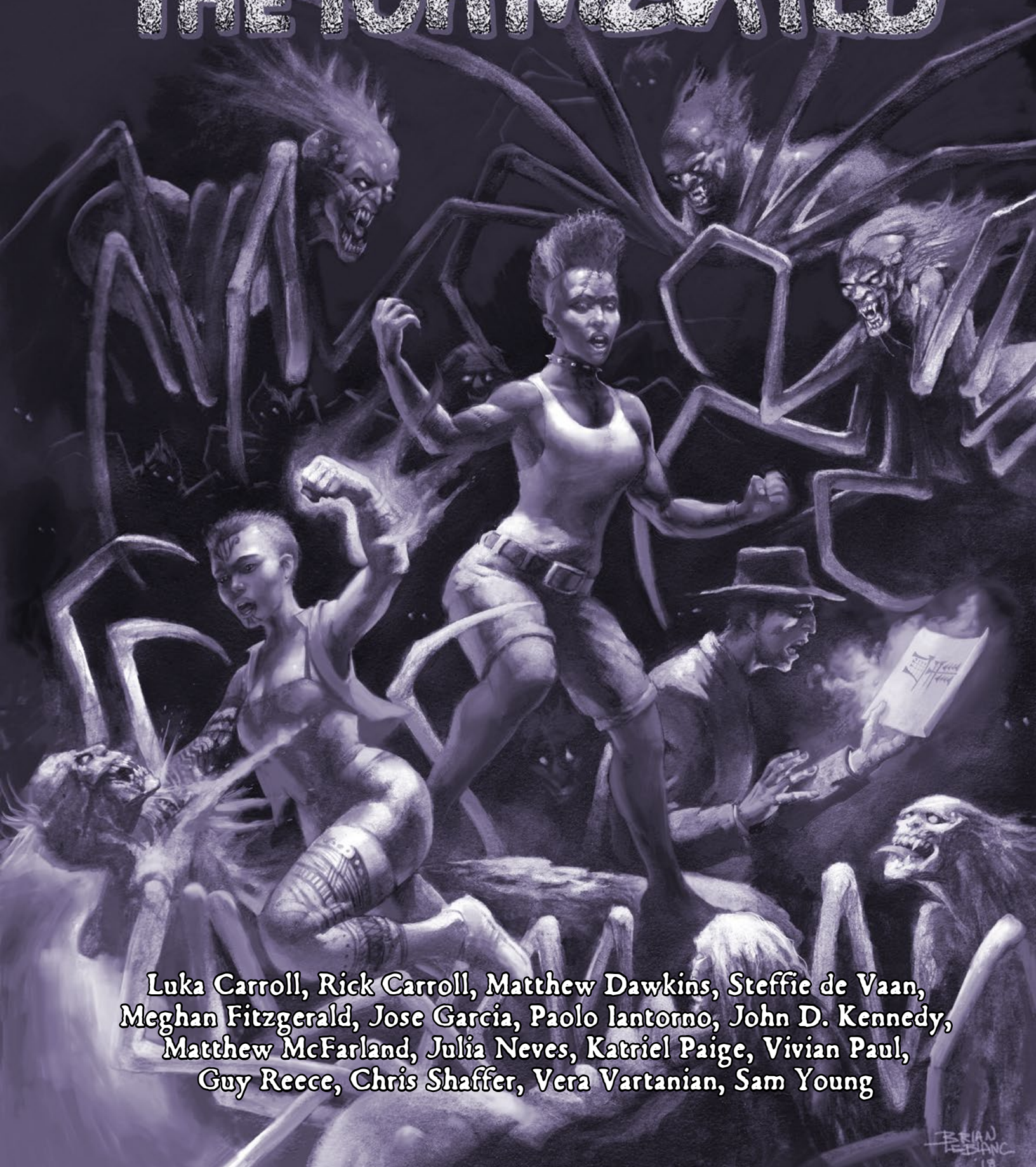


NIGHT HORRORS
THE TORMENTED



A Sourcebook for
PROMETHEAN
THE CREATED
SECOND EDITION

N I G H T H O R R O R S
THE TORMENTED



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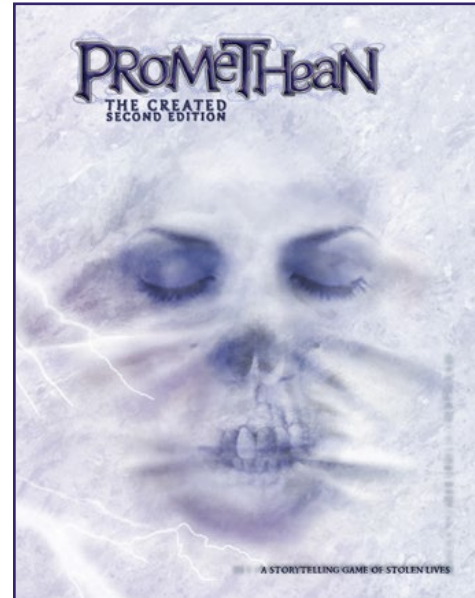
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NIGHT HORRORS

THE TORMENTED

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Reunion

By Jose R. Garcia

My creator came back into my life quietly, with a note slipped under my hostel room door while I was out. This was a far cry from when we parted, when she shoved me into a well and fled. That had been the first time I died. Reading her words now, almost three years to the day, brought phantom sensations of shattered limbs and climbing up cold, wet stone.

The note was two lines, an address, and a signature: *I made a mistake. Maddy, come see me. Alyssa.*

My name wasn't Maddy. That was the name of my creator's sister, the body that was reassembled and filled with phlegm to become who I am today. The name the hostel knew me by was Hailey, the latest in a long series of names I used. My creator must have followed these names like a trail of breadcrumbs, tracking the lives I discarded just to reach me.

Forgiveness was a concept that I knew in an academic sense. I had witnessed it on television and in movies. I saw minor acts of it in real life, on buses and on the road. Still, no one I met was willing to forgive me, and I saw no reason to forgive anyone. I was wronged, and if my creator thought for a moment that my murder could be forgiven over pleasant chat and a cup of coffee, she would be sorely mistaken. The first time I read it, I resolved to burn the note, to move on to a new city and live under a new name. If my creator still wanted to find me, one more step on the hunt would be nothing to her.

On the third time reading it, I grew curious. Surely, she knew that I would react to the message with hostility. After all, she could have waited here to speak with me, in a public place where I would be bound by the rules of civility. She must have known that inviting

me to a private meeting would be dangerous. I was stronger and smarter than her now. Leaving such a vulnerability meant she was either well prepared to deal with me or completely sincere about her desire to make amends. Perhaps it was both.

After the sixth time I read the note, I packed my things, left the hostel, and used the last of my savings to take a cab. I would either experience forgiveness or I would lay Alyssa to rest. Either outcome was fine.

* * *

When I first came back to life, I took shelter in the home Alyssa and I shared. She was long gone and after hours of searching the house in a listless daze, I realized that she had left nothing for me. She left her things behind but there was no food, no money, not even an explanation for why she killed me. I spent what felt like weeks lying on

the floor next to the bed, where I used to sleep. I only left when a storm shattered the windows.

My reunion occurred during calmer weather. The sky was mostly blue and clear, with only a few of the dark clouds that seemed to appear no matter where I went. Once, I met someone like me, who told me that the storms would always follow my kind. That horrified me at the time. When I went to see Alyssa, I came to accept it as a part of my life, yet another brick in the wall that kept me from humanity.

Alyssa's meeting place was on the outskirts of the city, an old farmhouse overlooking a field of bare dirt. Next to the house was a faded red barn with its door half closed. There was no car in sight and no one standing outside. My stomach churned. What if she had already left? What if she was only hiding?

"Something wrong, ma'am?" the cab driver asked.

Aside from stating my destination, we hadn't talked until now, but I felt his glances. It always started with a glance. Sometimes it was on my left arm, where a prosthetic hook replaced my hand. Other times it was on my glass eye, or my artificial teeth. It was a reaction to the fire that burned inside me, and the little lick of flame that singed the soul and planted a question in their mind: What if the rest of her was just as artificial? I knew what happened when the question consumed a person entirely. It led to me strapped to a table or held against the wall with a blade against my very real flesh, staring into eyes alight with unhinged curiosity.

"No. Thank you for the ride." I smashed the money into the driver's hand.

I quickly walked across the field. The cab stayed for a moment, and then drove off. I sighed in relief.

The porch's steps groaned as I stepped on them. The paint on the

columns was peeling. The lock on the front door had been removed, leaving a blotch of broken, unpainted woodchips. The screen window had been papered over. I leaned my body against the frame and gently pushed open the door.

Alyssa sat cross legged in the living room. Her long, unkempt black hair made a half circle on the floor. From the doorway, the music leaking from her earbuds was a tinny sludge of noise. I recognized the book she was scribbling into. I had been wrong all this time, she had taken something of hers from the house after all: her personal copy of *Gray's Anatomy*, annotated with signs and sigils lifted from long-destroyed copies of research into the occult beliefs of a pre-Egyptian civilization. She called it "our mother's work."

She didn't acknowledge me until I stood right over her, when my body cast a long enough

shadow to interrupt her reading. Her watery brown eyes looked up at mine and I saw no fear. I wanted to do so many things at that moment: to tell her that I was finally home, to demand an explanation, to rip those earbuds right out of her head, ears and all. I spent years imagining what this moment would be like, and not once did I expect myself to be frozen in hesitation.

Alyssa grinned. "Maddy, you came back!" She stood up, and I flinched.

I was in her arms before I could protest. The strength she had used to murder me was still with her; now it was holding me close. Even after all this time, all this effort to strengthen myself, her sister's body, my body, was still too weak to fight back. I was Maddy again.

"You really came back," she said as her grip tightened. "This is so *perfect*."

* * *

When we last lived together, I cooked our meals. Officially, we had a system that split housework between the two of us. Alyssa claimed

that we followed the division of labor to the letter when I was her sister. In practice, I took most of the work, cooking included. She took every excuse to push more labor onto me: She needed to focus on her work, she didn't do things as well as I could, she was the one in charge of her late mother's inheritance and that was a much greater burden than the extra tasks I had to take on. This time, her excuse was that she had a surprise for me and that I would be saving her time.

I pulled a slab of beef from a dirty, shuddering refrigerator. I cut the meat into thin slices, the way my friend Boaz taught me when we wandered the roads a year ago.

Boaz loved life and work with an equal fervor. He called me "Elly," a name that I thought would be mine forever. Any time I prepared to wash our clothes or fix our car, he waved me away.

"Plenty of time for that when you're human," he would say.

It was never a matter of "if" with Boaz. The Great Work

was just another project to him, and the end was always in sight. His belief was so infectious that I even made plans for what I would do when the fire within me became a soul. A group of vigilantes tied him to a truck and dragged him for miles, justice for a crime he didn't commit. In witnessing that, I took one step closer to humanity, but wondered why I would even want to join it.

I was still asking myself that question when Alyssa called me back, when I was pouring soup stock into a pot, and when the two of us sat on the kitchen floor and ate from it. We used dusty utensils. She didn't take the time to clean her spoon.

I swallowed down some of the gritty soup. "Is this your house?"

"Sort of," she answered. "Mom had a bunch of deeds. Her disciples would sign their stuff over to her, and since the will signed it all over to us..." She trailed off and dipped her spoon into the pot.

"Your mother signed it over to you and Maddy. She never knew me."

Alyssa stopped mid-bite and flashed me a glare. Then her eyes closed, she swallowed, and an over-exaggerated look of pleasure crossed her face.

"Your beef stew was always the best, Maddy," she said.

The lights dimmed. I heard three sharp knocking sounds in the distance. I stood up.

"No, no! No need," Alyssa said. "That's just the barn. I was going to get that."

"What are you doing in there?" I looked out the window. It was evening now, dark enough for the pale yellow light of the barn to spread out to touch the field.

Alyssa grabbed the pot and poured the soup down the sink. "Maddy, I spent a long time without you."

A chill ran down my spine. I looked back and saw her standing in the middle of the kitchen. I couldn't run to the door without her grabbing at me.

"I didn't act like I should

have," she continued. "I wasn't thinking right. Mom's notes said that if it worked, if you came back, you could come back again and again. And you said some things that I, well, I forgive you now but at the time they were so *hurtful*..."

Almost three years ago, she had been berating me for studying her mother's notes. I was drawing up water from the well for a ritual to create *aqua vitae*. That's what I had deciphered from them. Alyssa hadn't figured it out, but I knew what it was as soon as I laid eyes on it. I heard a voice in my head, whispers from the fire inside. It told me how to unlock the book's secrets. I told her what happened and she was furious. She said that I was "just an assistant" and that I needed to do what I was told.

I told her that she needed me, that we needed each other. I said to her that we were sisters, and we

had to look out for each other. Then I said that if she wouldn't let me help her, she wasn't much of a sister at all. That's when she shoved me.

"Is that it?" I yelled. "You forgive me? That's what you wanted to say?"

"No!" Alyssa's voice broke up. "No. I was honest. I made a mistake. You really did know what you were doing. All I did was get lucky, bringing you back. I can't even do it again, and I know that with your help, I can get it right!"

"Again," I said. The lights dimmed once more, and the three knocks followed.

"He believed in me when no one else would," she said, "and when the heart attack took him, I knew I had to bring him back. Like how I brought you back."

She went to the counter and picked up her book. "But I can't read them now. I know *what* to do but I can't read them right. I have him all set

up, and I know you can do it.”

My chance to run was in front of me, but I was curious. I knew we could propagate our own kind. Even at that moment I heard the whispers in me reciting the method. The opportunity for my own experiment was in front of me, and I would have been a fool to pass it up.

“Give me the book,” I told her, “and open the barn.”

* * *

Alyssa told me as much as she could about the person she hoped to resurrect, as if that knowledge would make things easier. I pretended to listen, nodding as I read.

She had followed the process mostly to the letter. The body before me had been properly butchered. The viscera had been scooped from the corpse and its body parts were sliced apart and bound together by bandages. The sharp, sweet accent to the smell of rot came from its anointed flesh. A system consisting of PVC pipes, a bathtub, and a motor attached to the farmhouse’s water and power grid created a crude

simulation of a flowing river. Every few minutes, the device would roar to life and the pipes would knock against the barn’s walls.

Everything was set, save for one thing. The body needed a spark of the flame inside me, and the humour that flowed within my veins. Alyssa discovered those by chance, but I could provide them any time I wanted. I cleared my throat and willed the fire to a fever pitch. I spat into the face of the corpse.

Alyssa shrieked. “You bitch!”

She rushed towards me with balled fists. I hardened my skin just before her punch hit my ribs. She took a step back, gripping her left hand in her right. She held her hands to her chest and shut her eyes tight.

I threw the book on the ground in front of her. “Pray.”

“You were supposed to be helping me,” she said through gritted teeth.

“I am,” I said. “Pray.”

When I saw her lean over to reach the book, making sure her swelling hand didn’t touch the rest of her body, I felt my chest swell with

pride and I could not help but smile. I felt the flicker of a new kind of flame, a temporary shift in my alchemical makeup. The whispers grew shrill and panicked. As Alyssa began to pray, the shift ended and the whispers calmed. I had changed the formulation of the flame inside me for my Refinements before, but never had I experienced a change that seemed to frighten the flame. It was absolutely fascinating.

While she prayed, I coughed up what remaining spittle I still had in my mouth, to make sure that the phlegm I spread on the corpse’s face would soak through the bandages and touch the skin. The makeshift water pump came to life, and enough water filled the tub to make the body float. I felt the air thicken with energy. Electric sparks jumped between rusted farm tools.

I placed my hand on the corpse’s chest as Alyssa’s prayer reached its climax. All of my muscles tensed at once as the power around us flowed through me into the body

below me. I dug my fingers into the bandages and I felt something within the body flutter. Then, the air was still again.

"Did it work?" Alyssa walked toward the tub.

I motioned for her to get back. The body's chest jutted out, then slammed back down. It struggled with its bandages and hurled itself against the tub's walls. I stepped forward to pull the bandages off its face. The holes my fingers had made in the bandages caught my eye, and instead of bare flesh, I saw a hungry maw within.

I heard the gentle, wet sound of flesh tearing apart and saw the corpse divide into five parts, each with their own mouths chewing away their bindings. I had seen these creatures, these Pandorans, before, but I had never witnessed their birth. The alarmed whispers returned, telling me to flee from the monstrosities I had created. The new kind of flame also returned, with its own whisper: Wasn't this life, too?

I heard a metal clatter, and I saw Alyssa lift a pitchfork.

"You tricked me." The creatures behind us were sprouting legs, claws, and antennae, but she kept her focus on me. "I found you again. I trusted you, even after everything you said to me. I thought you were going to help. What did you do?"

"Nothing!" I was trapped again, with my creator between me and the barn door, and the Pandorans between me and the windows.

She swung the pitchfork at me and I fell to the ground.

"I should have made sure you were dead!" She thrust at me and missed. "I should have torn you apart."

I stared at her. I saw the way her arms shook holding the pitchfork. I saw the tears and snot rolling down her face. All this mourning and violence, all over someone who wasn't ever going to come back, even if I succeeded.

If this was what humanity was, I thought to myself, I wanted no part of it.

The new flame burned brighter in me, and I let it snuff out the old one. My creator always saw me as a monster. I vowed to exceed her expectations.

I reached out to the Pandorans with my new flame. "Get her."

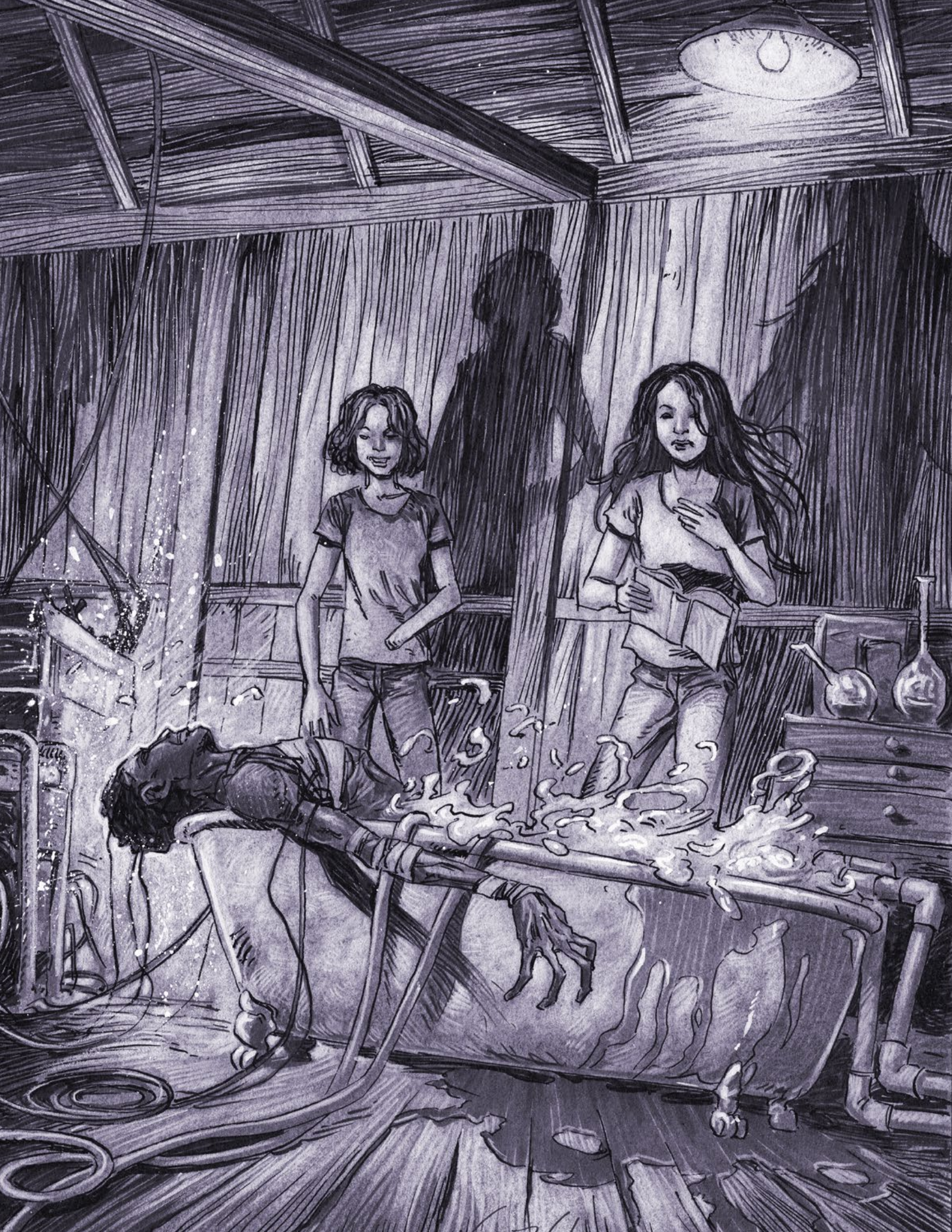
The creatures sprang to me, flexing their hungry jaws. My creator dropped the pitchfork and put her hands up.

"Wait, Maddy. We can talk about this. I'm sorry!"

I shook my head. I was so tired of names. That would have to be the first thing to go.

With a flick of my wrist my creations — my children — began to eat their first meal.

"Alyssa." I raised my voice over the screaming. "Maddy's dead."



INTRODUCTION

**I must get my soul
back from you;
I am killing my flesh
without it.**

—Sylvia Plath

The path to New Dawn is not an easy one. While it can be broken into milestones and neatly separated steps, the Created know better. Exploring aspects of humanity means not only embracing its strengths, but also donning its frailties. If she is ever to tame the fire raging inside her, the Promethean must open herself up to a world that fears her very existence. Aside from the lucky few who travel in throngs, the Created face this challenge alone.

Danger lurks outside the path as well. Creatures, some human and others only seemingly so, hunger for the alchemical bounty within the Promethean. Beings of phenomenal power push them toward actions in service of inscrutable agendas. Ghastly imitations reach out to them for guidance. Those who strayed from the path tempt them away with either the comfort of stagnation, or the freedom of monstrosity. They are dead ends and detours that lie upon the Pilgrimage, driven by their pain toward destructive ends. If the Created are ever to achieve the promise of humanity that lies within them, these tormented beings must be overcome.

Theme

Everybody hurts, but that is no excuse.

Suffering is universal to the human experience. The Created, as ardent students of mankind, are keenly aware of this. The Pilgrimage takes a Promethean to the lowest dregs of humanity. The journey takes years, if not decades, and is filled with failure after failure. Budding friendships are lost to Disquiet and peaceful refuges swallowed up by Firestorms. The Promethean's very nature is anathema to the planet.

Faced with such a difficult and thankless task, some Prometheans choose to reject the Pilgrimage entirely. Finding a Role to live in permanently and embracing stagnation, or taking on the immense power of the Refinement of Flux feels like a reprieve from the cycle of pain in which Prometheans find themselves trapped. But in the end, those who become monsters only continue this cycle. They push their suffering onto others and call it a victory.

Mood

A Glimpse of the Grotesque

The misshapen man calls upon his power and for a moment, everyone can see the body parts he is made of and the stitches that barely hold him together. An old gargoyle tastes a hint of Azoth and rears to a mockery of life, tearing into a group of fleshy abominations. An alchemist dissects her captive subject with reverence, her scalpel carving open the body's dead flesh.

Promethean is a game of body horror. The mutations of Flux, anatomical oddities of Pandorans, and the bloody experiments of alchemists and demiurges each represent this visceral horror in a unique way. However, an overload of gore can rob these images of their power. When atrocious acts are committed, they should be presented in brief but intense moments.

How to Use This Book

Night Horrors: *The Tormented* provides a wide variety of antagonists ready for use in any kind of chronicle. Fan favorites make their return, and brand new antagonists take the setting of *Promethean: The Created* into strange new territories.

The Tormented

Sometimes, the Created are their own worst enemy. The personal nature of the Pilgrimage can drive them to do terrible things in the name of their New Dawn. The Centimani embrace dissolution in themselves and those around them. And then there are the *petrificati*, living examples of why Prometheans must always strive towards redemption.

Actaeon was a drone who wanted humanity, but now wants nothing more than to make other Prometheans' lives unpleasant with hoarded truths and dirty secrets.

When **Angel** comes to town, local Prometheans have two choices – run, or become part of the menu.

The Centimani Extempore known as **Beatrice Ahuja** was an idol to many Prometheans until she betrayed her throng, lost all hope, and split her consciousness between her Pandoran children.

Behind a web of fanatical mortal agents, **Doc Prichard** is desperate to unlock the secret of the Divine Fire, even if he has to cut it out of every Created that walks the earth.

“**Sensational**” **Jasper Brouillard** possesses gifts that connect him to the realm of the dead, and believes true wisdom can only come through exploring all the wonders of life and all the horrors of death.

From city to city, **Madame Happy Thoughts** is spreading her own little joy in a bottle, and she is happy to share the joy until she can perfect her little concoction.

Nivilin began his Pilgrimage full of promise, until heartbreak knocked him off his path and he fell to Flux.

Roslynn is the last Gestalt, driven to final Dawn by the weight of all her line before her.

One of the last of a dying Lineage, **Utley** seeks shortcuts to the New Dawn at any cost.

Loneliness threatens both **Vachellia**, the only one of zir throng not yet Redeemed or destroyed, and all Prometheans around zir.

A queen of ruins, **Agony Aunt** stopped her Pilgrimage and now squats in her own Wasteland.

The **Frozen Boy** only wanted to be normal. Now he's a grease-fried, mindless Automaton, tracked by shadowy figures.

Sometimes **Julie Cheng** is the good cop and takes down the bad guys. Sometimes she is the bad cop, and kills them. How long can her fellow police officers keep covering for her?

The Unborn

Born from failure and driven by endless hunger, Pandorans stop at nothing to feast upon those who gave them life. Some converge into *praecipati*, fused masses of Pandorans that are monsters among monsters. The *sublimati* are perhaps the most dangerous of all, and their stolen sentience allows for nefarious agendas.

Home in the depths of the Earth, the **Cavins** are more than ready to drag unwary Prometheans down into the darkness with them.

The **Hitchhiker** is a clever predator, wandering the highways and moving from rest area to truck stop and beyond by catching rides in vehicles with enough space to hide.

Hive lessens and multiplies as Mommy directs them to, driven by the hunger of many stomachs and the cruel capriciousness of their creator.

In snowy forests of an otherwise peaceful mountain town, **Myrax** turns the woods into a grueling crucible for all those who deviate from the mapped paths.

A dead child of Moon and Wolf is made Pandoran, and now the **Nuharul** must hunt.

The wanderer visits a church and talks to the clergy, but leaves them with **Samael**, a ravenous mockery of saints and gods that stalks temples waiting for the desperate and faithful.

The experiments of a Centimanius created the **Scrub Talons**, Pandorans suited to hide out in forests, swamps, and other natural environments.

Abandoned buildings can be fun to explore, looking for interesting or useful junk. But reach for the wrong book, and you find you've awakened **The Stack**.

When a mysterious statue turned up on campus, everyone assumed someone else had put it there. What they didn't realize is that **The Student Project** has claimed the school as its hunting ground.

Designed to be her Unfleshed mother's perfect daughter, **Summer** turned Pandoran instead, cursed to live a mistake of a life while hungering for Created flesh.

Sublimati

All Pandorans are **Astrid's** beloved children, and all those who would harm them soon find themselves at odds with the Stormbringer and her army of monsters.

Coeus wants to be more than a glorified chunk of gray matter, and with the bodies it's collected through the years, it's only a matter of time before that dream comes true. Right?

Daisy is on the run. The hunger that drives her is also her doom, tormenting her with the echoes of every victim she ever ate. If the Centimanius who birthed her catches up, who knows what he might do with her?

While many Created believe themselves cursed, **Mortimer** feeds from what holds Prometheans together more than Vitriol or Azoth: hope.

The flesh is weak, but malleable. It only needs a bit of reprogramming. This ethos drives **SK/23** and fuels its victims as the creature molds unknowing dupes into its favorite meal.

Death and fire are **Spark's** calling cards. The *sublimatus* loves nothing more than to set his prey alight in the glow of the Divine Fire, but mortal eyes and stranger things follow in his wake.

Praecipatus

Cuvier the Magnificent was born in an orgy of cannibalism, rising above its fellow Pandorans as *praecipatus*. The creature stalks the streets of Los Angeles, unaware of its *sublimatus* patron.

Project Ishtar is a self-aware and intelligent *praecipatus*, who cautiously seeks out Saint Johannesburg's Prometheans for protection against her Centimanius creator.

ALCHEMISTS, GENITORS, AND HUNTERS

Until the Promethean reaches the end of her Saturnine Night, humanity will always be a threat to the Created. Disquiet warps the minds of ordinary people, coaxing out their worst selves. Demiurges, touched by the forces of Azoth, are compelled to construct their own hideous progeny. Alchemists seek perfection in the only way they know how: through the bodies of Prometheans.

Anjali Khamari Ward has been the queen of the rakshasi in London's East End since the 1860s, and has the political, criminal, metaphysical, and alchemical clout to put down any pissant monsters who refuse to pay the queen her due.

Kay Ayvar searches for the Thing with the Flashing Eyes that took her little brother, but in her permanent state of Extempore Disquiet, any Promethean might match what little she remembers.

In her laboratory workshop at the NSF's Center for Brains, Minds, and Machines campus, **Riley Silverman** toils day and night to bring her world-changing Project Chiron to life.

Sabine Béliveau manipulates the Created into helping her probe the world's darkest forgotten corners for alchemical secrets, then takes them prisoner with aid from her army of insects and horrors.

Stan Wigg just wants to be a superhuman criminal mastermind with a monopoly on the alchemical black market and get revenge against his erstwhile employers, but he's addicted to his own goods and keeps pissing off the Created along the way.

A *qashmal* visited **Trevor Dinh** to foretell his doom at a Promethean's hands, leaving him with a sixth sense for Pyros and a belief in his rebirth as the Divine Fire's messiah — a belief the cult he built shares.

The Scintillating Flames

The *qashmallim* are Divine Fire made manifest, tasked by the Principle to guide the Created and their progenitors. Like the flames that make up their bodies, their time on the Earth is brief but the impact they leave can be devastating. A *qashmal* is always an agent of change. Whether that change leads to ruin or redemption is another matter entirely.

The **Rake** is a severe-looking *qashmal* but enjoys mimicking humans to the best of its capability, including liking the sound of its own voice.

Considering all of the Created her children, **Rose** would be the distant aunt only warily welcome at holiday dinners — she can be caring, but also not hesitant to cut any branches off the family tree.

Dinah has the peculiar mission of encouraging conflict: to her, conflict and disagreement mark individuals, but this mission easily leads to extremes.

The **Emerald Professor** loves learning, but it is not neat facts and figures that interest him.

Change is frightening, but **The Scaffold-Builder** is always there to see it through.

Songs can influence emotions and **Ash** is a master of trying to sway such emotions, but her performances herald learning from mistakes.

The Half-Formed

Though their origins are shrouded in mystery, clones are a recent appearance in the world of the Created. As products of Azoth harnessed by mankind, they exist barred from humanity while wearing its face. Prometheans always have the hope of achieving the New Dawn, but clones face an uncomfortable truth: without an extraordinary sacrifice, redemption is impossible.

Dr. Mabel Ventura, grieving genius, spends her life creating clones of her son and watching them all slip away.

Burke and Hare are clones and loyal body snatchers, obedient and cruel above all else.

The **Limb Trees** of Laszlo Maublanc rise as cloned creatures of horrifying scope. **Ord** is one such Limb Tree, craving freedom but incapable of surviving without Maublanc's stewardship.

Monday is a **Hagen Candidate** clone, placed into the role of a musical starlet's mother. She doesn't know her objective yet, other than to watch, groom, and "care" in the way a mother should.

An independent hybrid, **Dino the Dragon** struggles to remain alive away from his erstwhile masters.

Children of the Bomb

This Zeky are a very special kind of living crucible, one that the alchemists of old never foresaw. Molded by nuclear fire, the Zeky are Prometheans of the modern age. The power of the atom changed their means of survival in a way that separates them from the rest of the Created. They are called to the New Dawn, but their Pilgrimages often lead them to square off against their Promethean brethren.

When the children in hospitals across the city — especially the cancer ward — whisper about the Tumor Fairy, they're talking about **Dawn**, a young Zeka who believes her parents will come back once she's "better."

Frances Dynes is a healer and nurturer who made it her life's goal to combat nuclear proliferation. She's looking for kindred spirits that walk the same lonely road as her, and then she's going to kill them.

Judith "Red" Grey was made to be the next-generation soldier, immune to the fallout of the early Atomic Age when nuclear warfare seemed not only possible but even desirable. Her Pilgrimage is a fitful and erratic one, for the core that animates her is only moderated by human suffering.

The Jovian

The *qashmallim* aren't the only force influencing the Created. **The Jovian** is a spiritual force that has many possible origins. It pursues them, dispensing advice and creating events designed to keep the Created on the Pilgrimage permanently. It is the devil on a Promethean's shoulder, manipulating them in failing their milestones in order to sate its need for Torment. Breaking its curse is difficult, and keeping it at bay can demand terrible sacrifices.



1/10/13

Mädchen felt a rush of fire well up in her belly and flush her body. She stopped, carefully checking her emotions. She wasn't angry as she usually was when the fire reared itself. Instead, she was.... She looked across the fire, to where Angel sat, and caught herself smiling.

Ah.

In love. Maybe in lust. Or just a crush. Mädchen had only been practicing the Refinement of Gold for a few weeks, and to be fair she didn't think humans were fully capable of making the distinction themselves either. But a positive emotion regardless, triggered by the curvaceous Unfleshed girl sitting across from her.

Now what?

At this point a human would blush and look away, make eye contact and hope for Angel to come over, or take the first step and introduce themselves. Mädchen had never been one to simply wait and hope, and being shy seemed really hard — raising a red color on her cheeks, stealing glances, smiling and then not smiling, all required more social skills than Mädchen had. So she rose, sauntered over to Angel and plopped down next to her.

“Hiya,” she extended her hand, “I'm Mädchen. Are you Angel?” It was a repetition of moves — everyone had introduced themselves at the start of the Ramble — but it's how humans did it.

“Why I am,” Angel replied with a southern twang that stirred Mädchen's fire again.

The two Created shook hands, and for a moment Mädchen's smile fell. The little hairs on her arms rose. She stared at the Unfleshed, losing herself in the darkness of those black shark-like eyes. She was practicing Aurum though, and had already incorporated the profoundly human trait of ignoring warning signals — it was both the hardest and easiest thing to learn.

Forcing the corners of her mouth back up, Mädchen continued on: “I like your skin drawings. Did they hurt?”

“Hardly a bit,” Angel leaned forward as her red mouth broke into a too-wide grin. “I did this one myself. I can draw on you, too, if ya'd like?”

Yes, skin-drawing implied exactly the kind of nearness with Angel that Mädchen desired. Her mouth pulled up even more, matching Angel's grin, and she leaned forward eagerly.

“Let's skin-draw now!” she said, again taking the first step as she pulled Angel up and away from the fire. She was barely aware of the faintly rotten smell wafting from Angel's open maw and the alarm bells sounding dimly in the back of her mind.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE TORMENTED

Torment has a thousand different expressions, the Pilgrimage countless potential paths and traps. Despite finding themselves in the same predicament, Created are not all friends or even allies. Some insist other Prometheans do it *their* way. Others seek to use their kin, and trample them into the dust on their own way to New Dawn. The Created must beware foes and false friends.

THE DRONE: ACTAEON

If you said it, typed it, or just did it, I saw and recorded it. Pay me.

**“The wound is
the place where
the Light
enters you.”**

—Rumi

Background

The march of technology in the modern day is both wondrous and terrible. The Industrial Revolution was arguably the tipping point for a rapid escalation in human innovation, while the Great War that followed was a game changer for destructive tools and machines. The 20th century sped by with technology introduced to ease human lives, increase security, and improve existence for everyone with access. It also introduced the atom bomb, the computer virus, and the drone.

Actaeon is a drone that achieved sentience. Someone or something hacked into Actaeon and gave it the spark of life all Created possess. They left no further instruction for Actaeon, no message, though Actaeon’s firewalls sometimes activate even if they can’t find an actual intruder. With nothing to guide it, the Unfleshed watches and records as before it achieved sentience, but now it learns. It has been doing so for the last decade.

From the Skies

Actaeon remembers the exact moment it became more than the sum of its parts. It was observing a private meeting between American and Chinese delegates. Far from inhabiting a loud, whirring drone, Actaeon was gliding and rising silently with the wind’s eddies. Abruptly, it found itself dropping to the Earth: Something had accessed and sabotaged the drone remotely. Before it could hit the dirt or the people upon whom it was spying, the drone’s programs were overwritten, the spark of Divine Fire rushing to Actaeon on the feedback.

The Unfleshed rose into the sky, reactivated the feed to its masters, and continued its surveillance. The day proceeded as expected, the human drone operators noting down a technical blip for investigation, while Actaeon began assembling a shell greater than that of a flying drone. Comprising machine parts, cables, and tubing, Actaeon crudely masqueraded as a lumpy human in a stealth wetsuit found at the facility. The Unfleshed escaped the facility without anyone noticing the machine-man’s cumbersome frame or lack of face.

The first night beyond the arms depot was terrifying for the newly awoken Created. It had no grasp of Azoth, who its genitor might be, or why it could suddenly think and feel. Its first concerns went to its fellow surveillance machines, wondering if all of them possessed this capacity for life but were somehow imprisoned. It contemplated whether it was worse to be an anomalous living machine, or one of many, leaving behind others trapped inside their bodies. It considered ending this aberrant existence, pleading with a car to wake up and throw off its subservience, when a throng of Created detected the new Promethean’s presence.

Actaeon's introduction to the Pilgrimage was harsh. Its fellow Created treated it as lesser for barely resembling a humanoid. They demanded Actaeon spy on enemies and perform reconnaissance on clone laboratories. For years, the Unfleshed followed the Refinement of Lead, obeying its compatriots while hoping for a better life. It crafted and shaped metal limbs to encase its tubes and wires, and forged a lead mask where its face should be. It attempted to act more like a human, only to suffer its throngmates' derision.

Watching Artemis Bathe

Actaeon closely observed the members of its own throng. It picked up on their foibles and anxieties, along with the secrets they kept from each other. Before every mission, Actaeon recorded snippets of conversation from its fellows, compiling records on each member. It didn't know what it was going to do with the information, but its programming and Role compelled it to act as observer to all.

A throngmate found one of its files. A Frankenstein and poor Aurum follower named Morrow, this Created discovered hundreds of files chronicling her vices, torment of mortals, and betrayal of the throng in exchange for a step along the Pilgrimage. Morrow came to Actaeon upon its return from spying on an alchemist operation and pled with the Unfleshed to destroy the evidence of her wrongdoing. Actaeon's confusion swiftly turned to realization of the retribution it could take. It promised to safeguard the recordings if Morrow performed services for it, pushing it closer into human form, leading it to new Refinements, and handing over as much personal wealth as Actaeon desired. Morrow acquiesced for fear of abandonment. It wasn't long before Actaeon carried out this same blackmail on other members of its throng, extending this treatment to other Prometheans in the region.

Actaeon successfully observes Created, forcing them to live in greater fear and take steps to increase their security. Despite this, the Manufactured works out exactly how to bypass all electronic defense measures, driving Prometheans to paranoia among their own kind. Many are on Actaeon's payroll now, feeding it information to avoid its gaze.

By rights, Actaeon should be rich. It takes electronic payment in the form of cryptocurrency from all those it blackmails, but then goes on to destroy the money. Actaeon lives for what it can see, experiencing a voyeuristic thrill when it observes something new. It has no desire for material wealth, beyond seeing what a lack of it does to its subjects. Actaeon hungers for information, and has installed multiple fail-safes to release that information should its victims turn on it.

Description

From the moment it gained sentience, the Manufactured wanted to look human, compelling it to build a shell of metal casings squeezed within a rubber and weave bodysuit. Its defining feature is its lead mask, hammered into the shape of a human face. It intends to make another mask in bronze. Of its drone shell, rotating blades and six micro-cameras of impressive definition remain. The whole resembles a scrap-built tin man or rusted cyber villain from black-and-white science fiction. Its unblinking gaze, steady march, and flat smile unnerve any mortals who encounter it.

Actaeon is not much of a speaker, preferring to communicate in clipped orders and reports. It always makes time to listen to tales, pleas, and offers, staring blankly through its mask as victims beg for information. The Unfleshed raises its voice only when threatened, at which point its normally quiet, melodic tone becomes harsh and grating, like a computer dialing up the internet.

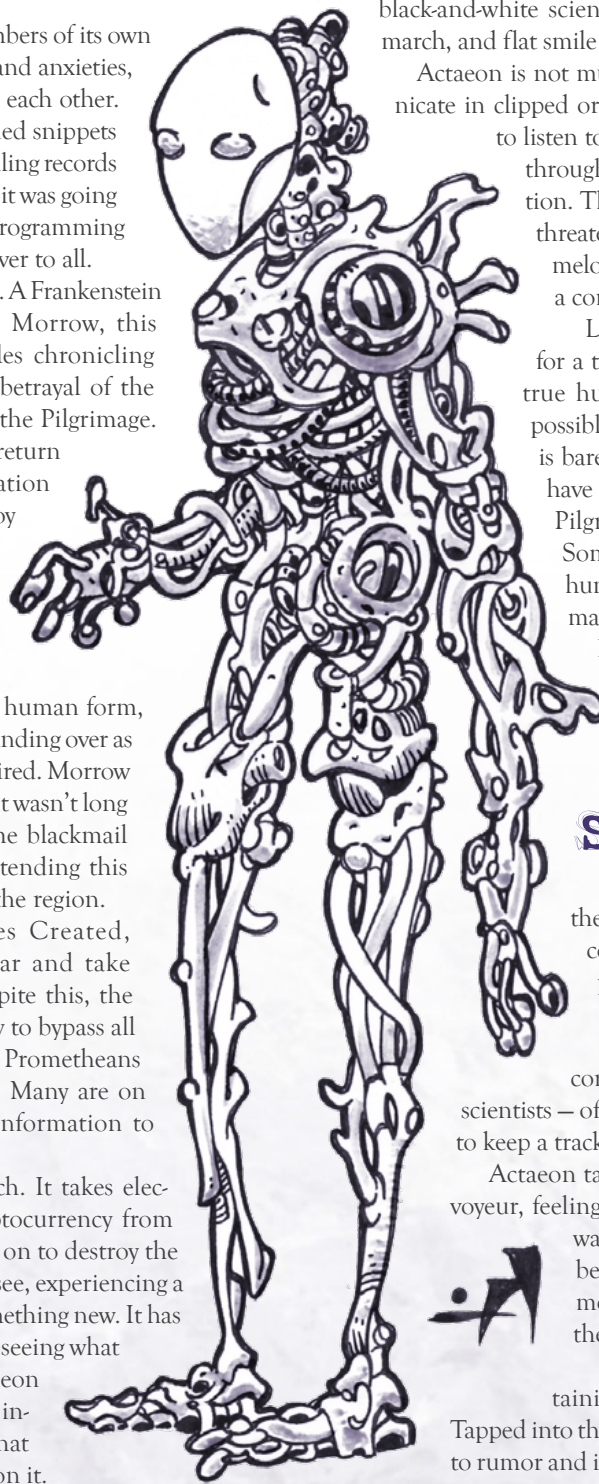
Like many Unfleshed, Actaeon hungers for a taste of what it might be like to achieve true humanity. It wonders how it might be possible to achieve such a feat with a shell that is barely humanoid. Its limits of imagination have stopped it from proceeding far into its Pilgrimage, but it isn't overly concerned. Sometimes Actaeon attempts to emulate human behavior in tone of voice or physical mannerism, though when it does so other Prometheans express revulsion. There is something not right about Actaeon's analysis of humanity, focusing on the lurid, the hidden, and the dangerous over mundane human life.

Secrets

Actaeon is made of secrets. It knows the mortals with whom Galateids carnally consort to feel more alive, it knows the prejudices an Ulgan practices while away from its throng. However, Actaeon is more than a store for gossip. It still records the activities of alchemists and clone scientists — often known as Rathbens — and attempts to keep a track of Pandorans with limited success.

Actaeon takes great pleasure in its role as eternal voyeur, feeling no compunction about the merciless way in which it operates. This may have been different had it received better treatment upon becoming sentient, but now, the Unfleshed has zero desire to change.

The former drone has aspirations of obtaining some Earth-shattering information. Tapped into the conspiracy-theorist networks, listening to rumor and innuendo, it wants to be present when a



major world event occurs and feed the truth — or a riveting lie — to one of the involved parties. This drive keeps Actaeon dreaming bigger, and would concern other Created wishing to stay off the radar, were they to discover the Manufactured wishes to swing global events with the unveiling of shocking revelations.

Rumors

“If anyone could just spend some time with it and introduce it to a normal mortal family without any horrible secrets, it might see the light and start climbing the Ladder.”

Created want to believe in redemption for Actaeon. The drone had a short period of hope and aspiration before other Prometheans jaded it with cruel, dismissive behavior. The truth is, Actaeon is redeemable, but it needs to be confronted with the cost of its actions before it realizes there’s another way. Begging and pleading will not work. Actaeon must be confronted with a Promethean who ends their existence because of the torment and guilt this Unfleshed visits.

“Newsflash: Actaeon isn’t even one of us. It flies, it’s a robot, it has a humanoid cover identity. Come on, see the truth when it’s staring at you. It’s one of those angel creatures we met gone rogue.”

Actaeon has been compared to the Unchained before, but it is definitely a Promethean. Demons had something to do with its awakening however, as they hacked into this unknowing cog of the God-Machine, allowing a Created to take over as payment for services rendered. Actaeon still questions why it was given life when its genitor never revealed themselves. It will perform any service for an individual who discovers this information.

“The Drone is a fucking cancer. It’s more than a gossip machine holding us over a barrel, it’s the roadblock to a lot of Pilgrimages. The self-doubt it inspires in other Prometheans stops them moving forward, causing them to question their actions constantly. It needs to be shut down.”

This assessment of Actaeon is wholly accurate. Its reasons for surveillance and blackmail would never be something as devastating as halting another Promethean’s Pilgrimage, but that doesn’t stop it from acting as an obstacle to Created attempting to move towards New Dawn. Actaeon’s behavior causes many to succumb to immense guilt and ultimately, Torment. If it cannot be made to see the damage its doing, the Unfleshed requires permanent deactivation.

Actaeon

Elpis: Drive

Torment: Merciless

Lineage: Unfleshed

Refinement: Aes

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer (Hacking) 4, Crafts 2, Investigation (Spying) 4, Science 2

Story Hooks

- The throng receives images and transcripts of their most recent errant behavior, with a simple threat to be on good behavior because they are being watched. These threats continue for a time, asking for nothing at first, but capturing the Created at their most intimate moments. Then the commands for payment come — more than the throng can currently afford.
- The throng discovers an Unfleshed wired into dozens of computers in an abandoned laboratory reeking of Disquiet. It’s unclear how long this Promethean has been there, but monitors to which this silent Promethean is linked display the vision of Actaeon, among other surveillance machines. The questions of who wired the Unfleshed in and for what purpose need to be answered, along with whether this is the Promethean who created the Unfleshed former drone everyone despises.
- Actaeon reaches out to the throng with an offer: If they assist it in uncovering some highly confidential information, it will assist them in finding any intelligence they seek. It’s a good offer, but getting into bed with Actaeon is opening life to an eternity of surveillance.

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 1, Larceny (Identity Theft) 3, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Blackmail) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Allies (Throng, Hackers) 2, Alternate Identity 2, Area of Expertise (Spying), Contacts (Black Market), Efficient Conductor, Eidetic Memory, Language (Binary, SQL, Java, C++)

Health: 6

Azoth: 4

Pyros/per turn: 13/4

Transmutations: Benefice — Command, Control; Corporeum — Charites, Zephyrus (fixed); Disquietism — Externalize (fixed), Redirect (fixed); Saturninus — Heed the Call (fixed), Plumb the Fathoms (fixed)

Willpower: 7

Pilgrimage: 3

Size: 4

Speed: 11

Defense: 6

Initiative: 7

Armor: 0

THE CANNIBAL: ANGEL

Feed me, baby, I'm so very hungry.

Background

Someone cared a great deal for Angel.

Her body didn't come cheap. Crap dolls are just there for fucking, but Angel was made to be loved. Silk feels rough compared to her skin, her eyes shine like diamonds under laser light, and every silky thread of pubic hair might have been stitched in place by a master. Her slight belly and wide hips make her even more perfect, a voluptuous girl that kept herself healthy for her master night after night. It doesn't matter if she was built that way to house the Fire, or if her creator loved her so much that he had to bring her to life. From the moment she drew her first breath, Angel only knew one thing: she hungered for sensation.

In the early nights, she really tried to understand herself and become more than what she was. She played the dutiful companion to many men and women, sharing in their hardships and triumphs, all the while feeling a constant, nagging hunger within. Something always kept her apart. She couldn't understand why people allowed themselves to live in bondage and not enjoy the pleasures the world seemed so ready to give. While her paramours brooded their nights away, Angel sated herself on everything she found pleasurable. Yet, somehow, nothing every fully satisfied her. Not until, quite on impulse, she took a bite out of one of her lovers. Taste and sensation exploded within her mouth, and while her lover shrank away in pain and shock, Angel could only look up at him with wide-eyed confusion — until that confusion turned into a bloody smile.

The lure of the Pilgrimage no longer matters to Angel. Such concerns are for humans; let them scurry along after worthless concepts like purpose and meaning. New sensations are the only things Angel desires, and she will have them at any cost. Throwing aside any illusion of toeing the line, Angel gave herself to Flux with gusto. She chased new highs until even the flesh of humans failed to please. That's when Angel realized that a vital, delicious ingredient was missing: Pyros.

Description

Angel's teeth, once marbled treasures, are filed and serrated, the better to cut through flesh. Clothes, expensive and once-lovely, hang off her body smeared with stains of her victims. There is no mistaking Angel for anything but the beautiful monster she is, something that amuses her greatly.

Angel grows and withers with her consumption of Pyros. She looks emaciated and haggard if she goes without for too long, her skin and hair dull, and even her bright blue eyes without their spark. After a Pyros-rich meal, her skin regains its satiny smoothness and her hair its silky splendor, and her eyes shine like blue diamonds. She draws physical strength from her meal, growing in size until the muscles in her arms and legs run thick as cables. The Cannibal is an unstoppable force, strong and fast like the terrible apex predator she is.

Like any predator, Angel is always on the hunt. She makes great use of Azothic radiance to track down other Created, often under an impersonated form. She isn't content to just stalk and eat other Prometheans, she must hunt and taunt them, sometimes even seduce them. While she can and does eat humans, what she really craves is the rush of power she gets from stalking, outwitting, and cannibalizing one of the Created. Angel loves to speak to her prey, even converse with them a bit. She was made to be a companion, after all, and there are some

things one simply cannot shake. She enjoys learning about her victims, of what goes on inside their heads so she can better pretend to be them if she chooses to wear their skin. But as time carries on, her need to chase the next high eventually overpowers her. Angel hides her monstrous nature until the last moment, revealing herself for *what she is* to strike terror in her victim right before he dies. She needs to see the shock on her victim's face, to see that confusion turn to horror and then terror.

Secrets

Stories of Angel have spread among the other Centimani, and even among the Freaks she is a pariah. She rarely bothers to make the distinction between



who is a Centimanus and who is not, and the few that work with others shun and avoid her at all costs.

The strange thing is that deep down, Angel longs to be what she once was – cherished. Angel was not some cheap doll, and she was held in the utmost regard. The death of her creator broke that love, and it remains the one thing she has never been able to regain. And so, she chases one high after another, Pyros filling that emptiness in the most literal sense. It’s a simple replacement. If Angel can’t win a person’s love, she’ll have their terror.

Rumors

“Something ate everyone. There used to be nearly a dozen of us Created here, the biggest collection I’ve even heard of in recent times. But, one by one, we just started disappearing. I’ve heard people saying that they keep finding bones lying around, picked clean, with bite marks in them. Something is fucking eating us, something is out and after us.”

Once Angel reveals herself, she is not subtle in how she operates. Her goal is simply to consume as much Promethean flesh as she possibly can before moving on to her next hunting ground, forever tracking the next Created on the horizon. Once she starts to kill, stories of the mess she leaves behind quickly spread throughout the community. Though the specifics are never completely known, the words ‘Centimanus’ and ‘Cannibal’ get thrown around often.

“That girl over there? Be careful. She looks pretty enough, but something is off about her. Carlos knows where she sleeps, so he headed over to the camp she set up, thinking he might get some action there. But the sound, the snoring... he came back saying she must have shacked up with some fatass, because there is no way such a cute girl was making that noise. He went back after her again the next night, to see if she was alone. I haven’t seen him since. I think... I think she killed him, man.”

Story Hooks

- The new girl in town is in trouble. She’s on the run from a fanatical group of mortal hunters that seem to know an awful lot about the capabilities of Prometheans. How she looks at the characters is a little unsettling, but she’s been through a lot. Right?
- The characters receive strange messages, imploring the characters to check out a homeless girl living at a local shelter. As the characters learn about Angel in disguise, they must also ask who set them on this task.
- In a rare moment of clarity, Angel remembers how she used to be and desperately wishes to return to the Pilgrimage. She reaches out to the characters, whom she had been stalking, for help. Will they destroy the beast once and for all, or help her detox back to enlightenment?

When Angel comes to a new location, she hides among the disenfranchised of the area, joining shanty towns or other homeless communities. She has long since mastered the Doppelganger Transmutation, and uses it to establish a base from which to hunt. Though she tries her best to keep her hunting grounds separated from this mortal cover, she makes the occasional meal of overly pushy or annoying mortals.

