOO
Prime	OOOOO
Space	OOOOO
Spirit	OOOOO
Time	OOOOO

HEALTH

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MANA

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

GNOSIS

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

WISDOM

10 _____	○
9 _____	○
8 _____	○
7 _____	○
6 _____	○
5 _____	○
4 _____	○
3 _____	○
2 _____	○
1 _____	○

ARMOR

Type _____	Points _____
------------	--------------

PROTECTIVE SPELLS

Name _____	Points _____
------------	--------------

ROTES: _____

DEDICATED MAGICAL TOOL: _____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrsus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

MAGE Noir™

The War? I remember the war. Kid, if you have to ask which one, you weren't in it. When we got back after saving the world, we found that America had changed. Women were working in factories while men skulked in corners and hid from their pasts. Technology had leapt forward while simple values were left behind. It was like the whole damned country had Awakened while we were gone.

Nothing's been the same since.

— Hard-Boiled, Thyrsus of the Thirteenth Question legacy

This book includes:

- A brief historical look at America in the 1940s, from an Awakened perspective.
- Player and Storyteller advice on chronicles set in this time period.
- A Storytelling Adventure System story, complete with a pre-generated cabal.



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MAGE
THE AWAKENING