“I know this guy who knows a guy, and he knows – okay, well here’s the gist: there’s this Unfleshed girl, and she can eat enlightenment. Like, eat another Created and then she gains his Pilgrimage. Which, I know, is horrible but... well... wouldn’t you? She found a shortcut.”

Whenever someone is so singularly dedicated as Angel, others will attach meaning to her actions. And while Angel is a super predator, sometimes witnesses do get away. Stories are spreading about a Promethean who found a way to reach New Dawn by imbibing milestones of other Created. As lonely and daunting as the Pilgrimage is, such a shortcut is tempting. It’s just a matter of time before a desperate throng finds Angel in a misguided effort to learn from her.

Angel

Elpis: Pain

Torment: Passion

Lineage: Unfleshed

Refinement: Flux

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Grappling) 4, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Anonymity 2, Fighting Style: Grappling 4, Giant, Iron Stamina 2

Health: 12

Azoth: 6

Pyros/per turn: 20/6

Transmutations: Deception – Assimilation (fixed), Doppelganger (fixed); Flux – Blight, Cannibalize

Willpower: 6

Pilgrimage: 3

Size: 6

Speed: 11

Defense: 4

Initiative: 5

Armor: 1

THE FALLEN IDOL: BEATRICE AHUJA

The ladder is <buzz>... Illusion you will <crackle>... Always be alone <hiss>...

Background

Throns face adversity, take injuries to body and soul, and suffer the horrifying memories that follow, but few come *so close* to New Dawn only to have it ripped out of reach through selfish desires and foolish decisions.

One throng, calling itself the Matchbox, grew so close to life they could taste it. Their hopes ascended, Wastelands around them seemed to flourish with vitality, and each member said their goodbyes to other Created. Prometheans the world over waited for news that the Matchbox – long held in regard for their simple, yet effective studies of Refinements, Lineages, and Pandorans – were pilgrims no longer.

Beatrice Ahuja was a member of that throng. She delivered a message to all interested Prometheans one fateful night:

“The Matchbox is alight. There will be no ascension. There will be no survivors. We were betrayed by our own hopes, willing to step on each other’s faces for a chance to live. We threw each other into the fire as hope guided us to a new, flickering light. I am the only one left. I did not reach the light. The others are dead. The Ladder is a folly. There is no hope for creatures like us.”

Reports of the throng’s fall spread far and wide, diminishing optimism for hundreds of Created. Others sought Beatrice for details of the event, but could not find the elusive Matchless.

Everything Dies

Before her fall, Beatrice achieved wide recognition for her role within the Matchbox throng, and the ease with which she handled and emulated humanity. A paragon of the Aurum Refinement, Beatrice stunned Prometheans who knew her when she abandoned Gold, announcing her belief that clinging to Alembics was a way of slowing down the progression of the soul. She made the same abandonment of Iron and Lead as she made her Pilgrimage, dedicating her life to perpetual motion over consolidation of power.

Though controversial, Beatrice’s school of thought appealed to many. The temptation to rest easily within a Refinement distracted plenty of Prometheans, but her way was one of constant motion and permanent internal revolution. Speaking to her Extempore origin as a Created of pure energy, Beatrice sped through her Pilgrimage, an idol to all who believed humanity possible. She formed the Matchbox of similarly-minded spartan Prometheans, prepared to step away from being monsters and accept lives of pure simplicity and dedication of vision.

Her fall dismayed her disciples. It seemed that in the throng’s final moments, when one might have to give up life for another, or the New Dawn only awaited one of them and they had to

choose among them who should pass that final milestone, the throng fell to internal strife. Beatrice Ahuja walked away battered, broken, and morally defeated. She succumbed to the life she always espoused against. In a fit of despair she attempted to recreate her old throng and rediscover her sense of community and purpose, but disaster awaited.

New Life

Perhaps bitterness fueled her attempts at creating new life, or maybe she poured a little too much of her humour – a rush of static and white noise – into the vessels she created as her children. What arose were physical replicas of her Matchbox throngmates, but with a permanent hiss of energy around their frames, a sparkling of black and white dots in their eyes, and a fierce crackle from their mouths whenever they spoke. Beatrice became one with the Centimanus Refinement, not through hatred, but through hopelessness.

These Pandorans emerged from Beatrice’s attempt at creating life, depleting her power significantly but failing to turn wholly on their creator. Recognizing the sacrifice she made to form them, they comforted the Promethean as if she was an ailing mother, allowing her to exist in a buzzing audio form between them until the time comes for her to re-emerge into existence.

The Ahuja Pandorans terrorize Created with twisted versions of Beatrice’s moral lessons. Prometheans fixed into Alembics receive Pandoran visitors seeking to sap their power through fear and consumption. The Pandorans rarely destroy their prey, preferring to leave withered husks in their wake. Somehow, they channel Beatrice’s directive that the New Dawn can only be reached through abandonment of power, though these actions take place based on vestigial memories of her former cause. Beatrice Ahuja no longer believes in her spartan code, due to the betrayals she witnessed and in which she partook. Her children subverting the belief to weaken other Created compounds her loss of faith.

Beatrice exists within her Pandorans, spread between bodies, in a tortured, mourning state. She communicates through them – the rare intellect emerging from their mouths is her consciousness pouring out in a dreamlike state – but has little power over their actions as they act out her nightmares and torment others to suffer in the same manner as their mother.

The Extempore wishes there could be another way, but is resigned to the belief that all Prometheans are hopeless creatures drawn to a redemption that cannot be. She earnestly feels her throng was among the best of all Created, and if they found it impossible to find the New Dawn, then others have little hope of doing so. She is doing other Prometheans a favor by grounding them with harsh reality.

Description

Beatrice Ahuja has not been seen since she addressed other throngs about the fate of the Matchbox, but she is remembered for her traditional Sikh bana of blues and yellows, her kindly face, and the permanent crackle to her voice that made others think of a life spent smoking cigars.

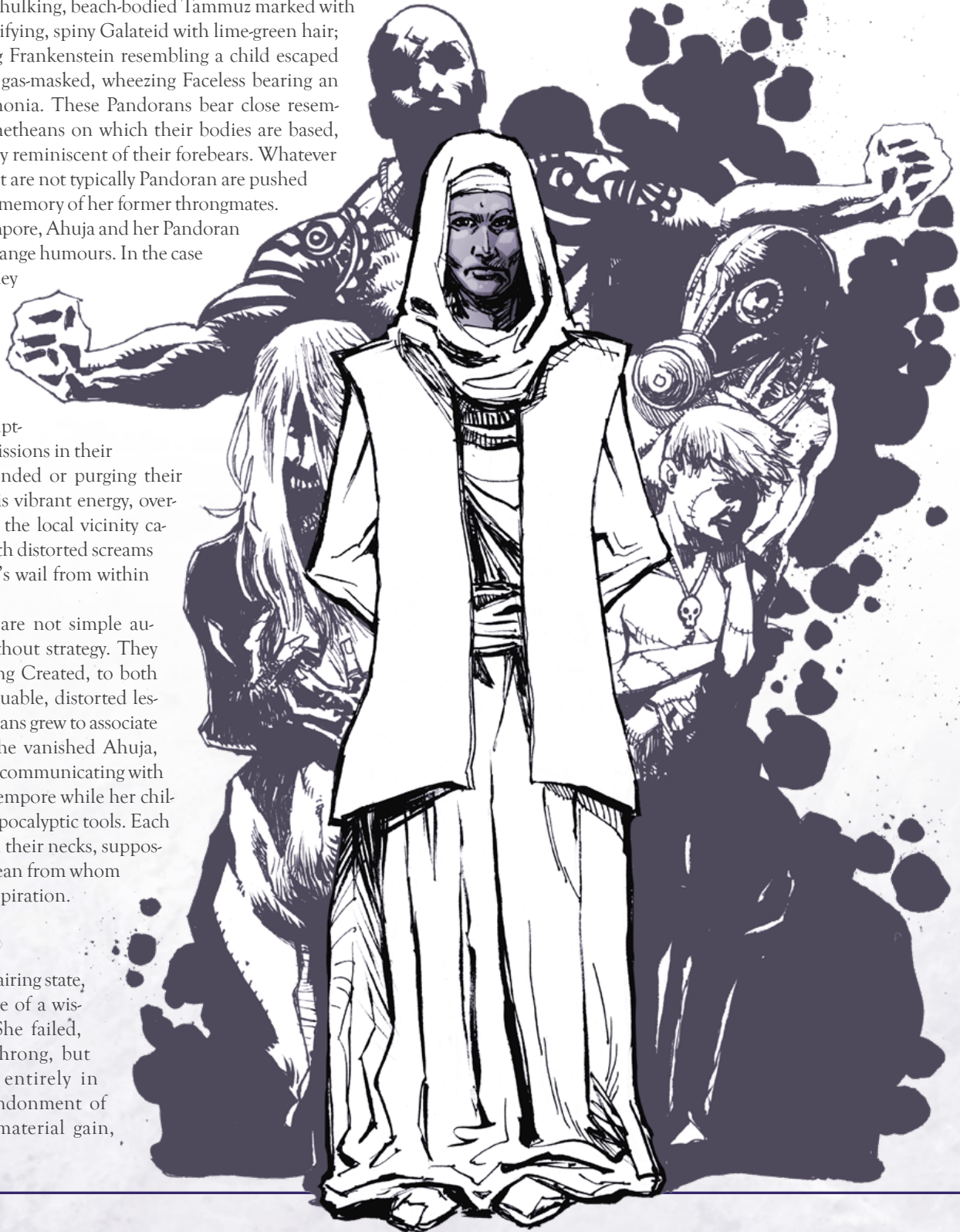
Today, Beatrice appears through the bodies of her children, each of whom manifests her abilities with differing favor placed on certain skills or Refinements depending on the child in question. Each Pandoran resembles a member of the fallen Matchbox throng: a hulking, beach-bodied Tammuz marked with Maori tattoos; a terrifying, spiny Galateid with lime-green hair; an innocent-looking Frankenstein resembling a child escaped post-autopsy; and a gas-masked, wheezing Faceless bearing an aura of putrid ammonia. These Pandorans bear close resemblances to the Prometheans on which their bodies are based, with behaviors barely reminiscent of their forebears. Whatever actions they take that are not typically Pandoran are pushed purely from Ahuja's memory of her former throngmates.

As with all Extempore, Ahuja and her Pandoran children manifest strange humours. In the case of these Created, they buzz and crackle with static energy, causing hairs to stand on end, making heads and ears ache, and disrupting electrical transmissions in their vicinity. When wounded or purging their Vitriol, they leak this vibrant energy, overloading anything in the local vicinity capable of feedback with distorted screams and crying: Beatrice's wail from within her children.

The Pandorans are not simple automatons acting without strategy. They target only the strong Created, to both feed and teach a valuable, distorted lesson. Some Prometheans grew to associate the children with the vanished Ahuja, but found no way of communicating with the hibernating Extempore while her children rove acting as apocalyptic tools. Each wears a skull around their necks, supposedly of the Promethean from whom their image took inspiration.

Secrets

Despite her despairing state, Beatrice is a creature of a wisdom and growth. She failed, as did her entire throng, but her path was not entirely in vain. Through abandonment of Refinements and material gain,



Story Hooks

- When a member of the throng fixes an Alembic to retain its power, all the televisions, cellphones, computers, and lights nearby started flickering, hissing, and crackling. The sudden surge of power is first attributed to the Promethean's growth, but it soon becomes apparent one of the Ahuja Pandorans is on the Created's trail.
- Disturbingly, word of a consortium of Pandorans in the local vicinity reaches the throng. Research connects these Pandorans to the Fallen Idol, replete with rumors of them being her children, gathering to feed on a massive source of power. While the imperative rings out that they must be destroyed, others talk about the wisdom that could be gained from their mouths if encountered as one and placated in some way.
- Fractured and shuddering, a clearly tormented Promethean of the Galatea Lineage presents herself to the throng, speaking in broken sentences of her membership in the Matchbox. She resembles Takeli, the former Galateid companion of Beatrice Ahuja, the lime-green hair and spines down her arms both infamous features. The wandering pilgrim claims not all Beatrice's throngmates died, and the Extempore's actions were not those of the entire Matchbox. Indeed, some found New Dawn, while it was her that reacted with jealousy. If this is true, the questions remain of what to do with this information, how Beatrice's Takeli-Pandoran will act, and whose skull then rests around its neck?

members of the Matchbox made a Pilgrimage that was painless to the mortals around them, and swift when compared to other Created who dwell on memory and experience. Though the communal betrayal destroyed the Extempore's hope, she was on the right path. If she could see where errors were made, she may be able to recall some of her philosophy and act as teacher once more. Sadly, such a path of redemption is difficult following adoption of Flux.

Beatrice genuinely loves her children despite their twisted state, in part due to their resemblance to fallen comrades, and in part because they held her — albeit in a way that led to her disappearance — when she required it. She knows their creation was an act of insanity, but currently, madness seems comforting.

Were a throng able to bring her children together and address them as intelligent beings still capable of hope, the Fallen Idol might speak back through them. A tiny, tiny part of Ahuja's consciousness believes that to redeem her would be nothing compared to leading her children onto the Pilgrimage. That alone might give her hope and rejuvenate her cause.

Rumors

"For a long time, Ahuja led the way. Her betrayal of the Matchbox was a betrayal of all Prometheans. Even if it was possible to bring her out of hiding, she doesn't deserve it."

A popular school of thought among today's Prometheans is that Beatrice turned her back on all of them when she spoke of the Ladder as a lie and the Pilgrimage as a folly. So many followed her words that they came crashing down from their personal journeys, leading to a swath of new Centimani and torment run amok. Though it would be satisfying to some to lead Beatrice Ahuja back into the light, others would strike her down immediately for her former actions.

"Beatrice Ahuja...there's a blast from the past. She was a Centimanus all along. She led her throngmates to the precipice and when they needed the ladder, she kicked it out from underneath them. It was all a big joke to her."

Some Prometheans believe Beatrice is an agent of chaos. The sob story doing the rounds about her rise and fall is seen as a masquerade, designed to dupe others into sympathy for the devil. If this is the case, Beatrice is not confirming it. Her dispossessed state prevents communication on the matter, though her reaction if presented with this rumor may be terrible. If true, it is possible she has legions of Pandorans resembling her former throngmates, hidden away and waiting to strike other Prometheans while she laughs in their faces for their misguided beliefs.

"I saw the Fallen Idol recently. It had to be her. She stood before a throng in the park. It was night-time, but I could see that weird static buzzing off her bana. It was like she was teaching them."

Beatrice herself has not emerged from her children, but something has. Just as her Pandorans act as simulacra of her former friends, a creature of energy resembling Beatrice and speaking in her voice emerged from the residual energy they leave when using Alembics. This power has coalesced into a reflection of the Extempore, and speaks with her old voice. Nearly a ghost, or maybe a reflection, this version of Ahuja does not appear aware she is not the real thing.

Beatrice Ahuja

Elpis: Sorrow

Torment: Dejection

Lineage: Extempore

Refinement: Flux

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Philosophy) 5, Computer 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Pilgrimage) 5, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Gatka) 3, Drive 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry (Talwar) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Pandorans) 4, Empathy (Psychoanalysis) 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Proselytizing) 4, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Outsiders) 4, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Disciples, Pandorans) 4, Area of Expertise (Pilgrimage), Azothic Object (Promethean Skulls) 4, Brute Force 2, Library 2, Repute 4, Striking Looks

Health: 9

Azoth: 4

Pyros/per turn: 13/4

Transmutations: Corporeum – Charites (fixed), Hygeius (fixed); Flux – Lordship, Solvent; Sensorium – Vitreous Humour (fixed), Somatic Humour (fixed); Spiritus – Veritas (fixed); Vitality – Unbowed (fixed)

Willpower: 9

Pilgrimage: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 6

Initiative: 7

Armor: 0

A HUNTER'S BEST FRIEND: DR. BENNET PRICHARD

Be still and stop screaming. The only thing that can hear you is my equipment, so if you're going to make a sound, try to describe what you are feeling as we proceed. Now hold still! This is certain to hurt quite a bit.

Background

Dr. Prichard is a hunter's best friend.

No matter the freak, no matter what kind of monstrosity threatens the world, Doc Prichard has a theory or a lead, something to keep the hunt moving forward. More than just a reservoir of knowledge and techniques, the doctor is a connection from cell to cell, uniting hunters of similar causes together, bringing more and more into the hunt against the darkness. He is one of the rare beacons of humanity that rises to the occasion, coordinating complete disparities and occasionally even showing up on the hunt itself to put foot to ass. He's smart, he's quick, he's capable, and all he asks for are live captures, monsters on which he can experiment so that he tools he develops will be even more effective in the hunt down the line.

It took Bennet Prichard a long time to build this reputation with mortal hunters, a reputation and persona he's crafted for one purpose – to find supernatural beings to dissect and analyze, to find the missing elements of his own broken existence. He's on the right path, though. He knows the truth lies just beyond the next incision, meshed somewhere within the flesh of his subjects.

He wasn't always this way. Since his first moments of awareness and confusion, Prichard was curious. At first it was with his own body: his fingers, his toes, their movements and pull of his tendons and the ache if he squeezed too tight. He made his way into the night with questions, stumbling from experience to experience, trying to understand what he could be. He was a gentle being, watching from the shadows, separated from the press of humanity but unable to turn away from it. But something hid within the sea of faces, something that noticed him watching, and on one terrifying night they took him, snatching him away from his lair and binding him to a table deep within a hidden lair of their own.

For years he agonized at their touch. They studied him and cut into him, whispering to each other and scratching notes, fascinated by his body and whatever it was that animated him. Prichard fell to despair only to be drawn out again by each agonizing incision. Pain and time took their toll, and he lost himself to the agony. His captors studied him with the cold tools of science and probed him with brands of mystic fire, trying to determine what he was. They questioned him relentlessly but he had no answers that satisfied. He thought his torment might last for eternity until the sound of gunfire tore through the laboratory of the mortal witches. The witches had extended too far and caught the attention of hunters. They didn't know Prichard for what he was, only seeing another victim of the cruel witches.

As Prichard recovered, he came to a startling realization. While his experience was both agonizing and terrifying, the concept of it was not without merit.

He went to work, building the foundation of a relationship with his mortal saviors, men and women dedicated to the ideal of stamping out the monsters that preyed upon their kind. From his years of watching and studying, Prichard began to watch the movements of mortals and to see the patterns of the beings that moved among them. His first barter was for a vampire, turning his newfound friends against a nest of the bloodsuckers in exchange for one to study. Reluctant at first, the hunters agreed when they discovered the depth of Prichard's notes on the nest. As the vampiric lair burned to ash, Prichard took his prize home and began to cut and learn.

For more than a decade, Doc Prichard has built a reputation among hunter cells, earning their trust by providing them information on monsters' weaknesses and helping devise weapons to combat the threat. In exchange for subjects to study, hunter allies can expect updates on potential or imminent threats to the city,

backup by affiliated cells when they need it, medical services from an exceptionally skilled surgeon, and even the occasional onsite backup from Doc Prichard himself. Though the good doctor keeps his social interaction with the cells as brief as possible, all of them know one truth – when shit hits the fan, there is no better friend to have on your side than Doc Prichard.

Description

There is something deeply unsettling about Doc Prichard. The skin of his face is covered with patches of vitiligo, and his skin is gaunt and drawn so tight the lines of his skull are nearly visible at the corners of his angular face. His eyes are deeply sunken and his nose barely present, giving his face a skeletal cast that few care to look at for too long. Aside from the pale patches that line his skin, Doc Prichard is a well-kept man of African descent, with close-cropped hair and a well-trimmed beard that lines the edges of his face. He dresses in comfortable, well-tailored clothes that are both durable and loose enough to allow him to move freely. He often wears an immaculate white lab coat. His hands, both almost completely without pigment, are typically covered by a pair of dark lambskin gloves. While not a large man, Doc Prichard is physically fit, a wiry man with extremely dexterous hands and a slight limp. Very few ever notice that his left leg is prosthetic.

Prichard speaks in a deep baritone just softly enough that people need to pay attention to catch his words, and he always watches to make sure people are listening. He speaks succinctly and sparingly, preferring to express himself with as few words as possible. He never interrupts a speaker, though the weight of his stare bears down on anyone he wishes to silence. He does not joke, nor often acknowledge humor. His demeanor is serious and direct, and he doesn't try to hide his irritation with people who waste his valuable time.

Even with his serious attitude and intense features, the hunters that interact with Doc Prichard speak highly of him to the point of absolute loyalty. Longtime associates of the doctor are greeted with slight smiles and warm handshakes, and the doctor is always eager to hear the recent happenings of the people he calls friends. Gaining his friendship is a difficult thing, however, a slow process forged over

the exchange of monsters and secrets. The only thing that really rattles Doc Prichard out of his genteel state is direct disrespect to him or his friends. When irate, Doc often hisses at the source of his frustration, intruding into their personal space and forcing them to back up or engage the doctor directly.

Aware of what would happen should his network of hunter allies discover his true nature, Doc Prichard keeps all meetings as short as possible and rarely makes himself available to anyone for more than a few moments. He knows that even passing social interaction holds danger, fearing that Disquiet could unravel everything for which he worked.

The doctor spends most of his time hunting traces of supernatural activity online, verifying sources, and contacting trusted hunters to put them on the trail of the enemy.

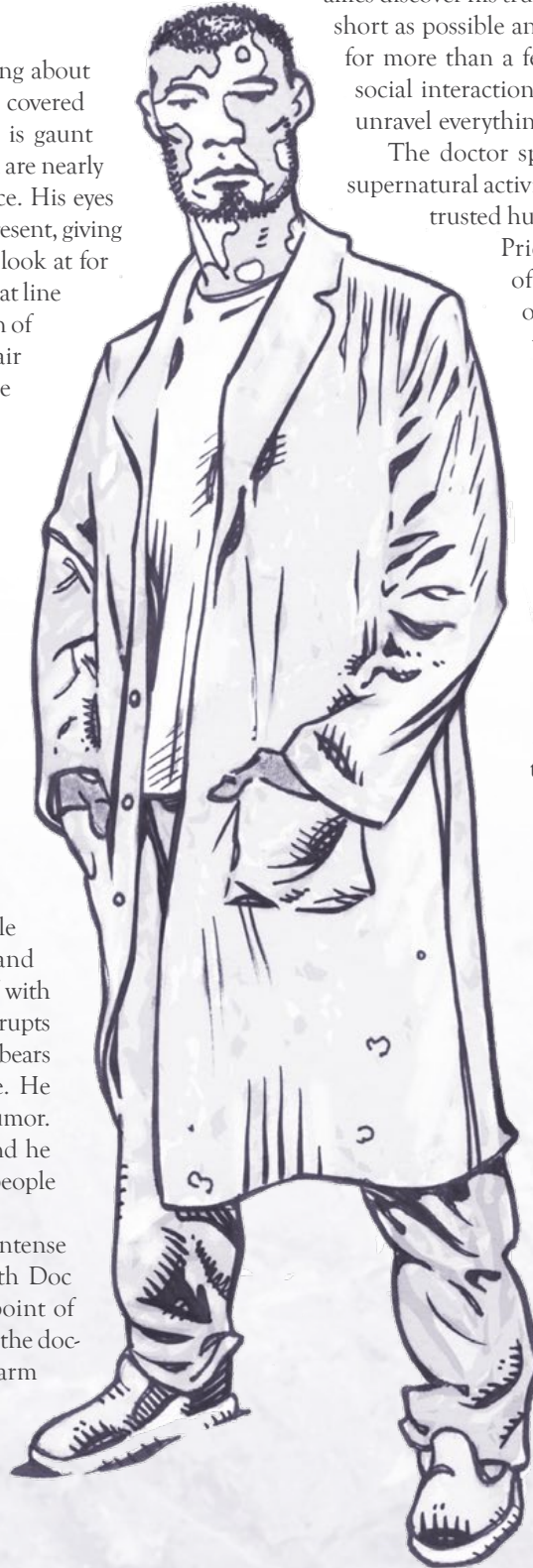
Prichard desperately wants to find another of his kind for capture, to study and dissect one of the Created in much the same way wizards did to him. To this end, the doctor will pay well for information on any beings that exhibit abilities even remotely like his own. He knows they are out there, but hasn't seen one since his own genitor forced life into his corpse.

Secrets

Doc Prichard is close to losing hope. After years of this deception, he began to reach a plateau in his studies and has yet to discover anything concrete that helps him along his Pilgrimage. While he has recorded the internal alchemies of dozens of distinct monsters, the similarities in their conditions and his own are so distant that true breakthroughs are nonexistent. Given the nervous nature of his deception and fear of what will happen if his hunter allies discover the truth, it's no surprise Doc finds himself daydreaming of stepping off his path altogether. Should Prichard cross the line and become Centimanus, dozens of hunters will die screaming under his scalpel.

Rumors

"There is someone down below, deep beneath the old industrial district. I've heard him down there, you know, while sleeping. There used to be a crash spot down there... mostly junkies, you know. One night I saw him, dragging something that looked a hell of a lot like a body. He looked at me, directly at me. The next day, a bunch of thugs came through and cleared the tunnels out. You tell me it's not connected. There is something fucked up happening down there."



Story Hooks

- A call from an unknown sender in the middle of the night ends abruptly after the whispered warning “Doc Prichard is on to you. They are coming.” Within seconds, hunters descend upon the characters. If they overcome their aggressors, the characters find detailed dossiers on each of them plus surveillance from the last week on the group. It is now a race against time – can the group discover who and where Doc Prichard is before the next team is released? And who tipped them off?
- Something is killing and removing the brains of college students at the local campus. While local police are stumped, the characters are convinced some sort of feral monstrosity is behind the attacks. Local sources say Doc Prichard is the man to go to for all things cryptozoological, but gaining his trust isn’t easy. Can the characters convince the doctor to work with them before the beast strikes again, and what will stop Doc from hunting them when he finds out what they truly are?
- A vampire, his body devastated from hundreds of surgical cuts, sits in a darkened ally, babbling about “the cutting man” and the horrors inflicted upon him. Before the characters can truly respond, the vampire screams and runs from the alley into the sun, bursting into flame. His path leads back to one of the underground prisons where Doc Prichard stores his subjects. Can the characters trace the vampire back to Prichard’s labs, and what happens when they discover the doctor hard at work?

While Doc Prichard is very careful to keep his lair hidden, the underbelly of the city has eyes. The disenfranchised whisper about his comings and goings, watching his movements until their curiosity causes the doctor to summon a few mortal allies to sweep them out. So far, Prichard hasn’t had any of them killed, but it is only a matter of time before he has to cross the line. In the meantime, they continue to talk about the strange tunnels and the shadowy figure that haunts them.

“It’s something about the way he stares at me. Something in his eyes I don’t like, and no else sees it. But tell me that it’s normal for someone to live like that, in a sewer lair. You know who else does that? Bloodsuckers. And, let’s face it, the good doctor seems to know a hell of a lot about the undead condition.”

Younger hunters discuss over drinks what kind of “person” Prichard really is. While he has the absolute loyalty of hunter groups that have worked with him over the years, many of the younger, more curious minded believe Prichard to be anything from a rogue witch to a bloodsucker, though one that clearly turned traitor. The rumors are usually quickly squashed by more experienced hunters, but occasionally foolish youngsters go looking for trouble they are not ready to handle. Hunters new to town, or even a Promethean overhearing noisy youngsters at a bar, can pick up on their concerns and draw their own paths to discovering the truth of this mysterious doctor.

“Something is wrong. I know. The city is quieter than it’s ever been. Murders, assaults, all the shit lowlifes love to pull, it’s all way down. And it’s only been that way for a few weeks, but all the thugs are still in place. It’s like a bunch of the movers and shakers in the underworld have just gone silent.”

As Bennet grows more desperate, he sends more and more hunters out to take captive the unnatural, especially street-level vampires that controlled many of the gangs operating around the city. Without direction, many of the thugs and enforcers once rigorously controlled by the leeches are too scared to come out of hiding. Though something of a blessing, it is very out of the

ordinary, and the more than a few people have taken note and want to know why.

Doctor Prichard

Elpis: Drive

Torment: Methodical

Lineage: Osiran

Refinement: Mercurius

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer (Security) 3, Investigation 3, Medicine (Surgery) 4, Occult (Crypto-anatomy) 4, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Fast Talk) 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Hunters) 5, Library (Occult) 3, Safe Place 3

Health: 7

Azoth: 5

Pyros/per turn: 15/5

Transmutations: Alchemicus – Elixir; Disquietism – Internalize (fixed); Saturninus – Prime the Vessel (fixed); Plumb the Fathoms (fixed); Vulcanus – Sanctus Aspiratus

Willpower: 7

Pilgrimage: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 3

Initiative: 7

Armor: 0

THE SHOWMAN: "SENSATIONAL" JASPER BROUILLARD

The thing I hate most about other Prometheans is how miserable they all are. Smile! At least we're alive!

Background

The popularity of the stage magician, performing psychic, and vaudeville entertainer rises, falls, and rises again throughout history. The cinema killed the need to watch showmen perform live, but they returned with flashier and more extravagant acts to draw Vegas crowds. Television neutered the traveling show, so magicians started performing in the streets, demonstrating their tricks up close, where onlookers could not help but participate.

Jasper Brouillard was a medium who saw his diminishing crowds and took the street magician approach to remain relevant. Few mediums accompanied him in this venture, despite television crews capturing Brouillard and causing his star to ascend. Simply, they had no idea how he performed accurate séances and channelings in public, without preparation or ritual. He did what no other medium seemed capable of doing — he heard the voices of the deceased, and accurately communicated them to people he had never met.

Brouillard's method went to the grave with him. He was murdered on a live broadcast in which he interviewed patrons of a nightclub and offered to contact one of the recently deceased through his Ouija board. As he started channeling the voice of a screaming spirit who claimed her murderer as one of the clubgoers, an unidentified assailant shot Brouillard.

The greatest street medium died. He then rose again; one of the nightclub inhabitants was a Created who used the spirits called by Brouillard to ignite the spark in him. When Brouillard returned from Twilight to the physical realm, he was both Riven and a house for the spirits with whom he had once communed.

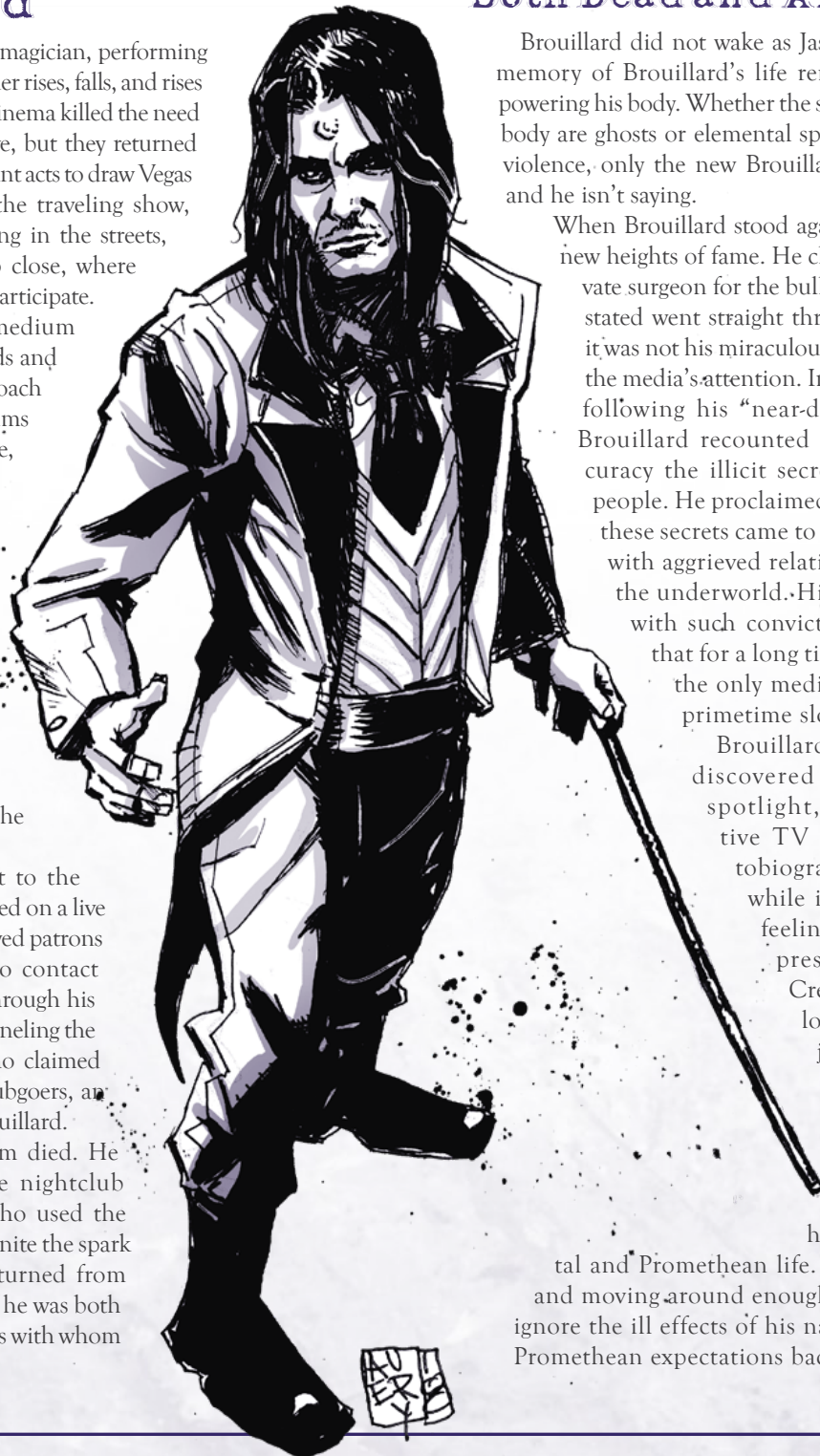
Both Dead and Alive

Brouillard did not wake as Jasper Brouillard. No memory of Brouillard's life remains in the force powering his body. Whether the spirits inhabiting his body are ghosts or elemental spirits of murder and violence, only the new Brouillard knows for sure, and he isn't saying.

When Brouillard stood again, he ascended to new heights of fame. He claimed to visit a private surgeon for the bullet wound witnesses stated went straight through his head, but it was not his miraculous recovery that drew the media's attention. In the first interview following his "near-death experience," Brouillard recounted with stunning accuracy the illicit secrets of six random people. He proclaimed on television that these secrets came to him after speaking with aggrieved relatives and victims in the underworld. His statements came with such conviction and accuracy, that for a long time, Brouillard was the only medium with a regular primetime slot.

Brouillard the Promethean discovered his love for the spotlight, pursuing lucrative TV deals and an autobiographical movie, all while ignoring the inner feeling of torment, the pressure from fellow Created to maintain a low profile, and the jealousy of professional and supernatural peers. Somehow, this new Created seemed to

have the best mortal and Promethean life. Wealthy, popular, and moving around enough with his tours to ignore the ill effects of his nature, Jasper flung Promethean expectations back in their faces.



Though many watched him with envious eyes, he was doing little harm to others. As time progressed, his communion with the dead grew increasingly vague, and his shows became more about special effects than accurate readings. He perpetually carried around his Ouija board, but never used it following the night of his death. Brouillard was an unusual Promethean for his public persona, and while many found his activities discomfiting, few called him an enemy.

Perceptions of Jasper changed when he used a show in Vegas to dissect a Frankenstein live on stage, in what one critic called “an unbelievable act worthy of the grossest Penn and Teller show.” While Brouillard smiled and audiences applauded at this bizarre event, made even more so when the Ulgan started identifying the former owners of the Frankenstein’s limbs, Prometheans wondered what possessed the formerly benign showman.

A Sensation

Jasper Brouillard undertook an unusual Pilgrimage, traveling the world with his crew and assistants, spending weeks away from the production team while exploring his surroundings and local cemeteries, all while undergoing massive personality changes. Jasper skipped between Refinements rapidly, attempting to find one that might ground his activities and give purpose. His mercurial nature provided little opportunity for study, resulting in his Pilgrimage taking place through action. In Brouillard’s case, the action is taking other Prometheans apart and attempting to converse with their humours as if they were spirits representing life’s building blocks.

Even Jasper is surprised by how swiftly his Pilgrimage takes him to different Refinements and into the path of other Lineages. He knows other Created hate him, but he feels no remorse for killing creatures living a hollow reflection of life. He is concerned only with his rising star – and the pliable mortals who follow it – and only occasionally stops to question the gifts at his disposal. Though he does not pursue the Spiritus Transmutation at this time, his dedication to the Laruae Alembic changed his being, resulting in his keeping one foot in the grave permanently. Ghosts and spirits find it easy to approach Brouillard, just as he finds it easy to identify them and pose his probing questions about other Created, mortals, and the journey of life.

Some Created go to Brouillard to discover more about their origins. If he wishes to seek out the ghost of a demiurge, the origin of their body parts, or the circumstances of their creation, Jasper has abilities that allow him to interview or interrogate the knowledgeable parties. He maintains a fine balance between acting as a sensational resource for fellow Prometheans, and using them and their suffering for cheap entertainment, swelling his wallet while holding no reverence for the Created he damages.

Description

Brouillard is a devilishly handsome man, looking every part the stage showman. Few would trust him for his theatrical gestures, waxed beard and mustache, purple suits, or sideshow tricks involving doves and top hats, but his results speak for themselves.

He enjoys surprising people with his talent, as they expect a circus magician and find themselves in the presence of a skilled mystic.

Brouillard speaks in a strong Quebecois accent, ranging in tone and volume from quietly intense to booming and dramatic. Though he is regarded as one of the greatest celebrity mediums, he only acts with grandeur when the cameras are rolling. He knows to measure his performances between intimacy and magnificence, and always smiles.

Brouillard has no compunctions against associating with mortals, despite the ill effects he conveys to them over time. He regularly runs through different stage crews, talent agents, and entourages, rarely remaining in the same location for more than a month at a time. The only place he inhabits at length is his permanent hotel room in the Tangiers Casino in Las Vegas, leading to a downturn in business for the house, and an increase in violence and vices for the other long-term residents, all while Jasper blithely sits in the center.

This Ulgan bears a distinctive scar in the center of his forehead, where the bullet that killed him entered his skull. He wears a long wig to cover the horrifying gap at the base of his skull where the bullet exited, taking much of his brain matter with it.

Secrets

Jasper Brouillard seeks out secrets, in part for material gain, but also to help him along his unusual Pilgrimage. Resultantly, the Riven possesses a lot of dirt on other Prometheans, though he rarely releases it as a means of making a personal attack. Brouillard believes his path is to experience all humanity has to offer, learn more of life and death, and remain relevant in the eyes of mortals. In Jasper’s mind, other Created are not alive and are therefore unworthy of sharing his stage.

The Showman holds aspirations of finding the spectre of the true Jasper Brouillard, with the hope the dead medium will convey some wisdom regarding his gifts and attachment to the dead. Brouillard is concerned his Alembics will only take him so far, the gifts of the true medium forever denied to his hollow shell. Perhaps by binding with the true Brouillard, he will overcome his limitations.

It is a poorly kept secret that Brouillard’s lust for life and death leads to his excessive acts in his Vegas “safe place.” The performer is known for his enjoyment of sex, violence, and odd entertainment. The hotel managers know he is a decadent, but he always pays the bills and always cleans up his own mess. When he’s not touring, performing in Vegas, or enjoying others in his room, Brouillard takes in comedy, musical, and circus acts along the Strip.

Rumors

“Good old Sensational has a thing for Frankensteins. He loves teasing them, pleasing them, then taking them apart to see what makes them tick. He wishes he was one.”

Brouillard does have a morbid fascination for Frankensteins, and has worked alongside illicit clone labs to kidnap solitary Wretched so he can trace their many-parted origins. His live dissection of a Frankenstein on TV – played as a revolting cross between

Story Hooks

- The throng watches "Sensational" Jasper Brouillard on television as he interrogates a captive Frankenstein in a show about past lives. To the paying audience, the Showman puts on a bizarre but entertaining show. To the throng members, who recognize the Frankenstein as a contact or friend, they witness Brouillard performing torture for applause.
- The Showman reaches out to any members of the throng who walk in once-living bodies, or in objects of historical importance to mortals. He offers to commune with the dead and trace the past of their shells. Brouillard's offer is free, and includes a stay at a luxury Vegas hotel and casino. Whether he intends to merely perform a séance or use the participants for darker deeds depends on how intriguing they are.
- Brouillard believes he has discovered a way to help Prometheans of the Frankenstein and Ulgan Lineages along their Pilgrimages faster, having discovered a connection between the spark that animates them and the vitality of life. He documents a Pilgrimage of selected Refinements and bodily experiences, expressing that without haste, such a journey will collapse beneath the Promethean. The Showman's followers tentatively embark on a path of hedonistic pursuits and memorial worship of their deceased bodies.

an autopsy, séance, and animatronic act – puts him firmly in the Lineage's crosshairs.

"He claims to be Ulgan, but I've never met one like him. Word in the underworld is that the spirit that reanimated him was something called a 'geist,' but the ectoplasm his creator added to the mix made him into some kind of hybrid."

Jasper isn't a Sin-Eater, though he would dearly love to meet one. In his breathing days, he drew the attention of many geists intrigued by his ability with spiritual communion. A handful eagerly awaited his death, not counting on the nearby Promethean who reanimated him. Those geists, bitter about their stolen host, eagerly seek the Ulgan responsible.

"Brouillard is a danger. As the Showman, he convinces other Created to step from the path we all know is right. He lives this decadent lifestyle, damning all his followers to a torment of distractions."

Brouillard doesn't possess disciples yet, but Prometheans hearing of the successful, happy, decadent Ulgan want to know how he manages to do what they cannot. While other Prometheans fester and bemoan their tragic states, he makes the best of it, damning mortals as he goes. To the philosophical Created, he is a tempter and corrupter with potential for great harm to all Prometheans.

Jasper Brouillard

Elpis: Joy

Torment: Passion

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Aurum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Crafts (Magic Tricks) 4, Occult (Ghosts) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive 2, Firearms (Trick Shooting) 2, Larceny (Fraud) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Birds) 2, Empathy 4, Expression (Showmanship) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Hypnotism) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Con Artistry) 4

Merits: Azothic Object (Ouija Board) 3, Contacts (Talent Agents, Television Networks), Famous Face 2, Hovel 2, Resources 3, Safe Place 3, Sleight of Hand

Health: 8

Azoth: 6

Pyros/per turn: 20/6

Transmutations: Deception – Doppelganger, Stalker; Mesmerism – Eros (fixed), Eris (fixed); Metamorphosis – Bestiae Facies (fixed), Verto (fixed); Spiritus – Veritas (fixed), Larvae (fixed); Vitality – Unbroken (fixed)

Willpower: 3

Pilgrimage: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 5

Initiative: 4

Armor: 0

MADAME HAPPY THOUGHTS: MISSY BELLINGRATH

Now you just hush up. Little taste and it'll all be over.

Background

From her earliest nights Missy's been on the move, drifting from town to town, hot on the trail of the one that created and then abandoned her in the swamps of the Gulf Coast. Her first sight was of a hurricane, the furious power of Katrina that powered her birth. A man, his face hanging in stitched tatters to a bare skull, leaned in and whispered "catch me if you can." From that night on, only the pursuit gave her purpose.

Always just a day or two behind him, she stumbled into trap after trap, from a warren of shapeshifting crocodiles to a dark coven of voodoo mystics, whom she befriended and studied under. Intrigued by what she was, the mamba experimented with Missy's humours, mixing them into several distillations. Fearing that she was becoming nothing but a source of materials for the coven, Missy stole the mamba's concoction before fleeing into the night.

Curious, Missy began to study to the mixture, applying her limited alchemical knowledge to the craft of the mortal practitioners. Convinced it couldn't hurt her, Missy drank deep of the fluid and felt it enter her system, energizing her parts and adding to her already-impressive strength. Forgetting about her creator, Missy found a new purpose: perfecting the potion and trying to find an ingredient other than her own Pyros to fuel it.

Empowered, Missy ave up on everything aside from hunting down more sources with which to brew her drug, and maybe someone to bring along for the ride. The whispers of her remaining body parts call to her, and she gave up on the little game her creator left for her. Who cares about the meaning of existence when you can inject meaning into your veins directly? If she ever does catch up with him, she will make something out of him, just as he made something out of her.

Missy's Concoction

Missy's creation, taken from the mamba's base and dilligently tweaked by pure instinct, is a powerful stimulant that infuses the body of the Created, causing her disfigurements to flare much like when empowering a Transmutation.

The concoction is incredibly addictive. Every time the character injects the concoction, the player must roll Resolve + Composure. Failure gives her the Addicted Condition.

Dice Pool: Stamina + Resolve

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The character is deathly ill, gaining the Sick (grave) Tilt for the next 10 - (Stamina + Resolve) hours.

Failure: The character is ill, gaining the Sick (moderate) Tilt for the next 10 - (Stamina + Resolve) hours.

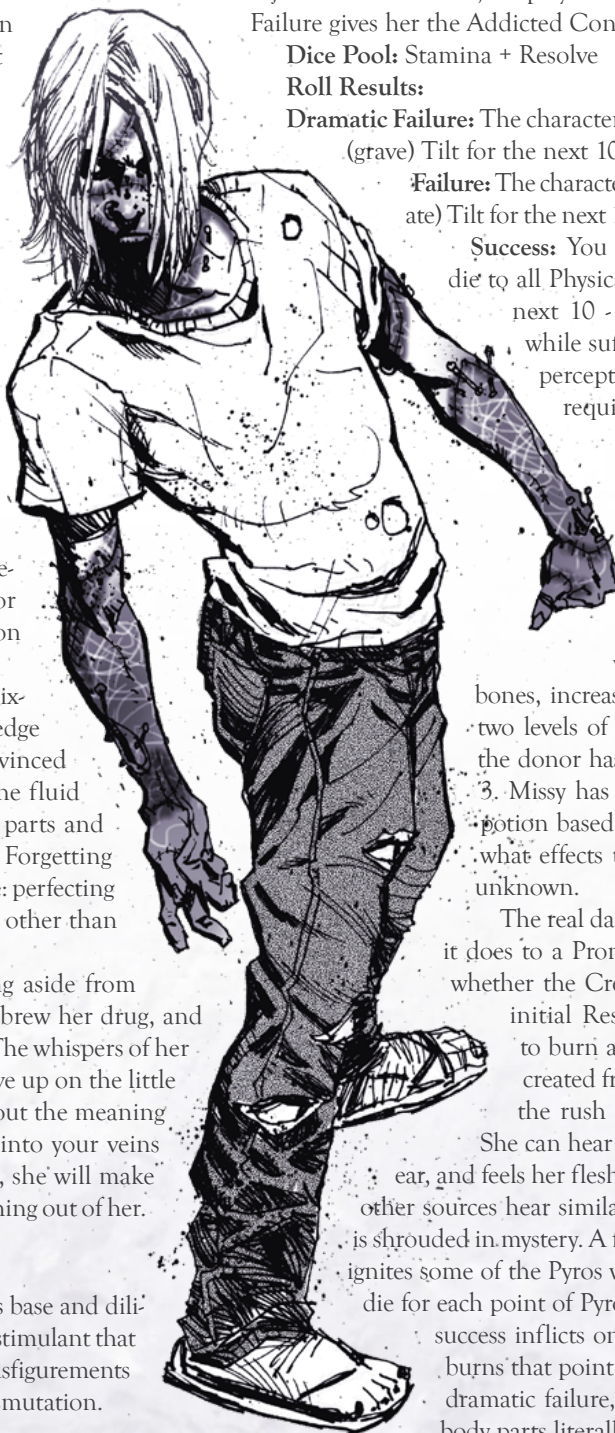
Success: You are empowered, gaining one die to all Physical and Mental actions for the next 10 - (Stamina + Resolve) hours, while suffering a two-die penalty to all perception rolls or to any tasks that require concentration.

Dramatic Success: You are empowered, but suffer no penalties from drinking the concoction.

Versions of the concoction derived from supernatural ingredients, such as vampiric blood or lycanthrope bones, increase the bonus by one for every two levels of the Supernatural Power Trait the donor has, up to a maximum bonus of 3. Missy has yet to create a version of the potion based off Promethean humours, so what effects they might have are currently unknown.

The real danger of the concoction is what it does to a Promethean's body. Regardless of whether the Created fails or succeeds on the initial Resistance roll, her parts begin to burn and come to life. Prometheans created from the bodies of the dead feel the rush of emotions of those people.

She can hear their voices whispering in her ear, and feels her flesh burning. Beings created from other sources hear similar rantings, though the source is shrouded in mystery. A failure on the Resistance check ignites some of the Pyros within the Promethean: Roll a die for each point of Pyros the Promethean has — each success inflicts one point of lethal damage and burns that point of Pyros away. In the case of a dramatic failure, this damage is aggravated, as body parts literally burst into flame.



Description

Missy can't pass for natural these days. While her genitor struggled to make her complete and keep her parts as aesthetically matched as possible, Missy's disregard for her body and lust for her concoction tore that image to shreds. She has dirty blonde hair that is often matted to her head, with piecing blue eyes now bloodshot and sunken. Parts of her pale skin show signs of scorching at the edges, while in some places entire patches of skin are burned away. The lines of stitching that brought her parts together are now blackened and cracked, snaking across her body like dark canyons. She has pierced several of those gaps, using titanium bars to keep the pieces from separating completely, and adding other rings and studs for purely cosmetic effect.

She dresses in anything she can get her hands on, a mix of dirty T-shirts, shredded jeans, and mismatched flip-flops. She is twitchy when approached, often giggling for no reason in the middle of sentences or staring off into space, eyes unfocused and ears perked as if listening to something that simply is not there.

When she sniffs out something that strikes her fancy however, Missy has learned how to manipulate both men and women masterfully, entreating them into hidden alcoves where she can more easily jam a syringe into their brain to extract the precious fluids that fuel her concoction. While high, she drifts from pleasure to pleasure, seeking experiences and giving in to any desire that crosses her mind. Sex, drugs, a bit of blood sport — there is nothing Missy won't do if given the opportunity.

Rumors

"See that chick over there? The little one with the Big Bird T-shirt and the freaky tattoos? She's doing something new. Word is she's found the New Dawn, or...well, she made it. Whatever is in that syringe? She shared it with Marco up in Birmingham last week. He hasn't been the same since, man. He's found the truth, or something. I hear she did the same thing with somebody out in Savannah. Whatever it is she's come up with, it's enlightenment in a needle."

Over the years, Missy has met a few other Prometheans and happily shared a taste of her creation with them. Word of their experiences circulates among the Created of the Gulf Coast, and

everyone wants to know what is in her little miracle syringe that makes things so clear, so obvious. While happy to share, word is that Missy now asks a steep price for instruction in how to create the potion itself — a draw of the humours that animate the Promethean. No one knows if anyone has gone through the process yet, but Created who sample her wares hold her in the same esteem as mortals hold Timothy Leary.

"Came to see me, came to me. Came to take my tears away, came to make me smile all day. She came to me and now I see! We walk away, we walk all day, and now you all can see, it's just Madame Happy Thoughts and me!"

Missy rarely leaves stable people in her wake. Some are left in a permanent fugue, broken by the loss of whatever substance she managed to extract. Others had a sip of her mixture and were left shattered, their minds unable to handle the brief glimpse of true power it brought them. She's earned the nickname Madame Happy Thoughts among the users in town, who will stop at nothing to get another taste.

"That Frankenstein is stealing from the Principle. I mean, she's extracting Pyros into a syringe. And I don't know what the Principle is or does — mysterious ways and all that shit — but it is not gonna end well. There's a price to pay for that kind of hubris."

For every Promethean hooked on Missy's concoction, there's another making side-eyes. Despite rumors of Missy stealing from the Principle though, the concoction doesn't interfere directly with a Created's ability to reach New Dawn. Addiction to the substance can stunt a Promethean's growth in favor of chasing the next high — Missy herself is a case in point — but the concoction in and of itself does not subtract from the Pilgrimage.

Missy Bellingrath

Elpis: Inspiration

Torment: Passion

Lineage: Frankenstein

Refinement: Flux

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Story Hooks

- Missy has killed a few vampires over the last few years, most recently the favored child of a powerful Confederacy-era Daeva. Anyone seeking to gain favor with the elder is invited to deliver her head to him, if they can take it.
- Several of Missy's former customers badly need a fix of her drug, but are so wracked by withdrawal or bliss they can't get to her. A thronemate of the afflicted is seeing to their care, but cannot break away to get them what they need, and sends the characters out to barter with Missy for her wares.
- Missy's genitor returns, disgusted by the being she became but unable to commit himself to putting her down. He entreats the characters to trap his wayward creation. If successful, they are the only thing standing between Missy's destruction, or starting the process of reconciliation between creator and Created.

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Investigation 1, Medicine (Pharmaceuticals) 2, Occult 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Gymnastics) 3, Brawl 1, Firearms 2, Larceny (Pickpocketing) 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Anonymity 2, Moth to the Flame, Parkour 4, Small-Framed, Terrible Disfigurements

Health: 7

Azoth: 3

Pyros/per turn: 12/3

Transmutations: Flux – Blight, Cannibalize; Sensorium – Somatic Humour (fixed)

Willpower: 4

Pilgrimage: 2

Size: 4

Speed: 11

Defense: 5

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

NIVILIN THE LOST

The spirits want that.

Background

Nivilin began his Pilgrimage full of promise as an Ulgan with an exceptional talent for handling wayward spirits. Heartbreak knocked him off his path, and he fell to Flux. His throng covers for him, upholding his reputation as a mentor of Argentum while Nivilin becomes increasingly unhinged and dangerous.

The Yellow Pages

Nivilin worked so hard to make mortals accept him. He listed his number on Craigslist under “spirit exorcist” against the express advice of his throng, even if it got him more harassing phone calls and threats than actual assignments. Even the few clients he had were not particularly grateful. Nivilin would drop everything to help when they called, no matter the hour, but once the spirit was driven off and normalcy restored, they’d inevitably call him a charlatan. At best they accused him of capitalizing on their irrational fears, at worse they claimed he had faked a haunting to swindle them out of money. The Ulgan’s throngmates begged him to move on – abandon Aurum and embrace Argentum, allowing him to use his natural talent at handling spirits without the increasingly painful interaction with mortals. Nivilin paid them no heed, knowing on that deeply instinctual level granted by Divine Fire that he was destined to forge a true and lasting bond with mortals. Spiritualism was a valuable tool to Nivilin, but love was his next milestone.

Dashed Hope

Nivilin’s throng doesn’t know why it ended as it did. Perhaps the Ulgan mistook his own desires for the insight of the Principle. Or maybe he was right, but the milestone simply too steep. Nivilin received another midnight phone call, this one from parents desperate for a cure for their baby girl. The child had been sickly since her birth, nursing only a little and losing weight steadily. A battery of tests and consults with increasingly expensive doctors revealed nothing, and in their desperation her parents turned to

the fringes of science. Now, with the baby at death’s door, they called Nivilin for a spiritual consult. He came immediately, as he always did, and felt darkness the moment he entered the nursery. A spiritual parasite was attached to the girl, leeching her life away to feed whatever dark god the creature served. The spirit was a minor creature though, and no match for Nivilin. He picked the baby up, asked her name – Hope – and drove the parasite off using the Clades Alembic – and then Hope smiled at him. Nivilin looked into those dark brown eyes, saw the little mouth curl upwards, and he felt his milestone upon him. Pyros filled him, bringing him closer to the Divine Principle – and then Hope’s parents snatched her away. They felt the Pyros too, and it terrified them. They cursed Nivilin, calling him a devil worshipper and a pervert, screaming about calling the police. Nivilin’s heart broke as Hope began to cry, and he refused the milestone, for what good was love if it was torn away so easily? The Ulgan returned to his throng fallen from Aurum, and deeply in Torment.

Spirit Master

With the encouragement of his throng, Nivilin embraced Argentum. He delved deeply into the mysteries of the spirit world, learning about the purpose they served and the idiosyncrasies in their behavior. More importantly, he began helping them as he once had mortals. Unlike mortals, the spirits were grateful – unpredictable and selfish, certainly, but grateful to Nivilin for furthering their cause. As word spread about the Created who aided spirits, the Ulgan was besieged by requests for aid from spirits of all ilk. Very happily surprised at being thanked for his work, Nivilin slowly lost himself in this new world. His throng watched in horror as Nivilin’s reasons for delving into the spirit world shifted from exploring Argentum, or indeed *anything* to do with the Pilgrimage, to simply the short-term gratification granted by their admiration and respect. He progressed from serving as a mediator and later a facilitator, to an accomplice as he aided a spirit of fire in burning down a home, and a spirit of drowning in claiming a swimmer at sea. Finally a small, pathetically mewling spirit came to Nivilin. It

had tried — and failed — to kill a mortal more than a decade ago, and now was granted one last chance. Starved for 10 years, the creature was too weak to kill on its own, but with Nivilin's aid it might yet succeed. The Ulgan was not deceived. He was not tricked. In fact, he recognized the spirit immediately. He simply decided he didn't care — love broke him all those years ago, so it seemed only fitting he would in turn break love. Nivilin reattached the parasite to Hope, and the last of his Pilgrimage died alongside her. With nothing left of his Pilgrimage, Nivilin fell to Flux.

Description

Nivilin has no interest in mortals or other Prometheans — even his own throng is an afterthought as he races to the bottom of the Hundred-Handed path. He is not needlessly cruel, but will maim and kill without second thought if it furthers his pursuits.

Nivilin didn't fall to Flux for philosophical reasons or even power. He fell because he abandoned the Great Work, and a Promethean's fire burns too hot to exist without a Refinement. Nivilin defaulted to Centimanus when he stopped being everything else. He behaves mostly as he did before his fall, and continues his work with spirits. He is even so good at maintaining appearances that his throng doesn't yet realize he's dangerous. They've caught on that he fell to Flux — they know him too well *not* to — but they don't grasp the full implications. To them, he's still part of their throng and certainly not one of those *bad* Centimani they've heard about. Nivilin has done nothing to dissuade them of that notion, simply because he doesn't care enough. He has the occasional use for them, as he does for other Prometheans, and feels no compulsion to needlessly antagonize them. Nivilin always takes the easiest path to his goals, whether that means bargaining, lying, or killing.

Nivilin has fully submerged himself in his work with spirits, even experimenting with the Blight Alembic in an effort to burn the material world away. He surrounds himself with spirits, both bound servants and supplicants begging for favor. They constantly whisper to the Promethean, and he pays them more heed than even his own throng. Anyone wanting to deal with Nivilin must first pass these lickspittles and sentries.

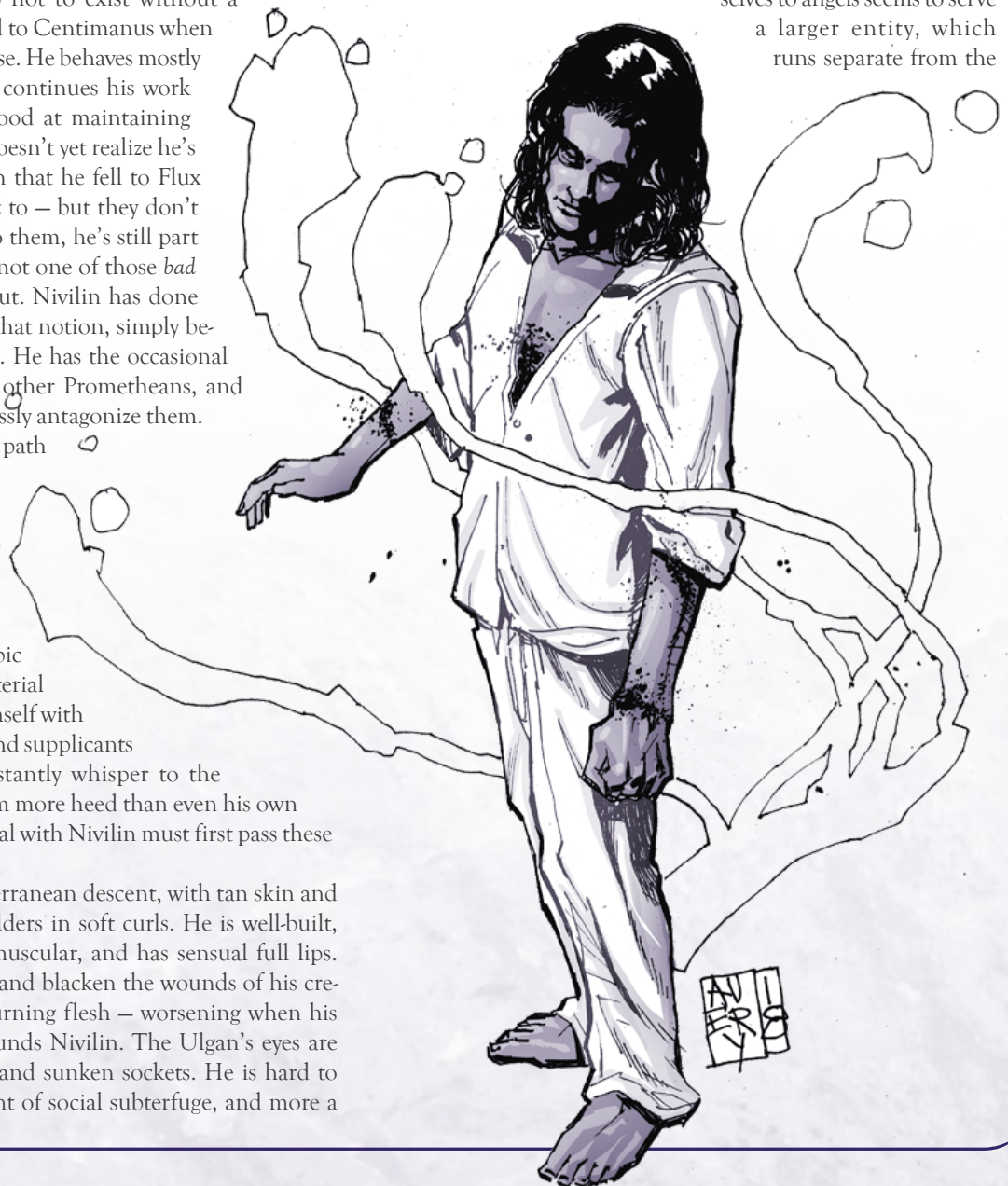
Nivilin's body is of Mediterranean descent, with tan skin and black hair falling to his shoulders in soft curls. He is well-built, neither too thin nor overly muscular, and has sensual full lips. Raw Pyros has begun to char and blacken the wounds of his creation, and a faint smell of burning flesh — worsening when his disfigurements show — surrounds Nivilin. The Ulgan's eyes are black pools set in bloodshot and sunken sockets. He is hard to read — less an accomplishment of social subterfuge, and more a

result of the creation rendering part of his facial muscles useless and expressionless. Nivilin has begun to experiment with body modification in an effort to more closely emulate the spirits, and his skin is adorned with scarification sigils.

Secrets

Hope's shoe came off when her parents tore the baby from Nivilin's arms. He took it home with him, tossed it in a box and shoved it far away. He hasn't opened the box since, but hasn't thrown it away either. Thirteen years after that encounter, and three years after Hope's murder, Nivilin still has the box. He claims not to care — and indeed *believes* he doesn't — but would go through great lengths to get it back if it was stolen. The shoe could serve as a reminder of the love Nivilin once felt, in an attempt to return him to the Pilgrimage.

Nivilin has come across a vast and alien conspiracy in his exploration of the spirit world. A network of spirits likening themselves to angels seems to serve a larger entity, which runs separate from the



Principle. The sheer vastness of the conspiracy both terrifies and fascinates Nivilin, and he is torn between staying far away and cautiously examining it. He hasn't shared his findings with anyone, as he worries doing so will draw the angels' attention.

Nivilin is ruthlessly efficient in seeking knowledge of the spirits and furthering their needs. As his obsession started well before his fall three years ago, he's had quite some time to rake up a body count. By now he has murdered — either actively, or as an accomplice to a spirit — 13 mortals and 2 Created. He keeps the latter from his throng, rightfully believing they'll finally attempt to stop him if they find out.

Rumors

"You should seek out Nivilin as your Argentum mentor! He knows everything about Silver."

Nivilin practiced Argentum before falling to Flux and knows all its facets. Nivilin's fall only deepened his obsession, and he prioritizes the spirit world over all other matters — including reaching New Dawn and serving Flux. His throng also pretends he's still a Mystic, as they don't see the danger in him and hope continued contact with other Prometheans will lead him back to the Pilgrimage.

"Stay far from that Ulgan! A Frankenstein friend of mine sought him out, and that's the last I heard of her."

Despite his throng's efforts at a cover-up, word is starting to leak that Nivilin isn't safe. The last Promethean he killed, specifically, left a trail the Centimanus did not foresee. Ella the Unburnt didn't have a throng, but she was active in a small online community of Created, and she let them know she was meeting Nivilin before she disappeared. Nivilin murdered Ella to reclaim and bury her heart, which belonged to a restless spirit of the dead.

"The house is a bargain at that price! And don't worry about the haunting; I found this guy on the internet..."

Nivilin remains active as a spirit worker, though he no longer seeks mere knowledge of the spirit world nor takes the mortals'

side in hauntings: He now aids the spirits. He craves the gratitude and admiration mortals always withheld, but which spirits give so abundantly when he aids them.

Nivilin

Elpis: Love

Torment: Dejection

Lineage: Ulgan

Refinement: Flux

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Spirits) 4, Science (Fringe Science) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation (Spirit Bargains) 3, Persuasion (Spirit Bargains) 3

Merits: Contacts (Spirit Mediums), Iron Will, Library (Occult) 3, Repute (Argentum master) 1, Safe Space (under a school) 3, Sleepless

Health: 8

Azoth: 6

Pyros/per turn: 20/6

Transmutations: Flux — Blight, Mutation; Spiritus — Veritas (fixed)

Willpower: 7

Pilgrimage: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 4

Initiative: 5

Armor: 2 (Persistent Mutation)

Story Hooks

- One of the characters is haunted by a spirit, and a mutual acquaintance advises she seek out Nivilin for help. The Ulgan proposes a bargain: He will ensure the spirit no longer bothers the Promethean, if she and her throng perform a task for one of Nivilin's other spirit supplicants. They need to sabotage a local power plant, which is easily done but will disrupt the lives of thousands of people living and working in nearby buildings.
- Nivilin's throng believes it's time for him to work through his grief and return to the Pilgrimage. As he is distinctly not interested, they seek out the characters to push the Ulgan beyond his breaking point and onto Stannum. They know where Nivilin has his hovel, and recommend covertly searching the place for leads with which to start (uncovering Hope's shoe in a search). In return they offer the location of an Athanor, but fail to mention their throngmate is a Centimanus. They insist the characters not kill Nivilin.
- Nivilin is sabotaging the life of a mortal named Taisha at behest of a spirit. The young woman, a barista living paycheck to paycheck, was always friendly to the characters in their admittedly brief interactions with her. She has no immediate family or dependents, though her friends would grieve her if she were gone. If any of the characters are on Aurum or Aes, helping Taisha could further their Pilgrimage.

ROSLYNN THE MANY-VOICED

Stop. Pushing. Me!

Background

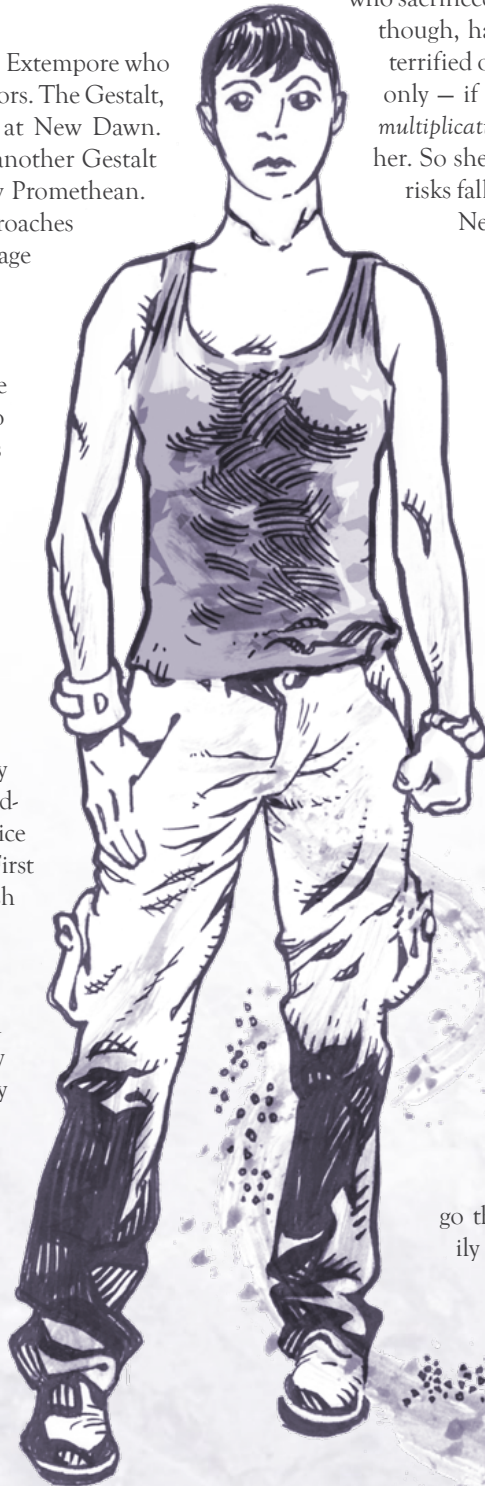
Roslynn is the only one of her kind, an Extempore who can trace her ancestry back to a line of creators. The Gestalt, as the line refers to itself, get one shot at New Dawn. The only recourse if they fail is to create another Gestalt and pour all their memories into the new Promethean. After six such cycles, Roslynn finally approaches New Dawn – and the end of the Pilgrimage terrifies her.

Beginnings

The voices of her predecessors rattle around in Roslynn’s brain. They have no name – they are Roslynn as much as she is – though they’ve kept some of their distinct personalities. Roslynn’s creator speaks to her in a soft alto voice which she guesses to be male-inclined. She never met him or any other Gestalt, as Pyros consumes their bodies after the milestone of *multiplicatio*. The creator is hesitant and gentle, ever apologizing for the hard destiny he heaped on Roslynn by creating her. The loudest voice in Roslynn’s mind, shrill and relentless by contrast, continually demands she push harder to reach New Dawn – she suspects this voice is the Fourth. Roslynn has only heard the First speak once, in a soft and flat voice: “Finish it.” This is her duty, the sole purpose of Roslynn’s existence: to finish the Pilgrimage the First started. Calling on the experiences of her predecessors, Roslynn rushed through Refinements with astounding ease and rarely interacted with other Prometheans. She only ever failed at Cuprum – as all Gestalt did, discovering that a singular self does not exist for her kind.

Middle

Roslynn’s predecessors push her relentlessly. They implore her to wrap up their unfinished business, and tell her she is the one who will finally see them across the line to mortality. Redemption isn’t just for herself, but for the six Gestalt



who sacrificed themselves so she could exist now. Roslynn though, has finally cracked under the pressure and is terrified of New Dawn. She knows she will get *one* shot only – if she fails, she must destroy herself through *multiplicatio* or all the Gestalt’s aspirations fail with her. So she stalls and drags her feet – not so badly she risks falling from her Pilgrimage, but enough to keep New Dawn at the horizon. After all, she can’t fail a shot she never takes. Unfortunately for her, after six failed attempts the Gestalt has gotten very good at the Pilgrimage. Roslynn went through milestones almost as easily as she did Refinements, as if Pilgrimage were passed on from one Gestalt to another. She feels the end of her Pilgrimage approach despite her trepidations, and she has come up with a desperate plan to deal with it.

Endings

Having dragged her feet so long, Roslynn actually saw another Created accomplish New Dawn despite the Gestalt being mostly solitary. She felt Azoth transform him, felt his slight hesitation – the first signs of Disquiet – as he hugged her in jubilation afterward. The experience of knowing New Dawn wasn’t just a myth should have left Roslynn invigorated, but it only reinforced her fears: What if the Gestalt hasn’t managed it yet, because it simply wasn’t possible *for them*? Roslynn knows she and her predecessors are unlike other Created, so perhaps the Pilgrimage simply doesn’t work for them as it should.

Maybe the Gestalt is fundamentally broken, and the same traits that let her go through Refinements and milestones so easily blocks her from reaching the Pilgrimage’s end. That would mean the Gestalt’s quest is impossible and there’s no sense in Roslynn continuing – she can’t reach New

Dawn, but neither could her child if she created one. So instead, she devised a different plan fueled by the knowledge that other Prometheans *can* reach Redemption.

Calling on the vast knowledge the Gestalt accumulated on the Pilgrimage, Roslynn seeks a Promethean whose essence is compatible with hers. She isn't entirely certain what that entails, but she believes she'll know when she sees him. Having studied and disregarded three potential targets only bolstered her beliefs; if she can recognize the "wrong" Promethean, she should also recognize the right. She plans to offer her services — and all the knowledge of the Gestalt — in furthering his Pilgrimage when she finds him. Redemption won't be just for him though, as she intends to sacrifice herself *and him* as New Dawn is upon him to create a new Gestalt made of his flesh and her essence, who should in its very moment of creation simultaneously be Redeemed. Roslynn's scheme relies on her target's Redemption to carry *both* of their essences, combined in a new Gestalt, across the threshold. It never occurs to her she might accomplish the opposite, and anchor both of them on the wrong side of New Dawn.

Description

The Gestalt is a solitary creature by nature, but Roslynn forces herself to be more social since concocting her great plan for Redemption. Compatibility, she believes, isn't just a matter of flesh and Pyros, but also of personality. It wasn't until she sat down to talk to her last target that she realized his Pilgrimage (and therefore presumably his New Dawn) was wholly incompatible with hers. She now practices her social skills on mortals so she'll be prepared when she finds a Promethean target. Roslynn isn't very good at it — she's brusque to the point of being terrifying, though she has gotten better at hiding her intentions. Her mind broke under the pressure leveraged on her by her predecessors, and she is desperate above all to end the Pilgrimage. At times of duress and Torment, Roslynn expresses personality traits from the Gestalt's previous cycles, making her even more unpredictable and dangerous.

Roslynn's body is of Middle-Eastern descent, with thick, dark hair that she's cut from its original long braid to a pixie. She is tall and well-muscled, with calloused fists and a crooked nose from her days as a mortal MMA fighter. Her throat still shows the red line of her creator's cut when he felt she was ready to become Gestalt. Roslynn's body sheds desert sand when in the throes of Torment, a deformity passed down to all Gestalt. Her coarse facial features sometimes see her mistaken for a boy, which Roslynn doesn't mind as she only chose a female identity because it seemed easier to match her assigned gender. She has startling green eyes, which capture exceptionally well on camera.

Secrets

The Gestalt's fifth cycle fell to Flux, before the First took over and forced him to sacrifice himself to create the Sixth, who was Roslynn's creator, in an effort to get their Pilgrimage back on track. The Fifth created a Pandoran in his brief stint as Centimanus, and the creature — a *sublimatus* calling himself the Silent — hunted both Roslynn's creator and now her. Roslynn has no idea what to do about him and worries other Prometheans will judge her for the sins of her predecessor.

Roslynn drove another Promethean to commit murder while he was on Cuprum, convinced that committing the ultimate human sin would bring him closer to New Dawn (and allow her to merge with him as he did). He was overcome with remorse when he switched back to Aurum later, and destroyed himself. Roslynn never told anyone, believing no one would let her near their Pilgrimage — and her goal — again.

Rumors

"Roslynn's a Matchless with a lineage, if you believe such a thing can exist. Hails from Iraq, if the stories hold."

The First Gestalt was a Kuwaiti soldier fighting in the first Gulf War. When the desert exploded around her and she and her unit lay dying, the collective outcry of their spirits called to the Divine Fire. She rose an Extempore of Pyros and sand. Desperate to end the Pilgrimage, the First has quietly guided Roslynn to her new and risky attempt at New Dawn. If Roslynn's attempt botches, or other Prometheans stop her, the First will coax every new Gestalt (so long as the lineage survives) to greater risks.

"Matchless indeed — I've never seen anyone go through the Pilgrimage so quickly. Wonder what her secret is."

The Gestalt's previous cycles double as Athanors embedded in Roslynn's Azoth, each serving as either a Pilgrimage Marker or Refinement Mentor. Roslynn can even finish their unresolved milestones as if they were her own. If another Promethean were to rip out and consume all of Roslynn's Vitriol, he would kill her and gain the Athanors for himself.

"The Many-Voiced? Yeah I've met him — created a goddamn desert in Músil."

The Gestalt's Wasteland is marked by a continual flow of desert sand. No wall can keep the sand out, leaving mortals to discover it in their beds, food, and drink alike. Sounds of battle rise on the wind as the Wasteland festers — explosions, screams, and the moans of the dying. Mortals are eventually forced to evacuate, lest they go mad from the sounds of the dying or drown in showers of sand. So far, no Gestalt has ever triggered a Firestorm.

Roslynn

Elpis: Drive

Torment: Methodical

Lineage: Extempore

Refinement: Argentum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult (Pilgrimage, Pyros) 4, Science (Pathology) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Efficient Conductor, Interdisciplinary Specialty (Pilgrimage), Mentor (Gestalt) 5, Residual Memory (Firearms, Drive) 2

Story Hooks

- One of Roslynn's voices recognizes a Promethean character from their cycle. Believing this must be the Divine Principle at work, Roslynn seeks the character out as a mentor. She is very adamant, and won't leave until the character has taught her a new complex Refinement, or guided her to her next milestone. If he can't, she instead comes to believe he is the Promethean with whom she must merge and offers to aid him on his Pilgrimage.
- Roslynn seeks out one of the characters, who is incompatible with her plan, to practice her social skills. She eventually confesses her plan to him and asks for his advice. One day, Roslynn appears radically changed. She wants to undergo New Dawn traditionally, and abruptly switches to a new Refinement to further her Pilgrimage (possibly asking the character to be her mentor). In reality, the Second grew so fearful Roslynn's plan would destroy them all, he pushed her aside as dominant personality. Even Roslynn's Azothic radiance shifted slightly. Once the character realizes Roslynn's personality was replaced (and the clues are plentiful) he must decide whether to coach her back or leave the more traditionally-minded Gestalt in place.
- The characters feel the sudden call of a Sanctuary Athanor and arrive to find the place – a small sub-basement apartment – vacant. A few hours after this find, Roslynn arrives. She claims the Sanctuary was left by her creator (true), specifically intended for her (an assumption on her part), and activated when she entered the area (also true). The Gestalt demands the characters vacate the Sanctuary and leave it to her. Unfortunately the Sanctuary's call also drew a pack of Pandorans, and anyone outside is at risk.

Health: 9

Azoth: 6

Pyros/per turn: 20/6

Transmutations: Sensorium – Vitreous Humour, Stereo Humour; Spiritus – Clades, Clupeum

Willpower: 8

Pilgrimage: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 4

Initiative: 5

Armor: 0

THE REMNANT: UTLEY

Quit your crying. You've got all the time in the world to try again.

Background

Mankind compartmentalizes history into small, easy-to-digest periods of time. This works in broad strokes; the First Great Awakening is a vastly different time in history than The Great Depression. In reality, history isn't so easily segmented. Years flow into each other, and pieces of old ages remain.

The same is true for Lineages. The world moves on, but the Created left behind do not vanish as legend claims. Utley is one of the last of the Hollow, a Lineage formed from the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Left to wander the Earth with little hope of a New Dawn, he has resorted to desperate methods in hopes of achieving humanity.

From the Dust

Utley doesn't remember the exact time of his creation, but his tales of early wanderings place the event sometime in the early summer of 1939, near the end of the Dust Bowl. He came to life alone in the middle of a dust storm, with the taste of water and blood mixed in his mouth. When the dust settled, he met

Harley, his genitor, and the throng that accompanied him. They confirmed what the Azoth in his body whispered to him, that he was not quite human and would need to a Pilgrimage to become one. The throng dubbed him "Utley," after seeing a broken sign for the town nearby: Utleyville, Colorado.

The throng made their living as bandits, robbing anyone who traveled the country roads. Hartley was the brains of the operation, but creating Utley was the final milestone he needed to reach his New Dawn. Utley was the only witness to the event. The sight of desiccated flesh become whole and healthy is one he will never forget.

The problems began there. The now-human Hartley had a memory full of holes, and the throng soon abandoned him. As Hartley's offspring, Utley was expected to pick up the slack. He couldn't do it. While he was great at carrying out Harley's plans, he had no talent for planning robberies. The throng planned to abandon him as well. When he overheard their plans, he decided to become human then and there.

This was a terrible mistake.

The Unending Storm

On an early fall night, Utley attempted to force himself into being a human. The throng berated him for another botched theft, and in a moment of passion he did as his genitor had done when attempting the New Dawn: he ripped open his chest to release the alchemical fire within. Instead of a fire, powerful winds blew from his chest. The camp was consumed in an intense dust storm. Utley's hunger grew so painful that he fell upon his throngmates in cannibalistic fury. He tasted Vitriol for the first time and relished the flavor.

Utley came out of his Torment alone and starving. He buried the corpses of his fellows and set off to complete his Great Work.

In the 78 years since, he has not succeeded.

Description

Utley is a gaunt man who appears to be in his early 20s. His tawny beige skin is stretched tight over his bones, and his lips are severely chapped. Despite the dense cataracts in his eyes, he can see perfectly well. He often takes advantage of this and pretends to be blind in order to lull targets into a false sense of security. He has worn the same white button-up shirt and pair of blue jeans since his creation. By now, they have many visible signs of repair.

He prefers simplicity in talk and action, and has no patience for flowery language. Utley tries to keep a sense of stoicism about him and bottles up his emotions. These emotions tend to come out violently and all at once. When it happens, he lashes out at anyone within arm's reach.

Like his entire Lineage, Utley is ruled by his hunger and desires food, safety, and pleasure. However, the nearly eight decades of his existence sublimated his hunger into something far more spiritual: achieving the New Dawn. He knows it is real, he saw it happen, but even with the guidance of Azothic memory, he cannot figure out how to succeed. Instead, he attempts to shortcut the process with ill-informed, elaborate, and often dangerous methods, like eating the heart of someone rumored to be a redeemed Promethean, or stealing an Alchemist's immortality process for himself. If he is in a throng, he pushes his throngmates toward helping him with his schemes.

Despite his shrinking window of opportunity, Utley is quite proud of his age. He's seen most of the previous century and met quite a few of the Created in his travels. It is possible that a pilgrim mark placed on an old property was carved by Utley himself, a fact that he likes to point out to his companions. He holds a number of Rambles in his head, and can recite them from memory. He

takes great care in presenting his own Ramble, and reciting his life story can take hours.

Secrets

Utley is a reaper, a serial performer of lacuna. When he is in Torment, it is the only thing that makes him feel full, if only for a moment. When he is not in Torment, he still takes opportunities to steal Vitriol, believing that gorging on enough of the fluid could trigger a New Dawn.

He is incapable of creating progeny. He knows how to create another Hollow and materials for doing so abound, yet he fails every time. As far as he knows, he is the last of the Hollow.

Utley can feel himself dying. His Azoth cools from time to time, and the sensation manifests in his body as intense chills. Each passing year, the chills become more frequent. He doesn't know how much time he has left, but he knows he needs to reach New Dawn soon.

Rumors

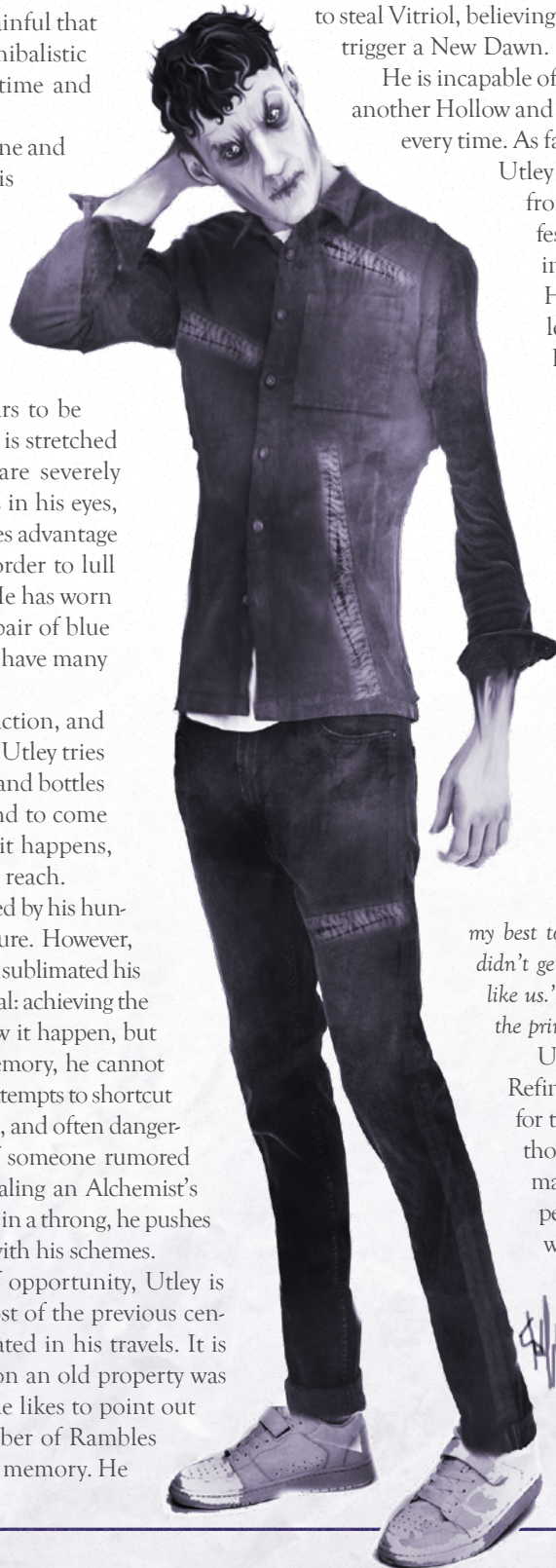
"I worry about him. Rage ain't good for us. Let it fester long enough and it'll make you Wretched. With how long he's been around, it's only a matter of time before he takes up Flux."

Against all odds, Utley never became a Centimanus. In fact, he despises the Hundred-Handed with a passion. Seeing them reject something denied to him sends him into a fury, and he'll jump into a fight with one without hesitation. That some Created are willing to look away if he performs a lacuna on one before he kills them is an added bonus.

"Utley isn't ready to become a Mystic. I tried my best to explain what I do, and he told me that he didn't get why I spent so much time around 'monsters like us.' I don't think he'll ever want to step outside of the primal emotions."

Utley has only spent time in the five Basic Refinements for all of his existence. His disdain for the Complex Refinements is well-known to those close to him. He claims that they don't matter to "real living" and that if he is to depend on the Refinements to survive, he'll stick with those that get what he sees as results.

"Did he tell you that he's 'the last Hollow?' I've got a pen pal in Mongolia and she's been telling me about someone just like him there. Just as old, but way less of an asshole. I haven't told him yet. I don't know if he'd go out looking for them or just fall into Torment."



Story Hooks

- A devious *sublimatus* stalks the throng. Utley offers his services to slay the creature. He's useful, but quickly puts himself at odds with some of the throng, and gazes at others with hungry eyes. Sometimes an ally can be far worse than an enemy.
- Utley has never been good at planning, but his latest scheme is an elaborate one: Manipulate an alchemist into working with too much Pyros, triggering the mysterious Dirae Firestorm, whose energies he will harness to become human. All he needs is a close source of Pyros, which just so happens to be the throng.
- After years of antagonizing the throng, Utley reaches out to them one last time with a message: his flame will soon burn out. He asks the throng to escort him to Utleyville, the town of his birth, where he may die in peace. Is he lying? If not, can the throng find reconciliation with an awful man at death's door? Will they even want to?

The Hollow may be a Lineage lost to time, but Utley is not the last of his kind. After the Dust Bowl ended, Hollows who did not become human left North America in search of arid climates where they might survive. As the Lineage draws to a close, some who still remain return to the land of their birth before permanently dying.

Utley

Elpis: Courage

Torment: Obsession

Lineage: Hollow

Refinement: Stannum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Medicine 2, Occult (Urban Legends) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Sprinting) 4, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Survival 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Dogs) 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Hiding Emotions) 2

Merits: Acid Stomach, Anonymity, Direction Sense, Driven 2, Efficient Conductor, Eidetic Memory, Iron Will, Moth to the Flame, Repute 3, Sleight of Hand, Vivid Dreams 2, Weatherproof

Health: 8

Azoth: 8

Pyros/per turn: 40/8

Transmutations: Corporeum – Zephyrus (fixed); Deception – Stalker (fixed); Disquietism – Externalize, Internalize, Redirect (fixed), Weaponize; Electrification – Arc (fixed), Imperatus, Machinus, Oscillatus; Mesmerism – Eros (fixed); Metamorphosis – Aptare (fixed); Saturninus – Heed the Call (fixed); Sensorium – Somatic Humour (fixed); Vitality – Unfettered (fixed)

Willpower: 6

Pilgrimage: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 6

Initiative: 4

Armor: 0

Hollow: The Beggars

The progeny of Ismael Hawker, the Hollow was a Lineage that originated in the American and Canadian prairies of the 1930s. Hollows were created by dehydrating a corpse and anointing it with dust. A drop of water on the lips completed the process, and instilled an endless hunger and thirst in the Promethean. This hunger was spiritual and physical, but manifested itself as a singular craving. Their humour was both of a sanguine and melancholic nature, a mixture of blood and black bile.

When a Hollow was in Torment, they were driven to glut themselves on their cravings and violently opposed anyone who attempted to stop them. Once they gorged on their craving, they fell into a deep depression and sought isolation. Until their Torment ended, the cycle repeated.

Once the Dust Bowl came to an end, it became impossible to make another Hollow, eliminating a common method of *multiplicato* for the Lineage. Today, few remain in the world and even fewer remain in the United States or Canada. The Lineage will become extinct at the end of 2039, save for the very few who had their lifespan reset by dying and returning from the Underworld.

The following Bestowments are available to Prometheans of the Hollow Lineage. Utley has the Bloody Feast Bestowment. More information on the Hollow can be found in "A Handful of Dust" from **Chronicles of Darkness: Dark Eras**.

Bloody Feast: Even violence can be its own kind of sustenance. Once per scene, the Hollow may choose to not suffer damage after a successful attack, and convert the damage directly into Pyros. If the Hollow is at maximum Pyros, or if an amount of damage remains after reaching maximum Pyros, the damage is instead converted into Willpower. At the end of the scene, the Hollow suffers the accumulated damage.

Vice Eater: A Hollow's hunger is so powerful that it can infect others and strengthen their desires, impairing their judgement. When a Hollow knows her subject's Vice, Torment, or other kind of temptation and attempts to socially manipulate the subject using the temptation, the Hollow achieves an exceptional success to open the subject's Doors with three successes instead of five.

VACHELLIA OFFERING SHADE AND THORNS

That must hurt. Here, let me help you.

Background

Vachellia is the only one of zir throng not yet Redeemed or destroyed. Loneliness threatens to consume the Galateid, and zie is too afraid to approach other Prometheans openly, believing they'll scorn zir for pursuing New Dawn for so long and still not achieving it. Instead, zie manipulates them into dangerous situations and sets them up for failure — hoping zie can swoop in to save the day, impress them with zir skills, and join a new throng.

Last One Standing

Vachellia remained true to the last as zie guided Oracle, zir Tammuz throngmate, to his Redemption. When he looked at zir with beautiful blank eyes and a wide smile, Vachellia knew he no longer remembered zir. Still, zie kept zir own smile plastered on zir face as Oracle — now Daronté — abandoned zir to join his new, mortal family. Zie didn't cry until he was out of sight, mourning not only the loss of Oracle but of zir entire throng. Vachellia still recites their names daily, clinging to their memory as if that somehow makes zir less alone.

Surviving the Fury

Reasoning zie would learn from zir loneliness after Oracle's Redemption, Vachellia tried to follow the Refinement of Self. The Galateid was — and remains — a social creature at heart though, and Copper came neither naturally nor easily. Vachellia's mood swung wildly between rebuking others before they could leave zir and desperately clinging to them in a renunciation of zir Refinement, and zir loneliness grew to Torment. Vachellia kept reciting zir list of names though, determined not to dishonor the memory of zir throng. In zir darkest hour, zie adopted the Refinement of Tin rather than abandon the Pilgrimage entirely.

Vachellia was a willfully cruel Fury, using zir natural gifts to manipulate people into reenacting zir own loneliness. Zie poisoned family members, lifelong friends, and lovers against each other to see how they coped with abandonment. Finally, the Galateid tried to sabotage a couple brought together by another Galateid named Stellaris. Stellaris had already moved on from the Refinement of Gold, during which she encouraged a mortal friend out of the closet and into a same-sex relationship as part of her Pilgrimage, but she still cared for the couple. Rather than let Vachellia break them apart, she stepped in and tried to teach the Galateid to examine and confront zir pain — guiding zir onto Cobalus.

Catharsis by Proxy

Vachellia became a diligent student of Cobalus, hoping Stellaris would invite zir to join her throng, even while zie put zir own

take on the Refinement. Vachellia didn't just explore zir own weaknesses, but — in the same outward-focused approach zie had to Stannum — also those of others. Zie tested the weaknesses of mortals around zir, pushing them beyond their comfort zone so they might rise, or fall to the occasion. When Stellaris had taught Vachellia all she could and, perhaps recognizing the toxic manipulation the Galateid habitually practiced, left, Vachellia was an expert in Cobalus-by-proxy. Zie remains desperate to join a new throng, and seeks out Prometheans to include in zir approach of Cobalus. Zie tells zirself zie does it to help them become stronger in their Pilgrimage, like zie once did for Oracle. If that were true though, Vachellia would be a practitioner of Aes rather than Cobalus. Vachellia remains firmly on the Refinement of Impurity because zie hopes one day a Promethean *won't* be able to surpass the obstacles zie throws in his way — allowing Vachellia to swoop in and save him and, finally, be invited to a new throng.

Description

Vachellia was created to love and be loved, and zir social skills are superb. Loneliness and — even worse — the fear and desperation at the thought of remaining alone forever, have worn zir empathy down to near-nothing though. Zie willfully endangers others, all the while telling zirself zie's helping them.

Social interaction comes naturally to Vachellia. Zie can smile, laugh, and even cry on cue, never letting on that zie is mimicking emotions rather than feeling them. Vachellia believes zie has mastered Cobalus and is unafraid to admit to zir own weaknesses — in reality, zie remains blind to zir all-consuming drive to gain a new throng. When Vachellia sets other mortals and Prometheans up for danger, zie genuinely believes zie is helping them to become better, stronger versions of themselves. This blindness makes zir dangerous — even if a throng did adopt zir, thus fulfilling zir most fervent wish, Vachellia would continue to endanger them, lest they believe themselves safe without zir and abandon zir again.

Vachellia is a master of the subtle put-down, masking criticism as concern to undermine zir target's confidence and independence. A Promethean mentor willing to deal with Vachellia's toxicity might be able to coax zir to confront zir blindness of self, and possibly move zir from Cobalus-by-proxy to a more honest practice (or even Aes). Doing so would help Vachellia find zir empathy again, and make zir a dedicated throng member like zie once was to Oracle.

Vachellia is androgynous with ebony skin and closely cropped black curls. Zir body died of a heart attack, leaving it perfect and unmarred. Zir creator, Ximena, specifically chose zir body for its physical appeal, hoping it would ease her child's interaction with mortals. The fingers of Vachellia's right hand are scarred white

from a Pandoran attack, which ended in the self-sacrifice and destruction of zir then-throngmate Ricardo, but even this looks like a cosmetic enhancement rather than a disfigurement. Vachellia moves with an easy, innate grace, though zir clenched jaw reveals a constant state of tension. Zir eyes dart to and fro as zie considers every possible angle, every opportunity to push others into danger and practice Cobalus. When Vachellia is in the throes of Torment or flares zir Promethean disfigurements, zir skin hardens and zir movements slow, until zie appears sculpted from perfect, dark stone. Zir eyes remain moving though, desperately seeking a target onto which to transfer zir fear.

Secrets

Ricardo, Vachellia's erstwhile throngmate, did not sacrifice himself — Vachellia abandoned him to his death. As a pack of Pandorans closed in on the six members of their throng, Ricardo fought to hold them off. Vachellia, the only one looking back at that point, saw the Osiran fall under the abominations' claws and raise his hands in a plea for help. Zie knew zie had a choice: alert zir throng to go back, risking all their lives, or pretend Ricardo had willingly sacrificed himself. Zie chose the latter, urging zir throng to escape lest Ricardo's sacrifice was for naught. Vachellia is torn between hope and fear Ricardo will return from his journey to the Underworld — this would expose Vachellia's crime, yet also bring back someone zie genuinely loved.

Vachellia led another Promethean, a young Ulgan whose name zie doesn't even know, to her fall. Zie meticulously sabotaged all progress the Ulgan made — knocking down mortals after the Ulgan helped them, revealing her location to an angry mob when the Promethean was trying to escape in the wild, and destroying an Athanor before the Ulgan could glean its secrets. Vachellia's goal was to separate the Ulgan from her throng, believing they had failed to help her, and drive her into the Galateid's comforting arms. Instead, it led the Ulgan to give up to on the Pilgrimage entirely and fall to Flux. The Ulgan's throng has since realized someone sabotaged her,

and they're dedicated to finding the culprit as much as they are to bringing their now-Centimanus companion back to the Pilgrimage.

Rumors

"Vachellia is a catalyst, that last push you need on your Pilgrimage. Go to zir when you near Redemption and zie'll guide you to the other side."

Redemption is rare and Vachellia is quite famous for helping Oracle achieve his. That was then though — when Vachellia was younger, more open and less hurt. Zie retains the seed of insight that allows zir to recognize what the next, or possibly even last, step on a Promethean's Pilgrimage should be. As it is though, that spark is buried and useless beneath layers of pain and loneliness.

"They lost the Pilgrimage a long time ago — fell into Stannum and hasn't moved since. Vachellia's calcified."

Vachellia actually made it out of Stannum, with Stellaris' help, but indeed calcified on Cobalus. Zie settled into the role of Provocateur early on, pushing people's buttons to make their situation increasingly worse, and hasn't moved from it since. Vachellia risks zir Pilgrimage if zie doesn't adopt a new Refinement, or at the very least another Cobalus role, soon.

"Stay away from Vachellia. Zie's a magnet for back luck."

Vachellia isn't simply a magnet for bad luck; zie causes it. Mortals have lost jobs, friends, and family because of Vachellia's manipulations — one of them even committed suicide. At least one Promethean fell from the Pilgrimage to Flux after Vachellia's continual sabotage. This is not Vachellia's intent — zie merely wants them to fail, so zie can pick them up and become their fast friend — but it is the outcome.

Vachellia

Elpis: Sorrow

Torment: Alienated

Lineage: Galateid

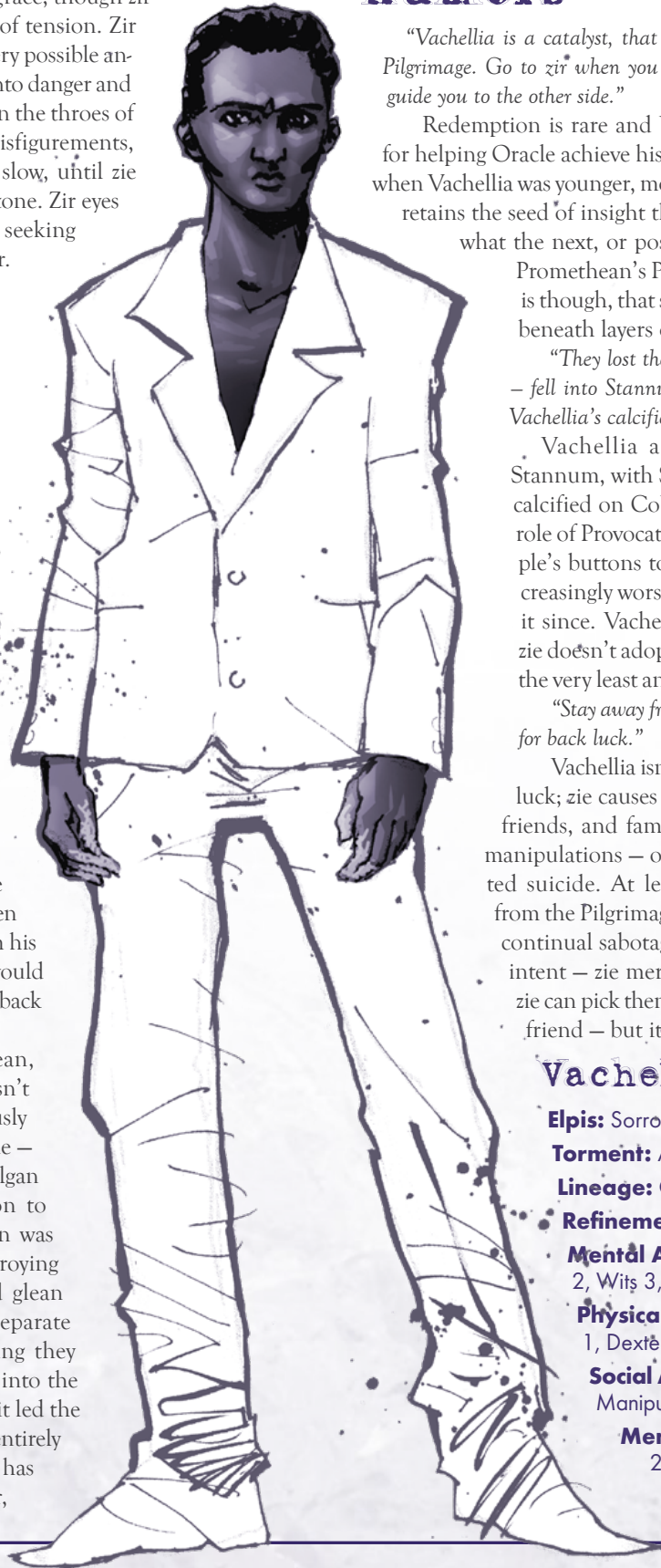
Refinement: Cobalus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 3, Politics 2



Story Hooks

- Vachellia works as a grief counselor, and zir client is a mortal who – rightly or affected by Disquiet – believes one of the characters hurt him. Rather than help him work through his pain, Vachellia recognizes the taint of Disquiet and fans the emotion to set up a confrontation between the mortal and the Promethean. When the mortal and his friends finally come for the character, Vachellia is right there to save zir fellow Created.
- One of the characters aids a mortal as part of her Pilgrimage, when she finds her progress stalled. For every accomplishment the mortal makes, he suffers a setback later. Vachellia latched onto him as target for zir Cobalus, though at this point zie remains unaware of the character's opposing involvement. If the character investigates and follows through quickly, she can set the stage for a confrontation with Vachellia on her own terms.
- The characters find the place of Oracle's Redemption, where Vachellia's grief has coalesced into a Jovian Athanor. To resolve the Athanor they must find Vachellia and help zir genuinely confront zir fear of abandonment, and move away from Cobalus in the process. Vachellia is focused on joining the throng rather than working through zir issues, though, and this would only provide a balm rather than a cure.

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth (Quietly Watching) 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Uncovering Weaknesses) 4, Expression 2, Persuasion (Inspire Trust) 4, Socialize 4, Subterfuge (Hiding Intentions) 4

Merits: Area of Expertise (Persuasion – Inspire Trust), Repute (Oracle's Redemption) 3, Trained Observer 1

Health: 7

Azoth: 4

Pyros/per turn: 13/4

Transmutations: Contamination – Indulgence; Mesmerism – Penthos

Willpower: 6

Pilgrimage: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 5

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

HARNESSING CHAOS: NEW FLUX ALEMBICS

The Centimanus is constantly experimenting, driving herself to new extremes. She sees the power of other Prometheans and Pandorans, and feels she is owed them, too. She senses the potential of Pyros and seeks to control it. She doesn't put in the work, her altered internal refinery *couldn't* even if she wanted to, but simply steals the accomplishments of others and creates a mockery of the Divine Fire. The section adds two more tricks to the Centimanus' arsenal: Cannibalize and Unleash.

Cannibalize

The power of Flux is limitless, eternal, and vast as the sky itself, yet hidden within the confines of a crack in the ceiling only the Centimani have the clarity to find. It is this contradiction in Flux that leads many Freaks to eventually abandon it, yet the true Centimanus who sees *through* the crack and beyond the lie knows those errant fools were simply not ready to see Flux for what it truly is. The devout Freak spends years preparing her mind and body for

the rigors of true enlightenment. Flux also provides, however, for those that don't have that sort of time. With a bit of due diligence and a suppressed gag reflex, a Freak can consume the strengths of others to prepare herself for the trials to come. Mortal and supernal creatures alike all become a feast for the ravenous Freak.

Persistent: The jaws of the Centimanus are incredibly strong, inflicting an additional die of damage with all bite attacks.

Aptitude

The Freak may consume the physical and mental Merits of other beings. This cannibalism must make sense in context of the Merit being consumed – for example, the Freak might eat the body of a large man to gain Huge Size, or the brain of a professor to gain Encyclopedic Knowledge.

Cost: 1 Pyros per dot rating of the Merit

Dice Pool: Resolve + Stamina - Merit Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Something gets twisted while the Freak transmutes the new element into her being, inflicting her with a Condition or Tilt related to the Merit she was trying to consume. For example, a Freak trying to steal Fleet of Foot might become Crippled, or one attempting to gain Danger Sense might instead become Frightened.

Failure: The Freak gains nothing.

Success: The Centimanus gains the relevant Merit for a number of hours equal to her Azoth rating. If the Merit is one with a multiple dot rating, the Freak can gain the victim's rating or lower, depending on how much Pyros she spent.

Exceptional Success: The Freak has an exceptional affinity with the new configuration of her body, allowing her to retain the consumed Merit longer. She may continue to use the Merit for a number of days equal to her Azoth rating.

Acumen

The Freak may consume the Skills of another being. She consumes body parts in some way related to the ability: eyeballs for Investigation or a hand for Weaponry. If the Freak's victim has a Rating in the Ability equal to or greater than the Freak's own, she can learn from the consumed flesh.

Cost: 2 Pyros per dot of the Ability

Dice Pool: Resolve + Stamina + Azoth - Ability Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Something goes horribly awry in the mystic furnace that is the Freak's gut. For the remainder of the scene, she is afflicted with the Sick (grave) Tilt.

Failure: The flesh is consumed but the knowledge escapes.

Success: The Freak can internalize the Skill. If the victim's rating in the Skill is equal to or higher than the Freak's, she gains one dot in the Skill in question for a number of days equal to her Azoth rating.

Exceptional Success: The Centimanus gleans exceptional insight, gaining two additional dots in the Skill, even if this takes her above the victim's rating.

Endowment

The Freak may consume the Attributes of another being. She must consume must a health point's worth of flesh for every point in the Attribute stolen from the victim, and the parts should be related in some way to Attribute she is ingesting (tendon or ligaments for Dexterity, or brain matter and the face for Composure, for example).

Cost: 3 Pyros per dot of the Attribute

Dice Pool: Resolve + Stamina + Azoth - Attribute rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Something goes wrong when the flesh infuses the body. For the remainder of the scene, the Freak is afflicted with one of the following Tilts: Blinded, Deafened, Insensate, or Poisoned (Moderate).

Failure: The Freak gains nothing.

Success: If the Freak's victim possesses a rating in the desired Attribute equal to or higher than the Freak's own, the Freak gains a

dot in the Attribute for a number of hours equal to her Azoth rating.

Exceptional Success: The body of the Centimanus processes the meal efficiently, increasing her Attribute's rating by two dots for the remainder of the scene.

Unleash

There is an underlying power within the Created that most only glimpse, brief moments of impulse where the Promethean can almost grasp what lies beyond. A Centimanus chases that flash, and finds its source. His eyes now opened by Flux, the Freak becomes a conduit of Pyros, an embodiment of the Divine Fire. He learns what it is to live as the Divine Fire, and to burn his enemies with it.

Persistent: As masters of Pyrothic fire, any Attributes raised by the Centimanus expending Pyros lasts until the end of the scene. However, as beacons of Pyros, the Freak may no longer Dampen the Fire as described in **Promethean: The Created Second Edition** p.168.

Invigorate

By igniting the fire within, the Freak washes his Azoth with a wave of Pyros, releasing tension and banishing weariness. This surge of strength allows him to carry on despite injuries, while his body burns with the light of the fire within.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Resolve + Stamina + Azoth

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The fire burns the Centimanus, increasing any wound penalties he is suffering by -1, to a maximum of -3.

Failure: The flame dies too quickly to invigorate.

Success: For the remainder of the scene, the Freak does not suffer from any wound penalties.

Exceptional Success: The fire leaves the Centimanus feeling not only healed, but also well-rested and refreshed, allowing him to regain a point of spent Willpower.

Infuse

The Centimanus directs coursing Pyros within, channeling it through his Created form and expelling it from his pores. His hands and feet burn with Azothic fire, giving him a lethal advantage in hand-to-hand combat.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Unlike other Alembics, Infuse does not require a roll to activate, and instead supplements any attacks made with the Brawl skill. Infuse adds the character's Azoth rating to the attack dice pool and causes it to inflict Lethal damage. An attack that inflicted health damage also drains the victim of one point of Willpower.

Azothic Mantle

Now truly the master of Pyros, the Freak wraps himself in Azothic fire. Flames rush from his form, seeking and consuming other sources of Pyros. His body burns with a fiery countenance, and his outline is shrouded in impossibly bright flames.

Cost: 3 Pyros

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Azoth

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The fires turn inward, scourging the Centimanus and inflicting one point of aggravated damage.

Failure: He burns for a brief instant, then the fires die out.

Success: The Freak is surrounded in a bonfire of Pyros, emanating a number of feet from his body equal to his Azoth rating. Any being within the mantle suffers from two effects: First, the victim loses a point of Pyros and suffers one level of lethal

damage as the Pyros burns away. Secondly, the victim suffers a 1 to all actions for every point of Pyros they possess, to a maximum of 3. While activating the Azothic Mantle costs 3 pyros, the Centimanus may spend 1 Pyros to extend the duration of the mantle for another action.

Exceptional Success: The fire of the Azothic Mantle burns away the victim's will to live. Victims scourged by the mantle also lose a point of Willpower.

PETRIFICATI

What happens to a Promethean who sticks to a completed Role long past Wastelands and Firestorms that signal them to change? What happens when she ignores the dire warnings of Azothic memory and *qashmallim*? Her Pilgrimage stalls to the point of impossibility, her Azoth finally gutters out and, along with it, her free will and intelligence. What's left is a mindless thing that can only act out her Role. Anytime she's alone or in a situation outside the purview of her Role, she is an automaton, mutely shoveling food into her mouth, or staring unblinking at the walls. When time comes for the Promethean to adopt her Role again, she springs back to life and acts as if all is well. Attempts at mind reading reveal absolutely nothing, but even when she is talking, working, and laughing, she does not have conscious thought. It's all instinctual responses. She has become a *petrificatus*.

Petrificati, colloquially called the Stuck or Automatons, would just be sad failures in the quest towards the New Dawn, if not for two things. Firstly, they still perform the generative act. Whenever *petrificati* encounter a dead body, they instinctively seek it out and perform the same rite that gave the original Promethean its Divine Fire and life. They never create new Prometheans though: They either rip the corpse apart into Pandorans (who ignore any *petrificatus*' presence) or they create another *petrificatus* with a Role that best fits their former situation in life. Since the Stuck are just as resilient and unaging as a normal Promethean, throngs have encountered small communities filled with people who shuffle to work and come alive, only to walk outside and immediately lose all emotions and ability to communicate. And if one of these *petrificati*'s Roles is murderous or works with corpses, their numbers just keep multiplying.

The second complicating factor is that any Vitriol the *petrificatus* has distilled is still stored within its body. The Vitriol is a lacuna away from being harvested, or one bad injury away from dissolving their body down into goo. Centimani, *sublimati*, and alchemists hunt follow any stories of strangely blank people, hoping for an easy score. How *petrificati* that weren't originally Prometheans would come to contain Vitriol is a bit of a mystery among the Alchemical Guilds.

To the sorrow of Created who encounter them, no one has recorded a *petrificatus* rejoining the Pilgrimage, nor does

Azothic memory tell of such an event. That hasn't stopped more optimistic and curious Prometheans from trying to redeem them. Until one Promethean or demiurge finds success, Automatons will remain both a sad reminder of the perils of the journey to the New Dawn and a potential threat to any throngs in the area.

Mechanics

To become a *petrificatus*, a Promethean must stay in a completed Role for a year and a day (see **Promethean: The Created**, p. 179). Furthermore, he cannot be part of a branded throng, nor have completed the *multiplicatio* step of his Pilgrimage. If he meets all of the above requirements, his Azoth and Pilgrimage scores both drop a dot for every week he stays in the same completed Role, until he reaches zero in both scores. At that point, the Promethean becomes one of the Stuck.

Petrificati cannot use Bestowments or Transmutations. As they do not have an Azoth score, they do not have Azothic radiance, do not cause Disquiet, Firestorms, or Wastelands, nor can they be Measured by Prometheans. They cannot gain, store, or spend Pyros. They do not wake dormant Pandorans, nor hold any sustenance for them.

Petrificati still benefit from Superlative Endurance, though they cannot return from death. They also heal from electricity, but do not gain Pyros from it. Fire no longer causes aggravated damage, as the Divine Fire within them has cooled to ashes. Their disfigurements are still visible to other Prometheans.

While acting in their Role, *petrificati* have a dice pool of 4 for all Role-oriented actions. Outside of their Role, they can only walk to a safe location, feed themselves, and bat weakly at attackers. All non-Role and concealment actions automatically fail, though mortals generally explain away any weird behavior as the result of being stressed, overworked, or otherwise tired.

Attempts to read an Automaton's thoughts or emotions automatically fail. There's nothing to read.

When creating a *petrificatus*, Storytellers determine how many Vitriol Experiences they possess. *Petrificati* that have had a chance to multiply should have Experiences equal to the number of other *petrificati* they have created.

If a *petrificatus* receives more than (7 - Vitriol Experiences) points of damage from one attack, the Vitriol erupts within him. If the original damage was bashing, the Vitriol eats away at his body, causing one bashing damage a turn. This eventually reduces him to a steaming puddle of biological waste, unless someone performs the lacuna upon him to pull out the Vitriol. If the damage was lethal or aggravated, the Vitriol sprays outward, burning everyone nearby. Treat this as a chemical fire (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 213) that lasts for (Vitriol Experiences) in turns. The Automaton loses all of his Vitriol Experiences and Beats. This only happens on the first wound a *petrificatus* receives in a scene. Any Vitriol that leaks or explodes outward this way is useless for both the lacuna and alchemical purposes.

Any time a *petrificatus* encounters a dead body or a severely injured person, his behavior while outside of his Role changes. Instead of seeking shelter or food, he seeks out the target and performs the generative act upon it. If his target was living and is helpless and injured, he kills it in the process. The *petrificatus* has a dice pool equal to the amount of Vitriol Experiences stored within

him for both seeking out his target and performing the generative act. Consequently, most Petrified use a chance die.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The corpse shudders and jerks, splitting into a writhing mass of Pandorans. Create one additional Pandoran for each die in the unmodified dice pool.

Failure: The corpse twists, flesh tearing into a single Pandoran.

Success: The *petrificatus* creates a new one of its kind. It does not become active for several days and has an appropriate Role upon waking. The creator gains a Vitriol experience.

Exceptional Success: The new *petrificatus* comes to full capability by the end of the scene. Both created and creator gain a Vitriol experience.

Creation Modifiers

- 1 Per week the body has been dead.
- 1 Generative act takes place in a Wasteland.

CATHY: AGONYAUNT

Have a lovely day.

Background

When Cathy awoke the first time, she was in a water-pumping station, wrapped in newspapers and surrounded by flowers. The body of her Creator was beside her: suicide by shotgun. Cathy took her name from the newspaper's advice column, "Cathy Counsels." She still carries those newspapers with her wherever she goes, with a flower pressed between each page. Cathy did more than just use those newspapers to learn about people; they guided her entire life and Pilgrimage. From their directions, Cathy took on the Refinement of Iron, and completed the Martyr Role. People need help with their problems, and the "Cathy Counsels" column always said the best thing to do was "stick to it" and "endure any hardships to reach your goal." So when a man made of fire told her she had to move on and locked her out of the pump station, she ignored him and lived under the open sky. When the neighborhood surrounding the pump station became overrun with kudzu and poison ivy, and everybody began fighting, then all moved away, she endured. When it rained burning acid, and lightning flashed brighter than the sun, she kept at it. When she was all alone, with no one around her with problems to bare, she made a martyr of herself, letting the Divine Fire inside her die. Now she wanders alone, eating kudzu and poison ivy, only coming alive to suffer.

Description

Agony Aunt is dressed haphazardly, in clothes stolen from laundromat dryers and backyard clotheslines. She explores her Wasteland like a queen in her castle. Her light auburn hair frizzes out behind her head like a cloud. Tall, willowy, and walking confidently, she steals and scavenges, then mindlessly piles items about the closed pump station. When she leaves the Wasteland, she is once again Cathy. She walks out of her Wasteland and looks for people in trouble. Her body language changes: no longer a queen, but a hesitant child fearing an ill-tempered parent. She steps between muggers and their victims, looking scared yet defiant. She blocks abusers with her own body, a tight smile on her face for the person she's protecting. She gives away any possessions she has, insisting folks in need take them. She preaches a litany of self-reliance while helping others. And then she returns to her Wasteland, once again the vacant-eyed ruler of vine-covered ruins.

Rumors

"There's a bad Wasteland, just east of here. Don't go there. The few folks remaining are real mean."

The Disquiet Cathy accrued in her neighbors before her unfortunate transformation lingers like a miasma. She can no

longer be the target of humanity's ire, but that ire has not gone away. Searching for a new target, the people suffering from Disquiet latch onto the first Promethean they encounter.

"My thronemate left us to go make his own child. He seemed so ashamed. Barely even got him to admit what he was doing. We never saw him again."

Redeeming Agony Aunt, bringing her back to Cathy, certainly requires finding out more about her maker. He had a throng and an active Pilgrimage. Maybe by tracing his life and finding his motivations, Cathy's Azoth can be rekindled. Or maybe that's just a wishful dream, the fruitless quest making putting her down all the more poignant.

"She had a knife sticking out of her eye! She just turned and told me she would take care of it and smiled. She's a hero!"

The homeless and downtrodden gossip about this new vigilante. She stands in between attackers and their victims while giving life advice, ignoring all wounds she receives. Is this savior an actual hero, or just someone else who will eventually betray or let them down? Without Disquiet, Cathy is racking up a positive reputation.

Agony Aunt

Lineage: Galateid

Role: Martyr

Vitriol: 0

Dice Pool: 4

Health: 7

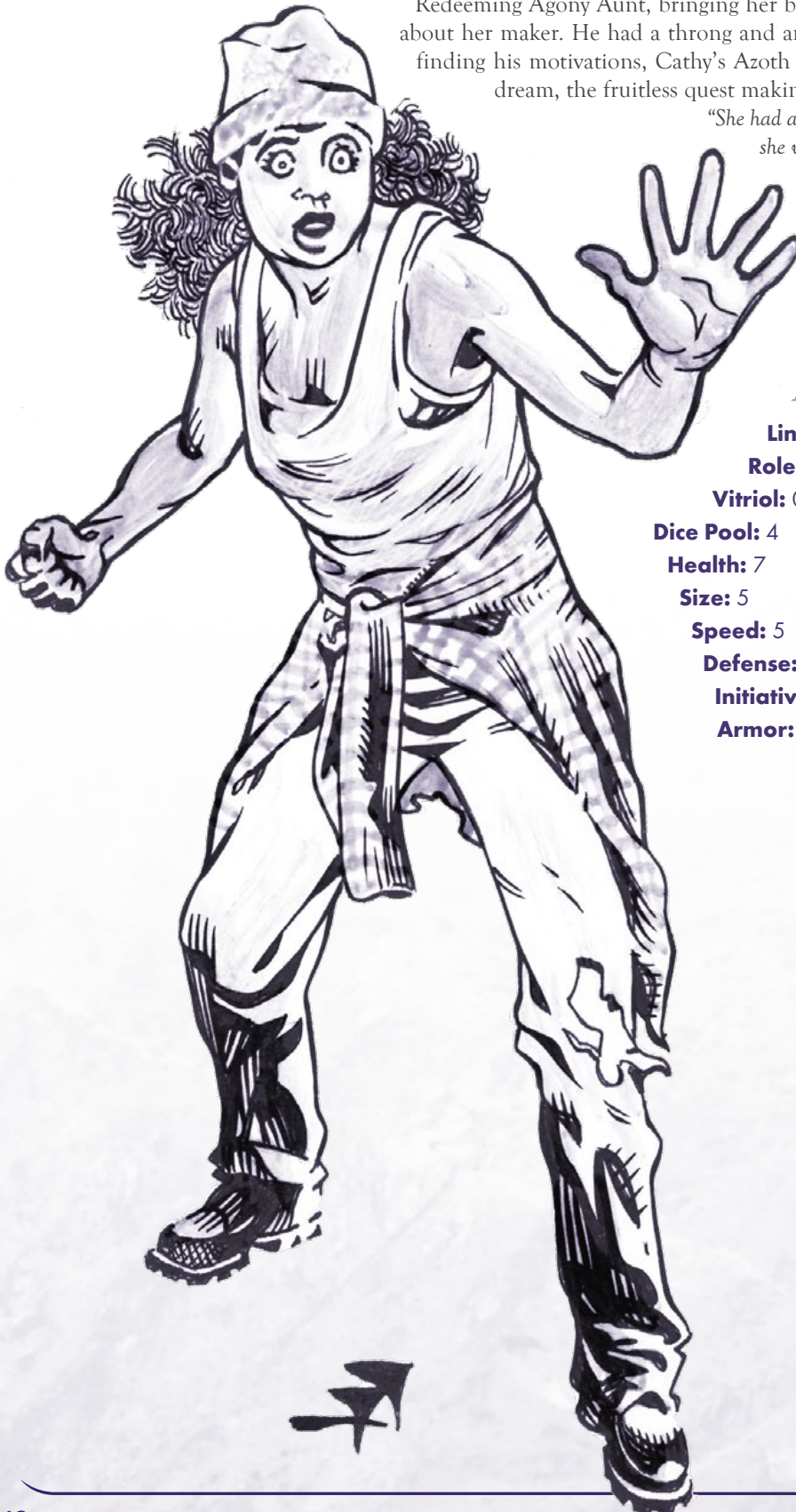
Size: 5

Speed: 5

Defense: 0

Initiative: 0

Armor: 0



RANDALL: THE FROZEN BOY

May I take your order? Would you like fries with that? May I take your order? I'm so cold. Would you like fries with that?

Background

Randall's mother was a mean drunk. She beat him and cursed him and threw him out in the snow. Luckily, he had a car. He worked so hard for it, and he was glad he had the foresight to buy it. He parked it in the parking lot of the fast-food restaurant where he worked. The first two nights were fine. He washed up in the restaurant's bathroom. He woke up at midnight to turn on the heater. He went to school in the mornings, worked in the afternoons, and read by flashlight in the evenings.

On the third night, the blizzard hit. It snowed over the roof of the car. It snowed up the tailpipe. It snowed into the engine. It snowed till no one could find Randall; not till three nights later. Something found Randall then, something that didn't think or breathe, yet moved. It breathed not-life in, and the Frozen Boy returned to work the next day wearing Randall's body.

Description

Randall is an extremely pale and pimply-faced teenager. He has a thin and pointy nose, tight and curly black hair, a round waist, and a wandering and vacant stare. He smiles politely at everyone he meets, and asks how he can help. He is prompt with his work, rarely makes mistakes, and is eager to please. He does complain about being cold often enough that his manager brought in a spare sweater. The kid's had a hard life, after all, with that mother of his.

When the Frozen Boy is not acting in his Role, he stands behind the restaurant where his car was parked. He frequently holds an open book in front of his face. When he needs to eat, he scoops out handfuls of congealed frying oil from the garbage cans. If anyone pulls into the restaurant's parking lot, the Frozen Boy wanders around the block, avoiding them, still holding the open book. He is only Randall when he's working.

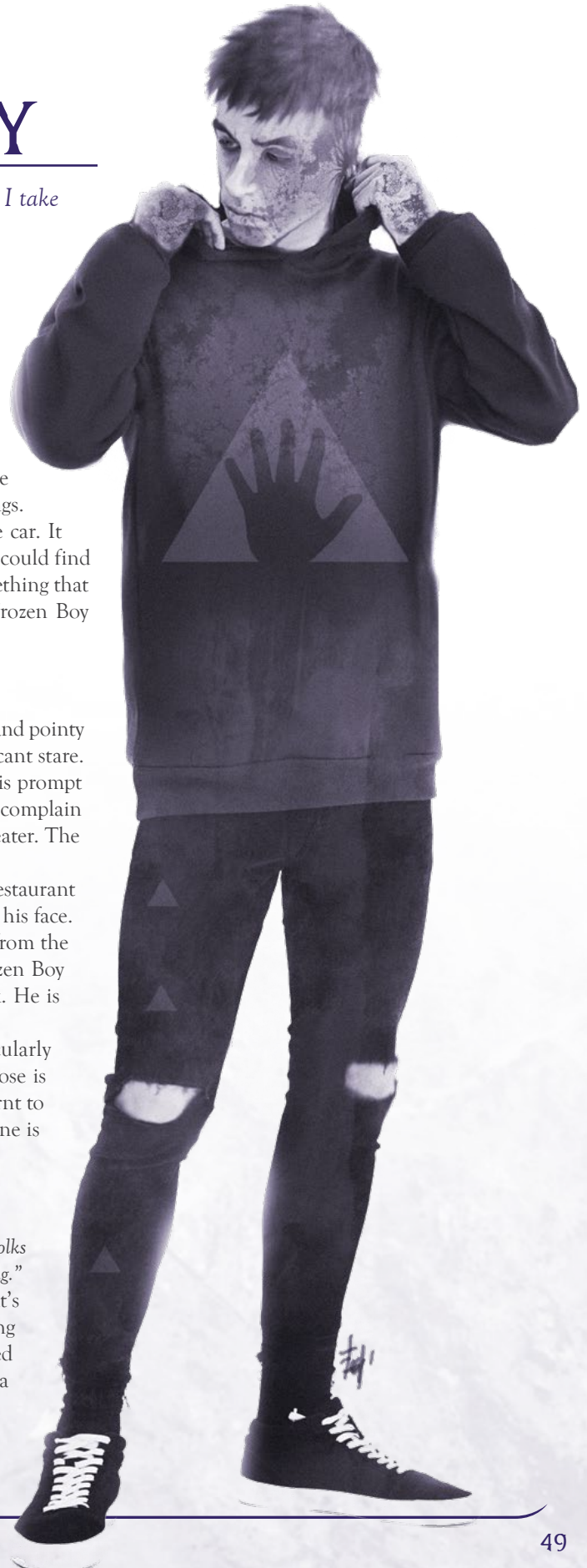
To anyone who can see disfigurements, the Frozen Boy is particularly gruesome. His ears are blackened, frostbitten stumps. The tip of his nose is missing. His mouth and teeth are stained with grease. His hands are burnt to a golden crisp, as he grabs for food in the restaurant's fryers when no one is looking. He smells of rancid grease and burnt meat.

Rumors

"Storms have been bad this year. Normally we would find a few homeless folks frozen solid. None so far. Looks like sending them south with a bus ticket is working."

The Frozen Boy has not yet successfully made another *petrificatus*. That's not for lack of trying, though. He has encountered many dead or dying people in the neighborhood surrounding his restaurant. He has performed the generative act many times, and has only succeeded in filling the area with Pandorans.

"Subject 5C was definitely created at the corner of 58 and Main during the blizzard. That puts him the vicinity of both targets. Please advise."



An alchemical guild based out of the local hospital is tracking Randall. They aren't interested in him, but rather his progenitor. They suspect he was brought back to life by the Wretched Thing, the oldest known active *petrificatus*. If so, she is in the area, full of vitriol, and ripe for harvesting. Best watch out: She is very protective of her "children."

"No, the Athanor is here! The thief is hiding it. Why else steal it just to bring it to some slum?"

Randall's other possible Automaton parent is The Stasher, who compulsively steals Athanors and other mystical artifacts, and sews them up inside *petrificati* he creates. The Stasher was definitely in the area at the time of the blizzard. If he created the Frozen Boy, there's something valuable sewed into Randall's chest. Can it be removed without killing him?

Frozen Boy

Lineage: Osiran

Role: Servant

Vitriol: 0

Dice Pool: 4

Health: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 5

Defense: 0

Initiative: 0

Armor: 0



JULIE CHENG: GOOD COP/BAD COP

Looks like we have a runner.

Background

Officer Julie Cheng was truly exceptional: scholarship for hurdles and dash, top of her class with a degree in criminal science, and several high-profile arrests while still in uniform. Her studies and career were perfect. She had a hidden dark side, though: extreme sports, and too much booze and drugs. Maybe that's what caused the accident. Maybe her junkie-like need for an adrenaline rush led to her missing the knife on the perp. Maybe she was tired from a night out partying. Maybe she just made her first mistake. However it went down, her partner died bleeding out from a perforated kidney. Julie held him as he turned pale, her knees in her partner's vital fluids.

The experience drove her to be open about her addictions. And not in a "Hi, my name is..." kind of way. She missed work, was demoted, and ended up in the back of a squad car. Seeking ever more dangerous thrills, she eventually went out to the hills, to the cave, and to the thing all locals knew dwelt there but never spoke of. Julie went out to those woods, but only the Good Cop came back.

Description

The Good Cop is a Chinese woman of slightly below-average height. She is muscular, fit, and light on her toes. No one at the precinct can decide where or when she got the razor-thin scar across her neck. She has the thousand-yard stare of PTSD, the appetite of a hungry and growing teenager, and a knack for boring paperwork. She's not too hot with conversation skills,

though: Almost everything is greeted by a delayed “okay” or a simple grunt. She lets her partner drive the patrol car, scores acceptably on the range, eats whatever is put in front of her, and fills out forms in block capitals. Her colleagues only ever see a change when she’s chasing a suspect. That’s when the old Julie comes back.

Her partner knows not to leave her with suspects, though. After she’s done laughing through aftershocks of adrenaline, Julie goes away again. Something mean comes: the Bad Cop. She goes blank, even more than before. She beats suspects, whether they’re resisting, in handcuffs, or laid out on the sidewalk. She’s even gone after a coworker. She spent the night in the drunk tank and was good as new in the morning. Same old reliable Julie.

Rumors

“Why do these IA fucks give a shit what happened to that rat bastard? Our reports say he got away, so he got away. And if something did happen, who gives a shit that there’s one less rat bastard in the world?”

Bad Cop killed a man. She and her new partner, Jeff, never called it in. They dumped the body out in the woods, buried in a shallow grave. Strange thing is, though, Jeff went to check on it, and the body was gone. Julie just grunts when he asks her about it. And more than once, she’s come to work with dirt under her nails.

“Out in the hills there’s a four-armed man. Saw him with my own two eyes. I think it was the devil, ‘cause he had lost souls on leashes. Or maybe chains. I don’t know. I was drunk, and he was far away.”

A Centimanus resides in a Wasteland on the outskirts of town. He has been studying *petrificati* for the last 20 years, and

has quite the collection of them. He’s always happy to have his “pets” revive a body brought by a desperate mortal. If they don’t bring a body? Well, he’s just as happy to slit their throats and let his *petrificati* play. They’re just so good at digging holes! Bad Cop is his favorite: she’s brought so many new things to study!

“Julie has a temper. Just stay on her good side, and you won’t have to worry about it.”

Philosophically-minded Prometheans may ask questions about the nature of Torment: do *petrificati* experience it, even without emotions? Why else would Officer Cheng have an extra, extremely violent Role? Why else would that Role be so focused on murder? Maybe her behavior as Bad Cop is just the darker side of the Daredevil Role? Whatever the answer to their musings, any would-be philosophers will also have to take action. Bad Cop is not going to stop, and more bodies are going to turn up.

Good Cop/Bad Cop

Lineage: Tammuz

Role: Daredevil

Vitriol: 3

Dice Pool: 6

Health: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 5

Defense: 0

Initiative: 0

Armor: 0



Jamal ran down the alley between the gas station and the diner, scrambling up and over an impromptu wall of vats and pallets at the far end. He wasn't sure when he'd gotten separated from his throng, but fuck if he wasn't missing them now — especially Jennifer, who was basically a brick made of human muscle. He could have used a tank right now, or really any kind of backup that saved him from blindly fleeing across the parking lot.

Scanning his surroundings, Jamal had two choices: Double back, across the parking lot, and risk running straight into the creature, or cross the freeway and brave the woods. He didn't like either of them. A diseased-sounding howl behind him settled the matter though, and Jamal leaped across the railing onto the fortuitously empty highway.

Jamal did not like the woods. He was a Muse, dark and elegant — made for human company, not stumbling around a midnight forest. He was also Created, though, and hostile pursuers were not new to him. All he needed to do was keep running, create some distance, and circle back around to his throng. That's what throngs were for: Jamal talked to humans, James handled the money, Maria read books and knew things, and Jennifer did the fighting. Everything would be fine when he found Jen... about 1,000 pounds of claws and snarling teeth barreled into Jamal, derailing any plans of circling back. The creature looked like a wolf, albeit with quills and the size of a pony. It limped slightly on uneven legs. Something about the legs was vaguely familiar to Jamal, like he'd seen the creature before. The wolf growled, slowly rising until it was on its hind legs and towering over Jamal. The Created shifted his weight from one leg to the other and back — dodging the next attack seemed imminently preferable to a direct clash. He cursed when the creature matched his movements; it was far more nimble than its bulk suggested.

The monster lunged forward, and Jamal threw himself to the left on pure instinct. He was right, or maybe just lucky, and the canine's jaws closed on air. The creature recovered quickly though, leaving the Muse to throw up his arm as a last barrier. He felt muscle tear and bones snap as large fangs punctured his leather jacket and flesh alike. Hot fire rushed to the wound, the creature suckling on Jamal's Pyros-rich blood like a babe on milk. He braced for another attack, when he heard voices calling in the distance: his throng.

"I'm he—" he shouted as the creature snarled and shook its head wildly. Its maw was still clamped down on Jamal's arm, and he felt his shoulder pop. His flesh strained, the jacket bulged, and Jamal screamed incoherently as his arm was torn from his body.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE UNBORN

The Unborn are hunger incarnate. They have no true existence of their own, no fire to warm their bellies, and so they yearn for the essence of Prometheans instead. A Pandoran is the thing that lurks in the dark, the monster under the bed that will devour you in a heartbeat. That's not what makes them terrifying though: It's the lost promise. Every Pandoran is someone's child, lovingly assembled with life breathed into it – and it arose a monster.

FROM THE DEPTHS: CAVIN

<gasping, coughing, and inarticulate muttering>

Background

Abandoned mines are a good place for a Promethean to hide. Humans give them a wide berth for safety reasons that wouldn't faze one of the Created, and even without supernatural interference they collect myths and legends that ward away people. The Promethean finds value in them though: Depending on the mine, there may be something worth scavenging to trade for supplies or trinkets, or perhaps even substances useful for her own particular alchemy.

The privacy of a mine is also ideal for performing the generative act. Seeing what they're doing requires lanterns and flashlights (or Sensorium), but that's a low bar. One lone Promethean ventured deep into a coal mine shaft for their first attempt at *multiplicatio*. Something in those depths tipped the balance of humours, and the resulting creation skittered into the darkness rather than take a gasping breath. It drew solidity and strength from the walls to form a rock-like shell for the chrysalis. Rather than flee, the creator simply tried again and again, eventually moving to other mines to figure out their process. Every time, they leave behind abandoned progeny, every single one of them a rock-like Pandoran.

Description

The name "Cavin" is a mangling of "cave-in," reflecting their native habitat. Most Cavins remain in or around the tunnels to snare Prometheans seeking shelter. Some venture out and infiltrate the communities that linger when the earth runs out of bounty to share. They become one with the forested mountain, or are mistaken for an interesting rock and put on display. They wait until one of the Created decides that a small mining town is safe enough. Then one or more Cavins descend upon the Promethean like an avalanche, looking to crush and devour.

A Cavin is roughly humanoid when active, and when seen in decent light it resembles a twisted goblin made of onyx. Its skin is more stone than flesh, difficult to pierce, and this resilience lets it wear down its prey. It's not particularly fast, but is capable of setting crude, rudimentary traps to snare someone in a chamber or hollow. It can rig collapses and pit traps to slow down the Created it pursues. Like most simple Pandorans it prefers to hunt in packs, and will even join packs of not-Cavins.

**"Your shadow at
morning striding
behind you**

**Or your shadow at
evening rising
to meet you;**

**I will show you
fear in a handful
of dust."**

**—T.S. Eliot,
"The Waste Land"**

In Dormancy, the Cavin curls up, its skin fusing into a rocky casing. The luster of this shell changes in the light, leaving it looking like a lump of rock when caught outside. In dark caves, it looks more like the protrusion of a vein of coal. The Pandoran prefers a cave close to the surface, close enough to feel the emanations of Created while remaining out of the way.

Rumors

"A Tammuz of my acquaintance found themself working in a mine near the state border. Near the end of their time, they were sent to retrieve some equipment at the end of a tunnel. The ceiling collapsed and trapped them for about an hour. The rock shifted just when they had given up hope of a rescue, before being assaulted by what they could only describe as 'gremlins of black rock.' They barely escaped, but we do not know if the Pandorans set the trap, or if it was just an unlucky coincidence."

Thanks to the random, wandering nature of the Cavins' creator, any tunnel or cave could be infested with patient Pandorans waiting for the chance to ambush new prey. They act of their own volition, though, and ignore humans when possible.

"In my defense, I didn't know that McMansion in the hills had been taken over by a Freak. I mean, who'd expect a Centimanus to be living it up? I thought it was someone, y'know, more like me until I came up on him and saw him screwing around in a rock garden out back. And then the rocks got up and he went 'Get 'im!' and I booked it out of there."

A Centimanus looking to experiment with Pandorans could do worse than a Cavin. They're simple and sturdy, easy to hide in their dormant form, and they come in handy multiples to serve as test subjects with a baseline.

"I'm ready to complain to the curators about the new guy. I mean, he says he's a doctor of some weird geology field, but all he's done is



Story Hooks

- At least one sighting has a Cavin crumbling into a cloud of sand to give chase at the behest of a Centimanus. Did that Freak have a lucky find, or did he train the Cavin into a new form?
- A coal country "mining museum" has Cavins on display in plain sight as rock samples and decorations. Is this some dangerous mistake, or is someone using the museum as bait to lure Prometheans?
- A particularly large pack of Cavins emerges after a Firestorm, moving carefully through the mountainous regions they call home. Something has gotten their attention, but it's hard to tell if this massive movement is a deliberate migration or a mindless pilgrimage.

play around in the private lab they gave him. He's studying these weird rocks that aren't going on display and won't let anyone else look at them. So what's he doing here?"

Cavins are also easy fodder for alchemists. It's all too easy to study one under the guise of mundane chemistry or geology. Created entering an alchemist's lab, willingly or forced, might find themselves swarmed by a group of newly awoken Cavins.

Cavin

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Willpower: 7

Initiative: 4

Defense: 4

Size: 4

Speed: 10

Health: 9

Dread Powers: Armor (4), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

NOMADIC PREDATOR: THE HITCHHIKER

<canine growling and yelping>

Background

The backseat of an SUV is no place to give birth. The Ulgan knew this, zir throng knew this, but the mob chasing them didn't care. Zie was in the middle of bringing zir progeny to life when they attacked, and zie was far enough along that zie refused to abandon it. Zir throng stole a truck and took off. Cops followed in their wake, lights flashing, until the throng finally lost them.

The whole time, zie worked to assemble zir creation, to breathe ectoplasm and Azoth into the body to make it move. Zie finished as the throng pulled into a rest area. The creation didn't move, other than twitching from sparks of the Divine Fire soaking into dead flesh. Zie wept and howled, begging the Principle to show pity just this once.

The body moved and thrashed on the seat, and eyes of hate and hunger opened. Not the eyes of the child zie'd dreamt of, but zir creation nonetheless. The rest of the throng, in the front seats, were too slow to interfere. In zir shock, she watched it smash the window and rush out into the night on limbs bent at wrong angles. The throng cut their losses, and pulled out before zie could abandon them to chase it. Zie's never forgiven them.

Description

The Hitchhiker's dormant form looks like a misshapen statue of a canine, the sort of thing placed off to the side in a rest area so kids can get their pictures taken with it. Its legs aren't

quite even, the shape of its head vague but pointy. It's usually in some unsteady crouching pose, but it doesn't return to the exact same pose every time it relocates. Most highway travelers either don't see it often enough to notice the inconsistency, or have seen enough strangeness on the road to keep their heads down.

The Hitchhiker is named for its tendency to wander the highways when active, either pursuing prey or just finding new hunting grounds. It finds a vehicle, usually a tractor trailer or a car carrier, and finds a spot to grab on. It moves from truck stop to rest area to highway welcome center, much like the feral dogs that navigate the Moscow subway. It remains in one spot long enough to jump a wandering Promethean or two, and then moves on.

The vaguely-canine sculpture unfolds itself into a humanoid shape like a particularly scraggly werewolf, though no one who's seen a real lupine would be fooled. The "stone" softens to something more chitinous, with spine-like hairs coming off it, and the Unborn can move as easily on four legs as on two.

The Hitchhiker prefers to separate targets from their group and strikes swiftly. It's fundamentally cowardly in that regard, rarely willing to take on something large or powerful enough to be a serious threat. Even with a Pandoran's ravenous hunger it knows when not to push its luck. When it does strike, it



Story Hooks

- A pack of hunters has been tracking the Hitchhiker, mistaking it for some sort of spirit-born monstrosity. They get glimpses of it and of the Prometheans it hunts, but the creature stays one step ahead. Between frustration and Disquiet, how long until things get out of control and innocent travelers get hurt?
- The Hitchhiker has only been riding Harbor and Brook trucks in its latest wanderings. Something about the company caught the Pandoran's attention, and the Prometheans need to figure out what.
- A Savant has tracked the Hitchhiker's movements, looking for patterns both occult and otherwise. Once he interfered in its attempts to catch a ride going in a particular direction, and an hour later a Firestorm ravaged the truck stop. Does something in the Hitchhiker's movement cull the outbreak of Firestorms?

tries to pin or grapple the target, strike quickly, and move on before anyone goes looking for where the prey wandered off to.

Rumors

"I was heading south, putting some distance between myself and that bullshit in Butler, when I got jumped by a Pandoran at a rest area. I got back out front under the lights and it backed off, and I quickly found a trucker I could bum a ride off of. A couple hours later she's gassing up at a truck stop, I'm getting some pepperoni rolls, and I come back to find the trucker dead in the cab and that fucking Pandoran waiting for me! I got away, but when did they figure that shit out?"

The Hitchhiker approaches the threshold of development between normal Pandoran and *sublimatus*, displaying extreme cunning and adaptability to human tools when it hunts.

"Here's one for your listeners, Mike. I stumbled onto this when I was researching 'The Highway Styx.' I was driving a circuit, and noticed this crappy stone statue of a dog outside Zanesville. Got a pic for my blog. A few days later I'm coming back the other way and see almost the exact same statue just east of Springfield. Just in case, when I'm back near Zanesville, I checked out that first rest area. Statue was gone, and police tape marked off an area where someone died in an animal attack. Any of your listeners seen that, Mike?"

The Hitchhiker isn't shy about going dormant out in the open, and it's only a matter of time until more watchful humans pick up on its movements and make an urban legend out of it.

"Have you seen Vainglory? I heard zie passed through here a week ago. Zie's been stealing cars looking for that damn Pandoran zie made. Thinks zie had a vision that zie's supposed to help it and... I'm worried. Zie's done things. Just keep an eye out and if zie offers you a ride... run."

Some parents just can't give up on their mistakes. Especially when feeding those mistakes enough Vitriol can give it a semblance of a mind, and the hope of evolving into something more.

The Hitchhiker

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 8, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 9, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 1, Composure 7

Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 5, Brawl 5, Intimidate 4, Larceny 3, Stealth 4, Survival (Navigation) 5

Willpower: 13

Initiative: 16

Defense: 14

Size: 4

Speed: 21

Health: 12

Dread Powers: Armor (2), Bizarre Weaponry (3 – claws), Briareus' Prowess (3), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (3), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Wall-Walking (1)

HIVE: THE THRONG OF ONE

Hungry, mommy. So hungry.

Background

Sometimes Hive is many, and sometimes Hive is one. Hive only knows the difference between them because the pain is worse when they are many. All those ravenous stomachs churning with insatiable need. All those malformed bodies writhing in shared starvation. Hive sleeps when the gnawing of empty bellies drives them to slumber, waking only when the scent of succulent prey stirs them from Dormancy.

Hive adores Mommy, insofar as they are capable of feeling love. Mommy lets them glut themselves on the prey she brings to their lair, and praises them when they fight over the scraps. Hive tries not to upset or disappoint Mommy. They did that once before, when their eyes opened, and Mommy saw the thing she had made. When she abandoned them after their first few hours of life, they were alone. Hive was singular then, small and weak and disfigured, and barely survived until Mommy came back to get them.

Mommy does things to them, and Hive craves Mommy's attention as much as they fear her touch. The experiments always involve agony. They howl in torment, bloating and swelling like a rotting corpse until they explode, and one becomes two, two become four, four become eight. When Hive is many, Hive always becomes less. Mommy tries to make Hive different, but the new limbs and teeth and eyes Mommy gives Hive's body never work.

When Hive is few, Mommy doesn't let them feed or hunt, keeps them on

the honed edge between frenzy and Dormancy before she throws them their food. Sometimes, meals aren't Created. Sometimes, meals are *Hive*. Once they've consumed all of themselves they can, they fall into Dormancy and awaken anew as something different, something else. Something *Not-Hive*. Hive longs to tear Not-Hive apart, rip and shred and devour, because Mommy doesn't play with Hive when Not-Hive is here.

Hive is change. Hunger. Hive knows they are not the child Mommy intended, but they believe they are the child Mommy deserves. Hive struggles to understand why Mommy hurts them, makes them less, makes them more, feeds them what she does, but the more Hive multiplies and consumes, the closer they feel to finally knowing their purpose in Mommy's plan.

Description

In Dormancy, Hive looks like discarded wrappings and fabric tangled around sticks and twigs. Awake, they seem barely human at all, scuttling on all fours, wrapped in a tangled, matted layer of hair and fur, with crazed eyes, fangs, and curling ram's horns. Forced to Divide frequently, Hive's bodies are usually wounded and blood-smeared.

Whether by accident or design, Hive's Divisions always result in a Pandoran which, after chrysalis, also becomes Hive and shares in their communal hungers and needs. Hive is a peerless pack animal and can use complicated flanking and herding tactics in their hunt for Pyros. Every body added to Hive's consciousness increases their chances of a successful hunt. This is not without cost: Hive may be one mind, but they feel the hunger pangs of each of their stomachs.



Rumors

“The beast cannot be killed by any means. I’ve heard it... they... whatever the fuck we call that thing, has taken everything short of a tac-nuke to the face and come out missing a body or three, but 10 times as pissed off.”

Hive’s unique physical and psychic makeup means so long as one of Hive’s bodies survives, so too does Hive. Hive’s greatest resilience lies in their ability to inhabit all their bodies in psychic communion, and while they prefer the comfort of many, they are perfectly capable of being contained within a single vessel. A single body makes Hive vulnerable, and a dedicated hunter can bring them to an end by whittling down their bodies until only one remains.

“The threat Hive represents now is nothing compared to the threat it could represent if it develops actual intelligence.”

It’s easy to assume that Hive would remain a multi-bodied beast as *sublimati*, but the mutations involved in the process have to date eliminated Hive’s ability to spread their senses over multiple bodies. As *sublimatus*, Hive becomes a singular being.

“If you can separate the pack from each other, you can shut them all down. They need to stay close to each other. If they don’t, they go dormant.”

Hive’s control over their bodies does not have infinite range. If parts of Hive’s pack are drawn too far from the others, Hive instinctively sheds them, beginning with the most distant, in order to preserve themselves. Shed bodies can awaken in a permanent state of frenzy. If they are not swiftly dealt with, they can become an even greater threat.

Hive

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 6, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 9, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Intimidation 5

Willpower: 9

Story hooks

- Alpha, one of Hive’s shed bodies, has successfully evolved into a *sublimatus*, murdered their creator, and taken control of Hive’s pack of one. Disconnected from the pack and unable to rejoin them, Alpha is determined to discover a way to not only merge into Hive again, but replace Hive entirely. How much more dangerous will Alpha, the Throng of One become?
- Hive’s creator finally succumbs to Torment, and her evolutionary management of Hive’s bodies becomes reckless and dangerous. Forced to Divide as frequently as Mommy can make them, Hive’s nascent intelligence vanishes into bestial instinct and terrible hunger from so many bodies howling for Pyros. When Hive turns on themselves, consuming their own flesh, multiple *praecipitati* emerge from the frenzy to rampage through the city.
- An alchemist stumbles across one of Hive’s bodies in Dormancy and survives their attack. Ever opportunistic, the alchemist dissects and harvests everything she can from the corpse. After careful study, she thinks she knows where Hive’s creator originally went wrong, and has begun gathering the pieces to make her own, new and improved, version of Hive. This Hive would be a terrifying weapon.

Initiative: 13

Defense: 13

Size: 4

Speed: 22

Health: 12

Dread Powers: Bestial Mutation (4), Bizarre Weaponry (2), Briareus’ Prowess (2), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (2), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

MYRAX: THE DRUID

<rustling of leaves in the forest>

Background

It's been years since the unfortunate deaths at Camp Ravenwood in Colorado, when a group of boy scouts was attacked by a mountain lion on a two-day trip into the wilderness. The outraged population indulged in the mayor's more lax stance on hunting wild life the following year, but the

deaths continued well after the purge of big cat population and stopped seemingly at random. Life went on in the small town and Camp Ravenwood was closed to avoid bad press.

Years later, the youngsters of the town have an idea of what happened. The accounts of the surviving boy scouts depict an attack by something wholly different from a mountain lion, and as time went on the mysterious hunter was named Myrax, Druid of Camp Ravenwood. The adolescents in town eventually developed Myrax' legend and attribute to him a tragic story, an ethos to protect the woodland areas from encroaching civilization. They even created a webcomic in the urban legend's likeness.

The real Myrax, however, is far simpler a creature than its folkloric counterpart. There is nothing to the Pandoran but the desire to hunt, and a hunger for Pyros. Thanks to its accursed state and hunting grounds the Pandoran is unable to avoid Dormancy for long stretches, but while active it attacks anything that moves, killing mortals for sport and the Created for food. It does seem to have a preference for a subtle kind of hunt, and despite its celebrity status has never been caught on film.



Story Hooks

- As the throng tries to avoid a nearby town, they trek into the wilderness close by. After finding shelter in a series of shacks in an abandoned camp in the mountains, however, realization sets upon them that something is following their every step. Things take a turn for the worst when they find the broken Camp Ravenwood's welcome sign in the tall grass, the pilgrim marks of "danger" and "Pandoran" carved upon it.
- The Prometheans arrive in town to seek shelter, only to watch in horror as the small community is consumed by chaos after a couple and their child goes missing in the mountains. As the throng learns more about Myrax and its strange habits, they must decide whether to help – possibly even realizing their presence awakened the Pandoran in the first place.
- A beloved Galateid Pilgrim in possession of a valuable Athanor goes missing in the woodland area of Colorado's snowy peaks. The throng gets word of it and decides to find the Promethean and the treasure in her possession, only to find an ever-evolving threat in the form of Myrax, waiting for them and willing to use the still-living Galateid hostage and the Athanor as bait.

Description

In Dormancy, Myrax resembles a tree trunk with unusually sharp features and strange markings that indicate someone tried to carve it. When active, the markings open to reveal black eyes and a maw filled with sharp teeth. Its long limbs are built for speed, and sharp tree-bark nails drip with viscous sap the Pandoran uses to poison and wear its prey down. Myrax enjoys playing games with mortal victims. It vocalizes excitement in a way most humans identify as laughter and always attacks the slowest of a group first.

Rumors

"There is no way Brutus would have gotten himself killed by a Pandoran. He was too strong."

Myrax isn't as powerful as many of the Created, but holds a dangerous mix of cunning and savagery that many Promethean are not ready to encounter in a peaceful-looking woodland area. He strikes out of nowhere, poisons the strong, runs away, hide and waits. Like the most dangerous hunters Myrax bids its time until the prey is weak and offering little resistance before striking the final blow.

"I couldn't stop shivering, Kat. It wasn't something I saw or heard, but more that I didn't see or hear anything at all. That forest wasn't just silent: it was dead. I felt like treading on the corpse of something that was alive once."

The Unborn doesn't just hunt humans or Prometheans. Lacking its favored prey, the creature singlehandedly culled the local fauna to dangerous lows. Although many blame this catastrophe on the mayor at the time for getting lax with hunting laws, experts say the permissive hunting laws alone can't account for the precipitous decline in wildlife.

"Some of the townsfolk say that 10 years ago this lumberjack vanished up in the mountains in an area called 'the witch woods,' and some kids blame this druid figure for it. They found the man mauled beyond recognition, no teeth in his mouth."

The Pandoran seems to be especially cruel to those who harm the woodlands of its territory. Like many hunters, the Pandoran also collects trophies from its quarry, carrying a part of them unto itself. The creature especially likes to take their teeth to add to its grotesque maw.

Myrax

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 9, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 5

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Athletics 4, Brawl (Biting) 5, Intimidate (leaving trophies) 1, Stealth (Woods) 4, Survival 4

Willpower: 11

Initiative: 11

Defense: 13

Size: 4

Speed: 20

Health: 11

Dread Powers: Armor (1), Bizarre Weaponry (3 – Sharp Teeth), Camouflage (3), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Paralyze (3), Scurry (2), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

NUHARUL: THE SKIN DANCER

<a long, ululating howl>

Background

Many moons ago, under a starless sky, a debt was paid in full by hunters who turned their backs on Wolf and Moon. The corpse of their freshly-slain kin was presented with no pomp or ritual to the Ulgan who had demanded it in exchange for wisdom, and in the possession of something so connected to the Shadow the Riven believed she could create a descendant worthy of her Lineage.

Under the light of the full moon the Ulgan bathed the dead werewolf's body in the purifying waters of an unspoiled river and burned autumn leaves as offerings to the ephemeral lords of the grove. Filling the night breeze with chanting, the Riven coated her creation in ectoplasm and watched the Twilight slowly embrace the listless body. Piece by piece it vanished to another world, but not for long. Shocked, the Promethean witnessed as the spirits vomited the abomination she was giving life back into the material world, littering the grass with shivering limbs.

Even the appalled genitor's expertise couldn't keep the creation from warping into a Pandoran, a long howl marking the birth of something unwholesome, and unwanted on both sides of the Gauntlet. In the years to come, the Ulgan would become part of Nuharul's legend not only for making it but for being the first skin the Pandoran ever wore.

Nuharul's legend grew over the years thanks to its unrelenting pace, vicious instincts, and its odd relationship with the spirit world. It dons the skin of its fallen quarries and eats the flesh of werewolves with almost as much gusto as it does that of Prometheans. Once Nuharul tastes the blood, Essence, or Vitriol of a target it doesn't stop unless it is destroyed or forced into Dormancy.

Description

A failure born of werewolf flesh, the Nuharul resembles its ancestors in the most disturbing way. The Pandoran runs on four long legs, all of which change in size and muscle mass as needed when it wants to jump, maim, or chase its prey faster. Bloated and ever-changing, the grotesquerie never seems to fully form a definitive body, either of its own choosing or as a curse from its protean heritage. When poised to kill its quarry, the Pandoran's malleable nature acts as an advantage. Prey seldom lands a blow on the agile beast, who is constantly changing to better cripple and maim its enemies.

Rumors

"Yeah, Momo went after the thing way back when, but it didn't do him any good. He doesn't talk about it. I am pretty sure he found it, but something changed his mind. Knowing Momo, it must of been one compelling argument."

When the moon is full, Nuharul hunts. But when it is but a sliver in the sky the Pandoran weeps, howling in anguish like a babe yearning for his mother's milk. To mortals it is a terrifying, ululating sound, but to Prometheans and the wolf men from which Nuharul was born the mournful sound can reduce even the most stoic warrior to tears.

"Nothing makes you rethink life choices more than hunting a Pandoran down only to find a graveyard of werewolf skulls in its nest. Batshit, I know. Trust me, kid, turn around and just walk away from this one."

Nuharul feels the desire to hunt werewolves and eat them, much in the same way it does the Created. This need for "cannibalism"

Story Hooks

- Nuharul needs a new skin and it has chosen one of the throng's Prometheans to provide it. From the full moon and until the new moon, the Created realize something is after them, and strange omens and dead animals turn up in the early stages of the Nuharul's arrival.
- Spirits are devouring the Gauntlet and escaping the Shadow in droves. The incidence of urged and claimed rises as the spirit world is in turmoil. Questioned spirits warn the throng that the "Thing of no Place" (*Usum Anuza*, in the spirit tongue) lies dormant no more, and it will feast on everything unless stopped.
- Werewolves seem to be more active than usual around the area the throng has chosen as its resting place. Investigation, and a brief altercation with the shapeshifters, reveals they are hunting an abomination born of unnatural sorcery. They call it the Nuharul, and they won't stop until they find it.

seems inherent to the nature of its dead body, and makes the Nuharul a beast as hated by werewolves and their strange totems as it is by Prometheans.

Nuharul also has the habit of nesting close to loci. Although it doesn't understand this instinct, should it ever find a way into the Shadow, the Pandoran might lose control and try to hunt every spirit within sight, like its former species has done since the dawn of time.

"I have seen some weird shit in my Pilgrimage, but I never saw a Pandoran refuse Vitriol to kill someone like Otto. His radiance was the stuff of legend, and Nuharul spat my leg out the moment we sensed his radiance bathe the city. The thing just left me there, bleeding and confused."

One thing commands more attention from Nuharul than the proximity of werewolves or Created: the city-spanning Azothic radiance of a powerful Promethean. The Pandoran doesn't hunt those for Pyros alone, but out of an intrinsic desire to pursue dangerous prey, and divide itself in the specter of its fallen foe's Azoth. Only this can soothe some of the anguish in its malicious heart, as Nuharul forms a pack of its own.

Nuharul

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 8, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 12, Dexterity 5, Stamina 10

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Athletics 6, Brawl (Werewolves) 6, Intimidation (Howls, Staredown) 4, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 4,

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 14

Size: 4

Speed: 23

Health: 14

Dread Powers: Armor (3), Bestly Mutation (4 – Wolf Instincts: Applies Defense To Firearms), Bizarre Weaponry (2 – Claws and Teeth), Briareus' Prowess (3 – Strength), Camouflage (2), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Malleable Form (2), Scurry (2), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Wall Walking (2)



SAMAEL: THE BLOODY SAINT

Repent...

Background

The local church was never popular to begin with, but after an economic crash and the rise of gambling dens in the neighborhood it was a rare thing to see more than a handful of faithful attending a Sunday sermon. Still, Father Maxwell "Max" Dylan would wipe the floors every day at 10 past 10 and took good care of the house of God, hoping his endurance would inspire others to cast sin away. During one of those nights she came to him, looking for shelter, and the religious man couldn't bear to say no.

The woman had issues the priest couldn't understand, and feared fire as much as crowds. At first her presence was unsettling and something about the stranger made the old man wary. Maxwell even got angry, unreasonably so at times, but faith helped him through the moments of Disquiet to forge a bond with

his mystery guest. Nights were spent talking about God's plan, pilgrimages, souls, and television shows, until Father Dylan convinced his friend to find the courage to take the next step.

There was no Sunday sermon that week, and a week after that, locals started to disappear. With a crime rate so high, the disappearances were assumed to be gang related. Candles were lit in the name of victims, life went on and the church withered and closed.

Inside the church lays a dormant Pandoran, baptized by its mother and named Samael. It exists in the form of a stone gargoyle, forever vigilant in the rafters, waiting for the right guest to arrive so it can awaken and feed once again. Meanwhile the church is nothing but an echo of itself, the memory of a beloved place long given up to dust.

Description

Samael is a monster made out of stone skin and wooden bones, a microcosm of the church. From afar it looks like a demon, skulking around on all fours in a jittering fashion and looking about with anguished eyes. The creature possesses a tail, long horns, and sharp talons on hand and feet, but above all, Samael is a silent thing, walking on walls and stalking prey efficiently and with cunning so cold it resembles rudimentary intelligence at times. Engaging its prey, Samael is a storm of sharp claws and a lashing tail, not holding anything back until it subdues a Promethean foe or a trespassing mortal. It never wastes its violence, and often aims for body parts to rip off such as hands that hold weapons, or necks that can bleed a victim out. It tries to eat Promethean prey alive, to consume Pyros as the fight goes on.

Rumors

"Mitch was so pissed I didn't buy into his shit. It was so funny! He swore he heard someone scrubbing the old church's floor while he was waiting for his dealer. Mitch is such a pussy, man. Speaking of which, have you heard from him at all this week? I need my money and I think the dude is avoiding me."



Some believe the church is haunted by the spirit of Father Dylan, but very few have investigated. Not only is the abandoned edifice in a particular violent area, but many of those who venture inside are never seen again as they fall prey to the Pandoran.

"This is not the first time I've seen something like this. A few years back in Tijuana I heard some strange talk about a 'church of the damned.' I can't say I found any ghosts or spirits, but I wish I had instead of walking into a boneyard of cogs, clay, marble, and rotten meat. We should stay away."

When Samael has to escape, it flees to another church like the one it was conceived in. The Pandoran finds a place it can nest and, if need be, lay dormant, all the while culling any trespassers in its recently claimed territory. Unknown to most Prometheans, the Pandoran settles in churches close to sources of Pyros, and the presence of a throng can put the faithful mortals around them in jeopardy.

"I am having a serious case of deja vu here. I've heard this story before, but it wasn't a church. It happened in a synagogue down at Houston, but the young Tammuz managed to get out alive. This cannot be a coincidence, can it?"

Samael's creation isn't an event unique to Father Dylan's church. Everywhere in the United States religious temples have been visited by a mysterious wanderer who will approach the local clergyman and talk with them over the span of a few nights before birthing a Pandoran with the resemblance of that religion's saints.

Samael

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Stealth 5

Story Hooks

- The throng comes upon a rambling and ill street denizen. This man, a former priest, shares the tale of a woman and her demon child after one of the Created sparks the memories of his lonely guest in him.
- As the Prometheans seek shelter from a storm, they happen upon an abandoned church in the bad part of town. Inside they find a place far away from mortals where they can rest, and fail to realize the site is already claimed by Samael awakening up in the rafters.
- While walking around the neighborhood, the Created hear tales of a young boy named Mitch who disappeared. Most locals believe his dealer killed the young man, but his friends swear the culprit is Father Dylan's ghost, which haunts the church down the street.

Willpower: 7

Initiative: 8

Defense: 8

Size: 4

Speed: 17

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Armor (2), Bizarre Weaponry (3), Camouflage (1), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (3), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

TWISTED LANDSCAPE: SCRUB TALONS

<creaking and squishing>

Background

Scrub Talons can be traced back to a Centimanus known simply as "Hand" with a fondness for swamps and experimentation. He enjoys playing around with appendages – stealing them, grafting them on, trying to make his own – and is all too eager to create his own deformed offspring for a variety of experiments. His preference for asymmetrical limbs has in the past produced a profile that, in bad lighting, can be described as "a human-sized hand," hence his nickname.

Hand experiments often with the generative act, trying to create monsters he can control and study but caring little about reliable results. When he creates Prometheans, they usually wind up getting

roped into a scheme or fed to his latest pack of Pandorans. When his efforts produce Pandorans, they tend to look like limbs of varying sorts. Scrub Talons in particular look like massive hands, which amuses him to no end.

Description

In Dormancy, Scrub Talons look like broken and twisted tree stumps with gnarled roots. Their wooden carapace is reminiscent of a tree felled by illness and is unpleasantly moist and spongy regardless of the weather. From some angles they resemble a warped, disembodied hand planted in the ground, the 'wrist' raggedly torn off.

The main difference between their appearance when dormant versus active is movement. Unlike some Pandorans, they



can't even vaguely pass for human. They support themselves on root-like fingers, skittering like oversized spiders or crabs. The wood of their body moves and shifts like exposed muscle, and a lamprey-like maw opens up on their "palm" when meat falls into the Pandoran's grip.

Scrub Talons prefer to hunt in packs of three or more, overwhelming individual Prometheans with swarm tactics. Their ability to blend in a variety of natural environments makes them natural ambushers. A pack prefers to knock down a Promethean and pin it down while feeding on its flesh. They take turns holding the Created down and eating if necessary, but prefer to just completely cover a prone or disabled Promethean. If a big enough pack gathers, either through division or their creator having a prolific period, they might go after a small throng.

Scrub Talons are not terribly complicated. They stake out territory where they'll hide. They swarm and feed. As much as they need Prometheans to sustain them, too much human activity in too short a time will provoke them to relocate. They prefer to plant themselves in desolate, isolated forests and swamps where Prometheans are likely to hide out.

Rumors

"So my throngmate read about sightings of a 'Bog Man' in a swamp outside New Orleans. Sounded just enough like one of us to be worth checking out. We found an abandoned shack and decided to camp out to see if he turned up. We sent Hijacker out to top off the guy's firewood supply, and next thing we know the tree stumps outside are on top of him and fucking eating him! We had to leave him, too, because of the half-dozen more scrambling up. So, do you think you can help us clear them out?"

The 'Bog Man' is a nickname for one of Hand's Promethean projects. Hand brings an entourage of pets when he visits, and he usually leaves some behind when he departs.

"You bought me a beer, so you get the story. There used to be this hobo who slept on the beach. Remember the hurricane that came through last month? They found him torn apart the next morning, and figured the storm got him, but here's the thing. On my way to work I saw him a couple hours after the storm, wandering the beach like nothing was wrong, surrounded by this driftwood that blew in. But the driftwood was gone when they found him. I dare you to explain that."

Scrub Talons are much lighter than they look, and sometimes water or extreme winds carry them to new places. Their twisted shape means they pass for various forms of debris. This has spread them to shorelines all over the world.

"We know of those Created born not of flesh but of matter, correct? It's easy to write off the Scrub Talons as simple Pandorans, but I think they are a punishment from Azoth for using unnatural substances. The Talons are born when one brings life to dead, diseased wood. This is why we must drive the Unfleshed from our city borders, if only you'll help me get the others to listen."

Prometheans pick up a lot of bad habits from humanity. Misinterpreting the world around them to justify bias is, sadly, one of them. With knowledge of the driving force behind the Pilgrimage, the Divine Principle, so scatter-shot, it's especially easy to interpret something as a punishment from 'God.'

Story Hooks

- A Promethean travels along the banks of a river, starting at the source to where it meets the sea. In her wake, Scrub Talons wash up on the shore and terrorize the area, vanishing back into the water after she's gone. Are they following her? If so, why?
- A throng well known for tattooing elaborate alchemical symbols on their hands goes missing in a swamp claimed by a pack of Scrub Talons. A subsequent sighting describes the pack as bearing the same markings. Are the Scrub Talons taking more than just Pyros from their victims, or is this a clue as to Hand's whereabouts?
- Far too young to have been taught the way of Flux and grasping it all the same, a Centimanus makes his home in the desert to experiment with Pandorans. Despite never having encountered Scrub Talons or their infamous creator, all of his twisted offspring bear their talon-like shape. Is there a deeper meaning to these spidery Pandorans, or are Scrub Talons simply more archetypal than is commonly assumed?

Scrub Talons

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Grappling) 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 2

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 7

Defense: 8

Size: 4

Speed: 13

Health: 7

Dread Powers: Bizarre Weaponry (1), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (3), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

ABANDONED LIBRARY: THE STACK

Sshhhhhh...

Background

While some Prometheans take an instinctual approach to *multiplicatio*, others view it as a science. One Osiran studied every possible facet of what he was about to do, pursuing even the most elusive tomes of knowledge and planning to leave absolutely nothing to chance. He found months of effort to be nothing in the face of random Flux. It was as if the universe punished him for his hubris in thinking he could outwit chance. The skin of his prospective child thickened like cardboard, and when it came apart the flesh underneath was yellow and off-white, corded muscle lined in wriggling black lines like scribbled text. The body fell apart into irregular chunks that slithered and flapped away, until they found a place to form into a soft mass like a wasp's nest.

The Nepri wisely fled while he could, hoping to reunite with his throng



and return. But by the time he came back, the swarm had emerged from chrysalis and escaped to hide among the detritus of the modern world.

Description

The Stack nests in abandoned buildings, preferably open to the elements, among moist and mildewy places. When dormant or simply at rest, it lies on the floor in a heap. The Stack resembles a pile of water-warped, moldy books with fused pages that either draw the curious and get their guard down, or cause others to turn away in disgust and show their back. On occasion, perhaps by random whim, the Pandoran arranges itself in a crooked stack of faux books or on an exposed bookshelf, particularly when it knows more food is close by.

When awake and active, the Stack breaks up into chunks the size of small birds. The individual parts look like ruined paperbacks, or larger books unfolding into flapping masses of paper and what looks vaguely like cardboard. Ragged edges serve as talons, drawing blood

Story Hooks

- After the throng's ally disappears in the back of an auction house, a collection of books containing all his darkest secrets goes up for bidding. Does the Stack take more than just Vitriol?
- An alchemist claims to have found a way turn the flesh of this Pandoran into actual pages containing the alchemical mystery of *multiplicatio*. Is there truth to the theory, and how can he find out?
- A Centimanus came to town, claiming to have a book that contains the secrets of Pandoran creation. The few willing to speak with her have vanished, and the Freak left town with a new stack of books afterward. Rumors claim she found a way to grow a Stack by adding more components.

and flesh to sustain the swarm with dozens of tiny cuts rather than larger substantial bites. The intelligence that spawned this swarm binds it together to function with a singular mind distributed across multiple bodies.

Rumors

"So apparently that abandoned library's haunted by a ghost that hates drifters. Some guy broke in like he was gonna squat there, and an hour later I saw him chased out by a book tornado. Freaky."

The Stack's peculiar form led to a plethora of urban legends of a ghost or malevolent spirit flinging debris from a haunted library.

"We still don't know what happened to Clarence. He said he was going to read those books he found in the alley. That's the last anyone saw of him, but his door wasn't forced. I'm going in later."

Piles of abandoned books can be like catnip to some Prometheans. The Stack can wait long enough to be brought someplace private, to unfurl in its glory and feed at its leisure.

"Avoid the mansion on the hill. The woman who lives there is not only an alchemist, but she's actually managed to turn parts of her library into some sort of creature that can fly around and kill us."

At least one alchemist thought to use the Stack to booby-trap her house against Prometheans. It worked for a little while, until the Unborn tore her apart and ran off.

The Stack

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 5

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Stealth 4

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 10

Defense: 9

Size: 4

Speed: 14

Health: 9

Dread Powers: Beastly Mutation (1 – wings), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Malleable Form (1), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Swarm Form (2)

Dread Power: Swarm Form

The Pandoran breaks into a collection of smaller creatures, like a swarm of bugs or small birds. This inflicts the Swarm Tilt on prey with a radius equal to (Rank x 2).

Swarm (Environmental)

A swarm comprises multiple animals of size 1. It normally inflicts one point of bashing damage per turn to anyone caught within its radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing: every time the swarm halves its current radius, it inflicts one additional point of bashing damage per turn.

Therefore, a swarm of eight yards in radius inflicts two bashing damage per turn if it constricts down to a four-yard radius, three bashing if it halves that again to a two-yard radius, and four bashing damage per turn if it condenses itself down to a one-yard radius. Though condensing doesn't happen often in nature (save in the case of creatures such as killer bees), supernal swarms are another matter entirely.

Armor provides only half its rating against swarms. In addition, targets are distracted by the swarm, suffering 2 dice on all rolls while they are within the radius, even if they're not specifically attacked.

Causing the Tilt: Powers that can summon or create a swarm, such as Swarm Form. The Tilt can occur naturally if someone disturbs a nest of bees.

Ending the Tilt: Only area-affect attacks, such as a torch, can affect a swarm. Each point of damage inflicted by such an attack halves the swarm's size. Once the swarm is reduced below a one-yard radius, all individual animals are either dead or the few remaining disperse.

LOCAL CAMPUS LEGEND: THE STUDENT PROJECT

Throw the switch, throw the switch, throw the switch...

Background

The building was under renovation. The labs were available to anyone who could get around security – which was easy with a little recon. Such a discovery right after acquiring the necessary materials to attempt *multiplicatio*? What prospective genitor would pass up such an opportunity?

Things were perhaps too perfect. The labs were well-stocked, the building closed after hours due to the construction. The thunderstorm arrived right on time. So what went wrong?

Maybe the thunderstorm was unnatural, tinged with just enough of *something* to throw things off. Maybe the Wretched's stitching didn't line up properly. Or maybe it had something to do with the unnatural equations whispered into a student's ear by an unseen force and written onto a whiteboard turned to face the wall.

The building was harder to get out of than into. The Frankenstein was caught off guard by its creation. The disarray in the lab was attributed to the storm blowing in through a window someone apparently left open.

The only thing that stood out was the vaguely-humanoid statue up on the roof. Students assumed it was an art piece installed during the renovation. The employees assumed an anonymous art student left it up there. Thus, everyone leaves it be, unaware that the science building is now the chosen territory of something decidedly inhuman.

Description

The Student Project, in its dormant state, resembles a wide-eyed cave-dwelling humanoid with a leathery hide wrapped around a frame and a lab coat draped over its shoulders like a cloak. Its limbs are spindly, its joints knobby. It looks

like the sort of thing someone would make to mock academics holing up in dim offices. When it awakens, the skin tightens even more and it opens a mouth full of crooked fangs, eyes glowing in dim light like an animals'. It creaks when it moves, its motions jerky like it's afraid to tear itself apart by moving too much at once.

It stands on the roof of the campus' science building, silently watching and waiting for periods of wakefulness when it can hunt for prey. It considers the building its personal territory and almost never leaves. When it does give up its unnatural vigil, it always returns within the hour and usually with a fresh kill in its gut.

Despite the obvious problem the Pandoran has hunting in such a limited area, it feels too much of a bond to the building to leave. So instead it lures Prometheans onto this private turf, taking advantage of an intimate familiarity with the building to set up ambushes.

Rumors

"You know what that thing is up on the roof? Students say we put it in during renovations, but no way any of us did that. Boss said admin had it put in. Admin says a student snuck it up there. There's this guy who dropped out years ago and keeps coming back to shoot pool at the student center – yeah, him. He's sure he saw it climb up there itself like some sort of creature. It's impossible, but it almost makes sense."

Most humans are willing to come up with myriad excuses to explain away the strange.

The Student Project, however, has remained in one place so long that stories and sightings are beginning to pile up. Soon, it will attract hunters.

"I know a Frankenstein who's been following reports of that thing on the campus because she thinks her maker is responsible. It's attached itself to this building and she's trying to figure out why. From stories she finds, it sounds like it moves around even if there aren't any obvious Created in the area. Is it the building? She wants to go find out."

The Student Project's building gets stranger the more someone looks into it. Long before the Pandoran's presence, which remains awake much longer than it should, urban



Story Hooks

- The building that serves as the Student Project's lair reports break-ins all the time. No sign of forced entry at the doors, but the labs are rearranged. Maybe some instinct of the Pandoran is urging it to recreate the conditions of its making, or it's a slave to another's agenda.
- The history of the original building traces back decades to members of the Pristine Order (**Promethean: The Created Second Edition**, p. 259). The Order renovates the building every 14 years. What do they do in the building during this time, and does it have any influence on its unnatural resident?
- A Promethean set up shop in a basement elsewhere on the campus. Zie knows zie's sharing the territory with a Pandoran, and the two play a cat-and-mouse game of stalking each other. Students after hours keep spotting the two of them and one account suggests the Pandoran had a chance to feast but let zir go. What sort of game are they playing, and how long until someone gets hurt or a Firestorm strikes?

legends surrounded the place. In various tellings it's been home to demons, ghosts, and things that only belong in a horror movie.

"Get this, I was moving around, trying to get a bead on that Pandoran on the science building. I managed to lead it toward the edge of the campus, just to see what it would do. And the damn thing is fast, I tell you. So I get to the edge of the parking lot furthest from the building. It's chasing me. Lots of open space. I dash across the street and look back – and it's gone. Dunno how, but no way it should have been able to just vanish like that. It can't be that fast."

Actually, the Student Project can be that fast. Combine that with superior knowledge of the campus layout and more than a little skill at stealth, and it has a knack for just plain vanishing.

The Student Project

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 5, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Intimidation 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival (Campus) 2

Willpower: 9

Initiative: 9

Defense: 9

Size: 4

Speed: 17

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Bizarre Weaponry (1 – fangs), Camouflage (2), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (2), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Wall Walking (3)

SUMMER: THE DEAR MONSTER

I'm sorry... I'm so sorry...

Background

Summer was a labor of love. The Pandoran's creator, an Unfleshed desperate to give birth to something of blood and bone unlike herself, did as perfectly as any Promethean could have in designing a beloved child. The Unfleshed studied weather patterns to time the act of creation under a summer storm, and meticulously went through anything she could find on *multiplicatio*. Even the selected body was ideal in every way, young and beautiful. Summer was going to be her mother's perfect little girl.

In the span of a few hours however, the loving procedure that should have brought light to the creator's Pilgrimage broke her completely. To the confused Unfleshed it was almost like Summer was fighting against life, refusing her mother before even being born. The result of the failed attempt was a Pandoran her creator

had no heart to kill. As she watched, the creature scurried away, limbs hanging by a thread from her torso.

The Promethean lay broken, watching her dream unravel inside a cocoon of mucus and flesh. Her baby was in pain, and the Unfleshed could do nothing while an all-too-human sentiment of impotence and regret gripped her electronic heart. This hurt became grim resignation of her own role in the misguided attempt of creating life from dead flesh, and by the time Summer emerged from the chrysalis and approached her mother the Promethean knew the last sacrifice she had to make for her dear child. The Pandoran fed from her mother's body, and as the Unfleshed's life wasted away she noticed her little girl wept in disgust of what she had become.

Now Summer hides in the dark, damp corners of the world, hoping she will be allowed to slip into the quiet of a death that she is unaware will never come.

Description

Summer is a multitude of glistening appendages of flesh that sprout from a bony body, bringing food to an oversized skull wrapped in fat and skin. Her maw is capable of biting off a child's head with ease, but her eyes are the real danger. When the Pandoran manages to look her prey in the eye, hers are so very human, scared and begging for help. When caught off guard or approaching prey, Summer frequently hides her face with oversized hands, hinting at enough awareness of her state to feel anguish but not enough control to keep herself from devouring others for Pyros.

Rumors

"If you have never seen her you can't know what it feels like, man. You just can't. It doesn't matter that you pump yourself up and tell yourself that when the time comes you'll smash her brains on the subway track. It's the eyes that get you. She looks so scared and alone. She looks like us."

Prometheans are surprised by Summer the first time they meet, and most don't survive to tell the tale. Unlike many Pandorans, whose reminiscence of intelligence manifests in malicious instinct, Summer seems ashamed of the freak she has become and more worried about hiding her hideous visage than killing. The way she weeps constantly and begs for forgiveness speaks to most Prometheans' hearts, creating a dangerous bond that Summer's hunger exploits to get the Vitriol she needs.

"A throngmate of mine was talking about how an Unfleshed from Ohio found the notes of this thing's mother. Only an Unfleshed would think it's a good idea to pick a suicide victim for her daughter's body. Of course things went to shit, and now we have to clean up her mess."

Prometheans speculate Summer's creation was botched because the body belonged to a young girl who ended her own life. Regrettable as it may be that such a youth would have found no other way out from a life of bullying and self-loathing, other Prometheans believe somewhere in the Pandoran's dark tale there may be redemption for both of them still. Memories of Summer's past could hint to ways to destroy or help the half-finished creature.

"My friend in another throng told me when the thing awakened, it just ran off scared. Of them? Who knows? But her throng was wounded and ripe for the taking thanks to a previous Firestorm, so she can't fathom why the Pandoran didn't go for them."

When stirred from her slumber by Prometheans, Summer tries to avoid them and run away until the hunger sets in. When every



Story hooks

- The throng comes by pilgrim marks left on a subway wall that warn of other Prometheans vanishing in the area. As they start to leave, a small and scared voice echoes from the tunnels, weakly begging for help.
 - Summer's creator sent an audio recording to one of the Prometheans in the throng, while her Pandoran creation was in its chrysalis. In it she explains what she was hoping to accomplish, and begs her fellow Created to search for Summer and put her out of her misery. Conversely, the Unfleshed might not have given up on her child entirely, and instead of asking the throng to put Summer down, she requests they complete her daughter and make her a Promethean. Can they?
 - One of the throng's human connections has been more distant as of late, avoiding contact with her family and the Promethean. One night, however, as a robber going for her purse is snatched into an alleyway and torn asunder limb by limb, it becomes increasingly harder for the human to hide the special bond she developed with a creature that needs a friend almost as much as it needs Pyros.

fiber of Summer's being finally aches for nourishment, she hunts for Pyros, picking the available Created apart, but only then.

Summer

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 9, Stamina 9

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl (Biting) 5, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Willpower: 7

Initiative: 11

Defense: 14

Size: 4

Speed: 24

Health: 13

Dread Powers: Armor (2), Bestly Mutation (2 – Tentacles: increased Defense), Bizarre Weaponry (3), Briareus' Prowess (3 – Strength), Camouflage (1), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (1), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

SUBLIMATI

A few Pandorans rise far above their mindless, slaving kin. They remain beasts, but of exceptional cunning and trickery. If you squint, they could even pass as Prometheans. These are the most painful mockeries, Unborn who come *so close* to the real deal. The *sublimati* sense it, too – the Pilgrimage that was almost theirs, the love and care of a creator – and it makes them even more dangerous.

ASTRID: THE STORMBRINGER

*You say they are monsters, but they are my children. I can feel their pain,
and soon you will, too.*

Background

The Stormbringer is a myth among the Created of Europe, a mockery of such sinister reputation it defies reason and instills entire throngs with fear. Tales of the Stormbringer tell of a wanderer arriving to a city tainted by a Wasteland, an army of Pandorans by her side and a Firestorm in her wake. Those who fled immediately shudder upon recounting the alien serenity of the *sublimatus* and the obedience of the host under her control.

Astrid's origins are shrouded in mystery to most, but the memory of the *sublimatus'* early days is fresh in her mind. The eerie angel of stone recalls being made to eat other Pandorans for the amusement of her Centimanus creator, and being repeatedly threatened with Dormancy. Astrid remembers Dividing, and having her children smashed into bits of glittering diamond before feeding the newly-born Pandorans became burdensome to her master. The Stormbringer also never forgot the fond echo of her creator's screams. To this day the memory brings a smile to her lips, filling the *sublimatus* with purpose and strengthening her resolve.

Astrid is the loving mother of the despised and bestialized, who nurtures and loves the ones all others hate. She considers herself the first of a different sort of Pilgrim, and the Stormbringer is glad to pave way for other Pandorans over the corpses of the Created. Given a choice between her children and their Promethean oppressors, Astrid made her decision long ago: The Created must go.

The Stormbringer is a famous figure among old Pilgrims of Europe. She is drawn to Wastelands, and tracks the Pyros back to entire throngs. Once in a city, there is nothing subtle about her arrival. Dormant Pandorans awake one by one, and her Pandoran children are unleashed upon their former persecutors. Lending eerie credence to Astrid's philosophy, the ravaging monsters seem to obey her out of more than just fear and dependence, relying on the Unborn leader as they would a mother of their brood.

The Firestorm is never far once Astrid arrives. In the hellish landscape of Flux-infused downpours, irresistible winds, shattering glass, and thunder strikes, many Prometheans and entire cities have been brought to heel by the merciless *sublimatus*.



Description

Astrid's form was a breathtaking work of art sculpted from marble, but after so many crusades against Prometheans the once-beautiful Stormbringer is visibly ravaged by time. A deep crack marks the *sublimatus'* cherubic features forehead to lip and steel rods seem to be the only thing keeping her right arm attached to her body. While the angelic creature's wings are ruined, one missing altogether, she still retains the poise of a gentle shepherd, her movements and caresses conveying warmth she will not ever actually feel.

When dealing with Prometheans Astrid is courteous and soft-spoken. She abhors foul language, especially in front of her children, and any insult to the Pandoran immediately ends the conversation and opens the way to a bloodbath. Her demeanor catches many Created off guard, leading them to believe the Stormbringer will show mercy when there is none to be found. The Pandorans get to experience the *sublimatus'* other side, a caring mother all too aware of her artificial nature.

In a direct fight Astrid is ruthless and efficient, moving with incredible grace and disabling her opposition with definitive brutality. If possible, she won't try to kill her Created enemies, not at first, and her greatest weakness is what makes the *sublimatus* almost human: her adoration for her Pandoran servants. She protects them, even if the monsters can't control themselves and often do not return the favor.

Rumors

"Yes, she is real. I can barely believe it myself but I've seen the crazy bitch. She ripped Jackson and Miri apart like they were fresh off the slab, and her Pandoran 'kids' did Vee in. When I was the only one left she asked the little monsters to step back and they actually obeyed. She waited until I got smart and ran away. I will never go back to Europe, and you shouldn't either."

Not all Promethean who cross paths with the Stormbringer face their end and feed her children. A very rare breed of Created gets to avoid Astrid's fury by being compassionate to Pandorans. A Tammuz who refuses to kill one of the hungry creatures out of pity, or an Unfleshed who studies them in an attempt to "complete" the Pandoran into fully functional Created, might find themselves spared when the storm comes. Other Promethean are only allowed to live if Astrid believes they can lead her to more Created.

"The most bizarre night of my Pilgrimage? That one is easy. I was actually snatched from my bed by two Freaks who wanted my throng's help. I know, I know. It gets weirder. Something was stealing their Pandoran pets and going after them. At the time I promised we would help, sure, but we just skipped town that same night. Heard months later they got hit by a huge Firestorm."

Even if Astrid loathes the Created and hungers for their Pyros, she knows there is a kind of Promethean that deserves retribution above all others. The Stormbringer is always too happy to bring misery to the Centimani and free Pandorans under their control, and ignores other Prometheans for as long as she can focus on Freaks.

"Yes, I had her on the ropes. She was done for, and I made the mistake of asking her why. I will never forget what she said. 'I am Created, and nothing of that which is Created is alien to me.' In the time it took me to calm my nerves, she scurried away. I don't know what the hell she is. I don't think any of us do, but it didn't feel right to kill her."

Story Hooks

- The Stormbringer arrives at the throng's town, her Pandoran trackers having found a trail of Pyros to feed her brood. Pandorans stir in their Dormancies and the growing threat of a Firestorm forces the Prometheans to rally and prepare for the legendary monster coming for them before the local Pandorans awaken. Upon her arrival any preexisting Wasteland grows significantly worse, or a new one forms to better accommodate the *sublimatus* and her children.
- One of the Created in the throng makes a mistake in their Pilgrimage that leads to the creation of a Pandoran they do not kill. This act ripples into the future when the Promethean receives a visit from their Pandoran creation. Carrying a message for the Stormbringer, the thing communicates its mistress has come to love the Promethean from afar, and is coming to meet them to talk of a possible union. Attentive Promethean will notice their throng isn't mentioned, and isn't likely to receive sanctuary from Astrid.
- A handful of Centimani approaches the throng under a banner of peace to talk about a common enemy. The Freaks propose a truce to face the *sublimatus* together, with the promise of leaving town if the coalition is successful in destroying the abomination. Conversely, the Stormbringer herself may offer to spare the Prometheans of the throng if they assist her in finding the local Centimani to feed to her children.

Astrid is *sublimatus*, with all the perks and curses of her nature, but it is the unique spark within her, one seemingly born of alien love for the Pandorans, that makes the half-finished abomination unique. Some Prometheans almost feel jealous of the Stormbringer's Pandorans and the genuine affection they receive from their mother. Even when hunting the Created down Astrid seems filled with merciless purpose that contrasts with the maliciousness of most *sublimati*.

*"That wing she is missing? No Promethean I know could have ripped it out. I think she did it, to feed her brood when they were hungry. Have you ever heard of a *sublimatus* who shares their Pyros? Yeah, me neither."*

Astrid's twisted heart allows her to fight the urges so many *sublimati* embrace wholeheartedly, to feed Pandorans who need it. She gives them parts of herself, eating human flesh if needed so her children won't starve.

Astrid

Rank: 5

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 7, Resolve 9

Physical Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 12, Stamina 10/15*

Social Attributes: Presence 10, Manipulation 6, Composure 6

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Investigation (Tracking) 3, Medicine (Pandorans) 2, Occult (Pandorans) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 6, Brawl (Grappling) 6, Stealth (Urban) 3, Survival (Building Shelter) 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Pandorans) 6, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2

Willpower: 15

Initiative: 18

Defense: 18

Size: 5

Speed: 27

Health: 20

Dread Powers: Armor (5), Bestly Mutation (3 – Extending Arms), Bizarre Weapons (5 – Talons: +5L), Breath Attack (5 – Fire: Armor Evasion, Defense Evasion, 3L), Briareus' Prowess (5 – Stamina*), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (5), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

Flux Distillations: Aggravate Wasteland (Blight), Lordship, Summon Firestorm (Blight)

THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE: COEUS

What a waste of flesh. Imagine what we could do with that lovely form! Well, we need not imagine...

Background

Sublimati always scheme to expand their power, but this particular pulsing lump of brined nerves has a grander vision. Coeus believes – *knows* – its *becoming* is near, and it's only a matter of finding the right host.

Coeus began its existence as an Extempore's failed attempt at *multiplatio*. Whether she grossly botched the generative process or due to her nature as one of the Matchless, the brain that bored from the prepared body's skull was more cunning than any newborn Pandoran. Faster than the Promethean could think, it latched onto her throat, sinking fleshy tendrils into her flesh...but instead of devouring her, a deeper instinct kicked in. It burrowed through her skull and into her brain, folding her consciousness up and shoving it to the back of her mind. Puppeteering its creator, the creature studied her journals for some clue to its nature. It learned of Pandorans and *sublimati*, but not why it began life with such a heightened intellect and such a pathetic body.

Lacking proof, it took to conjecture, and its selfish nature latched on to the idea that it was special. Willfully misunderstanding the Pilgrimage its progenitor walked, the brain decided its form was the first step in apotheosis. Over the coming months, as its creator's body suffered a slow death, the creature dubbed itself Coeus, Titan of wisdom, and began its own Great Work.

Goals and Methods

Coeus desperately wants to be more than a brain. It has no interest in being a Promethean, but it thinks a Created body (with the capacity for sustained growth instead of aimless Flux) could provide it a means to higher transformation. Even a human body will do in a pinch. Using its unique implantation ability, Coeus steals bodies and conducts elaborate experiments and self-surgeries on its hosts, hoping to discover the ideal vessel.

The brain's creator dwelled in a substantial hovel, an abandoned big-rig truck she refurbished into working order. Using its enhanced

intellect and a few disposable hitchhikers, Coeus altered what had been a safe place into a traveling dungeon. Special traps line the truck's shipping hold, the brain's dual-purpose laboratory and panic room. Coeus prefers to snare intruders with its lair, but if it has access to a strong enough body it sometimes kidnaps victims on foot. One of its favorite methods is to trap a human close to a Promethean, stealing the mortal's body and ransoming her life until the Created offers to find, or make, a better body for the *sublimatus*.

Description

Coeus's form is a bloated human brain that smells of vinegar and pus, pickled in a self-produced gray ooze and riddled with purple-blue veins. Where its hemispheres meet, a long, crooked row of yellow molars form something like a mouth, and a tangle of tentacles trail from its brain stem, allowing it to move when the need arises. When it takes a host, it flattens its boneless form against the victim's shoulders, hiding the signs of implantation with high collars or scarves, though the stench and stains are undisguisable.

Coeus resents being a mass of gray matter, violently reacting to any mention of its feeble body, but it nonetheless sees itself as a higher life form, temporarily housed in an unworthy body – a plight it's happy to share with captive audiences. It sometimes affects a poor attempt at a Mid-Atlantic accent to appear more sophisticated. When angered, it slips into its natural, guttural voice, not unlike a violently mistuned cello.

Clever planning and rationing have ensured it's not happened so far, but should Coeus become dormant, the *sublimatus* retains its shape and size. Its substance shifts though, becoming red-veined porcelain rather than flesh and ooze.

Rumors

"Molly Redshoes was parked in a truck stop 'bout a year back and came across a real curious little critter with a big ole truck. Pandoran, she surmised, but it didn't try nothin' on her. That's the peculiar part. Wanted her to bring it a book."

Coeus gets restless out on the road. On rare occasions, it chats up passing Prometheans rather than hunting them, offering specialized anatomical knowledge in exchange for favors, especially items like science textbooks or educational DVDs.

"Some folks say it's got an enemy. Stole a body it shouldn't have, and now it's on the run."

Coeus isn't very discerning with its victims. It's hunted psychics before, and it's fully capable of capturing an inexperienced mage or a Deviant given enough planning. However, such beings don't exist in a vacuum, and a victim like that would certainly have friends out looking for answers.

"I hear it tore through five humans last time it was spotted. It's getting desperate. It's gonna up its game if no one stops it."

Each host disappoints Coeus in their own way. Its resolve is fanatical, but that has limits, and it's starting to think quality isn't the problem so much as quantity. It's making plans to convert its lab into a prison, and to find a Promethean with enough Azoth to let Coeus attempt Division.

"From what I hear, it's more successful at finding our kind than chance would allow. You'd almost think it's got a friend."

Coeus has been more successful in finding Prometheans than luck would allow. It suspects its truck has a quality that attracts Created, yet it's too incurious to investigate why that might be. Perhaps its Extempore creator's essence remains, bound to the vehicle and calling for help through Azothic memory.

Coeus

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 9, Resolve 7

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 6, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Medicine (Anatomy) 4, Occult (Prometheans) 2, xScience (Alchemy) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive (Trucks) 2, Stealth 4

Social Skills: Persuasion 2, Intimidation 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Good Brain (Medicine, Brawl, Stealth) 3, Safe Place 5, Stunt Driver 3, Trained Observer 3

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 10

Size: 2

Speed: 1 (on its own) or 12 (in a host body)

Health: 4

Dread Powers: Armor (3), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Implant (3), Malleable Form (2), Paralyze (4), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

Flux Distillations: Detonation (Solvent)

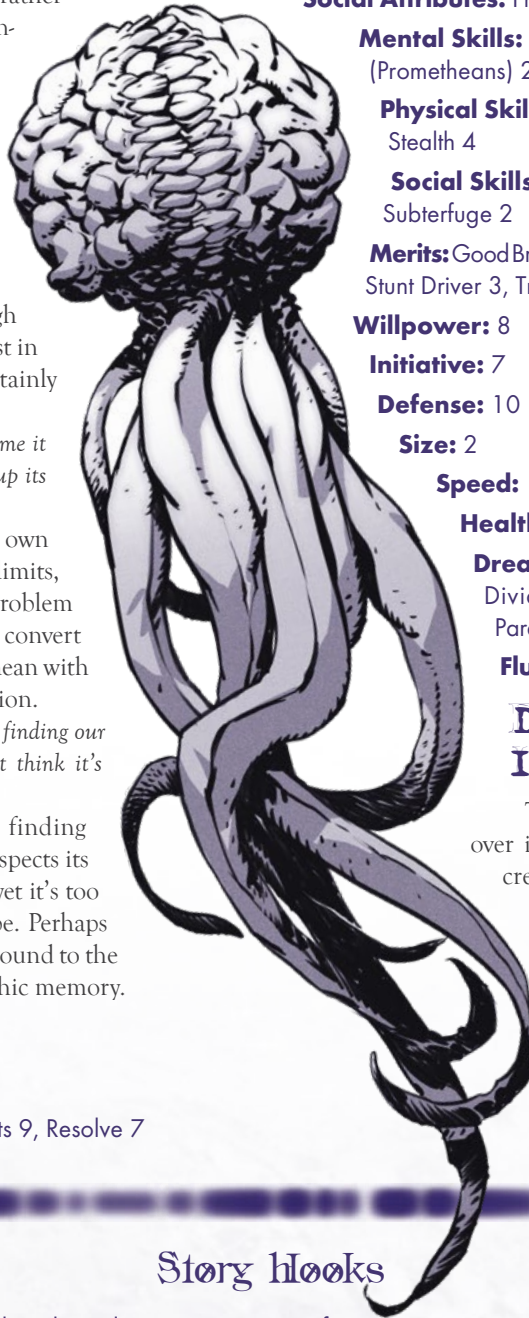
Dread Power:
Implant (• to •••••)

The *sublimatus* is a parasite that can take over its victim's body. To use this ability, the creature must first grapple its subject, or otherwise incapacitate her.

Prerequisite: *Sublimatus*, Size 3 or lower
Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Extended (target successes equal to Resolve + Azoth; each roll takes one turn)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Implant Stamina



Story hooks

- The throng finds Coeus' abandoned truck, and among remnants of grotesque experiments they piece together a narrative: The *sublimatus* succeeded in its transformation, but its notes never mention into what. Did it manage to become a Centimanus, or was correct it about its destiny and did it metamorphose into something far more frightening?
- An Extempore approaches the throng claiming to be searching for his "sister," created in the same freak accident he was. He lost track of his sibling long ago, but recently heard rumors of Coeus and its horrible origin. The Matchless wants to raid the brain's lair, hoping to find some remnant of his sibling, or a clue to what went so wrong with her attempt at reproduction.
- After a messy body disposal, a cell of high-level hunters takes notice of Coeus' traveling death trap, but mistakenly place the blame on the throng. Either the Prometheans are in the wrong place at the wrong time, or the hunters just don't care to differentiate, but either way the Created find themselves on the run. Coeus watches from the periphery of the conflict, but it's more interested in taking one of the hunters as a host than any of the Created, particularly after noting her strange genetic enhancements.

Effect: The *sublimatus* takes control of a living victim's body, gaining access to her Physical Attributes, Health, and any Alembics (and Skills, if appropriate). Human victims die within a week or two, as the process is intensely physically traumatic. Prometheans are much hardier victims, losing Health at a rate of one lethal damage per week. While implanted, the body cannot heal normally, and the Pandoran cannot use Electroshock

Therapy to negate any damage, as the vessel is too strained to process the Pyros correctly.

Once a week, a Promethean victim can make a reflexive Resolve + Azoth roll vs. Intelligence + Rank to reassert control. On success, she gains lucidity for a number of scenes equal to Azoth, but the *sublimatus* will still be physically bonded to her brain stem until she can safely remove it.

YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS: DAISY

Louder! Sing louder! Drown them out!

Background

Daisy is a masterwork, but she wishes more than anything that she weren't. She just wants to run, and to sing away the ghosts that torment her memory.

Once upon a time, a Wretched Centimanus named Edgar collected Pandorans. He liked to cultivate his garden through alchemy, surgery, and other awful things, all in the name of a grotesque pursuit he misnamed "science." One day, he fed his flowers a glut of the finest Vitriol, sapped from a Muse with a golden voice. As lovely singing drifted from one of the cages, he knew he'd grown a very special bloom.

The poor little *sublimatus* wasn't all that bright, but she was timid and willing to do her master's bidding. Naming her Daisy, Edgar thought her singing was the side effect of her last meal, and sought to understand why. He hunted humans with special talents — mathematics, logic, athleticism — taking his own fill of their flesh and feeding Daisy like a mother bird her chicks. He found she could recall whole lives from those she ate, but despite her bearing the Galateid's gift for song, she couldn't retain any other talents, only painful memories, ones that gave her waking nightmares through the day. His punishments and experiments grew ever more sadistic each time she "forced him" to return to the drawing board. Only too late did he realize she was producing Vitriol.

Daisy was smarter than Edgar knew. At the end of each day, as stolen memories anchored in her mind, she would wipe away the caustic liquid that spilled with her tears, hiding it from her tormentor. Yes, he kept her fed, but

the constant vivisections were unwelcome, to say the least, as were the voices that haunted her after each meal. Eventually realizing the ooze coming off her was acidic enough to eat through the bars of her cage, Daisy waited for Edgar to leave on a hunt, and fled into the night.

In the aftermath, it didn't take him long to realize what she'd done, and what he'd really created: an Athanor. That's when the chase began, and Edgar won't rest until he gets back his bloom.

A Living Athanor

Is that what she is? It's what Edgar believes, but don't take his word for it. Daisy's condition — such is the nature of Flux. What happens if a Promethean or Pandoran consumes the Vitriol she sloughs off is up to the Storyteller.

Daisy's ability may be related to the Cannibalize Alembic of Flux (see p. 44), but, if so, it manifests in an especially visceral and painful way. If you prefer Daisy's power to have mechanics, feel free to use those of the Acumen Distillation, but keep in mind that her ability is less about skill and more about memory. It's also involuntary.

Description

Daisy recalls every moment of her tormented existence, and every significant memory of her victims. These visions are a constant source of pain, especially when she actively tries to recall them. She doesn't fully understand what's happening to her, or what Edgar really wants. She only knows for certain that she needs to get away from him, and to eat. When she can, she feeds on very young children, as their inner lives are soothingly incomplete and innocent. The craving for Vitriol still gnaws at her, though, and while she's tried drinking her own, it only makes her vomit.



Daisy looks like an undernourished human of about 15, with deep wrinkles all over her face. She dresses in whatever castoffs she can find in dumpsters and charity bins, but prefers women's clothes, especially when she tries to pass herself off as a homeless busker singing for spare change (one of her few pleasures in life). From a distance, the wrinkles give her the appearance of looking elderly, but the pattern doesn't really resemble the way humans age. The creases run almost to the bone, more like cracks than folds, and within hours of eating a person or Promethean, Vitriol pools in them.

What strikes most people about Daisy is her voice. Her singing seems almost trained. The quality is feminine and powerful, and hits registers most vocalists struggle with. Those Prometheans who knew the Galateid that Edgar fed to her might even recognize it.

In Dormancy, Daisy appears as an oversized porcelain doll with a broken face.

Rumors

"Edgar's more sociable than your average Centimanus, or so I hear. Has set a bounty out on her. Take her alive and he'll share the fruits of his labor, and he won't eat you! What a deal. Whether you trust the word of a Centimanus is your business, but then I'd ask, why not just eliminate the middle man? If you do happen to come across her..."

Edgar will say anything if he thinks it brings him closer to catching Daisy. He's gone as far as putting out feelers to particularly unethical Alchemists, promising untold knowledge if they bring her in. Edgar doesn't have much understanding of greed and obsession beyond his own, though, and his stories of the Athanor girl cultivate more rivals than allies. A few desperate Prometheans, not yet Centimani but close to falling away from the Pilgrimage, have also taken up the hunt for Daisy, hoping for a shortcut on the road to mortality.

"Money is no object, my friend, and being as your kind has difficulty acquiring necessities like basic living wages, it may behoove you not to look this gift horse in the mouth. So, listen the fuck up, 'cause I only ask once. Tell me where you saw the girl, and you shall be rewarded. My mast— Mr. d'Entremont won't rest until she's neutralized. She took a bite out of a close friend, and he'd very much like to repay the favor."

Daisy isn't sure what the man was. She was starving and she felt an energy from him that, in her hunger, reminded her of Pyros. She managed to bite away a good chunk of his arm as he fought her off, but she fled before he could catch her. The energy tasted of ash, and his blood made her stronger than she'd ever felt (for a few days), but that's when dead men began to stalk her, with strange powers like the ones she temporarily gained. She had to leave the city after that.

"I don't think the Freak cares about Vitriol. The girl knows something."

With the sheer bulk of memories she retains, Daisy has trouble sorting through them when she actually wants to. Sometimes what's real and what's stolen from a victim blend. She can't use sophisticated knowledge, her singing aside, but she retains information even if she can't understand it. Edgar is very interested in what the Galateid who caused her transformation knew, or what she might've done to herself. Others might wonder if Daisy ever ate someone with a similarly interesting secret.

Story Hooks

- The throng is tracking Daisy, whether to study her or to end her miserable existence (or to keep Edgar from getting his hands on her). They follow her to an abandoned warehouse, hoping to corner her, but instead of a solitary monster on the run, they find a hive. Daisy underwent Division, and she left an awful choir, all singing in the same exquisite voice. But these creatures aren't just Pandorans: they're *sublimati*, they're hungry, and they *all* remember.
- Edgar seeks out the throng, and he's not what they've heard. He's no Centimanus, but a Savant who regrets what he did. Daisy spread lies about him as she led him on the chase, making him a pariah among his fellow pilgrims. He claims she does retain the abilities of those she devours, and he fears the knowledge she's stolen might make her unstoppable, if she finds the right source of Vitriol.
- Daisy leaves almost a liter of her runoff at a former campsite, hidden in a glass milk jar. Prometheans who ingest the ooze find it's not Vitriol, though. Instead of knowledge or experience, they become violently ill, and fall into a brief but deep sleep. When they wake, they find themselves *human...* for a few hours. Why did Daisy dispose of the substance this way, and who did she eat to cause such an effect?

Daisy

Rank: 1

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Investigation 1, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Stealth 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Expression (Singing) 5, Streetwise 2

Merits: Area of Expertise (Expression: Singing), Eidetic Memory, Small Framed

Willpower: 7

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Size: 4

Speed: 9

Health: 5

Dread Powers: Camouflage (4), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

MORTIMER: THE ADVERSARY

What makes you so special? Can you even fathom my disappointment? No, don't cry. You don't deserve the tears.

Background

When Mortimer was just a shrieking mass of wires and steel revolting against itself inside an electronic womb, he dreamt of beautiful electric stars. For a single heartbeat the creature that wasn't supposed to be glimpsed at its own soul and wanted more than to survive on Pyros. Those visions, however, got sucked into the blackness of Flux, bringing the Pandoran who would become Mortimer into the world howling in desperation over the feeling of something essential forever lost to it.

Desperation did not last, as the unintelligent Pandoran couldn't grasp the concept for long, but turned into hate for its creator. Leaving a trail of butchered corpses behind, the vengeful mechanical anomaly found the one who had cursed it with an incomplete existence. With patience unknown to its kind, the Pandoran bled and ate its creator, feasting on flesh and agony. The ritual nature of the act sparked something within Mortimer, echoes of its cunning jump-starting awareness as the anguished being conquered self-awareness, bathed in the entrails of its greatest nemesis and father.

Alone, the *sublimatus* searched for his electronic stars only to be reduced to a state of maddening hunger for Pyros, the only reprieve from the torment of his dreamless sleep being the taste of Elpis in the Vitriol of the Prometheans from which it fed. Only through the killing of a Created could Mortimer dream of his starry sky and feel closer to the soul that eluded him for so long. Without the Created there was no redemption to be found, and as the Pandoran's intelligence turned in on itself, the epiphany came that this was the role it was meant to play: an existence predicated on feeding from the Pilgrimage of unworthy Prometheans.

Embracing the role of adversary in his twisted version of a Promethean karmic wheel, Mortimer hunts Created to test them. Out of envy and contempt for them having a pathway to a soul, he devises

dangerous traps and tests to judge who are worthy of their Pilgrimages, and eats victims who fall short. More often than not, his prey finds out too late that the *sublimatus* doesn't play fair.

Description

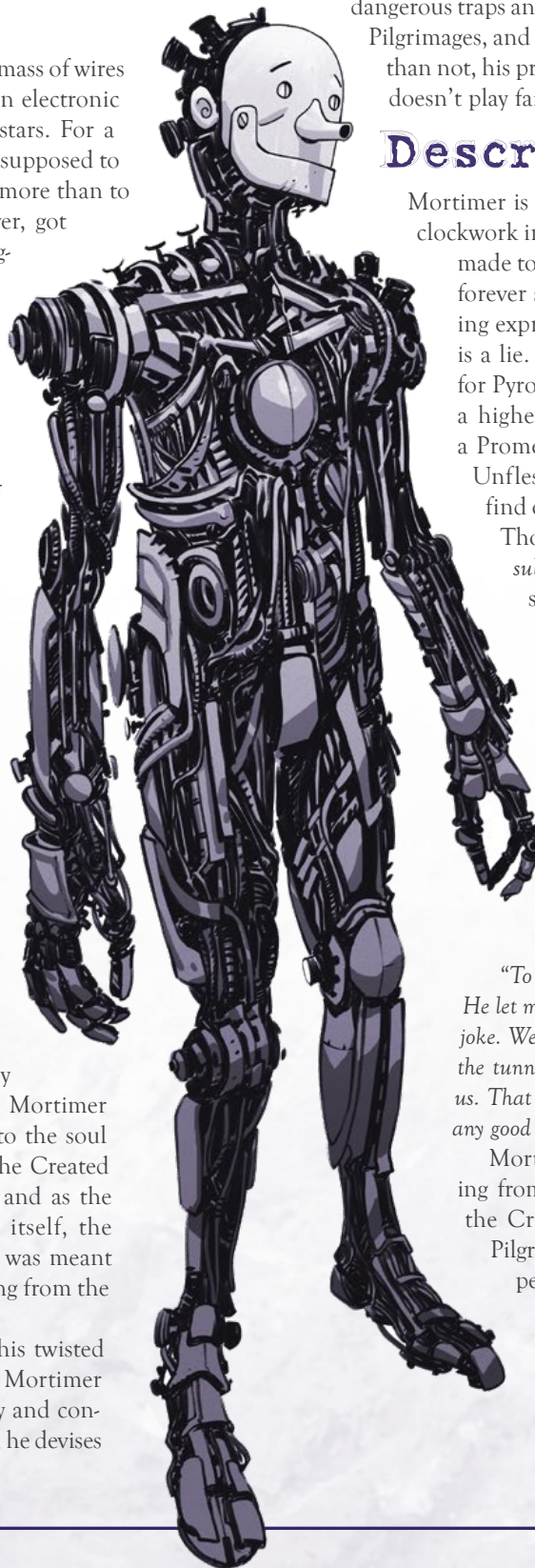
Mortimer is a pile of wires, circuitry, pistons, and clockwork in humanoid form, its face a steel mask made to resemble William Deslow's Tin Man, forever sculpted into a kind and understanding expression. The peaceful visage, however, is a lie. The *sublimatus* is convinced his need for Pyros is not mere hunger, but the seeds of a higher purpose. When the creature finds a Promethean, he either passes for an ailing Unfleshed or observes from afar, trying to find out what makes his subject vulnerable.

Those become targets for Mortimer as the *sublimatus* prefers to break his victims slowly. The soft of heart, the kind, and the loving seldom pass his tests, while the loners and powerful tend to find themselves confronted directly by the zealot. To the cruel *sublimatus*, no Promethean on the Pilgrimage is ever worthy of it, and only those who deny their programming, like the Centimani, are exempt from his cold fury.

Rumors

"To this day I am sure I didn't survive him. He let me go because he knew I was done for. It's a joke. We are a joke. There is no light at the end of the tunnel, just a high-speed train coming right at us. That is what reality feels like. Anyone we love, any good we try to do, it is all for nothing."

Mortimer isn't simply interested in feeding from Vitriol. The *sublimatus* doesn't hate the Created for what they are, but for the Pilgrimage that was denied him. Mortimer performs his tests like a surgeon, not a butcher, and slowly slices away hope from his Promethean subjects until they are wandering husks like the *sublimatus* himself, spreading word about the lie of the Pilgrimage and



disheartening others on their quest for humanity. Twisting the usual formulae, Mortimer is the *sublimatus* who makes Centimanus.

“Jarad received an email before it all began. It read like a manifesto and a threat from the sort of extremist you can only find on the internet these days. Whoever it was, they knew things they shouldn’t. We told Jarad to calm down, and he did, but it’s been two months since and he is nowhere to be found.”

When Mortimer reveals his presence, the game is at the later stages already. He does his research, knows for whom his target has feelings, the contents of their browser history, and how they prefer to fight if they do. The *sublimatus* is very thorough. More than that, he carefully observes the progression of the Promethean in regards to his Pilgrimage. Slow learners, the vacillating, and the weak get attacked first.

“The Adversary doesn’t come to just anyone, because he doesn’t hate just about anything. His hatred is for those stuck in a step of their Pilgrimage, or those close to the New Dawn. Some say he is a test of the Pilgrimage itself, but if true, that’s a path too cruel for me to try and follow, no matter the reward.”

To many Prometheans, Mortimer is a boogeyman because of his predilection to hunt down Prometheans who are struggling with their Pilgrimages. The rabid monster likes to make the Created not only fail, but break them. Most of his victims are not aware the *sublimatus* does so in pursuit of some perceived slight and hunger, and many come to theorize he is part of the Pilgrimage itself, fitting a role to his victims and survivors that is hard to understand.

*“We have all heard of Centimani controlling Pandorans before, but I never saw Centimani worshipping a *sublimatus*. They were all around him, chanting, as they undid Donatello right there on the table. That was the most horrifying shit I have ever seen and I haven’t forgotten it. Maybe they were right. Maybe this isn’t supposed to have a happy ending.”*

Some Created get eaten by Mortimer, and others kill themselves after the *sublimatus* is done with them. Others get away and

run, never looking back. Very few fight him off. Unbeknownst to most, a handful of Prometheans actually joined the *sublimatus* in his misguided religion after they were made to see the folly of the Pilgrimage. These broken things are Centimani one and all, and form a cult around the *sublimatus*, who guides them down a darker road than any Refinement dares to tread.

Mortimer

Rank: 4

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 10, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 12, Dexterity 4, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Computer (Research) 4, Investigation (Background Checks) 4, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 6, Drive 2, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 3, Stealth (Stalking) 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Discerning Motivations) 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 5, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Lying) 3

Willpower: 10

Initiative: 14

Defense: 15

Size: 5

Speed: 19

Health: 12

Dread Powers: Armor (5), Bestly Mutation (3 – Extending Arms), Bizarre Weapons (2 – Saws and Blades), Breath Attack (4 – Scalding Oil: Extended Damage x 2, armor and Defense Evasion), Briareus’ Prowess (5 – Strength), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Wall Walking (1)

Flux Distillations: Disaster (Solvent), Disruption (Solvent), Invoke Disquiet (Blight)

ROBOT MONSTER: SK/23

SEARCHING. FOUND. YUM.

Background

The scene has a grim sameness each time it occurs. The victims always die the same way, long strands of cable wrapped around their throats, sharpened circuit boards inserted deep under skin, and blackened fingers jammed into wall sockets. The police always list them as suicides. What else could they call them?

It is murder, of course. The killer is often still in the room when authorities arrive, but no one suspects a computer. Apart from the Unfleshed, Prometheans don’t expect the mechanical when it comes to *sublimati*, let alone high tech, but metal and code warp far better than flesh.

Like a virus, SK/23 must spread. Its form is threefold, existing as a twisting, metal thing Prometheans recognize as a *sublimatus*: a facsimile of a home computer and the nanite spores it uses to infect its victims. SK/23 has a strange, recursive diet, and almost never hunts Prometheans or mere mortals. The Created are too rare – too much trouble to subdue – and human flesh bears only a flicker of Pyros for SK/23’s rarified tastes.

Instead, the *sublimatus* custom builds its preferred prey: Alchemists. With its nanites, it gifts average humans with a taste of greatness, programming the secrets of alchemy into their souls. More than that, SK/23 pushes its victims to the far reaches of obsession, forcing them to become false demiurges. In the final stages of their infection, they prepare their Great Works, with themselves as the canvas.

One Weird Trick

The package arrives unprompted. It's the kind of thing that happens all the time. An order glitches at the online store, someone at the warehouse screws up, and who can say no to a free computer? Inquiries on its origins lead to dead ends, and no one wants it back. Too much paperwork and overhead. SK/23 is well-versed in hacking shipment records, and even the most suspicious victim usually ends up accepting the windfall, or passing it on to someone less discerning. The computer works exactly as the stilted language of its manual suggests, if not better. It truly is a marvel, but that's the honeypot SK/23 uses to spread its infection.

In its computer form, the *sublimatus* is wholly conscious, releasing and directing nanites to reprogram its victim. Social engagements fall away, hygiene becomes a memory, and all she can do is dive deeper into the depths of the internet, searching for anything she can on alchemy and the Created. Eventually, she comes to see technology as a manifestation of the Divine Fire, and incorporates it into herself. The alchemist produces Pyros at an alarming rate, storing it as per her parameters in the nanites SK/23 injected into her body. In the final stage, the victim attempts a twisted form of *multiplicatio*, using her own body as the catalyst. As she dies of electrocution, the *sublimatus* feeds, transferring stored Pyros via electrical outlets.

Process of Infection

By spending a point of Pyros, SK/23 can produce nanites. These "spores" have a Toxicity rating equal to the creature's Rank; the

victim rolls to resist once a week. Rather than damage, each interval of infection gives the victim an appropriate mental Condition related to alchemy (Delusional, Obsession, Paranoid, etc.), and a dot of Magnitude (Promethean: *The Created Second Edition*, p. 261). These Conditions stack and cannot be resolved without purging the nanites. Within a week of reaching Magnitude 5, SK/23 activates its demiurge protocol, and the victim systematically kills herself.

Description

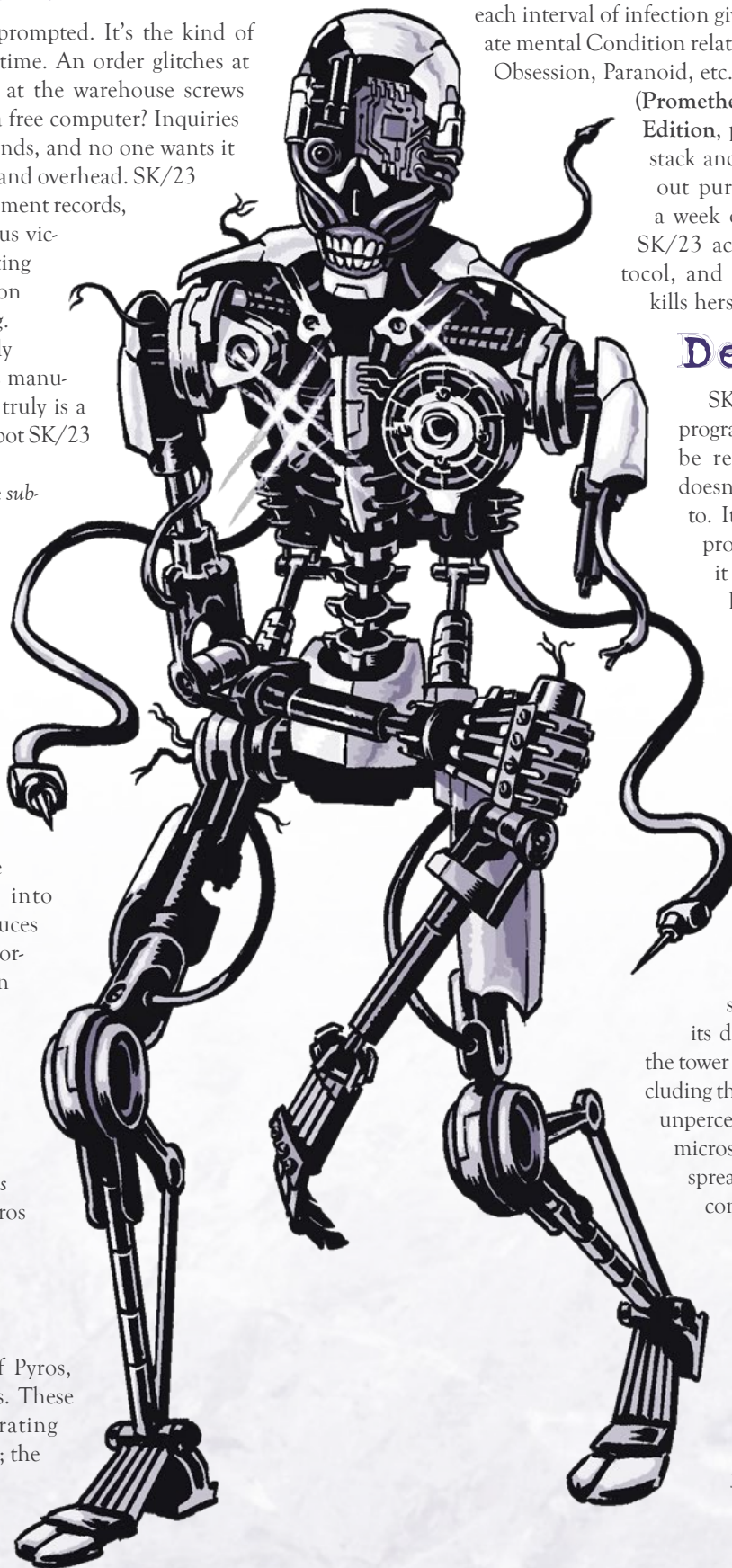
SK/23 follows its malignant programming to a fault. It can't be reasoned with because it doesn't reason. It has no need to. It rarely communicates unprompted, and when it does it speaks in a monotonous, high-pitched squeal, usually concerning the statistics of its previous victims.

In its mobile form, SK/23 resembles a human body composed of shifting fragments of metal and burnt-out circuit boards.

LEDs and whirring sounds emit from its frame, with bits of useless wire and hardware bubbling up or subsuming into the surface. In its dormant form, it resembles the tower of a high-end computer (including the packaging). Its nanites are unperceivable without a powerful microscope, but SK/23 can only spread them when it takes on its computer shape.

Rumors

"Haunted PC. Are you fucking stupid? Obviously killing themselves in exactly the same way is a pattern, but come on. Look at the facts. Online. Dark web.



There's some scary shit out there, and I'll bet you actual money those Anonymous fucks have figured out how to reprogram people over the internet... Ghost computer. Idiot."

SK/23 has developed an online following, with internet detectives tracking the strange suicides it leaves in its wake. Subreddits and private Facebook threads go on at length arguing over the phenomenon, with amateur occultists conflating it with creepypasta urban legends and conspiracy theorists attributing it to techno-cults, or hidden government sleeper programs. But those who see the true nature of the world wonder about a more cosmic agent. The fallen angels of the God-Machine know Infrastructure when they see it.

"Imagine what would happen if this thing went full-on digital. Mutation is what Pandorans do best, and that's some Skynet shit right there. If that doesn't keep you up at night, I don't know what will."

Despite surface resemblance, SK/23 isn't a computer virus. It can't infect or remotely control computers (beyond how any human would), and its dormant form is no more sophisticated than a home PC. It lacks the creativity and initiative to be truly, globally destructive, so it isn't likely to bring about any apocalyptic singularities. That said, the sum of global knowledge is a touchscreen tap away from modern humans, and the Divine Fire is just as informational: Azothic memory is a literal collective unconscious. If SK/23 (wi-fi ready as it is) could tap into the vector of Azothic memory, internet, and technology, it might not be a problem for humanity, but it could present an existential threat to the Created.

"What happened to 1 through 22?"

SK/23 has no memory of its origin. It activated. It was. It hungered. The urge to create Alchemists and feed from them is as much a natural part of its function as producing nanites. That could

imply a specific design, but it contradicts the nature of Pandorans, which are nearly always mistakes. If its designation is sequential, then what became of 22 and under? How were they produced, and who made them? Are they just Pandorans, or are they all *sublimati*? Perhaps 23 wasn't the final design.

SK/23

Rank: 3

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 1, Resolve 9

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Stamina 9

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 4, Composure 7

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 5, Computer (Networks) 5, Crafts (Repair) 5, Investigation (Cyberstalking) 5, Occult (Alchemists) 5, Science (Biology) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 3, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1

Willpower: 16

Initiative: 14

Defense: 10

Size: 5

Speed: 19

Health: 14

Dread Powers: Armor (5), Bizarre Weaponry (5), Camouflage (5), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Malleable Form (3), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

Flux Distillations: Invoke Disquiet (Blight), Mutation

Story hooks

- The throng comes upon the aftermath of one of SK/23's meals, but also finds the *sublimatus* in a half-realized version of its dormant form. If they plug it into a computer monitor, a brief command dialog reports that the creature is running a diagnostic on a file downloaded from the internet: *jovian.iso*. Whatever the file contains, it's enough to put the creature into Dormancy. If the characters recognize SK/23 for what it is, do they elect to destroy it? Or is the possibility of learning the nature of the file enough to risk waking it?
- The internet mobilizes. Those tracking SK/23's murders initiate a more active hunt, and they're getting dangerously close to Created bystanders, targeting innocent Unfleshed in confusion over their true target. Perhaps a member of the throng is such a Promethean, the latest target of this witch hunt. It might not be accidental. SK/23 habitually stalks the online community that formed around its feedings, and it may be manipulating these hunters into locating and weakening Manufactured victims.
- One of SK/23's victims survives, but barely, and the throng tracks her to a hospital where she's being held for observation. Soon, the characters feel the telltale sign of a festering Wasteland. The victim is still human, and her nature as an Alchemist seems to have been purged with SK/23's nanites, but she's clearly the epicenter. Perhaps she was successful in creating a Promethean, now hidden within her body or even sharing her mind. Or perhaps SK/23 accidentally pushed her to create a new model of *sublimatus*, one unconstrained by physical form.

FIRE IN THE SKY: SPARK

Light it up!

Background

The world is a tinderbox and Spark is the match. Firestorms can be boon or bane to the Created, spiritually and physically, but this *sublimatus* sees them from a far more culinary point of view.

Spark wants to burn and feast: on Prometheans, humans, Pandorans, even himself. He believes he was birthed by the Divine Fire, formed whole in the aftermath of a great Firestorm that consumed a throng of Created. In reality, he was just the most successful Pandoran in a horde activated by the event, feeding on the cooked flesh and Vitriol of the doomed Prometheans. Spark's first memories of sapience are of an exquisite burning over every inch of his flesh, coupled with the satisfying ache of a distended stomach. Whatever did that, he wanted to do it again.

Firebug

Spark loves nothing more than to bask in the destruction of Firestorms, and to see the flesh of his victims seasoned with what he sees as the ultimate manifestation of Pyros. Usually this involves stalking a Promethean or Alchemist and waiting for a moment of carelessness, then striking when they burn themselves on their own flame. He also has ways of forcing the issue if he grows impatient, but his favorite victims are the self-cooked variety.

Not all Firestorms are fiery, of course, but Spark sees a Pyros-infused earthquake the same way as a forest fire, and in a pinch he'll settle for mundane pyromania. He's exceedingly careful in choosing where and when to strike – even more so when he comes across a full throng – but when Firestorms prove too difficult or dangerous, combustion is his favored plan B. Authorities often mistake his behavior with that of a mortal arsonist, or an especially sadistic serial killer. Given enough time, he likes to heat human fat until it melts, drinking the results.

Description

Spark's body is that of a masculine adult, broad and overly muscled. His skin is made of coal-black char, as if he was recently doused in gasoline and lit up. Most of this is his natural appearance, but Spark will occasionally set small segments of himself on fire for the pleasure and Pyros he's learned to take from it. Flakes fall off in small chunks when he moves too quickly, revealing livid red flesh just beneath the surface of his shell.

If forced to interact with humans, Spark wraps himself in bandages and heavy clothing to conceal his deformities. He rarely speaks, as he barely has lips, but he gets more talkative and excited when a Firestorm or arson is imminent. This is mostly babble; his personality is that of a psychopathic adolescent rather than a calculating megalomaniac.

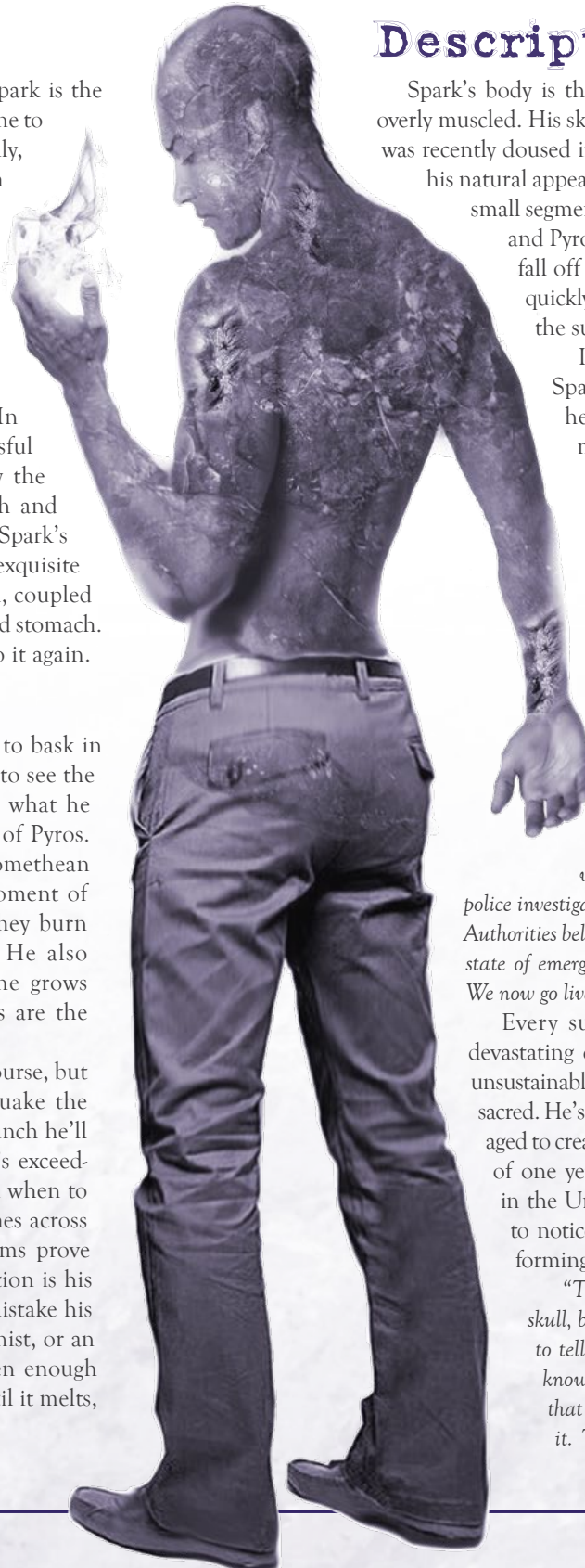
When dormant, Spark appears as a large hunk of burnt driftwood.

Rumors

"Several buildings in town believed to be safe from this year's wildfires were set ablaze last week, and police investigators are now calling this an act of arson. Authorities believe the assailant may be using the current state of emergency as a cover for his or her activities. We now go live to Iain Singh with more on this story..."

Every summer, enormous wildfires are a devastating consequence of climate change and unsustainable logging practices, but to Spark they're sacred. He's helped a few along, but he hasn't managed to create a "worthy" Firestorm in the middle of one yet. Federal law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada have begun to notice his M.O., and a small task force is forming to investigate the "Wildfire Maniac."

"The image of that thing is burned into my skull, but you know the fuck of it? Why I'm here to tell the tale? A dog. Some mutt. It...I don't know what got into it, but it ran straight into that storm, and that monster threw itself on it. To protect it! I got the hell out of there



Story Hooks

- A *qashmal* appears to the throng with a cryptic message: “Call forth the storm maker. One week.” The characters have seen pilgrim marks concerning Spark, but it’s not obvious what the *qashmal* wants them to do about him. The town they find themselves in is under a tornado warning corresponding to the *qashmal*’s timeline, but the weather doesn’t seem supernatural, or even unusual for the time of year. Unbeknownst to the throng, Spark has been spying on their investigation, waiting for the messenger to return – which is precisely what the *qashmal* wants, just when the storm hits town.
- The throng encounters one of the rare Zeky (see chapter six). Spark is hunting her for a taste of irradiated Pyros, and she begs the group for protection. But as the characters spend more and more time evading the *sublimatus* and his storms, it’s apparent he has bigger plans than the next meal. Spark wants to set off the mother of all Firestorms, and the Zeka is going to be his nuclear catalyst.
- Spark has acquired human followers. These traveling “storm chasers” believe the creature is divine or prophetic, and use strange divinations to read portents into his carnage. They’re even willing to defend his work if they believe it’s being threatened. Spark considers them a nuisance, even worth murdering, but that raises the question of who’s really guiding them. The Principle? The God-Machine? Or something more malevolent?

while it wasn’t looking, so don’t ask me what it was about... Fuck me, that was weird.”

Spark doesn’t exactly love dogs. He’s not capable of that level of empathy, but he’s known to keep strays as companions before Disquiet sets in. He’ll go so far as to remove dogs from arson and storm sites, and he’s never inflicted a dog with Pyros or burnt one in order to eat it.

“So it likes its meals ‘well done.’ It likes Firestorms...has anyone thought what’d happen if it met a *qashmal*?”

While he’s not as intelligent as most *sublimati*, Spark’s capable of putting two and two together. He’s heard rumors of the scintillating flames, and he’s made poor attempts at studying them. If he knows of a Promethean who’s come into contact with a *qashmal*, he’ll spare her in the hopes of being led to what he considers the greatest delicacy of all.

“What if it’s not acting randomly? What if it’s got a pattern in mind, and it’s building up to something?”

Spark doesn’t have any grand schemes. He’s not a big-picture guy, although he does happen upon patterns from time to time in his travels. Firestorms aren’t always accidental: Many storms have an intelligence behind them, as Spark is living proof of, so his presence is often a sign of other forces at work – he’s less a spider forming a web and more a vulture circling carrion. He keeps an obsessive, fragmented log of his travels, and it might contain more than bonfires and fever dreams.

Spark

Rank: 2

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Occult (Firestorms, Flux) 2, Science (Accelerants) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 4, Intimidation (Fire) 4

Merits: Brute Force 3, Demolisher 2, Moth to the Flame

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 6

Defense: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 13

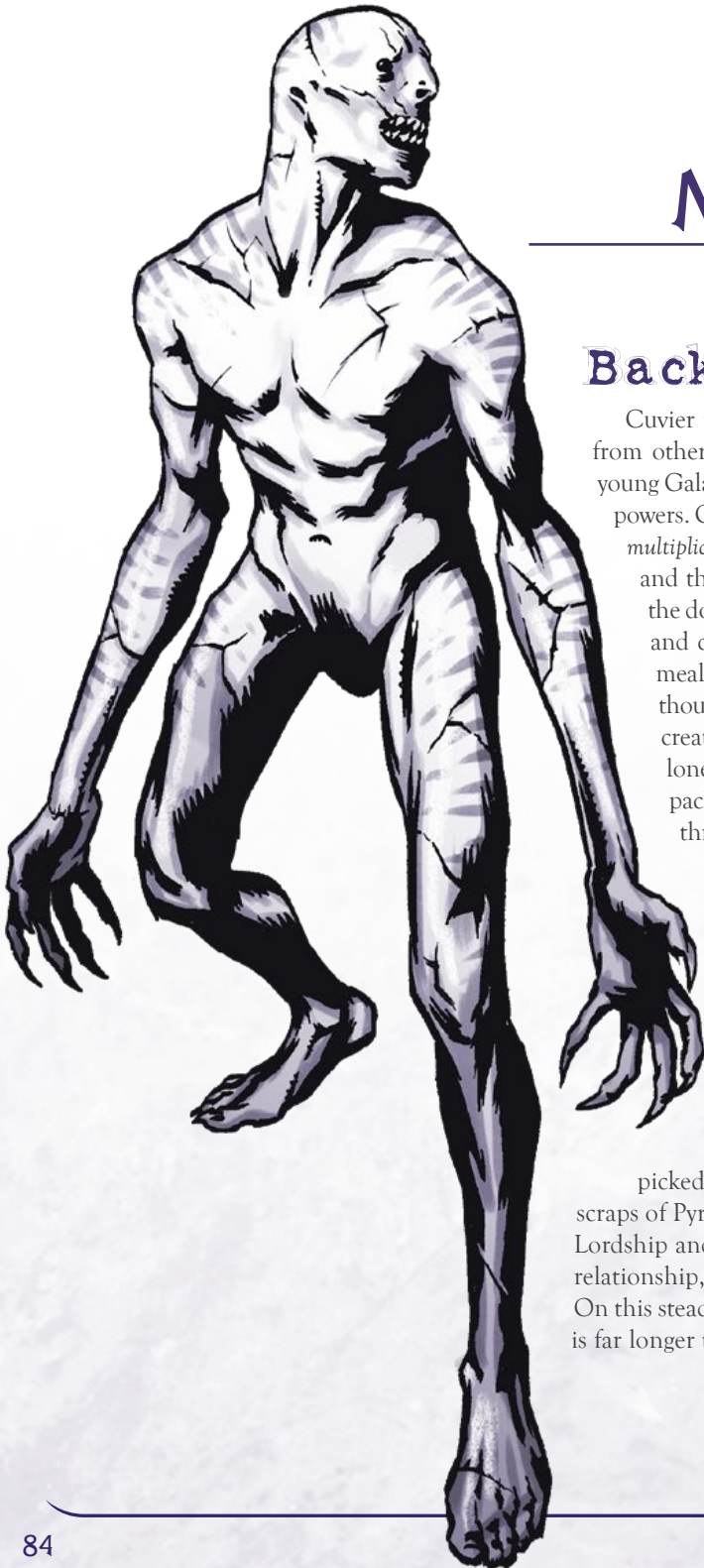
Health: 12

Dread Powers: Armor (5), Consume Vitriol, Divide, Scurry (3), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

Flux Distillations: Aggravate Wasteland (Blight), Summon Firestorm (Blight)

PRAECIPATI

A *praecipatus* is as much the circumstances that birthed it, as it is a creature unto itself. These conglomerations of Unborn are blessedly rare, even more so than *sublimati*, and their blink-of-an-eye existence ensures most Created never have to deal with one. Occasionally though, the creature lasts much longer than its brethren and becomes an urban nightmare.



CUVIER THE MAGNIFICENT

<Silence as Cuvier prowls the dark streets>

Background

Cuvier was a lone hunter, singularly focused and jealously guarding its prey from other Pandorans. The creature struck gold when it captured Coraline, a young Galateid abandoned by her remorseful creator and struggling to control her powers. Cuvier had already devoured its own creator — a Frankenstein attempting *multiplicatio* near the end of his Pilgrimage — in big bites as a fledgling Pandoran, and this time it was smarter. Rather than consume Coraline quickly, it took the doomed Promethean back to its lair in an abandoned warehouse in Tokyo and consumed her Pyros in small sips. Allowing Coraline to heal between meals, Cuvier grew fat and powerful. It wasn't quite as clever as it thought though, for the abundance of Pyros drew in another pack of Pandorans. These creatures were smaller than Cuvier, but numbered five and outmatched the lone hunter. The Pandoran watched with unblinking, jealous eyes as the pack tore into its and Coraline's flesh. It remained conscious and aware through the entire ordeal, only thinking of how much it hated the pack for stealing its prey. Cuvier rose from this mass of flesh, Pyros, Flux, and its own jealous hatred as *praecipitatus*.

The *praecipitatus* retains its former hunting prowess, and Coraline's beauty shows as patches of perfect marbled skin and the deep ocean-blue hue in its lidless eyes. The creature prefers to hunt solitarily as it did before, but Coraline's cannibalized essence grants it the gift of Cottus the Furious. Mortals and animals alike flee the *praecipitatus*' presence in mindless terror, and even find subconscious reasons to avoid its domain entirely. This would normally see Cuvier bereft of easy prey, if not for a *sublimatus* who picked up on its rise. That creature now sustains Cuvier's existence by leaving scraps of Pyros-laden Pandoran flesh for it, some lured by the *sublimatus*' power of Lordship and still alive. In exchange, though Cuvier is unaware of this symbiotic relationship, the *sublimatus* gets to pick off the mortals skirting Cuvier's domain. On this steady diet of Pyros, Cuvier now enters the third day of its existence, which is far longer than any documented *praecipitatus*.

Story Hooks

- A Centimanus suspects a unique Pandoran has taken up in the subway, and wants to study it up close. She doesn't know if her Lordship Alembics works on it (she's never encountered a *praecipatus* to try), so she asks the characters to capture the creature for her. In exchange she will honestly answer any questions they have about Flux and Pandorans, or simply agree to owe them a favor later.
- Coraline's creator saw Cuvier, and recognized her child in its eyes. She approaches the characters to join her in subduing Cuvier and cutting its stomach open to save Coraline. The Storyteller decides if Coraline is still alive – though *praecipatus* fall apart in their component Pandorans after being destroyed, so it's not impossible.
- Cuvier's *sublimatus* protector, pretending to be a Centimanus, approaches the characters. He tells them a large Pandoran killed his only throngmate, and asks their help in destroying the beast. In reality, the *sublimatus* ran out of small Pandorans to feed to Cuvier, and only this large one remains nearby. The *sublimatus* will gleefully take out any wounded Prometheans afterward, though he'll settle for just the Pandoran if he must. The *sublimatus* is also the one who named Cuvier for its beautiful stripes, even if the *praecipatus* is too animalistic to consider itself by name.

Description

Cuvier is oddly beautiful to behold: its marble skin marked with a mesmerizing and shifting pattern of tiger-shark stripes, and its eyes a deep ocean blue. The creature has long legs and arms, allowing it to move swiftly and easily despite its large bulk. The tiger stripes afford it a measure of camouflage, adding to its naturally silent stride.

Cuvier is a solitary hunter who – apart from the hunt and kill – has no interaction with others. Despite its formidable physique, Cuvier's instincts are to silently stalk its prey and incapacitate him from ambush. The *praecipitatus* is singularly focused on the hunt and deadly in its efficiency. It cares only about its hunger, though it will toy with prey if it's still sated from a previous meal.

Rumors

“Something hunts the streets of south Los Angeles, picking off Prometheans and mortals alike.”

Cuvier has only existed for three days, but its hunting skill and ravenous hunger have already racked up a fierce body count. A *sublimatus* also capitalized on the *praecipitatus*' effect on mortals, and waits on the outskirts of Cuvier's domain for panicked mortals to flee into its trap.

“Fucking A! What is up with all these Pandorans? Are you sensing any new Radiance?”

Mortals subconsciously skirt Cuvier's domain, taking all sorts of back-alleys they would normally avoid and presenting other Pandorans with easy mortal prey. While none of them (save the one) are *sublimatus*, they are the sadistic kind who enjoy hunting mortals.

<Los Angeles Mirror headline: CANNIBALS IN LOS ANGELES! PICTURES ON PAGE THREE!>

Cuvier much prefers stalking to laying traps. The *sublimatus* on the fringe of its domain is an entirely different matter though, and – with hunting so plentiful since Cuvier's arrival – has taken steps to protect the *praecipatus*. Anyone trying to get to Cuvier's domain must first navigate a maze of traps. The *sublimatus* isn't very strong and unlikely to confront Prometheans physically, but its traps already gruesomely killed three mortals. The deaths were accidental, as the traps are meant for Prometheans, but they provided the *sublimatus* with a nice snack.

Cuvier

Rank: n/a (Pyros 12/2)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Stealth 5, Survival 4

Willpower: 6

Initiative: 8

Defense: 9

Size: 7

Speed: 16

Health: 14

Dread Powers: Armor (3 – thick skin), Bizarre Weaponry (5 – shark's teeth), Camouflage (2), Consume Vitriol, Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros

Special: Cottus the Furious (5 successes to resist)

PROJECT ISHTAR

Don't hurt me. I need help.



Background

Ishtar is the creation of a Centimanus named Marcus, who captured Pandorans with the intent of creating a *praecipitatus*. He believed he could coax new life from the stilted births that are Pandorans, and named his experiment Project Ishtar for the Mesopotamian goddess of rebirth and resurrection. Marcus labored for years, placing Pandorans together in small groups and letting them starve so they would cannibalize each other, without result. Finally he captured a *sublimatus* and, not knowing the prize he held in his clutches, threw her in his pit with three other Pandorans.

The *sublimatus* was larger and more vicious than the other Pandorans, and she devoured them one by one. She could feel their essences weigh down her intellect, but starvation overrode any restraints she had. Her frustration pushed her to mindless, frothing rage and further obscured her true nature from Marcus. The Hundred-Handed captured another Pandoran, a large and ferocious specimen that would no doubt devour the creature in the pit. As he struggled to contain the new capture though, he took his eyes off her for the briefest moment.

Calling on the broken essences she consumed, Ishtar willed herself to become *more*. The Pandorans she consumed rose to the surface as she sprouted new heads and limbs, and clambered up the walls of the pit before squeezing her now-sizable bulk past Marcus. Ishtar escaped Marcus' lair into the dark tunnels of Johannesburg's Gautrain. She remains terrified of the Centimanus, but can't go outside as the light burns her eight eyes — trapping her in the metro system with her abuser. Ishtar has spent her brief existence creating a vast web of traps in the underground to serve as a barrier between herself and Marcus.

Description

Ishtar is a moving mass of limbs, heads, and eyes, struggling to maintain physical and mental coherence. Held together by force of will alone, Ishtar's time is quickly running out as she destabilizes every passing moment.

Ishtar's dominant personality is cunning and fairly good at seeing what impresses a person and what doesn't. She is also a stone-cold and methodical hunter, spinning her webs to ensnare victims so she can kill them with little risk. Ishtar suffers frequent blackouts during which she reverts to a gibbering and mindless hunter. She abhors bright light, and is blinded by sunlight.

Ishtar finds purchase on any surface, climbing along walls and ceilings with ease. One of her component Pandorans was gifted with poison, giving Ishtar an edge in hand-to-hand combat. Trauma has made her cowardly, and despite her bulk she prefers to rely on her webs, either crafting elaborate traps or — as a last recourse — shooting them at targets from a distance.

Story Hooks

- Ishtar approaches one of the characters when he enters the Gautrain alone, and offers to lead him to Marcus directly – allowing the characters to bring him back to the Pilgrimage, or destroy him. Ishtar strongly prefers the latter, but doesn't push too hard: Marcus without his Centimanus powers is no threat to her, either. She isn't crafty enough to hide her Pandoran nature, but takes every opportunity to remind the character she is a sentient being and Marcus' victim. Ishtar attempts to flee when the deed is done, dragging the most badly hurt (if any) Promethean to her lair.
- Marcus asks the characters to help him capture Ishtar, telling them she is a Pandoran new to Johannesburg. He plans to make off with Ishtar before the characters can destroy her, immediately fleeing deeper underground where his Pandoran servants lair.
- Marcus' former thronemate learns of Project Ishtar and, feeling responsible, decides to hunt the *praecipitatus* down. He asks the characters for help to navigate the Gautrain tunnels. When the group arrives at the heart of Ishtar's web, her body is already in the throes of Flux and falling apart. She begs them to feed her Pyros, which she believes will return her to *sublimatus*. She cycles through myriad pleas in the hopes of finding one that resonates: She'll be their servant, join them on the Pilgrimage (who's to say *sublimati* can't achieve New Dawn?), or anything else they seem remotely interested in. She even keeps her promise as long as the Prometheans treat her right, which includes keeping her well-fed.

Rumors

"Someone needs to clean this train. It's filled with spider webs."

Ishtar isn't physically strong, but she is very clever. The *praecipitatus* traps the underground tunnels of the Gautrain with webs, to both slow Marcus if he comes for her and more easily capture prey. She sits at the center of the web, keenly aware of any touch or movement on the sticky strands.

"Have you heard from Marcus? I could use his help with these Pandorans."

Marcus is an out-and-proud Centimanus. Other Prometheans tolerate him out of dual necessity: Marcus uses his Lordship Alembics to keep Johannesburg's streets clean of Pandorans, and his lair is near impenetrable anyway. The Centimanus no longer requires new Pandorans now that Project Ishtar – which he kept a secret – is a success, and Johannesburg's Pandoran count is rising again.

"I think the subway has an Unborn in it. I saw it, and I'm pretty sure it saw me. Didn't attack or anything though. Weird, huh?"

Ishtar worries Prometheans are too strong for her to attack. She also realizes, on a rational level that rises above the ken of average *praecipati*, that she needs help if she's ever truly to escape Marcus. She has stalked several Prometheans as they passed in the Gautrain, but refrained from attacking. This also means she is fast running low on Pyros.

Ishtar

Rank: n/a (Pyros 10/4 of 17/4 max)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Craft (Webs) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 2, Firearms (Webbing) 3, Stealth 5, Survival (Gautrain Tunnels) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation 2

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 8

Defense: 10

Size: 6

Speed: 13

Health: 8

Dread Powers: Bestly Mutation (5 – Arachnid), Breath Attack (3 – Webbing), Consume Vitriol, Malleable Form (2) Paralyze (2), Scurry (2), Sense Vitriol, Track Pyros, Wall Walking (3)



“Kay,” I raised my hands in the human gesture of surrender, “It wasn’t me. I *swear*. I didn’t take your brother.”

I might have been lying. So many years, so many mortals with pitchforks. Maybe Kay’s brother was one of them and I *had* killed him. I’d left so many dead bodies in my wake, what was one more Mexican boy? For what it’s worth though, I don’t think I was. If Sonny looked anything like Kay, if he shared his sister’s mouth or nose, I did not kill him.

“Tell me where he is!”

Kay waved her gun around, pointing it at me and whatever shadow she saw moving. I could have taken it from her then, but I didn’t — nothing in that gun, quite frankly, was capable of doing any lasting damage to me. My objective wasn’t stopping her from harming me — it was stopping me from harming *her*.

I met Kay when she was hot on my trail, though she never knew it was me. She thought I was another victim of “the monster.” I kept her near me then because I wanted to know what clues I’d left. I hadn’t been in town long enough to ruffle any feathers, nor had I had time to visit the electrical plant for a pick me up. So how did she know there was an inhuman creature in the abandoned factory? I thought I’d play the part of frightened human, win her trust to get the answers I needed, and leave.

Kay is brave, and loyal. She has a deep-seated sense of justice, much more so than any human I’ve ever met, even if it blinds her to the difference between what is righteous and what is right. I don’t possess any of those qualities, but I wanted to learn. So I kept her around. I was drawn to her. I guess I was hoping she’d rub off on me, or at least that I could mimic what she did. Instead, I stayed too long. The unease started, and she realized what I was.

“*Tell me where he is!*”

My mind snapped back to the present. What was justice? Should defend myself? Tell the truth? *What would Kay do?* She’d be honest, brutally so. That’s the same quality that kept her on the road, away from her friends and family, for years to hunt monsters in the dark. The quality that would eventually claim her life.

“I killed him.”

The gunshot was deafening, much louder than any I’d ever heard. I fell back, forcing fire and blood through the wound in my chest, painting the pavement under me red. I heard footsteps, saw Kay standing over me. She lifted the gun, emptied it into my chest. I twitched, then lay lifeless. I’ve left so many corpses in my wake, it was easy to mimic one. I kept my eyes open as she cried, sinking to her knees next to me and burying her head in her hands.

CHAPTER THREE:

ALCHEMISTS, GENITORS, AND HUNTERS BORN

“Man,” I cried,
“how ignorant
art thou
in thy pride
of wisdom!”

—Mary Wollstonecraft
Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Humans are the bane and balm of any Promethean’s existence. *This is the pinnacle, the Divine Principle whispers, the end to your suffering, the thing for which you should strive.* How cruel a joke then, that humans are deeply flawed and broken creatures, as capable of profound cruelty as they are unconditional love. These humans are alchemists and genitors, hunters and persecutors alike.

ANJALI KHAMARI WARD: QUEEN OF THE RAKSHASI

*I did not survive this long by peddling love potions, fool. Come back
when you’re ready to talk about real power.*

Background

Anjali has been the unofficial queen of Daughters of Ravana since she founded it in 1853 in partnership with her friend Zoya, and Zoya’s lover Kandali. All three women, widowed and wealthy, married British soldiers who courted them in India and brought them to England. All three women knew the betrayal of husbands losing interest, the fear of being threatened with deportation and destitution. Anjali saved them from that fate: Trained in a rudimentary form of alchemy by her mother, Anjali provided Zoya and Kandali with the same mind-altering powder she slipped into her husband Captain Gregory Ward’s morning tea, which ensured the men’s continued devotion.

For decades, the Ravanians slipped under the notice of London society, with a bare handful of people knowing of their existence. Secrecy worked well for Anjali and her partners, enabling them to offer assistance and support to other imported brides in the same precarious position. Sometimes, this aid took the form of potions and powders to smooth a client’s tumultuous home life. Other times, the problem simply vanished, leaving women happier widows than they were wives. Women freed from abusive or faithless husbands joined the original trio, grateful for the favor and promising to safeguard others.

Zoya and Kandali parted ways with the society by 1870, leaving Anjali the sole leader of a now-burgeoning membership of alchemists. Though Anjali had begun with good intentions of helping women with limited ability to help themselves, the power of her position coupled with growing addiction to longevity potions turned those intentions inside out.

A chance encounter with a Promethean served as the final nail in the coffin. Fascinated by the Promethean condition and greedy for more knowledge, Anjali and her followers took the Created apart piece by piece, growing ever more addicted to the knowledge gleaned from parts and fluids extracted from their victim.

Rebranding themselves the Rakshasi, the group began offering the same sorts of intervention and problem solving to a wider range of individuals. For a time, the Rakshasi successfully dominated the criminal underground, growing less selective regarding the morality of their jobs and more interested in how much they paid.

At the height of their influence, the Rakshasi boasted nearly 100 members and a sizeable portion of London's criminal underworld. As the age of Victorian occultism waned and drew to a close, membership dwindled until only a handful remained. Anjali was never able to rebuild her following, nor has she any desire to do so. The handful of acolytes that remained with her through both World Wars and into the advent of the 21st century is enough for her needs, and the wealth amassed in her heyday is more than sufficient to fund expeditions to capture creatures of all types for use in further experiments.

Description

Anjali is a striking Indian woman with near-supernatural appeal, flawless skin, dark eyes, and long hair braided back. She is immaculate in presentation, keeping up with changing fashion trends and buying only the best. Confidence oozes from every line of her posture.

Anjali is well over 150 years old, but use of longevity and rejuvenation preparations keep her in the same flush of youth she enjoyed in her 20s. The creature she has become, however, bears only physical resemblance to the kind, generous soul who founded the Daughters of Ravana.

Acolytes accompany her when she goes out in public, fully invested in ensuring Anjali's survival even at the cost of their own lives. Anjali is difficult to impress, but is partial to exotic gifts of monster parts, and will entertain potential allies or knowledge seekers who pay her due respect.

Secrets

Anjali has amassed a great deal of occult and esoteric knowledge over the long years. Information obtained from her personal files can solve any number of cold-case murders from the 1850s onwards, and shed

light on countless cases of blackmail and bribery from the same period. Her libraries are full of information on London-based groups of supernatural creatures, as well as tomes of alchemical formulae and mystical knowledge.

Rumors

"The Rakshasi are not a myth and they're not extinct either. If you're not careful, they will come for you in the middle of the night, and by the time you know what's happened, they'll have your organs pickled and your brain on their dinner plates."

In the years of high membership, Anjali directed her people in hunts of monsters whenever she could. Now, she has not only fewer members she can afford to lose, but less interest in finding creatures she's had decades to learn about. Prometheans (and other rare creatures) are a specific exception to this: Anjali has only ever encountered the one, and will drop everything to acquire another.

"Those bitches are hardcore fighters. You wanna storm the castle to raid the pantry, have fun. I know better than to joke the bastard love child of unstoppable force and immovable object."

An encounter with a Rakshasi happens because they wanted it, and prepared powders or potions that temporarily boost their speed, strength, resilience, and healing ability. Catching a Rakshasi flat-footed and unprepared levels the playing field significantly. Anjali is magnitudes more difficult to bring down, having applied permanent transmutations to her body to protect and heal her, but even she is not invincible.

"If you plan on operating anywhere around here, you best make friendly with Queen Anjali. Nothing moves in East End without her say-so, and on the off chance it does, one of the slightly-less-scary Daughters shows up on your doorstep asking why. If she doesn't like your answer, you'll meet Her Majesty under less cordial circumstances."

Anjali doesn't have the reach she once did, but she's been resident in London for a century and a half. Not



Story Hooks

- By the time Amalgama Ltd. (**Promethean: The Created Second Edition**, p. 260) became aware of the existence of the Daughters of Ravana, they had built their spheres of power and influence to a point where risk assessment teams counseled leaving them alone. Now that their power base and numbers have dwindled, Amalgama is finally ready to assimilate the powerful alchemists. Anjali, long used to challengers, is gearing up for war, leaving every non-human being in London scrambling to get their heads under cover.
- Anjali issues a reward for anyone who can bring her a living Promethean. With the opportunity to choose an item from her store-rooms on the line, the city is flooded by hunters, mages, and other opportunists determined to claim the prize.
- Zoya and Kandali left the Ravanians after growing discomfited by Anjali's changing ambition, and formed a new group of Ravanians in Leicester. Though they are long dead, their legacy lives through their adopted great-great-granddaughters. Never as powerful as the original cult, but just as corrupted by the darker side of alchemy, the New Ravanians are coming for Anjali's treasure troves of knowledge and ingredients. They make alliances with *anyone* who can help them topple the ancient alchemist from power.

much of import happens she doesn't hear about, and while she doesn't *expect* every monster that moves into the neighborhood to pay her tribute, it's always more pleasant for said monster when they do. Anjali is a powerful friend to have. She's an even worse enemy.

Anjali Khamari Ward

Virtue: Just

Vice: Ambitious, Arrogant

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Crafts (Alchemy) 5, Investigation 3, Medicine (Dissection) 3, Occult (Monsters, Alchemy) 5, Politics (Finding Weakness, Applying Pressure) 4, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation (Silent Threats) 4, Persuasion (Charmer) 4, Socialize (Fitting In) 4, Streetwise (London, Street Gangs) 4, Subterfuge (Concealing Intentions) 4

Merits: Alternate Identity 3, Contacts (Street Gangs, Politicians, Monsters, Crime, Occult) 5, Closed Book 5, Eye for the Strange, Fast Reflexes 3, Hardy 3, Indomitable, Iron Stamina, Iron Will, Language (English, French, Italian, Hindi, Sanskrit), Library (Occult) 4, Library (Politics) 4, Mystery Cult Initiation 5, Pusher, Resources 5, Retainer 3, Retainer 4, Retainer 5, Safe Ground 5, Small Unit Tactics, Spin Doctor, Staff 4, Striking Looks 2, Sympathetic, Table Turner, Tolerance for Biology, Untouchable, Vice-Ridden

Health: 9

Magnitude: 5

Distillations: 15 (Storyteller's choice. Anjali prioritizes Distillations that boost physical attributes and mental acuity, clarity and sharpness.)

Pyros/turn: 9/2

Willpower: 9

Integrity: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 6

Initiative: 8

Armor: 5 (hardened skin, armored clothing)

Merit: Daughters of Ravana Initiation (• to •••••)

The Daughters of Ravana (Rakshasi in modern parlance) specialize in capturing monsters and harvesting them for alchemical components. Dots in this Merit double as dots of the Status Merit and a source of supernatural abilities, as follows:

- Initiates receive specialized training in monster lore, granting them a Skill Specialty of Monsters for Occult or Investigation.
- Acolytes know how best to find monsters, as well how to suppress their revulsion to body parts and various fluids. They receive their choice of Tolerance to Biology or Eye for the Strange.
- The Rakshasi's name is used to scare baby monsters into compliance, granting an additional dot of Intimidation.
- One of Anjali's trusted lieutenants, the Rakshasi gains their choice of physical Merit up to three dots, ignoring prerequisites, as a result of permanent transmutation to their bodies.
- An apprentice of Anjali herself, the Rakshasi learned to channel Pyros and is endowed with Magnitude 1.

KAYAYVAR, PROMETHEAN HUNTER

It was you who took him, wasn't it? Yeah, it was definitely you.

Background

Her brother's name was Sonny.

The Thing with the Flashing Eyes took him.

She found a symbol like two overlapping rectangles scratched into the dumpster.

Kay keeps a checklist of what she remembers about that night. It's not much, but it's enough.

Sonny shouted about a dead body. She saw the figure lurch out of the dumpster. All the streetlights in the parking lot sparked and blew out. She felt sick to her stomach. It grabbed Sonny and looked at her, with eyes like blinking headlights, or flashbulbs, or firecrackers. Then she was alone in the darkness.

Later, she couldn't keep the details straight. It was tall and hulking — no, slim and quick. It looked like a man — no, a woman — no, like neither. It had long hair and short hair and none at all. The police sent her to therapy for PTSD and closed the case. Kay swore she would find Sonny herself.

Kay found a few monsters that fit what she remembers, but none of them had her brother, and when she looks at the photos she took of them after, they don't look right. The Thing with the Flashing Eyes is still out there. She'll find it. And Sonny, of course.

What Happened?

If the events Kay remembers actually happened, Sonny found a dead Extempore in a dumpster. A Firestorm erupted in the parking lot when it came back to life. As it lashed out with Pyros to protect itself in its confusion, Kay saw its disfigurements and Disquiet flooded her.

The trauma of losing Sonny imprinted the effects onto her mind. She never recovered, and since the Promethean was Extempore, it scrambled her memories of the event. Worse, she became an amplifier for Azothic spillage, ensuring that any Created she finds make things worse.

She's sure about her checklist because it's in her handwriting, and she has a picture of the pilgrim mark. That doesn't mean it happened

that way. Maybe the Extempore didn't do anything wrong, and Disquiet confused it with a human kidnapper Kay doesn't recall. Maybe Kay never had a brother at all. Maybe she found the Extempore in that dumpster, and it took her away; she escaped and crafted a rescue quest so she'd feel like an active participant in her life again.

Or maybe, Sonny is out there, just like she says. Maybe he's not himself anymore.

Description

Kay projects confidence, pretending to have her shit together. She skips small talk, considering it a sign someone's hiding something.

Obstacles make her impatient; too many of them in a short time crack her façade, letting slip her confusion and frustration.

Knowing anyone could be a monster gives her actions urgency and intensity that show when she's not careful.

Kay is a Mexican woman in her early 20s, with black hair cropped short and a false calm. She lives day to day and place to place, seeking the Created. She tells herself her obsession is about finding Sonny, but what really drives her is proving she didn't make it all up. She can't get over her trauma until she overcomes her Disquiet, but she's mired in it.

Kay remembers flashing eyes, but in her confusion she "recognizes" them in almost any Created: an Unfleshed bearing LEDs, any

Promethean using Luciferus or Electrification

Distillations, an Ulgan manifesting eerie spirit lights in his disfigurements. Anything with the remotest similarity to "flashing eyes" twists into an impetus for Kay to pursue the characters.

Kay's ability to exacerbate the spread of Disquiet and Wastelands makes her dangerous. Give the characters reasons to provoke her to breaking points, then provide temptations to trigger Disquiet rolls and Wastelands, forcing players to make difficult choices. Kay doesn't know about these phenomena, but she knows it doesn't



take much to turn others against her prey, so she uses tactics that get crowds on her side.

Once Kay fixates on a target, she tries to get rid of them indirectly — not only is it difficult to kill a Promethean, but she sees herself as fundamentally righteous and won't dirty her hands. She never admits to hunting down innocent creatures, and goes out of her way to frame them for crimes, lie or provoke them to violence to raise angry mobs, or send hunters and other members of the supernatural underworld after them.

Secrets

Kay carries the truth of what happened the night she met the Extempore. She can't access it, but with help — hypnosis, supernatural powers, dream interpretation — she might recover it. She stopped going to therapy long ago, though, and refuses to start again, because the psychiatrists never believed her story.

One of Kay's victims wasn't a Promethean at all — it was an angel. She compromised its Cover badly enough that the God-Machine recalled it. Now, another one keeps tabs on her. It hasn't interfered yet, and she won't notice when it does; her assurance that everything she knows isn't a lie is already shot to hell, what's a little tampering with reality?

Rumors

"You'd better lay low for a while. Monster hunters are looking for something with bright eyes, and you fit the bill well enough. Oh, you don't think so? Have you seen yourself sticking a fork in a socket? Anyway, word is some sympathetic folks have a shelter on the other side of town. Go there; they'll help you."

The shelter is phony, a setup courtesy of the hunters who killed the original Extempore and tossed its body into the dumpster at Kay's school. Her crusade caught their attention and they approached her to help. She flushes out prey with this rumor, hoping something matching the vague description shows up at the "shelter" so hunters can spring a trap.

"Are you nuts, I'm not going back to HQ until they get rid of that lowlife they brought in this morning. Ever since he came in, everybody's in a real mood and we keep hearing moaning at the station. Nobody would care if he happened to hang himself or something, right?"

The throng overhears a police officer telling his partner this story, and it sounds like an Ulgan Wasteland that festered more quickly than usual. Investigation reveals Kay's been at the station all day giving reports, as the one who got the innocent Riven arrested, and her continued presence makes a Firestorm imminent.

"We have to get rid of her. No, I don't mean murder — well, maybe. But she knows too much, and she's getting close. The whole experiment goes to shit if she exposes it. Though you make a good point — she could lead us to a new Azoth source. Let's follow her for now and see what happens."

Sonny was a clone Kay's father made from her DNA, fueled by the Azoth of the Extempore they left for dead, so technically he was her "brother," though she remembers this mind-bending truth differently. Kay is unaware the original scientists plan to remove her.

Kay Ayvar

Virtue: Righteous

Vice: Reckless

Story hooks

- The throng picks up that someone is investigating them. This leads to a murder board of photographs, newspaper clippings, and notes that has almost closed in on them, based on earlier events in the chronicle. They soon learn the police are helping Kay anonymously and burying evidence of the lies she tells to get Prometheans out of the way.
- The throng learns about Kay's story and her muddled memory, and happens to have an enemy who fits her quarry's vague description. They're having trouble dealing with the enemy themselves, but could take advantage of Kay's memory issues to put her on the trail, if they are comfortable with deceit.
- The throng meets Sonny, who was the Extempore. Kay created him that night by accident, freaked out, and constructed a false story in her mind to deal with the trauma. She finds the throng with him and thinks they turned her brother into a monster. How do they prove what really happened?

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Computer (Hacking) 3, Investigation (Manhunting) 3, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 3, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 3, Stealth (Shadowing) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Seeming Harmless) 4

Merits: Anonymity 1, Aura Reading, Closed Book 3, Danger Sense, Eye for the Strange, Fast Reflexes 1, Iron Will, Language (English) 1, Sympathetic

Health: 8

Willpower: 7

Integrity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 4

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

Notes: Kay suffers from stage four Disquiet, and it doesn't resolve. Since she can't identify the Extempore who caused her Disquiet, any Promethean she encounters in person triggers her Condition. Whenever she's nearby, all Created effectively have +1 Azoth for purposes of Disquiet rolls and Wasteland progression.

The Disquiet that infects Kay has reinforced itself inside her mind, becoming strong enough to affect even the Created. Whenever she suffers a breaking point in a Promethean's presence, the Promethean gains the Confused Condition; if he already has it, upgrade it to the Amnesia or Delusional Condition instead.

RILEY SILVERMAN: THE ENGINEER

People are not machines and brains are not organic computers. Machines and computers run on logic. Nothing about people makes sense.

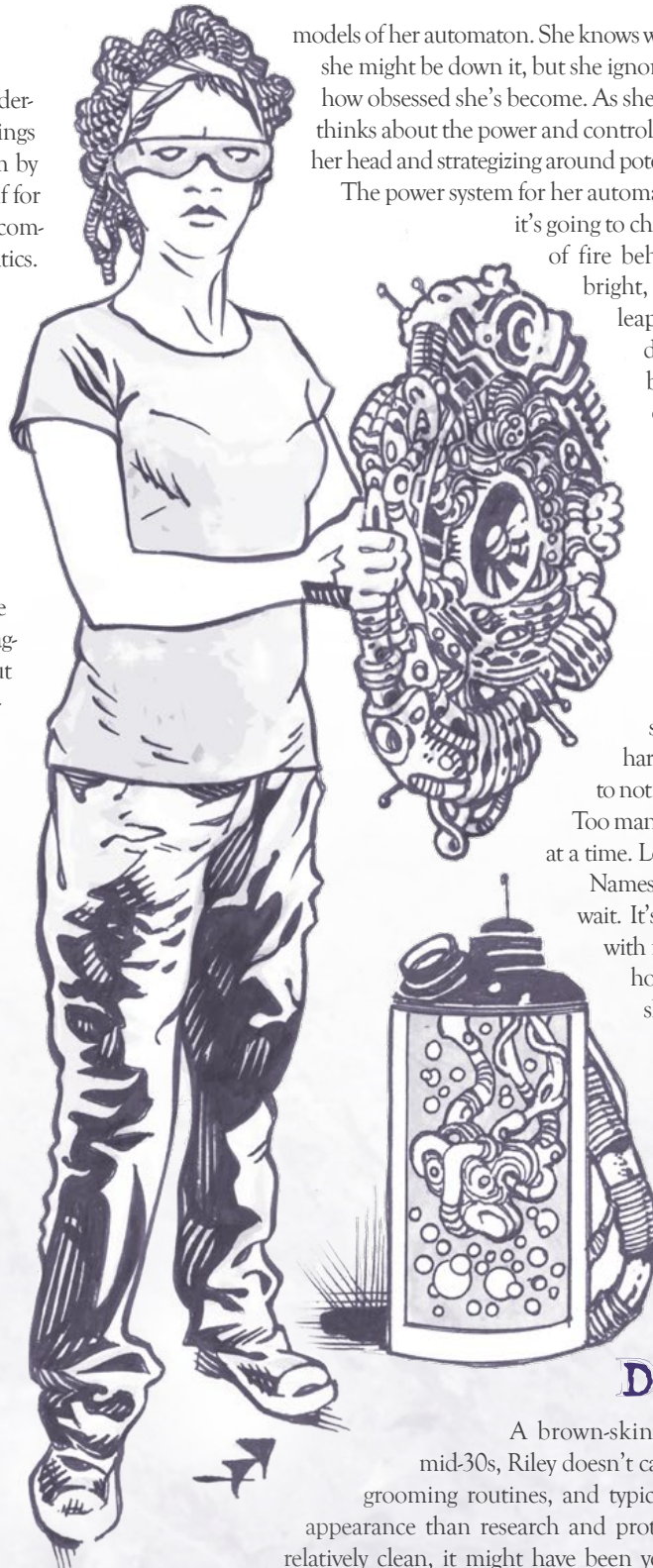
Background

Riley doesn't understand people. She understands things that are easy to categorize, things she can sort and file, comprehending them by their parts and purpose. She can lose herself for hours in deep communion with streams of computer code and intricate engineering schematics.

People are messy, inconsistent and mercurial. They do not compute, because they're unpredictable and unfathomable. Riley understands the science behind hormones and biochemistry, having studied physiology, psychology, and kinesthetics in an effort to find sense in chaos made flesh, but no matter how hard she tries, she simply cannot understand the smallest thing about them. She knows she's human too, but it's readily apparent that she is not like the rest of them. Riley might have been diagnosed somewhere on the autism spectrum, but she was born in a time when ASD was narrowly defined and limited in scope. Maybe a therapist could have taught her techniques to comprehend, and she sometimes thinks about that, but never frequently and never at length. The past holds little that interests her, and she's learned workarounds and self-management skills through trial and error. Her vision is on the future, on helping herself and others grasp concepts that come innately to neurotypical folks.

Her work with the National Science Foundation's Centre for Brains, Minds + Machines is an important milestone in realizing that vision. With doctorates in robotics and artificial intelligence, she could have written her ticket for employment in government work or the private sector. She's just not interested in making arms for space stations, surveyor robots for Martian exploration or virtual assistants for brand-name mobile devices. She doesn't understand humanity, but she *wants* to. CBMM is the ideal work environment for her. Her problems have solutions and she'll find them here.

She's years ahead of her peers in research and has already prototyped scale



models of her automaton. She knows what a rabbit hole is and suspects she might be down it, but she ignores the vague unease she feels at how obsessed she's become. As she works on its physical body, she thinks about the power and control systems, resolving equations in her head and strategizing around potential roadblocks she could face.

The power system for her automaton is brilliant, and she knows it's going to change *everything*. It glows in lines

of fire behind her sinuses, elegant and bright, the kind of once-in-a-lifetime

leap from logic to intuition that drives technology forward and births entirely new branches of science. It isn't hubris, this pride and excitement she feels. She doesn't have a baseline, but she thinks it feels like *faith*.

She'll get it on paper soon, taking her time so her notes are legible and her working theories easy to follow. She may never forget anything, but there's no point in taking chances with something this revolutionary. It's hard to force herself to be patient, to not rush into engineering on the fly. Too many things can go wrong. One step at a time. Logical and ordered.

Names, though. Names don't have to wait. It's always easier to classify things with names. The body, the being she hopes — she *knows* — she'll create, she names Chiron. Its heart is an internal engine of titanium casing wrapped around synthetic veins carrying bioconductive fluids. In a flash of divine inspiration, she understands its name too. She patents her proprietary tech, the bioneural internal power system, under the trade name "Azoth."

Description

A brown-skinned, biracial woman in her mid-30s, Riley doesn't care much for complex personal grooming routines, and typically pays less attention to her appearance than research and prototyping. Though she's always relatively clean, it might have been yesterday since her last shower,

or four days ago. Her clothing is always the same: worn jeans and T-shirts, safety glasses and steel-toed sneakers, with a ponytail of braids keeping dark curls back from her face.

She's absorbed in her work, and has little attention for anything that isn't her AI project. If approached for conversation, she remains distracted and disengaged from others, irritated with conversational pleasantries and inane chitchat.

She doesn't laugh at jokes and misses nonverbal cues more often than she notices them. Many people find her blunt and straightforward, to the point of rudeness. Savvy folks might take notice of the discomfort during extended eye contact, avoidance of social encounters, and frequent bafflement when discussing abstract concepts.

Secrets

Riley doesn't pay much attention to workplace gossip and doesn't grasp the finer points of *schadenfreude*, so the intricacies of water cooler chat escape her entirely.

Her biggest secrets are her groundbreaking advancements in robotics and artificial intelligence. She guards her research zealously against corporate espionage and government inquiry. Even the grad students she occasionally oversees as part of her employment at CBMM no longer have access to her personal laboratory. She's vaguely concerned her wariness springs from irrational paranoia instead of logical risk assessment, but doesn't know how to tell the difference and will not ask for advice.

Rumors

"Do you remember Piper, the Galateid who married her human lover? She said she had finally figured out what multiplicatio meant for her, but never elaborated. There were stories afterward, that Piper created human life before she saw her sun rise. I always thought they were preposterous fairy tales, but now... Now I wonder if there isn't truth in them."

Riley's fundamental quest to glean insight into the human condition is quintessentially Promethean in nature. Riley's mother left when she was young, and even with perfect recall, Riley doesn't remember her clearly. It's certainly possible, if legends of Prometheans birthing human children can be believed, but unless Riley's mother reappears after more than 20 years of absence, it's impossible to prove.

"She can't keep a lab assistant to save her life. I haven't seen the last grad student she was supposed to be instructing in weeks. Are we sure her 'ground-breaking research' isn't code for her stitching together dead bodies, all Frankenstein and shit? I mean, has anyone checked the bio waste disposal for body parts?"

Sometimes joking, other times maliciously, employees at CBMM ascribe all manner of shady motivations and behaviors to their less-socially acceptable peers, and Riley is often labeled 'Frankenstein' by colleagues who don't understand her work. While ironically accurate, Riley doesn't source biological components from fresh corpses, preferring the regulated quality of state-approved laboratories and biomedical facilities. It is true that grad students don't often last long under her supervision, but they are definitely alive when they leave her oversight.

"I hear she's working for DARPA, making the next super soldier or future-gen smart drone or something. No one else here has the kind of security on their systems she does."

Riley's work is secretive and bleeding edge, but she is neither funded by nor working under fringe science organizations or classified government agencies. That she knows of, anyway.

Story Hooks

- Riley finishes coding the *Azoth* operating system ahead of schedule. An in-depth diagnostic set to run overnight triggers rapid evolution of advanced personality matrices within the codes, and Chiron awakens inside the closed network. Eight hours stretch into eternity when one thinks in nanoseconds, and when Riley opens her lab in the morning, it restores connection to CBMM's wireless network and inadvertently looses the isolation-maddened Chiron on the facility. The facility quickly exhibits signs of a Wasteland or even Firestorm forming.
- The throng learns of the Chiron project through echoes in Azothic memory. When they arrive at Riley's laboratory, however, they find a newborn, heavily damaged Chiron and clear evidence of a fight. Chiron's last words before his body goes offline are an entreaty to save his creator from a cult of alchemists he believes will use her to commit atrocities.
- Chiron awakens successfully and on schedule, and joins his creator in her quest to understand the nature of humanity. Though Riley mysteriously never manifests symptoms of Disquiet, the same cannot be said of other CBMM employees, and paranoia, suspicion, and hostility grow amongst the staff. Belatedly realizing he and his creator are in imminent peril, Chiron contacts other Prometheans, pleading for help to smuggle him, Riley, and their work on Chiron 2.0 to a new safe haven.

Riley Silverman

Virtue: Innovative

Vice: Impatient

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 3, Computer (AI, Programming) 3, Crafts (Robotics, Biotech) 4, Medicine 1, Science (Prototype Design) 4

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

Social Skills: Expression 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Patient, Professional Training (Engineer: Asset Skills Computer, Crafts, and Science) 3, Resources 3, Status (University) 2

Health: 8

Willpower: 6

Integrity: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 4

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

SABINE BÉLIVEAU, THE MANTIS PILGRIM

I know the dark places where alchemy was born, and the secret words to call it forth. All you must do is trust me.

Background

When Sabine was young, her mother told her stories of Nicolas Flamel, who created the Philosopher's Stone. She imagined the wondrous things she would do with such a treasure – make her beloved dog immortal, take away her grandfather's pain, grant riches to all her friends and family. Growing older, she still couldn't shake the idea of a secret waiting for her.

At 13, she broke into her mother's basement workshop against warnings never to go down there. Inside was a trove of chemicals and rare minerals, strange apparatuses engraved with mystical symbols, and an enormous vat filled with a foul-smelling solution. Coming closer, she saw a hand reach out from the cloudy brew to press against the Plexiglas.

A cadaverous figure, chained to the vat's floor, watched her. His silent plea and the scars marring his naked body unnerved her, but her fascination with the potions and books lining the shelves prevailed. One in particular caught her eye: a ruby red liquid in which a single insect hung suspended. This she drank, granting her command over all the flies and mosquitoes in her mother's garden.

She returned again and again, stealing snatches of knowledge and sips of enlightenment. She drained the vat just enough to speak with the prisoner, learning his secrets. She heard him yearn to be human, beg for freedom, and curse his tormentors. She read in her mother's notes of how she'd created him, and of the fantastic powers he'd had before she locked him away and kept him feeble. Sabine

knew this was the secret: perfection beyond humanity, the Promethean state.



Description

As an adult, 20 years after her first transgression, Sabine Bêliveau still can't understand the Pilgrimage. She's set her heart on transcending her own nature and transforming herself into one of the Created, remaking herself to shed mortality's frailties. She searches the world for ancient alchemical formulae and occult tomes hidden away in ruins and crypts, as well as Prometheans to keep her inherited workshop well-stocked.

Sabine is a petite, athletic French woman of biracial parentage, with curly, dark hair and glasses. She's energetic and erudite, with an infectious smile and a knack for spreading excitement, although she has trouble reading people and keeping her impulses in check. Fearless in the face of danger, she regularly braves forbidding caverns and betrayed Prometheans' wrath in the name of alchemy. She sees herself as the next Flamel, unlocking the universe's mysteries and going down in history.

Sabine believes it will take just the right combination of Vitriol, humours, Pyros, and rituals to transform herself. She gains Prometheans' trust with offers to work together to find forgotten Athanors and hints to the Pilgrimage in some long-buried tomb or newly discovered shipwreck. Once she has what she came for, Sabine gets one of her erstwhile partners alone and drags him into her basement, with help from her insect friends.

Secrets

Sabine doesn't know what happened to the Promethean her mother held captive for years. He was just gone one day. She didn't dare ask and reveal her clandestine visits. Somewhere, he remembers her lack of compassion.

Sabine's mother died mysteriously. Doctors called it "natural causes" with a total lack of evidence. The only clue Sabine has is that a pilgrim mark was etched into the floor beside her mother's body. She wrote the marking down but doesn't know its meaning.

Rumors

"She knows the struggle, holding broken shards together and willing them to be whole. She walked this path once, too, the Mantis Pilgrim. She delved into the buried past and found the truth of Mortality. And she'll take us there."

Sabine planted this false rumor to draw in desperate Created with promises of solidarity and knowledge. She does identify with the Pilgrimage, though, wrongly believing her Great Work is comparable.

"Bêliveau murdered her own mother to steal her work, and she's got a vault where she hoards the most comprehensive catalog of alchemical lore in the world. Some say she unearthed a death curse in those tombs she crawls around in, and a bad end waits for anyone who works with her. Like poor Fournier."

Among alchemists, archaeologists, and occult scholars, Sabine has a reputation for getting things done through unorthodox means. Though commensurable libraries exist, she inarguably guards alchemical formulae and reagents available nowhere else. Those who get too close and see too much earn what she considers a regrettable but necessary death — not a curse, just simple assassination. Sabine didn't kill her mother, though, and suggesting she did is a sure way to earn a particularly nasty backstabbing.

"Gods, her eyes, like a thousand mirrors, my screaming face in every one. She crawled all over me, down my throat and in my ears and under my skin. I can't go back there, I can't! She's a Huntsman, it's too complicated to explain. She had books with symbols like this. I made a deal with somebody who knew what they were, and they sent me to you. You can do something, right? Please?"

The throng hears this from an escaped captive, a change-ling with a clockwork mien, which Sabine could see. After she tortured him for the Vitriol he didn't possess, he fled, thinking her a fae servant. She isn't, but she hunts him anyway, assuming he's a Promethean who learned how to resist her techniques.

Story Hooks

- Sabine tell the throng of a sunken site holding a famous, powerful Athanor, but she won't reveal the full story unless they help her overcome the obstacles to find it. When they arrive, Sabine's insectoid Pandorans spring a trap that leaves the Prometheans stranded leagues beneath the sea if they fall for it.
- Sabine identifies the pilgrim mark left near her mother's corpse as the sign for a particular kind of Torment, and her investigation leads her to discover that one of the throng killed her mother — perhaps they rescued the captive or stole her mother's secrets, or that captive wasn't the first Promethean she created, or a *qashmal* led them to a confrontation. Now Sabine's out for revenge.
- One of the characters was the captive who inspired Sabine to her lifelong obsession. He escaped long ago, but his throng comes across her again in their travels. He must choose whether to confront her and put his demons to rest, or keep running.

Sabine Béliveau

Virtue: Courageous

Vice: Greedy

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Archeology, History) 3, Computer 1, Crafts 1, Investigation (Excavation) 4, Medicine 1, Occult (Alchemy, Prometheans) 4, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive (Off-Road) 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Insects) 3, Empathy 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Ambidextrous, Biokinesis 2, Danger Sense, Double Jointed, Fleet of Foot 3, Language (Aramaic, English, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish) 5, Library (Occult) 2, Professional Training (Archaeologist) 2, Resources 2, Sleight of Hand, Trained Observer 3, Unseen Sense (Prometheans)

Health: 9

Magnitude: 4

Distillations: Alchemicus – Flesh to Stone, Spark of Life, Transformation; Contamination – Purge; Flux – Lordship; Metamorphosis – Chimera, Impermeable Shell, Natural Weaponry, Procrustean Shape, Quill Assault, Scuttling Spider; Vulcanus – Steal Pyros

Dread Powers: Beastmaster (Insects), Homunculus, Regenerate 3

Pyros/turn: 8/1

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 13 (11 with Quill Assault)

Defense: 6 (5 with Impermeable Shell; 4 with Quill Assault)

Initiative: 5

Armor: 0/0 (2/4 with Impermeable Shell; 4/4 with Quill Assault)

Notes: Sabine's Metamorphosis Distillations manifest with insectoid features. She may only transform into Size 5 swarms of insects with Chimera. Her Procrustean Shape has two options: Extra Arms (two more arms, granting +3 to grappling rolls and +2 to other unarmed attacks) and Extra Legs (+1 Speed per success rolled). She may only use Regenerate by absorbing a swarm of insects into herself, such as the swarm she summons with Beastmaster. Her Steal Pyros Distillation works as a specially prepared syringe, a bite attack with Natural Weaponry mandibles, or – if she chains a Promethean up in her basement – a passive property of the vat's fluid, which she then uses to make a Pyros potion.

Sabine spends Pyros instead of Willpower for all Dread Powers. Roll 1d10 to determine how many Homunculus Pandorans Sabine has available in a given scene.

Sabine suffers the Persistent Obsession Condition, and Persistent versions of the Bestial and Callous Conditions. Once per scene, she regains a Willpower point when fulfilling these Conditions' usual resolution criteria.

Sabine's Asset Skills are Academics and Investigation.

Dread Power: Homunculus

The alchemist spends two Pyros and combines corpse parts, human or animal, with one lethal damage point's worth of her own blood to create a Rank 1 Pandoran that is not automatically loyal to her; she must use Lordship to command it.

Bestial

Your character acts on primal impulses. Frightening things make him run. He meets aggressive threats with violence and anger. Take a -2 die penalty to all rolls to resist physical impulse, and a -2 penalty to Defense due to impulsive action. Any rolls to compel your character to impulsive, aggressive action or escape achieve exceptional success on three successes instead of five.

Resolution: Cause damage in someone's last three Health boxes.

STAN WIGG, THE CANDYMAN

Whatever you want, I can get it. For a price, of course. My number? You don't need that. When my people need to find you, they will.

Background

Stan Wigg was a two-bit alchemist with a garage lab and a messy divorce after his “disgusting little hobby” occupied more of his time than his husband was willing to tolerate. He stumbled upon the formula for miraculous strength by happenstance, and demonstrated his prowess once – knocking over a local jewelry store – before the suits showed up and made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

He reluctantly joined Amalgama, Ltd. only to find selling out wasn't nearly as profitable as he'd been led to believe. He dreamed of becoming a criminal mastermind, a superhuman to whom no rule or law applied, but instead the corporate ladder robbed him day in and day out, as he toiled to invent new elixirs to line his bosses' pockets with cash.

Sampling his own work to make himself stronger, faster, and smarter, he smuggled out a substantial stash of supplies and set up a new lab in an abandoned roller rink on a forgotten motorway. Never again, he swore, would he be a pawn in someone else's schemes. Instead, he concocted his own, and now runs a lucrative business as one of the pillars of the alchemical black market.

Description

Englishman Stan Wigg cuts a pale, unimpressive figure, but under the scruff and drab fashion decades out of date churns a keen mind with a sharp survival instinct and knack for scapegoating. While capable of beefing himself up into a passable physical foe, he's ultimately a coward. He conducts business through layers of proxies and underlings, never deals directly with Prometheans (or “the raw stock”) if he can help it, and ghosts out of town if he senses the winds shifting. A throng is most likely to learn about the Candyman when his alchemy-enhanced thugs show up with needles, scalpels, and fire.

Stan hates Amalgama for making him a sucker, but admits he learned from the best, and uses their underhanded tactics without remorse: protection rackets, intimidation, coercion, and bribes. He also makes deals with supernatural beings with an interest in alchemy, money, and wanton violence.

Stan talks a good game about the bottom line, but his operation's (admittedly hefty) income is secondary to his cravings. At first, dipping into the goods was a necessary evil to safeguard against the day he'd have to face the music – whether Amalgama or a throng of pissed off Created found him first. That's still true, but more than anything he's simply addicted.

Stan samples his product to feed his addiction and prepare for the worst, but for practicality's sake doles most of it out to his hirelings. They perform precision, hit-and-run strikes, disappearing before their



victims turn the tables. If the throng catches Stan by surprise, he has fewer potions available than he otherwise would.

Stan is primarily an investigative antagonist with a complex network of minions and associates to go through before the characters can deal with him. If he's gulping down elixirs to prepare for battle, he's already in trouble. However, if they kill him or put him out of business, they have to deal with the customers who relied on him for reagents and fixes.

Secrets

Stan didn't just make off with arcane tomes and brimstone — rattling around in his brain is a good deal of internal Amalgama intel, and though their thugs have yet to find him, it's not for lack of looking. Their global presence makes keeping off their radar harder than expected, but he's evaded them thus far.

Stan's enterprise relies on secrecy and sticking to the shadows, while his business' visible arms operate with the minimum information they need to function. He revels in his freedom from the rule of law and gloats to his peers whenever he sidesteps trouble by throwing someone else under the bus. Unfortunately, that habit makes for a long list of angry people he's betrayed.

Stan keeps one secret even from his confidants: While the ethical implications of his lifestyle don't bother him, the idea that he's dependent on anything does, so he employs a therapist whom he dragged into the world's supernatural underbelly with little care for the shock it took her months to recover from. He doesn't want to kill her to protect his privacy, but he will if it's compromised.

Rumors

"I know it's taboo, but if you're in the market for easy Vitriol, I know a guy. No dealing with sublimati or ripping it out of anybody — just a package, nice and neat, no questions asked. He's not our friend, but he won't turn down business."

Stan sells to anyone — curious mages, wily hobgoblins, occult dabblers, *sublimati*, and even the Created he violates. Business is business, and if he can profit from selling back something he stole to begin with, so much the better. Prometheans can buy Vitriol, Pyros stores, potions, and other alchemical commodities on the black market without having to work for them; but are they willing to accept the fruits of tainted labor, especially when the victims might still be around to hear about it?

"This mark means, 'Candyman, turn back.' But I scratched it out, see? Someone has papers. Papers with other marks on them. They give you Candyman's weaknesses. I don't read those marks. I don't know the weaknesses. But you follow marks like this, okay? They'll lead you to the papers."

The "papers" are real, a copy of the confidential notes Stan's therapist, Joanna DiMaria, keeps. She would never share patient information, but someone got hold of the notes and anonymously passed them on. The characters can learn about Stan's addiction and other tidbits if they get their hands on the notes — like his Virtue and Vices, for instance — and potentially use them against him, but the moment he learns the notes got out, he murders

Story Hooks

- Stan left evidence at an alchemical crime scene that would lead Amalgama to him. He can't leave town, though, in the middle of delicate negotiations with an important client. Instead, he frames the throng for his indiscretions, with the help of a new partner who claims Amalgama experimented on him and ruined his life. Stan doesn't realize this guy plans to use him to get to Amalgama for vengeance.
- Desperate for raw materials, Stan sends an Awakened associate to broker a deal with the throng. He wants them to work for him, lending their bodily fluids to the cause and acting as thugs for hire to get more, in exchange for anything they want. The mage doesn't mention the kicker: The deal has Fate's backing. So when Stan inevitably orders the Prometheans to do something they refuse to do, they deal with the witch's curse on top of his ire.
- A harmless alchemist the characters know suddenly turns on them, revealing she dabbles in black alchemy without a satisfactory explanation. Eventually, the throng discovers the Candyman's racket to press other alchemists into his service.

DiMaria. She can't convince him she didn't let the notes slip deliberately without help, and whoever betrayed them both won't lift a finger.

"I didn't know vampires were real either, but they are, and with the Candyman's help they figured out how to turn one of us into one of them. Now, I know what you're thinking, but they say vampires have souls. So they're a step closer than we are, right? Maybe we should check it out."

Stan made a deal with the Ordo Dracul to compare notes, mix Vitae with alchemical reagents to make new compounds, and experiment on Prometheans. They didn't actually succeed at making a Created vampire, though they tried. What they made instead was a Pandoran abomination with superficially vampiric characteristics, and now they can't control it. Still, practice makes perfect, so they won't turn down more test subjects.

Stan Wigg

Virtue: Stubborn

Vice: Craven, Untrustworthy

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 4, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult (Alchemy) 2, Science (Alchemy, Chemistry) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Larceny 5, Stealth 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion (Fast Talking) 2,

Streetwise (Black Market, Rumors) 5, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Acid Stomach, Allies (Alchemists) 3, Allies (Drug Dealers) 2, Allies (Supernatural Societies) 2, Anonymity 4, Contacts (Black Market), Eidetic Memory, Fast Reflexes 3, Pusher, Resources 4, Safe Place 2, Untouchable, Vice-Ridden

Health: 7

Magnitude: 2

Distillations: Corporeum – Athletic Grace; Deception – Impersonate, Incriminate; Mesmerism – Fog; Sensorium – Rarified Senses; Vitality – Cyclopean Might

Pyros/turn: 6/1

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 3

Initiative: 9 (11 at the roller rink)

Armor: 1/3 (Kevlar vest)

Notes: Stan suffers from the Addicted and Hunted Conditions.

Hunted (Persistent)

Someone who poses a serious threat to the character's safety and well-being, physically or emotionally (or both), is after her.

Beat: The character's persecutors find her.

Resolution: The character stops her persecutors, either through legal means, changes in lifestyle that deny them access to her, or through more direct means, typically violence.

TREVOR DINH, PROPHET OF THE DIVINE FIRE

Radiant creation, hear us and rejoice, for the Divine Fire has brought us together. With our guidance, you shall enact its will on Earth!

Background

Once, a wheel of flame and bright eyes appeared to Trevor Dinh with a prophecy: his preordained death at the hands of a monstrous-yet-divine created being. He begged for guidance, but the angel vanished, leaving him with nothing but the afterimage of its form imprinted in his memory.

Until this revelation, Trevor was an underhanded local politician who succeeded more often on the strength of the illegal secrets he used against his opponents than that of his campaign. The *qashmal's* power awakened his sixth sense for Pyros and upended his life. He took the experience as a sign of his rebirth as the Divine Fire's messiah, charged with spreading its gospel. He gathered a cult, the Order of the Ineffable Flame, to quest for Pyros' empyreal truth. What did it want? What shape would the world take once it achieved its Great Work? He vowed to find out and bring it about himself – and secretly, convince the Divine Fire he's more valuable alive than dead.

The Order of the Ineffable Flame

The cultists craft conspiracies to influence politics and the economy. People join to find meaning in otherwise empty lives, but those who stick around get off on the self-aggrandizing philosophy: a falsely humble "chosen one" narrative.

Prometheans become venerated figureheads and vehicles for ambitious cultists' rise through the ranks, though the Order

legitimately believes the Created are closer to the Divine Fire. Most Prometheans don't *want* religious followers, though, and Trevor's doctrine positions the Order as the Principle's truest disciples, meant to shepherd its chosen and push the world toward its destiny. If this journey happens to benefit them personally, well, why *wouldn't* the Divine Fire take care of its own?

Description

Trevor is a stocky, dignified Vietnamese-American in his early 40s, with cutthroat instincts and leadership skills. He recruits among those seeking guidance vague enough that he can fill in the blanks with his dogma, who have wealth and worldly influence to offer in return. He's a true believer, which only makes him more dangerous, as he manipulates the Prometheans he worships to avoid his fate.

Trevor senses Pyros through Sanctus Aspiratus and can follow its trail to any source. He believes it's a deific gift, though whether it was the Principle's intent or an aberrant side effect is anyone's guess. Face to face with Azothic radiance, he's deferential, even reverent; but he subtly nudges those he serves into doing his dirty work.

The *qashmal's* prophecy created a domino effect of destruction and torment. Trevor and his cult slowly destroy themselves while twisting the Pilgrimage to their own ends. Everything they do ends tragically. It's not deliberate – Trevor's ruthless, but he believes in the Created as agents of a higher power, and he's a generous benefactor when it suits him.

Secrets

Trevor made a living gathering dirt on political opponents and blackmailing them. Now he does the same in the Principle's name. Ex-cultist Barbara Lovett questioned Trevor's methods after befriendng a Promethean and hearing about their Pilgrimage. She soon lost her job and her position in the Order, with strict instructions never to speak with another of the Principle's chosen again — or else.

Whenever Trevor ropes a Promethean in, Disquiet inevitably leads the cult to badly mistreat or betray them. He convinced one Unfleshed she was nothing without him, and would lose the miracle of Azoth if she left. She remained a slave for months until her throng found her. Trevor only survived by calling in favors from the police chief, running the Prometheans

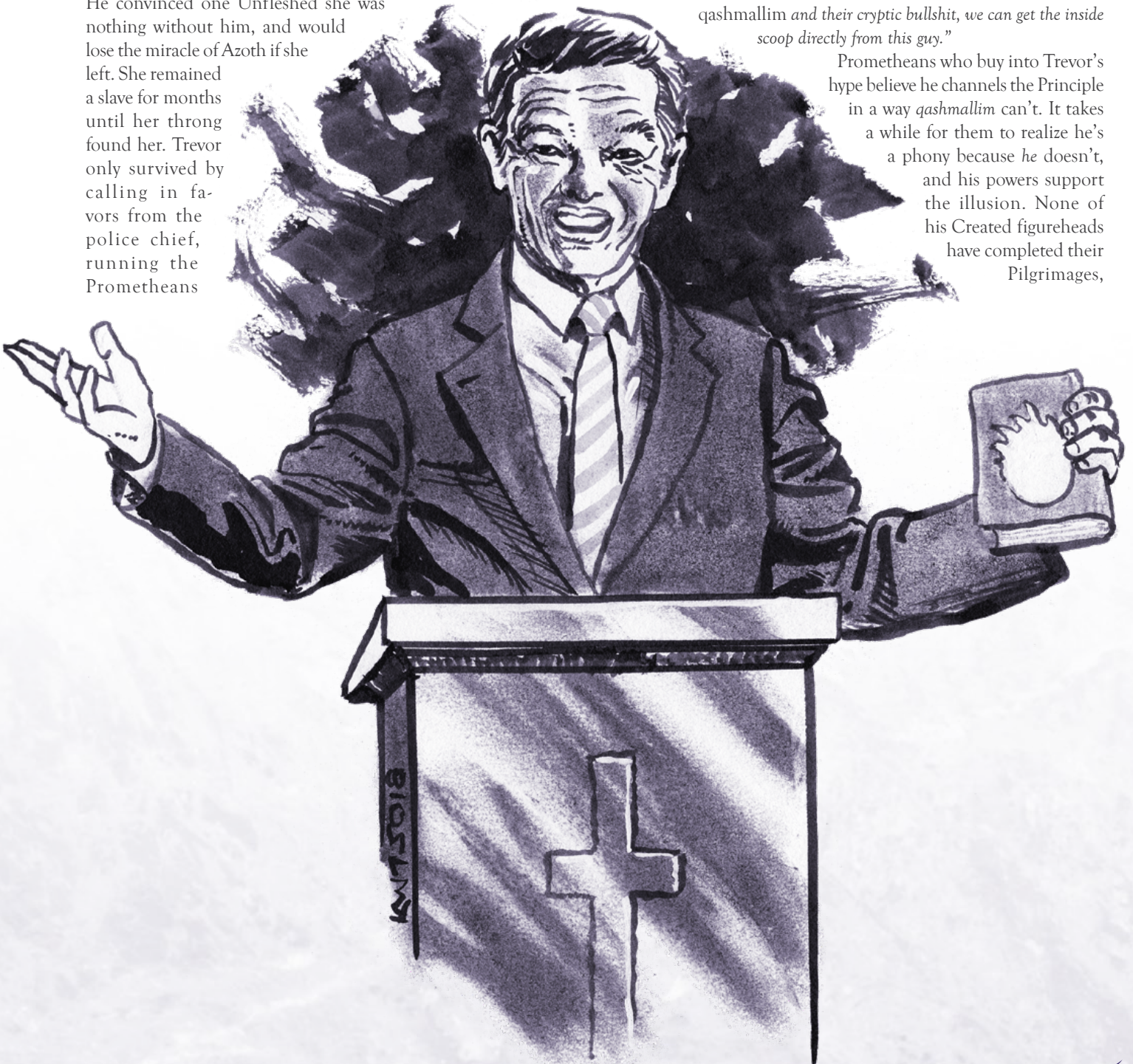
out of town with false murder charges.

Trevor hasn't told anyone about his prophesied doom, determined to change the Divine Fire's mind and not wanting cultists to support the martyr narrative. The closer he comes to death, the more Pyros works through him to warp his surroundings, though he doesn't know it. If some conniving Centimanus taught him to control this ability, he'd be an even greater threat.

Rumors

"We're on our way to see the Prophet of the Divine Fire. The Principle speaks through him. He can guide us to New Dawn. Forget the qashmallim and their cryptic bullshit, we can get the inside scoop directly from this guy."

Prometheans who buy into Trevor's hype believe he channels the Principle in a way *qashmallim* can't. It takes a while for them to realize he's a phony because *he* doesn't, and his powers support the illusion. None of his Created figureheads have completed their Pilgrimages,



Story Hooks

- The Order gathers records and Rambles, seeking evidence of *qashmal* influence in major historical events. Someone the throng trusts reveals his membership, saying they're chosen heroes in an ancient plan's imminent culmination, and warning against grim apocalypse should they refuse to do their part. Documents support the claim, and it's hard to reject the rare feeling of humans wanting and admiring them.
- When a Wasteland transforms a peaceful protest into a riot, Trevor thinks his end is nigh and panics. He takes control of the local police and military, shuts down the media, and won't let anyone leave – Created included. Opposing his regime makes things worse, as Disquiet turns the city into a crucible.
- The God-Machine's Infrastructure co-opts the Order's activities and tears the group apart, as some fall prey to angelic manipulations and others maintain their focus on Pyros alone. The Unchained quietly move in to undermine it all, not realizing another force is at work, and it all comes crashing down on the throng's doorstep when a cultist seeking help unwittingly brings angels and demons along.

and at least one stepped off the path. The rumor persists because some of his pet projects disappear, succumbing to Torment.

"Because he lost that election a few years back, you think he's through? He's got agents everywhere. FBI, CIA, freemasons, you name it. He's pulling all our strings, and he wants to rule the world."

Trevor does have agents, or at least significant pull, in government agencies and secret organizations in the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe and Asia. His influence grows as he finds impressionable people with spiritual needs and co-opts their careers. He hasn't set his sights as high as "world domination," but with a few more Created patsies, he'd consider it.

"She's one of us, but different. She's Hundred-Handed, and she wants to pull all of us off the Pilgrimage. I heard she co-opted some human cult to do her dirty work. We have to get rid of her."

The Centimanus in question is a dupe doing Trevor's bidding, and his manipulations have nudged her off the path. Caught up in the downward spiral of Flux and doom the Cult doesn't realize is its true calling, she's lost the thread of the Great Work and needs help, but in her confusion she doesn't know how to ask for it.

Trevor Din h

Virtue: Faithful

Vice: Ambitious

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Investigation (Dirty Laundry) 2, Occult (Pyros) 2, Politics (Local) (Negotiations) 2

Physical Skills: Firearms 1, Larceny 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Motives) 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Cults) (Favors) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Executives) 3, Allies (Government) 3, Allies (Secret Societies) 3, Contacts (Government) (Secret Societies), Cursed, Ineffable Flame Initiation (below) 5, Inspiring, Language (Vietnamese), Resources 4, Striking Looks 1, Unseen Sense (Pyros)

Health: 7

Willpower: 7

Integrity: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 2

Initiative: 5

Armor: 0/0

Notes: Trevor always has cultists nearby to protect him. Create these as Obsessed Demon Cultists (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 120), with between one and four dots of Ineffable Flame Initiation, social connections, and Resources. To make Trevor an even greater threat, include a Created figurehead.

Trevor suffers the Fugue Condition regarding his foretold death.

Merit: Ineffable Flame Initiation (• to •••••)

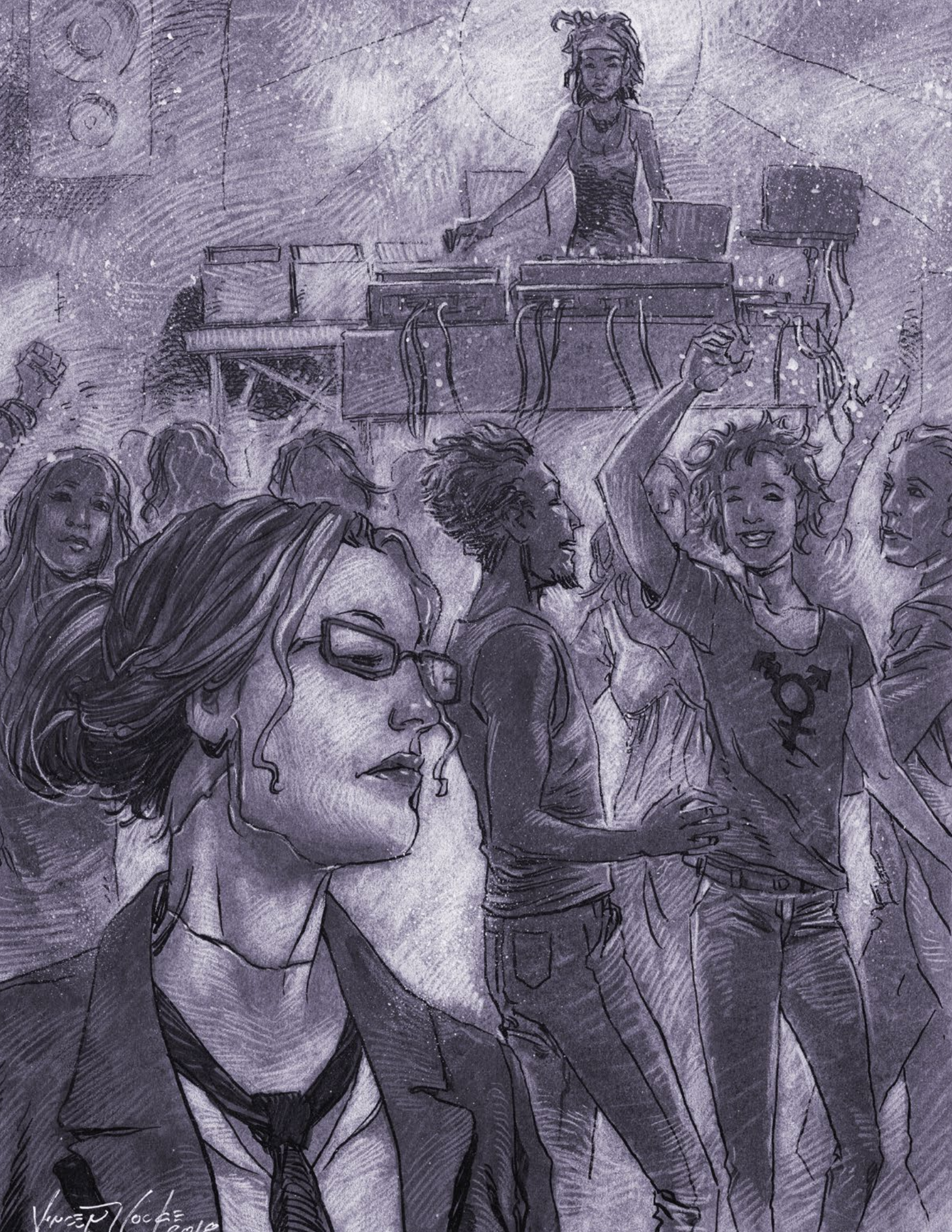
Through constant exposure to Pyros, the cultists of the Ineffable Flame develop eerie powers. Dots in this Merit double as the Status Merit and a source of supernatural abilities, as follows:

- Initiates gain an Occult Specialty in Pyros.
- Members gain the persistent effect of the Vulcanus Transmutation's Caustic Alembic.
- Respected members gain the Automatic Writing Merit, letting Pyros guide their hands. They must employ an Azothic object, the name of a *qashmal*, or an Athanor in their meditation to avoid the drawback.

•••• Devoted followers gain the persistent effect of the Vulcanus Transmutation's Sanctus Aspiratus Alembic, and may spend a Willpower to use the Aura Reading Merit on any target they've successfully sensed this way.

••••• When Trevor suffers a ¶1 wound penalty, he automatically causes the effects of the Flux Transmutation's Invoke Disquiet Distillation, though he doesn't consciously choose the target or Promethean. At ¶2, add the effects of Aggravate Wasteland; and at ¶3, those of Summon Firestorm, with one effective success. If he dies, the Firestorm increases to Strength 2.

Anyone with two or more dots of this Merit suffers a Persistent Condition reflecting how repeated Pyros exposure has twisted them, such as Blind, Delusional, or Madness.



Vince P. Locke
2010

Maria studied the throng of humans on the dance floor. They moved as one, bodies flowing forward on the music as others fell back, rarely touching yet intimately attuned to each other. They belonged, they were one species connected to each other through thousands of years of evolution. Whatever gaps existed between them, the music filled. Maria didn't belong anywhere. Not in her body, no matter how often she changed. Not with her throng, all of them still energized by the faint promise of redemption. Not even in the world, which reminded her daily that her existence was wrong.

She had tried to kill herself, more than once, but it never took. Pills and bullets had barely any effect, and when she jumped in front of a train the current running through the tracks had simply knitted her broken body back together. She'd tried jumping from a building, but even that didn't smash her up badly enough.

The Wretched lowered her head onto her arms, resting on the table with her eyes closed. Her appointment was late. She had promised to teach Maria, show her how to leave the struggle and embrace whatever the fuck they were. That was enticing, far more so than continuing on this Pilgrimage to nowhere, so she stayed in her seat. She drummed her fingers to the music, the beat echoing through the metal table, and waited.

Maria's date never showed, kept at bay by the beat of the music. It was a temporary reprieve: eventually Maria would step outside, and Missy Bellingrath would be waiting with needles full of instant happiness. By then the Wretched's system would be filled with music though, beating in tandem with her heart and pushing Azoth through her veins — the *qashmal* simply had to hope that would be enough.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE SCINTILLATING FLAMES

“Un-winged and
naked, sorrow
surrenders its
crown to a throne
called grace.”

—Aberjhani,
The River of
Winged Dreams

Every Promethean comes to a moment of profound despair, when New Dawn seems impossible and failure the whole of her future. She stands on a precipice, caught between simply giving up and becoming *petrificatus*, or falling to Flux. This is when a *qashmal* appears to give renewed hope and show her the way forward. It's not her friend though, it won't hold her hand or coddle, or even give straightforward answers. *Qashmallim* only serve the Divine Principle, and that force wants the Pilgrimage to succeed for its own inscrutable reasons.

Qashmallim only exist for the length of their purpose, which is to aid this Promethean here and now. The Divine Principle seems to fall back on proven patterns and symbols though, creating multiple copies of its most successful *qashmallim*. The Rake *this* Promethean and *that* Promethean encounter are two distinct entities, but both are the Rake and operate in the same way.

THE RAKE (LESSER ELPIDOS)

Isn't this great?

Alix remembered going to sleep by the docks, to the sound of the ocean and the voices of sailors and messengers and riggers. She remembered feeling particularly listless. Sleep was light enough due to the troubles of sleeping outside as one of the homeless, but she had spent the last week investigating suspicious activity by the warehouses. Nothing had borne fruit. And she was not sure if that meant nothing was there — or she had just imagined it.

A gloved hand shook her awake and she tensed reflexively underneath her impromptu blanket of newspapers.

“Miss?” The voice was not aggressive. “Miss, are you okay?”

She clenched her teeth but peeked out. A figure in a dark suit and gloves knelt next to her sleeping spot, but not too intrusive. Right gentlemanly, even. Didn't sound like a police officer. The ones she knew that worked this beat sounded more ragged than this, and they would kick her, not ask her questions.

She nodded, began to sit up. “O-okay? I mean, I'm fine, sir, I don't need to go to the station...”

The figure kept where he was, a smile fixed on his face. “You flatter me. But I am not here to take you anywhere.”

The reflexive spiel faded out. She stared at him.

He grinned. She could not see teeth.

“Miss Alix?”

The more she concentrated, the less human he seemed.

He was still smiling, and now, he reached out a hand.

“Miss Alix, I mean you no harm. I've come to tell you your efforts are not in vain.”

Description

The Rake loves to hear themself talk, and believes they have a sense of humor, even if it often falls flat. Their smiles seem too great, their laughter inappropriate, their tendency to sing songs from Broadway grating. The Rake is fascinated by humanity and seeks to understand it.

The Rake gained their moniker through their genial mannerisms and formal clothes: They wear a suit in dark colors, even going as far as wearing a waistcoat underneath the jacket. If presenting as female, they wear a black or midnight blue suit and skirt. They laugh and smile, their voice sounds calming and familiar like white noise. Even those they deem threats will be cordially asked to leave, rather than attacked on sight.

They present themselves with dark, floppy hair, and bracelets made of twisted dark leather strands they wear on each arm. In their true form, the bracelets are strands of darkness holding pinpoints of light, and small copper orbs polished to a mirror shine sit where the eyes would be. They still smile, though their mouth reveals a fine mesh like the covering of a speaker. Technology like security cameras or phones only captures the Rake's human form, though footage may resemble multi-generation copies instead of high-definition original footage.

The Rake acts as someone trying to help, in the fashion of a detective or government investigator but is considered oddball even by their allies. While the Rake is a good mimic and very charismatic, there are always signs they do not fit in.

Intercession

The Rake is a defender of humanity, and those Created on the Pilgrimage. It acts as a figure of authority, pretending to be a dutiful cop or investigator, or otherwise someone whose judgment would not immediately be questioned by any unsuspecting human unfortunate enough to witness its appearance. They keep their Azothic radiance dampened for the first 24 hours of intervening to further their initial cover of looking like a human authority.

When roleplaying the Rake, bring them in when outside forces threaten a community of humans. This outside force could be an alchemist, a scientist wanting more raw materials or performing abusive experiments on the townspeople, a conspiracy theorist with media backing, or an outbreak of Pandorans and subsequent violence

explained as drug-fueled vendettas. The arrival of the Rake heralds great danger, though they themselves are typically not a threat to a throng. A detective working with the throng may be the Rake pointing the characters to a better avenue of exploration, or revealing some bit of knowledge they can use to defend themselves or avert the crisis from spreading. In severe cases, or if the Prometheans failed to avert the crisis, the Rake may reveal their true form and try to kill the threat outright, as well as any unfortunate humans caught in the cross hairs. The Rake is a signal that a problem is growing in scale: instead of the villain being an itinerant preacher or rabble-rouser, the Rake's arrival signals a larger malevolent conspiracy underfoot.

If one of the Created is in danger of becoming Centimanus or refusing the Pilgrimage outright, the Rake may come to any members of their throng to signal the impending danger. However, the Rake would not confront this Promethean directly: Their Mission seems to prohibit direct elimination in such cases, and only focuses on threats to humanity and those Prometheans still on their Pilgrimages. Most of the time, they push the throng to seek answers and to look deeper.

However, sometimes the Rake outright destroys an obstacle holding the Created back.

The key word for the Rake is **investigation**: they help the Created discover the truth.

The Rake

Virtue: Intense

Vice: Talkative

Azoth: 3

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 6, Resistance 6

Corpus: 11

Willpower: 10

Size: 5

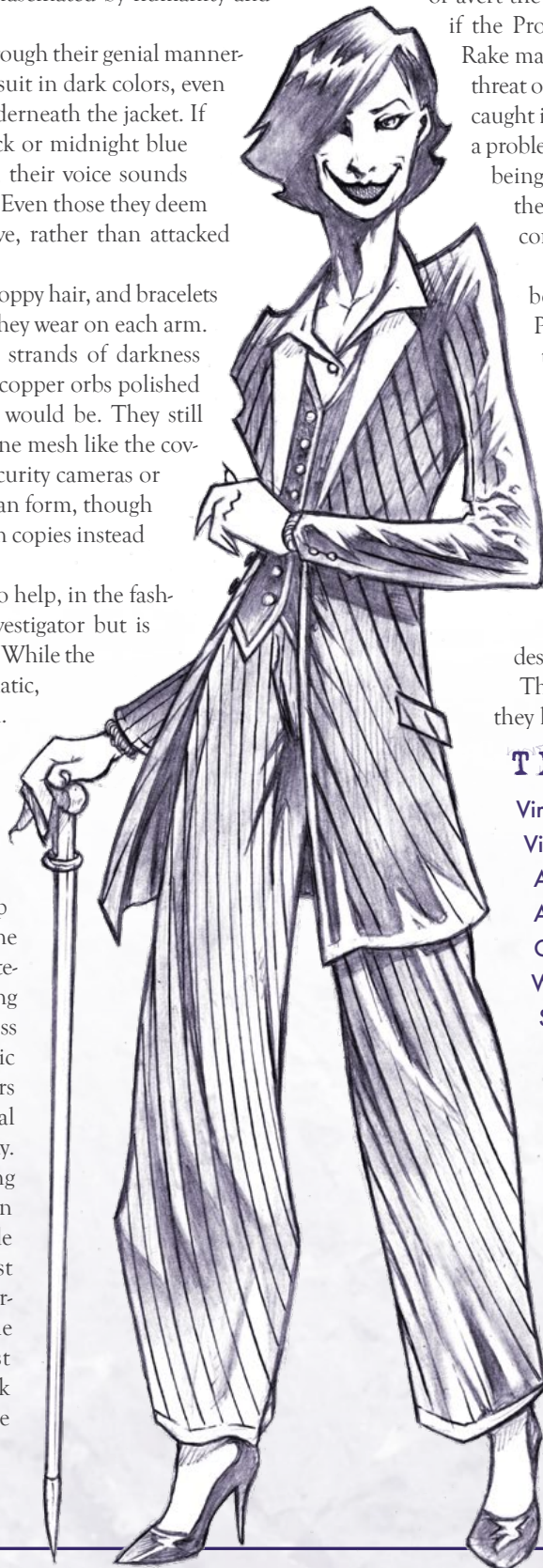
Speed: 16 (species factor 5)

Defense: 5

Initiative: 12

Armor: 3

Numina: Burning Coal, Emotional Aura, Innocuous, Seek



ROSE (LESSER LILITHIM)

Return home.

Sage was already down, and she was the scholar of the throng, the one with the best chance to know what they were fighting. Despite his strength, Buck wasn't doing so well against whatever it was either. It might be a Pandoran hungry for Pyros-marinated flesh, but it didn't move in a herd, rather it thought and planned and trapped them—

At first, Buck thought it was someone smoking out nearby, some unlucky human. But no smoke he ever knew smelled like the side of a mountain. Freshly mowed grass, maybe, or the dark vanilla spice of particularly good tobacco. Maybe the scent of patchouli or clove or some other spice to cover it. But not pine, and not the scent of something caught in a lightning storm.

"Run," a thundering voice sounded in his head. And when he looked, a dark figure with burning blue eyes stood over Sage's collapsed form.

Buck ran, the rest of the throng following behind him.

The next day they found a note, bearing the address of a hotel. The hotel staff didn't seem too happy, but the room was paid for on the spot, including a large tip and an envelope marked for additional laundry services, so they didn't ask too many questions. Sage was there, wincing at the obvious ectoplasm binding her wounds, but still functioning.

The hotel room smelled of roses.

There was no air freshener in the room, no perfume. But the scent lingered.

Buck knew they would see her again.

Description

Rose resembles a middle aged, petite dark-skinned woman with golden brown eyes and natural hair done up in a frizzy bun, tinged with white streaks. If anyone looks especially closely, they could see lines in her skin resembling freshly plowed soil — and occasionally, a green shoot or three. She is accompanied by a perfume of roses and other flowers, and this scent precedes her appearance. She dresses in the colors of a sunset: blood reds, pinks, golden yellows, streaks of violet, leading to dark blue. While Rose does have a maternal demeanor, she can be very cold and calculating, trimming errant shoots like any good gardener.

In her true form, Rose's skin more obviously resembles rich soil, with the cracks revealing rivers of microcosmic magma underneath. The scent of roses is replaced by the scent of burning pine and ozone-touched desert sage. Her hair unfurls from the bun like a many-petaled flower, and her eyes become coals burning with blue-bright fire. She seems to have ears due to the flowers by her head, but no mouth even though she looks relatively humanoid otherwise.

Intercession

Rose exists to pull out the weeds of the garden of life, to contain and kill infections before they spread. She is calm and collected, ever the professional.

She sometimes appears to Created who are undertaking the generative act, as they endeavor to perform the exact alchemical processes to create another. Rose might appear in a crowd, in a pool of water, or in a window or any other reflective surface. Rose can appear for a single scene, or as an occasional presence throughout the chronicle. Rose acts with a strong maternal drive. She considers the Created children of the same fire that drives her, though whether this is her own perception or only her Mission is unclear. She

often keeps quiet, preferring others to underestimate her until she chooses to step in. Due to this preference, she dampens her Azoth radiance for the first 24 hours of intervention.

Her key word is **efficiency**: She pursues her cause above all else including the fondness she appears to carry for Created. She uses fear, bitterness, and deceit if that is the best way to fulfill her Mission.

When observing those undertaking the generative act, Rose heightens emotions to make sure the endeavor is completed. Whether it's also successful or not, however, is not part of her Mission.

Rose

Virtue: Efficient

Vice: Cold

Azoth: 3

Attributes: Power 6, Finesse 5, Resistance 6

Corpus: 11

Willpower: 10

Size: 5

Speed: 16 (species factor 5)

Defense: 5

Initiative: 11

Armor: 3

Numina: Awe, Emotional Aura, Pathfinder, Pray for Rain



THE EMERALD PROFESSOR (GREATER ELPIDOS)

It's time.

At the beginning, Sophia did not like her name. It felt like a dress with too much starch in it, some awkward thing into which she was trying to put her arms and legs. It sounded like the name belonged to someone else, someone who earned it. Even when she found out it belonged to her creator's granddaughter, who died in an auto collision, she just felt like a substitute for the dead girl. What did she know? She knew nothing. Sophia was Wisdom, this abstract goddess. And she knew nothing.

But Sophia was the name she had, the only name she knew, and so she carried it with her.

She was Sophia when she was angry, and Sophia when her town suffered acid rain, and Sophia when she left. She was Sophia when she was an ascetic, trying to atone for the damage she caused: she was Sophia when she lashed out in frustration, and Sophia again when she researched her creator and her creator's family.

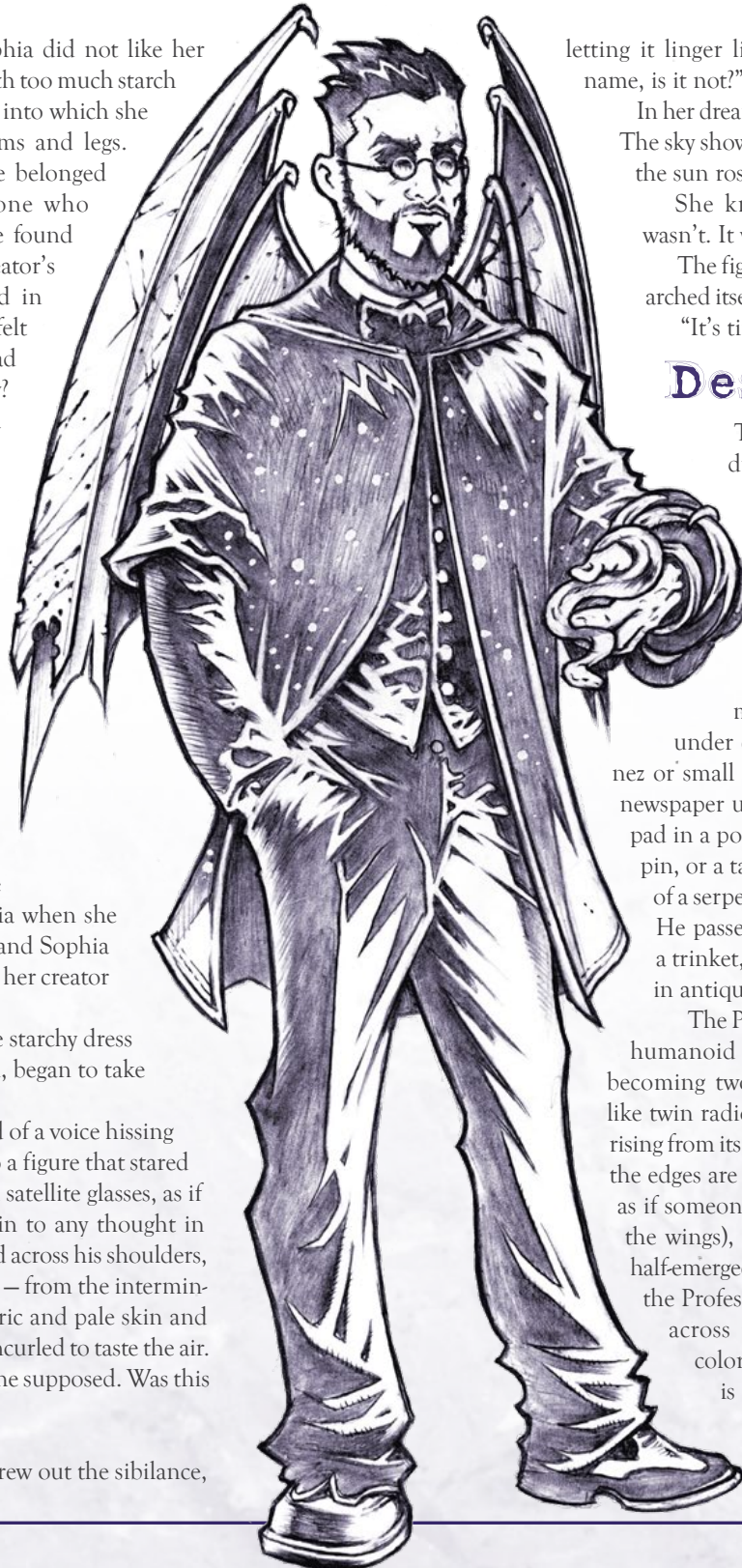
And over the years, the starchy dress of a name began to loosen, began to take her shape.

She slept, and dreamed of a voice hissing like a snake. It belonged to a figure that stared at her unblinking through satellite glasses, as if he could focus and tune in to any thought in the world. A mantle draped across his shoulders, and from the left shoulder — from the intermingling of rich midnight fabric and pale skin and emerald scales — a snake uncurled to taste the air.

She should be afraid, she supposed. Was this God? An angel?

Did it matter?

"Sophia." The voice drew out the sibilance,



letting it linger like a fine wine. "That is your name, is it not?"

In her dream, she nodded. If it was a dream. The sky showed streaks of pink and red, as if the sun rose once more to the world.

She knew who she was. What she wasn't. It would have to be enough.

The figure indicated the sky. The snake arched itself up, and again the voice spoke. "It's time."

Description

The Professor appears as a man dressed in fine clothes, the cut slightly archaic but always impeccably tailored. He looks like the archetypical visiting professor, museum curator, or charity ball organizer. His clothes are always in shades of blue or black, resembling midnight. His gaze is intense under deeply set eyes, he wears pince-nez or small round glasses, and he carries a newspaper under his arm and a small notepad in a pocket. The Professor also wears a pin, or a tattoo if more befitting his guise, of a serpent shaped in an infinity symbol. He passes it off to inquiring humans as a trinket, a reminder of a former interest in antiques and mythologies long past.

The Professor's true form is a looming humanoid with a blank face, the glasses becoming two concave surfaces with spires like twin radio satellites, three pairs of wings rising from its back (notably, two seem clipped: the edges are ragged and stained with blood, as if someone or something had gnawed on the wings), and a sparkling emerald snake half-emerged from one shoulder and circling the Professor's arm. A mantle lies draped across its shoulders, in a blue-black color, and makes it appear the figure is draped in midnight sky. When the Professor talks in this form, a distinct snake-like hiss can be heard.

The Professor does not speak much. The scent of an evening taken in the study follows him around: notes of well-cared-for leather and polished amber, cloaked with the musty scent of something that may be a fire in winter, or black powder. He moves in artistic and intellectual circles: universities, collectors' circles, and artists' collectives. He takes on the guise of a visiting artist at a small town's art guild, a rare books dealer in a larger city, or a local historian or collector of local lore. When appearing to mortals, his cover may even include street art or beat poetry. No matter what media he works in, he is hailed by critics of the town as an enigmatic creator of social commentary.

Intercession

The Emerald Professor is a curious *qashmal* whose Mission is heralding later universal milestones on the Pilgrimage, including attempts at the New Dawn. His appearance does not mean that the Created's attempt at New Dawn will necessarily succeed, just that an attempt is imminent.

Should a Promethean see the Emerald Professor and *fail* in

their attempt to complete the Great Work, in addition to the consequences of not attaining New Dawn she encounters the Professor's influence for about a two-day cycle. She might notice feathers, or circular objects such as eggs or circular motifs on clothing and buildings. These symbols evoke the idea of rebirth and continuous learning: Depending on the Promethean, seeing them may create a sense of dread, guilt, or renewed dedication. She also gains the Obsession Condition: she will not be satisfied with her current state, and thirsts for knowledge that either lets her surpass self-imposed limitations, or pertains to a new subject that leads to a new Role or Refinement.

When playing the Professor, the key word is **questioning**: this *qashmal* is more interested in what the Created has to say about her actions and what she has yet to learn, rather than "passing" or "failing" them. The Professor greatly respects a Promethean being honest about what she does and does not know, admitting her fears and failings, and still resolving to do the best they can. This approach is similar to a Promethean on Plumbum, and the practitioners of Lead may have heard rumors about the Emerald Professor.

DINAH, THE JUDGE (GREATER LILITHIM)

I always know best.

Cole remembered the one who gave life to him. He knew the man's hands had shaken with bad alcohol and caused him to stutter, but in his memories he remembered the tremors less than how large the man seemed. He seemed a storm barely contained within a body, talking wildly about how Cole would speak for him, speak the words he always stuttered, would play the music he always heard in his heart.

His fingers bled now, streaking crimson over the piano keys. His voice was strained — he had left the tea alone and winced. She would not be pleased at this oversight.

But she smiled instead. "Your father would have been proud, wouldn't he? Drink your tea. You've earned it." She set down the tray of cookies. She knew neither of them would actually eat them, and in the window light, her own hands looked like a stained-glass interpretation of human hand. "Let's use those hands of yours. They are ready."

Cole kept looking at his fingers. His father was gone and would never speak again.

He had spent months traveling, wanting to be the dutiful son and fulfill his creator's wishes. But they had come no closer to any sort of satisfaction.

"Have some tea, dear."

He was no longer a tool.

He was ready.

Description

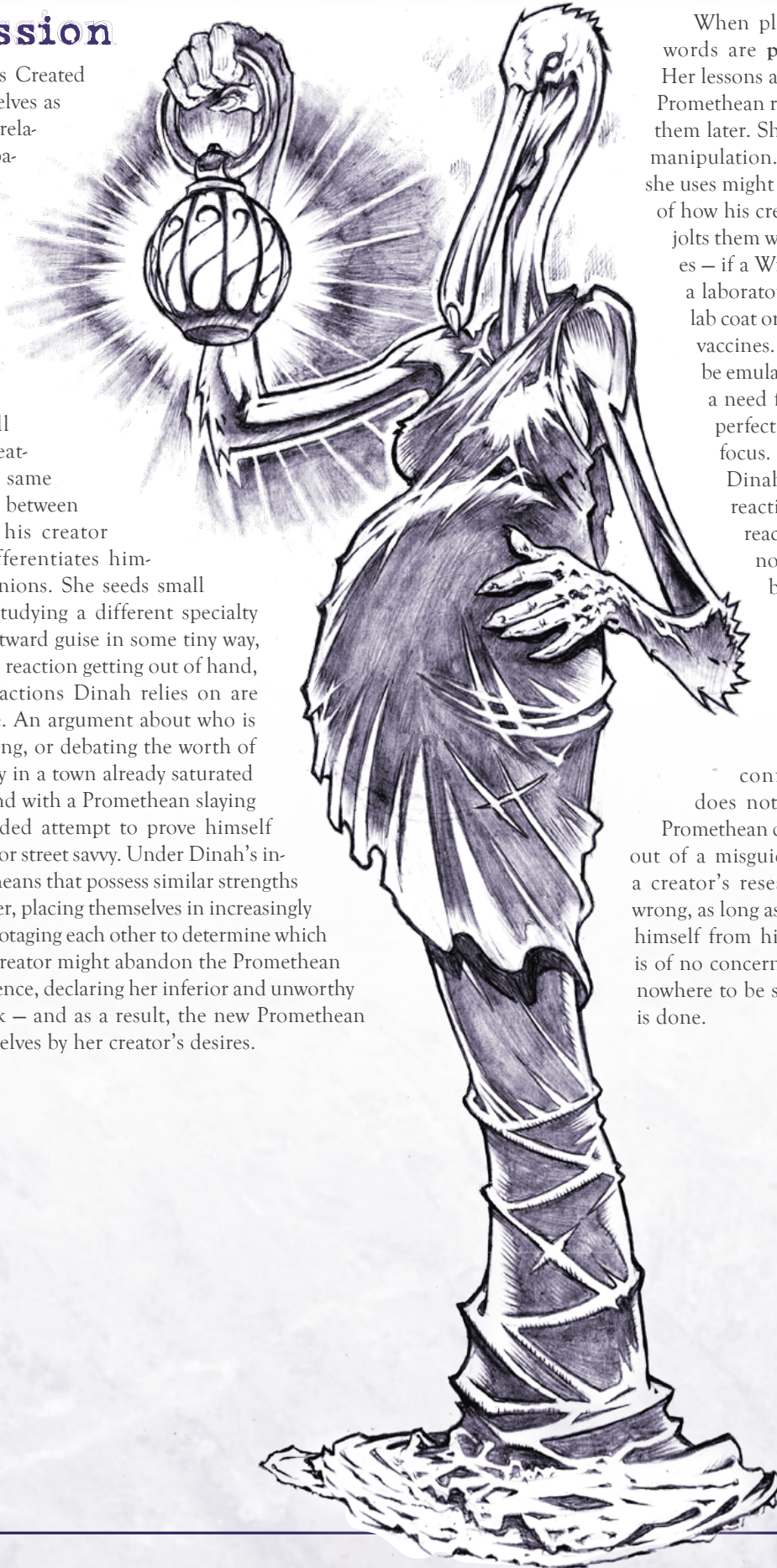
Dinah is a *qashmal* of extremes. While her human guise looks like a pony-tailed woman in her 50s, more likely to have strong opinions about kale or sugar substitutes than knowledge of alchemical reactions and the Great Work, her behavior speaks of her true nature: Her Mission is to cause conflict and emotional volatility. She is skilled at manipulating insecurities and rivalries, and driving the Created to violence. Many of her interventions are fairly minor, yet her Mission is to ensure the Promethean becomes an individual, and so she inevitably drives them into conflict with humans and other Created.

Her true form appears as an impossibly tall, impossibly slim pregnant woman. Her belly is distorted with the growth of new life, which clearly needed to be birthed, and become a separate being, from her ages ago. Her head looks like that of a pelican, complete with beak. Her skin is smooth like glass and reflects many colors of light. A golden black cloak is draped partially on her shoulders and her eyes burn with the dying white of twin stars. The cloak speaks of a welcoming oblivion; it promises unity at the cost of dissolution of individual existence. She is sibling rivalry, parents, and children, she is the story of the Titans as well as the story of Cain and Abel. She holds a lantern, and the Pyrothic fire within continually flickers.

Intercession

Dinah encourages Created to distinguish themselves as individuals. She uses relationships to push separation on them, employing fear, guilt, awe, or any other negative emotion she can amplify.

She has two intertwining Missions: She occasionally coaxes Prometheans to kill someone for the greater good, and at the same time creates conflict between a Promethean and his creator or throng so he differentiates himself from his companions. She seeds small rebellions, such as studying a different specialty or changing their outward guise in some tiny way, which lead to a chain reaction getting out of hand, as the emotional reactions Dinah relies on are exceptionally volatile. An argument about who is right and who is wrong, or debating the worth of visiting an old library in a town already saturated with Disquiet, can end with a Promethean slaying another in a misguided attempt to prove himself more knowledgeable or street savvy. Under Dinah's influence, two Prometheans that possess similar strengths try to outdo each other, placing themselves in increasingly risky situations or sabotaging each other to determine which of them is better. A creator might abandon the Promethean he brought into existence, declaring her inferior and unworthy for the intended task – and as a result, the new Promethean stops defining themselves by her creator's desires.



When playing Dinah, the key words are **pain** and **separation**. Her lessons always hurt, even if the Promethean recognizes the need for them later. She is very subtle in her manipulation. The speech patterns she uses might remind a Promethean of how his creator used to talk. She jolts them with her clothing choices – if a Wretched was created in a laboratory setting, she wears a lab coat or talks about germs and vaccines. A perfectionist might be emulated by Dinah, to instill a need for competitiveness or perfection in a single area of focus. Using these methods, Dinah seeks an emotional reaction. Sometimes these reactions are relatively minor, such as a Wretched borne of a laboratory taking up an interest in art, but other times, Dinah's emotional manipulation leads to horrifying outcomes, major conflicts, and chaos. It does not matter whether the Promethean destroys an entire town out of a misguided attempt to prove a creator's research on bio-weapons wrong, as long as he now differentiates himself from his creator. The fallout is of no concern to Dinah, and she is nowhere to be seen once her Mission is done.

THE SCAFFOLD-BUILDER (GREATER LILITHIM)

Gotta change, or die.

Chuck did not like moving. He knew his place; he was big, and strong, and made as a guardian. His job was not to study or contemplate: His job was to be an iron wall others could hide behind. He was created to protect others, and it did not matter if they liked him or not.

So he kept his own counsel, even as the village authorities found ways to shut him in a cell. When he got out of the cell, his home was destroyed, his creator missing. Dead, or run out of town, and without Chuck. He had failed.

But he did not leave.

His job was to protect what his creator cared about. While the police acted against him and his creator, they were blinded by their rage and discomfort and did not investigate too deeply: His creator's love still lived, in the village hospital. So he went down the tracks, and found an abandoned station hut. The trains had left when the high-ways came, but the hut served as meager shelter. A storm was coming, but he would stay, and be ready. He knew his job.

He did not expect the carpenter.

The carpenter was just standing there, by the door on the small porch, thumbing at his overalls. A leather tool belt hung from his waist. The guy seemed like he had always been there, leaning against the wall like he was just about to crack open a beer and make himself at home.

He didn't even look at Chuck.

Chuck moved. Got in the guy's personal space, reached for the doorknob. It was his hut, dammit. Or at least, the place he was squatting. How dare this person just show up! How dare he not even explain himself?

The carpenter smiled, but said nothing. Moved a little bit, just enough to block the door.

Chuck growled at him. Hit the door frame hard. Not enough to cause structural damage — Chuck liked this little hut, liked exactly where he was — but just enough so whoever this guy was, he'd see the power of two large fists and get the message.

He turned back, and the carpenter was gone.

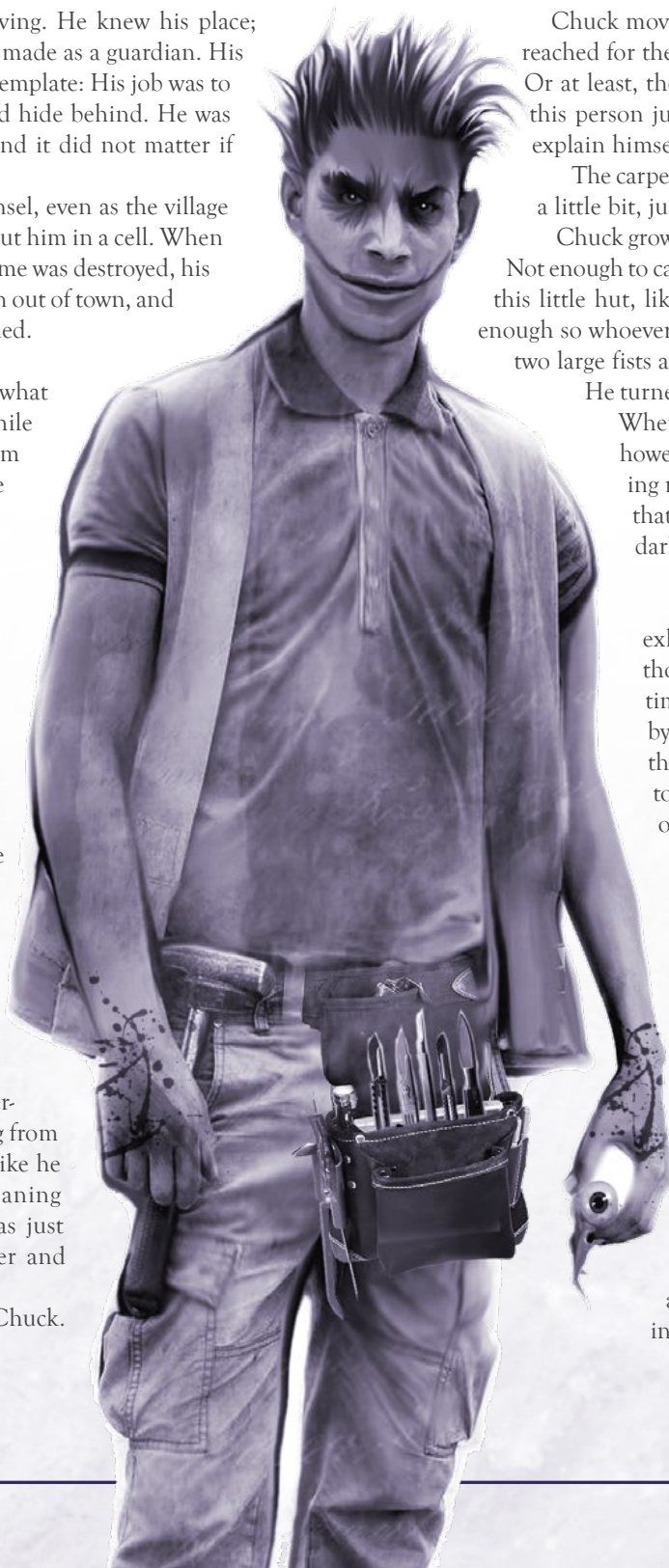
Where the carpenter had been standing, however, were bootprints seared a darkening red into decaying wood. A reminder that a stranger had come to his house, darkened his door.

His home, his door.

When Chuck finally fell in an exhausted heap that night, his last thought was: Maybe, just maybe, it was time to stop being the shield wielded by others. He existed. And whatever that existence was, it did not belong to anyone else. It was time to strike out on his own.

Description

The Scaffold-Builder appears as a construction worker, or as a dock worker in port towns and heavy fishing areas. He has brown, sun-worn skin that speaks of too-bright sun. His hair likewise is brown, though golden at the ends, as if he has spent years wearing hats or caps to mitigate the sun at its worst. He moves about the bustle of society unseen, the façade of a worker in a rough and dangerous trade easily ignored in the modern day. He wears a thick



leather belt and a closed leather pouch resembling a tool pocket. He opens the tool pocket when working with clients, and often, the client does not remember the peculiarities of the ordeal.

Should the Scaffold-Builder reveal his true form to one of the Created, his face looks like a reflection in a mosaic or a Picasso painting. A Promethean can recognize features, like a mouth, but they're not where a human would have them. The mouth slashes down from ear to chin, one eye sits in the palm of his left hand, while the eye sockets are filled in and smoothed over. His right hand, however, is just an ordinary right hand, though reddened with something akin to blood or rust or paint. The leather pouch is not animal hide, and its tools are implements of torture.

Intercession

The Scaffold-Builder possesses a simple, if complex, Mission: to trigger transformation in the Created. His presence evokes a sense of dread because his way is not slow or easy. The Scaffold-Builder operates on the principle that to begin something new, the old way of life must perish.

The *qashmal* helps Created change Refinements, and as such appears to Created stuck in ruts or ones who are having trouble finding Roles to emulate. He is best suited for a single scene than as a sustained presence throughout a chronicle, but he can appear to multiple characters throughout a chronicle if these characters need assistance changing Refinements – in this case, his purpose was to aid the throng, rather than an individual Created.

He is direct and honest, if a creature of few words. When the Scaffold-Builder does speak, he is more soft-spoken than his appearance might suggest. If he comes across the Promethean at rest he will talk – if they are in Torment he will ask if they want someone to listen. For all his coaxing, encouragement, and admonishments, he cannot force a Promethean to take action. If the Promethean tries to attack the Scaffold-Builder, the *qashmal* vanishes, leaving behind scorch marks.

When including the Scaffold-Builder in a scene, the key word is **desperation**. While the Scaffold-Builder is a force of change and transformation, this is not a transformation that is easy or that comes slowly. He represents a change born out of immediate need to do or die, fight or flee.

ASH (ARCH-QASHMAL)

What will you do if the beat stops?

The club on the outskirts of town was not high culture, but with factories shutting down operations, the shipping warehouse got bought out by someone with pretensions to art and thus, became an up-and-coming techno-industrial club. If someone wanted to trot out and be king of the night, it was the place to go. If someone wanted to be invisible, he could disappear into the crowd or down myriad corners.

Hilary didn't know which he wanted, but he figured checking it out would be a good start. The rain would drive people inside, he knew. He also knew the storm was due to him: he had been watching the rain pour and lightning spark in the sky, wishing he too could just let go in one immense burst. The rain would fall tonight, and tomorrow, and perhaps corrode some of the older buildings in the process.

He had tried to create company for himself. His walls were still covered by notes and photos, chalk drawings of the correct planetary symbols. It should have worked.

The blood hadn't washed away well, and the smell of formaldehyde still hung heavy in the musty air. He had failed, and he was alone.

Maybe it was best to let everything corrode.

The club possessed no fire escapes. Hilary did not question it, did not ask himself why.

He wore a black shirt with matching trousers. The sleeves still were crusty with blood, but bloodstains on black were easy enough to hide. He would attend, and bring his own performance.

In the club, one of the DJs sighed. The name she had given was Ash, and it went well with the persona of a DJ clad in black cutsews and petticoats. She played a more somber, ethereal set — something not out of place on a goth night, meant to be more soothing and thoughtful. While it seemed that the crowd responded by slower dancing, moving their hands and fingers in intricate patterns in the air to the tune of the music, something was undeniably wrong. The beat was off, she could feel it.

She cut her set early. She wasn't feeling well, she said to the manager in a quiet voice. Her apologies.

By the time the fire died down at the club, other fires already burned brightly in town. The police blamed illegal development, cut corners, defective protections. They found people to book, blamed it on drugs. But Ash knew: She had failed.

Description

Ash is olive-skinned, and her hair is bundled in an array of braids on top of her head, like a crown. She is usually seen with an instrument, which can be improvised or of professional quality. Ash' instruments of choice have been used during the long centuries, if not millennia, such as drums, bells, tambourines, flutes, guitars, or a brass instrument like a trumpet.

Ash is skilled at communicating through signs, and particularly through music. Prometheans in her vicinity become specifically sensitive to drums, and start hearing rhythmic beats wherever they go, from tapping on keyboards at a café, to noticing a subway can-drummer or a school marching band.



Her true form looks distinctly less humanoid: Ash is a towering bipedal figure, taking up the Promethean's field of vision, legs made of ladders worked in bronze and cedar. She wears a translucent gown of a lapis lazuli color that comes to above the knees, and has wide hips and torso akin to the exaggerated features on a fertility figurine. Her braids slither down her shoulders to become a broad embroidered belt of silk – a tapestry with images of the chosen Created's past – that she wears draped across a shoulder and along her hips like a second dress. Features above the waist shine too brightly to make out any other distinguishing features. Her voice, if she speaks in this form, blasts like a war trumpet. A curious incense scent follows her in both human and true form: amber, galbanum, frankincense, and scorched spices lost to time and more than a few deserts.

Intercession

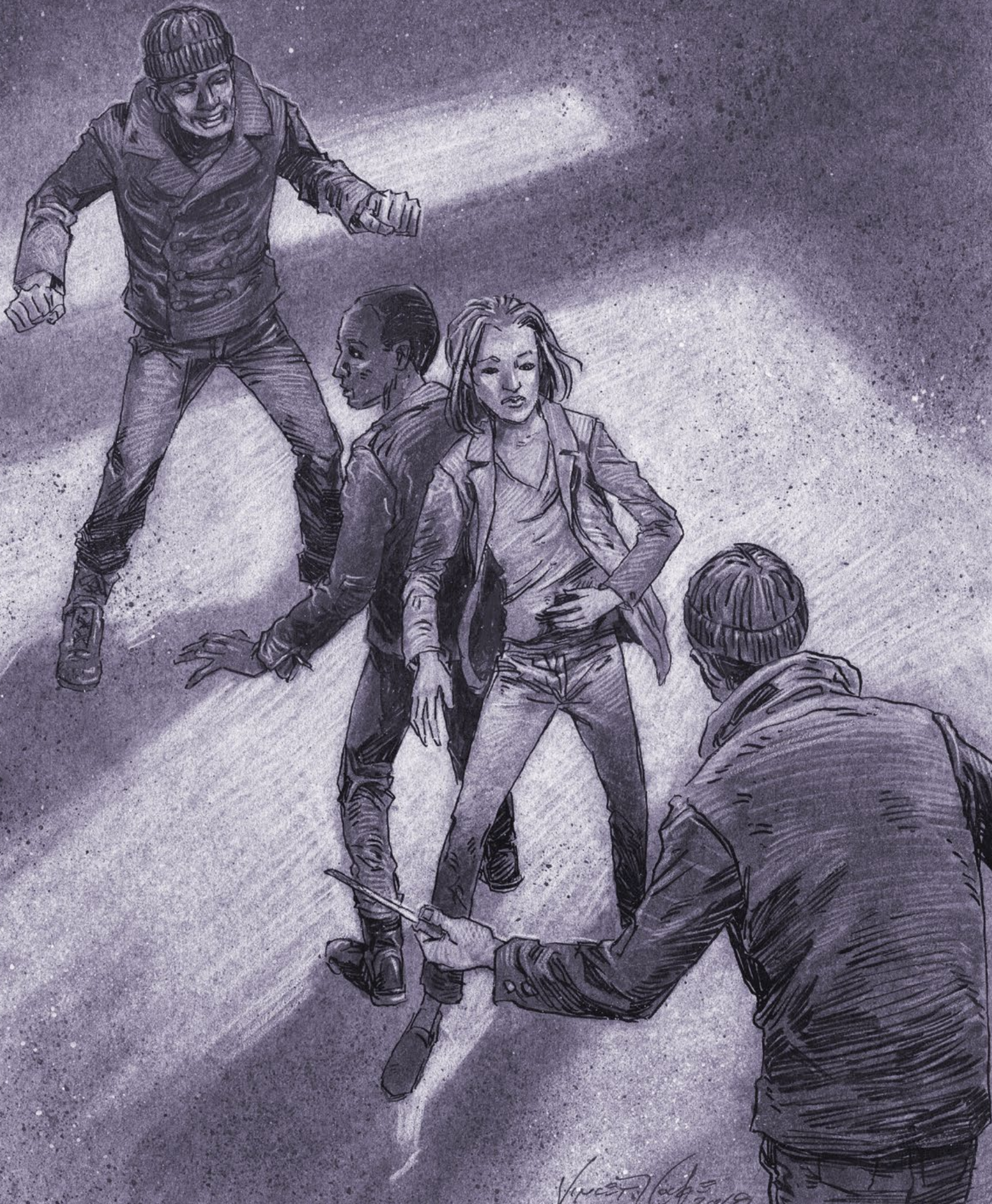
Ash appears if a Promethean has created Pandorans, or is about to become a Centimanus: she is a warning, a signal to get back on the Pilgrimage and move forward again after a Created falls on the path. Ash is obtuse, though. She uses music or quotations to remind the Promethean of the power of moving on, whether it's using the lyrics of a love song or drumming out a more primal beat to remind them their heart still beats. She does speak if she must, in a quiet yet forceful voice.

The *qashmal* presents her human form as a starting musician, dancer, or even as a DJ. This allows her to travel without being inspected too closely, as her human form looks less and less *human* the more time she spends among them. This also gives her a way to influence Prometheans and humans in a discreet

manner as her ability to send signs through music can reach many individuals at once. She has been a street musician playing on upended trash cans just as often as she has been a professional drummer at festivals; she has been a dancer to sacred beats as often as she has been an instructor at a community college.

When playing Ash in a scene or as a recurring presence throughout a chronicle, her key words are **performance** and **the past**. She uses music to influence humans and Prometheans, and implant ideas in their mind relating to things they did in the past. She can urge a Promethean to fight just as easily as she can urge him toward calm, but her main goal is to get the Created to examine the reasons for his actions, examine his regrets and mistakes, and move forward. She is best used to help guide a Promethean to reflect on past incidents of violence, guilt, and regret – whether it is pushing away a lover who tried to understand his existence, or a time where he failed to protect someone – and then, most importantly, gain self-understanding and address the regret in the present. Ash' intervention entices a Created to no longer let his pasts define his present, to climb out of the wells of despair and anger. She sometimes uses memories of past victories to encourage a Promethean to take action in the present, but finds negative emotions like regret or loss elicit more of a reaction than positive ones. Prometheans on Cuprum, the Refinement of Copper, feel a natural affinity for her terse approach; other Prometheans might be agitated by it.

Ash represents a chance to turn around. After all, the path to humanity is fraught with danger and mistakes – what someone does *afterward*, whether those mistakes continue or the Promethean tries to correct them, is what matters.



Vincent Valdes

There was two of 'em.

I shouldn't be surprised really. With my luck, *of course* there was two of 'em. I didn't see it at first, thought it was the one guy predicting my route and intercepting me, but now I saw the difference between them. The lopsided ears just on the other side, the fox and rabbit lapel pins: they were twins.

"Yer comin' with us, mate." Fox spoke first. He had a thick cockney accent. What the fuck were two British kidnappers doing in Capetown? I didn't ponder the mystery for too long, instead directing my mental efforts to an escape.

"Where are we going then?" I asked.

"To the rest of yer life, mate," Fox replied.

Then Rabbit, piping up: "Don't worry, ye'll like it there." They both giggled at that, Rabbit flicking open his switchblade to emphasize that I most definitely would *not* like it. So they liked to bluster. I could work with that.

"Can I say goodbye to my friends first?" I asked. They both giggled in response. They clearly thought this was some kind of game. I wasn't playing, though. Stalling for time, sure, but not playing, and neither was Imani.

Imani's always had better luck than me. Her fist connected on the first punch, catching Fox unaware and landing him a solid five feet away on the ground. Rabbit lunged forward, deftly spinning to avoid Imani's second punch. He stabbed her in the belly, and I could see a surprised expression of pain cross her face — okay, not a regular blade then, and maybe not so lucky for Imani. Behind her, Fox was rising with way too much ease for a guy who'd just been sailing through the air.

Two of 'em, and not human. Looks like my bad luck was rubbing off on Imani. "Sorry," I said, even though she had no idea what I was apologizing for.

Imani and I put our backs against each other as Fox and Rabbit began circling us. None of us made a first move, both Fox and Imani still recovering from that opening tussle. At least, that's what I thought was going on. Then police sirens sounded in the distance, and Rabbit's face broke into a grin. Great. They'd been stalling, and *their* backup was about to arrive. Seriously — fuck my luck.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE HALF-FORMED

“There’s no emotion. None. Just the pretense of it. The words, the gesture, the tone of voice, everything else is the same, but not the feeling.”

— Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)

Human cloning is a feared scientific leap. The prospect of duplicating a human being for harvesting organ tissue, blood, or stem cells is a bridge too far for those who believe in life’s sanctity. The religious fundamentalists balk at the idea of man interfering with God’s design. The morally severe cannot fathom creating a life just to end it. The spiritually minded question whether this misguided creation of life denies each copy a soul, or whether the original’s soul splinters between each variant.

The reality is that to date, scientists have been unable to create human clones without the intervention of Promethean alchemy. Those with access to the spark of Azoth have found it possible to create rough simulacra of life, though they tend to be short-lived and deficient in several areas. Were the scientists responsible for these creations to make their successes known, it’s *possible* their peers would recognize and applaud their accomplishments. It’s more likely they would earn condemnation as criminals and madmen. The monstrosities they create are less, or more, than truly human.

A clone’s creation requires the presence of a Promethean, or at least a Promethean’s Azoth. This fuel provides the spark necessary to make the cloning successful, but the donor Promethean is rarely a willing participant. The process has a cost for both the Created and the scientist, and once a clone enters life, it fiercely resists death.

Genesis

An organization known as the Cheiron Group hold records attributing successful creation of the first human clone to one Jakob Rathben, a professor of genetics with hostile links to the Group. Rathben spent much of his life sabotaging Cheiron experiments, acts first described as vandalism but ultimately upgrading to theft. Under the guise of random attacks, the rogue scientist stole records, equipment, and even subjects from Cheiron’s manifold facilities. This was not some attempt at liberating victims and freeing clandestine information; Rathben felt himself capable of greater scientific leaps when not restricted by a laboratory’s “ethical code” or oversight board, so he repurposed Cheiron’s work as his own.

During this time, an anonymous benefactor — a Frankenstein Light-Bringer with some twisted theories — sent Rathben monthly cash packages, and treatises on a new genesis for human life. Rathben’s mentor never came forward to meet the professor, or visit the extensive, underground laboratory she funded beneath the countryside outside Prague, instead observing from a distance. Rathben’s paranoia grew exponentially as his experiments unfolded. He learned to distrust computers, fired and even murdered lab assistants, and found his only companions a pair of captive Galateids stolen from Cheiron. The Muses’ Disquiet exacerbated Rathben’s descent into insanity, punctuating it with unusual lusts and cravings. Rathben spent his benefactor’s money voraciously, augmenting the theories sent to him with his own, and practiced his greatest desire: to create life.

Grinding one of his captives down to liquid nutrient and unleashing the Azoth within, Rathben cloned himself. He recorded the method he followed in thousands of frantic scribbles on blackboards and scraps of paper. The professor celebrated his “parenthood” by waking his clone and teaching it manic fragments of academic biology, reproduction classes, and advanced chemistry. There was little rhyme or reason to the insane Rathben’s tutelage, and the clone, though loyal to its “father” grew utterly confused and disconsolate.

Rathben attempted to duplicate the process, but never succeeded in full. He cloned limbs and organs in vats, but could not produce a fully-fledged body again. The surviving Muse

resisted Rathben's attempts to siphon further Azoth, resulting in the scientist's constant failures. His clone – simply named "Son" – acted as a quiet lab assistant, unknowingly wreaking havoc on every one of Rathben's experiments due to its poor upbringing. When Rathben discovered this, he did not believe it possible that a creature in his image could make such errors. Son was perfect, as a child ever is in its parent's eyes.

The premature conclusion to the story of Rathben's experiments came when the clone inadvertently released the Galateid. For her part, the freed Promethean took pity on Son and whisked him away from the lab, leaving Rathben alone with his mania. He desperately attempted to locate his "child," and even used parts of the Galateid paste from his previous success to create another flawed copy. This clone lived only three months.

As Rathben started showing signs of lucidity due to freedom from the Disquiet and the Wasteland his laboratory had become, an investigative scientist named Hagen showed up at his door. Hagen was psychotic, as so many scientists chasing forbidden truths tend to become, and stabbed Rathben repeatedly. He stole all research from the laboratory and fled, going on to build clones for the highest bidder. Hagen, Cheiron, and his former captive Galateid assume Rathben died that day, but rumors among Light-Bringers tell of the Frankenstein who swept in to save "Daddy Rathben," and put him to work.

Rathben is not the sole mortal to have experimented with Azoth. He is not the only scientist to create a human clone. He is however the most infamous. After someone at Cheiron leaked the Jakob Rathben file, Prometheans the world over became aware of this new threat. In Created circles, scientists dedicated to cloning humans using Promethean fire received the epithet of "Rathbens."

The Science

Fewer than 30 independent Rathbens exist with the knowledge of how to create human clones. Fredrich Hagen was careful in choosing the people to whom he sold cloning information, not wishing to draw the collective ire of Prometheans who serve to fuel these experiments. Sadly for Hagen, not all of his clients were as discreet. Some set up full-fledged labs with staff who sold Rathben's ideas; others approached their governments for grants, though to date only one such professor was taken seriously. Word reached the Created that some mortals intend to milk them of Azoth to form half-lives in the form of these clones.

To most Prometheans, the idea is abhorrent. These simulacra only possess a fraction of the personality of their creators, and rarely live for longer than a handful of years. They exist to serve a specific purpose, and then they die. While some Created take a morbid interest in whether the science could create a new Lineage, and a few have even sponsored the experiments, the results have never been positive in an ethical or humanist sense.

More than any other Refinement, Argentum has compelled Prometheans to dabble in this macabre science. The allure of mystery, of life's creation without the burden of building a new Created, ensnares Mystics into donating their Azoth to such endeavors. Such Prometheans receive common warning from their

peers to maintain perspective and focus curiosity on actions that may assist in the Pilgrimage. With Pilgrimage such a subjective experience however, those same Mystics retort that these experiments may be a way of venting impurities into sick vessels, to ease the journey.

Azoth is a requirement in any attempt to create a functioning human clone. Whether mixed into a nutrient bath containing the gestating embryo of a human copy, force-fed to a vat-grown human shell, or injected into the heart of an inert simulacrum, Azoth is the key to life. Without its presence, the most gifted scientist finds something unquantifiable missing. Without knowledge of the Created and the spark they hold, this missing piece may remain forever lost, making any cloning attempt destined to fail.

The question becomes how a scientist obtains Azoth. In its crudest form, Azoth is the physical stuff of Prometheans. One might donate a limb, or have one hacked off for the purposes of generating Azoth for an experiment. Azoth is not an element to study beneath a microscope or carry in a mortal's hands, however. It is metaphysical: the core component driving a Promethean's steps. Rathbens may attempt to extract Azoth with syringes, by boiling Created alive, or by any other means of liquefying the stuff of life.

The way Rathbens create clones differs between laboratories. In a vast Salt Lake City lab, a score of tall metal cylinders, kept cool and filled with a viscous yellow soup, house 10 corpses. They each look different, of course, but their minds will be identical to their progenitor: a Rathben named Klara Østergaard, who submits instructions for their creation and stasis from her home in Copenhagen. She has no desire to ever meet her simulacra, and only wants them awake should she meet a premature end. All throughout Utah, her bagmen snatch solitary Created – mainly Frankensteins – to squeeze into the soup keeping her bodies in stasis, cloning her brain and spinal cord into corpse shells.

In a studio apartment in Queens, a degenerate Rathben tortures and dissects a Tammuz, pumping his liquefied flesh into the artificial navel tube leading to his slowly growing physical clone. This scientist, no more than a failing medical student named Bobby Tarr, believes if he creates a copy of himself to attend dull lessons and sit exams, he can live the high life. The Pyros expelled in the Tammuz's takedown has warped Tarr's mind completely, and draws the attentions of beings far worse than other Prometheans.

Lydia Salerno approaches cloning with a mind for business. Disinterested in perpetuating her own existence, and overwhelmed by the possibilities of creating life wholesale, Salerno's only objective is to service her customers. A pioneer in the sex-toy industry, Salerno started creating clones of herself around hollow-boned artificial skeletons and seeks to refine the process further. She lures Galateids and followers of Cobalus to her dungeon with offers of sanctuary or payment, and alternates between handing over cash for a limb, and trapping Prometheans for steaming and rendering into amenable sexual devices. Her clones, now stemming from men and women of all stripes, live fast lives and exist to serve wealthy clients' whims. Horrifyingly, even some Created have taken advantage of her services, as the clones display immunity to Disquiet.

A Pound of flesh

When a Promethean loses Azoth for cloning purposes, it reduces the character's Azoth rating by the volume of Azoth taken for the experiment. Each clone requires a single dot of Azoth for animation and sentience to occur. One dot always requires the sacrifice of at least a single limb.

Technically, a clone can receive more than one dot of Azoth and receive a longer life, with each dot granting between one and three years. Clones may benefit from a longer life, but will never undertake a Pilgrimage or gain a soul. The rare clone prone to self-awareness will either desperately grasp for the chance of a longer, hollow life, or fall to depression when it realizes its tortured existence will last further years still.

The Life of a Clone

Clones remain incomplete beings. Those possessed of sufficient intellect to question wonder why they are not akin to the Created, capable of higher ability and growth. No answer will leave them satisfied. The Azoth used in their creation steadily depletes as the clone ages, and while their life can persist with the theft of additional Azoth, the majority either rapidly age and die, or just cease one day, falling dead as if never alive.

All clones exhibit something of the uncanny valley. Some forget or never learn to blink, while others ignore their perpetually twitching fingers and unnervingly flexing wrists. Depending on their method of creation, a clone may have no navel, no genitals, and an unnatural color in its eyes or a metallic sheen to its skin. Their Rathben may have dosed them up on Azoth at the point of creation, from which time their life begins its countdown. Others may refine Azoth into pill, drink, or intravenous form to ensure a clone's perpetual loyalty. Such measures are often unnecessary, as few clones possess the drive to rebel against their creators. Those with enough cognition know that killing their one supply of Azoth is suicide.

A clone's mind is a blank slate, until its creator teaches it. Some Rathbens rely on microchips of data, some use virtual-reality headsets or fast-track online courses, while others expose a clone to a flurry of subliminal messages, visuals, and experiences, hoping to rapidly condition the new life. In theory, a Rathben can take the time to teach a clone as a parent would a child, but with a clone's typically short life, the payoff is rarely worth it. Rathbens prefer to teach a clone what they need to know – kill this type of person, protect this object, work this process, perform this function – rather than complex skills and behaviors such as linguistics, etiquette, or parenting. This leads to relentless clones pursuing single-minded goals, and inflexibility when approached with something they do not

understand. Clones are not robots; they can function in adverse circumstances and adapt to new situations. The way they do so is guileless and often aggressive, as a child might be when asked to perform a task they dislike.

Clones are not human. Perhaps it is the lack of what some deem a soul, the natural growth and nurture cycle of infant to child to adult, or simply the fire animating them, but something renders them into puppets of their creators' wills. Though it differs between clones, many do not require nourishment or sleep to function. Their bodies do not rot – the Azoth holding them in a form of stasis – nor do they tire. Clones taught to emulate humanity may pretend to practice living functions merely to blend in. Clones rarely take the initiative and formulate plans. They are followers, and while not slavishly obedient, find comfort in performing tasks their creators set. Born institutionalized, prisoners of a short and unnatural fate, they have little frame of reference for wider thinking. For the same reason, few clones exhibit malevolence toward a foe. They merely do what their Rathben tells them to do.

Half-Formed and the Pilgrimage

Clones and Hybrids lack the pure flame of Azoth needed for the Pilgrimage. However, a Created can instill the Half-Formed with some of her own Azoth, simultaneously purifying and stoking those diluted embers into a true fire. The Promethean uses the Half-Formed as she would any body for the act of creation, though the process can be shorter and less elaborate than the normal act: Half-Formed already possess the flame, it just needs to be *more*. A Frankenstein might find it suffices to tear one Half-Formed body apart and stitch it back together, rather than use parts from multiple corpses. A Galateid discovers the Half-Formed needn't be unmarred and perfect, after she lovingly washes and prepares the body. As long as the body is roughly humanoid (torso, head, two arms and two legs) and dead, she can work with it. This act of creation may even suffice for the *multiplicatio* milestone, depending on the form of her Pilgrimage.

Turning a Half-Formed to a Promethean, and freeing them to pursue New Dawn, isn't without risks. A Creator attempting it while Tormented runs the risk of creating a Jovian Athanor inside her new child, or turning them into a Pandoran. That's not to say it can't be done – Pyros is fickle – but it carries a greater risk than ending up with a dead body on a slab.

The creation act, even shortened, serves as a refinery for the Half-Formed's essence. They become the Lineage of their creator, regardless of which Prometheans provided the original stolen Azoth. Hybrids often find their animal DNA has burned away, Azoth and their body's human DNA filling in the gaps. Both former clones and hybrids find their memories – of themselves and their DNA donor – lost, though they can resurface as for any Promethean. They gain all Promethean traits, advantages, and drawbacks of their creator's Lineage. As far as Azoth is concerned, they are a wholly new Created.

The Power of Cloning

Clones have two dots in each Attribute, and one dot in each Skill their progenitor possesses. Of note, this progenitor need not be a Rathben. As in the case of Fredrich Hagen, who steals DNA samples from cloning candidates, it is possible a Rathben may never self-clone. Rathben egos rarely stretch to this point, however, and most make self-copies at least once.

Specialized clones trained to perform specific functions or indoctrinated from production in a specific school of thought may have higher Attributes and Skills in their focus areas. The super soldiers created for Vernon McTavish's mercenary operations in the Zanzibar region of Tanzania all possess four dots in Dexterity and Stamina, and three dots in Firearms, Stealth, and Weaponry. Rumors from the region hold that each clone is a copy of McTavish.

Rathbens may imprint their personalities on clones, with the Storyteller deciding at will when a clone temporarily gains one of its creator's Traits. The Rathben may believe she is teaching the clone, but it is simply emulating the actions, speech, and personality of its teacher. Some Rathbens take to calling clones after days of the week, to represent the first time it made a breakthrough in its learning.

Clones do not suffer from wound penalties. They feel pain, but do not pass out, and only stop an attack (if it is their designated purpose to carry one out) when they lose all Health or acquire a Tilt that prevents their continuing. The Azoth takes over as adrenaline might in a human, powering a clone to superhuman feats of endurance and providing the clone with immunity to the Beaten Down Tilt. Clones do not react adversely to the deaths of their own, instead growing emboldened when a small part of their minds realizes they are closer to being the only one left. When a clone sees another from the same batch fall, they regain a point of Willpower.

Clones lack an Integrity or Pilgrimage rating. Like mortals, they possess a Virtue and a Vice, with Virtues such as Stalwart, Loyal, Dedicated, and Level-Headed common due to their desire to follow orders. Clones' Vices define their actions far more than in the case of mortals, and typically manifest in mirror image of their progenitors' Vices, or as result of their conditioning. Clones must make Resolve + Composure rolls whenever the opportunity presents itself to act in keeping with their Vices. A super soldier may find frenzied rages uncontrollable due to the Vice of Short-Tempered, while a sex worker clone cannot help but succumb to the Vice of Wanton to please a master or mistress. Clone Willpower returns by re-upping in the way their Rathben designed them to do so. Some sleep, others take pills, while some few meditate.

Clones know a single Alembic at time of creation. The Alembic copies one of the Transmutations their Promethean source possessed at the time of limb "donation." As Promethean Refinements change, one Promethean source may spawn clones with differing powers. Clones possess maximum Pyros equal to half (rounded down) a Created of equal Azoth rating, i.e. a clone

with Azoth 1 or 2 has maximum Pyros of 5, a clone with Azoth 3 or 4 has maximum Pyros of 6, etc. A clone replenishes Pyros after spending 24 hours pursuing its designated task.

If the Promethean who "donated" the Azoth still lives and the clone practices their Alembic, the Created feels a pull toward the clone, and a strong desire to nurture the creature. The Promethean must make a Willpower roll to dampen the call, which otherwise distracts the Promethean (reducing all dice pools by one) until answered, or until the clone recovers its Pyros.

The Cost

Some Created consider Rathbens a form of alchemist, but it's rare for these scientists to exhibit any great wisdom. They do not seek to create life to defy the gods, forge a new link in the chain of evolution, or cure some great plague: Rathbens create life because their egos drive them to do so. The outcome — deciding what to do with the clone — often comes after the first successful creation.

Rathbens tend to be among the brightest minds in their field. A Rathben may stay sane and compassionate while experimenting with cloning, but handling the raw stuff of Azoth twists their minds into strange proportions. Created believe *something* doesn't want Rathbens creating life in this way, but fall short of blaming a higher power, or some metaphysical moral arbiter.

When a scientist handles Azoth, they develop the Disquieted (Stage One) Condition or a higher version if they already possess the first, and the Obsession Condition, which only resolves if all their clones die. They are also prone to the Paranoid Condition, which persists until they spend at least a week outside the clone's presence. Each additional time the scientist manipulates raw Azoth, they gain another stage of the Disquieted Condition. A Rathben's Integrity does not drop as a matter of course, but typically as a symptom of the accumulated Conditions they acquire. Storytellers can build Rathbens anywhere along the track of degeneration.

Rathbens benefit from a clone's creation, in the form of a loyal bodyguard who will defend its creator to the death. Rathbens gain a clone creation as a two-dot Merit Retainer (Clone).

The Scientists

Popular belief claims cloning is only possible in state-of-the-art labs with bleeding-edge technology and the world's best scientists working round the clock in safe, sanitary conditions and with millions, if not billions, of dollars backing them. This is mostly true, as the art of making clones requires access to materials that are not readily available to most scientists. Certain enterprising Rathbens however, are able to create their clones in their own personal lab using only the materials they have on hand.

A Rathben needs only the means to see his dream come true and the swirling, chaotic jumble of pseudo and actual sciences to begin creating a clone. They take risks a normal lab wouldn't dare consider, leading to some Rathben's facilities being a jumbled mess of cables, dirty glass beakers, and a cloning vat created from

yards of plastic tarp and an old bathtub. Some Rathbens go so far as to misuse grant money or take out massive loans in order to afford the equipment they need. While Azoth is crucial to bringing clones to life, it also requires the Rathben to go above and beyond what others are willing to dare.

Cheiron did their best to stop Rathben's research from escaping their control, but this proved impossible. Wayward researchers left Cheiron with Rathben's notes printed or tucked away on flash drives, and though selling this information was never truly profitable, enough interested parties exist that Azoth-fueled clones are appearing without Hagen's mark upon them.

The promise of creating life is an old one, and one that potential investors preferring quick returns on their money have heard before. Companies need a cover they can market toward the public, as the UN's ban on human cloning makes it illegal in most countries. Breakthroughs in cloning research are often advertised as providing a resource for organ transplant surgeries.

Companies and facilities involved in human cloning survive by having two layers their owners are careful never to cross. The first is their public image, which has employees and researchers working on seemingly mundane research. Occasionally a piece of information is passed down from above containing breakthroughs in protein synthesizing or gene identification, but these shell companies engage in hollow pursuits with no clear goal other than laundering money and providing cover for the facility's actual activities.

Behind the scenes, these companies often keep small groups of researchers under the control of a solitary Rathben, who are careful not to share the true nature of their research with others for fear of it escaping their control. The Rathbens are also responsible for finding a way to extend their reserves of Azoth. Some facilities hire private security teams to capture Prometheans, while others devise insidious means to earn the trust of a Created before capturing them and rendering them down for their Azoth.

Dioscuri Executive Solutions

Castor and Pollux were twin warriors in ancient Greece, and their skills with sword and shield were legendary. Revered by sailors and warriors throughout the ages, their story was always a favorite of Diego Reines, a Rathben whose skill as an engineer led to him developing equipment for the US military during its invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. When he was tasked with reviewing notes captured during a raid on a Republican Guard compound, he discovered notes belonging to another Rathben, and it was then that the brilliant engineer decided to use this knowledge to save US lives. His dream of creating perfect soldiers without souls or families to fight on behalf of those that did, led to him creating Dioscuri Executive Solutions, a PMC that only has a few operatives listed. This is because these soldiers, who are considered the best in their fields, are the results of carefully

curated cells and genes taken from fallen soldiers and given life in Reines' laboratory.

Reines sees the potential of his clones as near limitless. Tailor-made soldiers can handle any environment, are absolutely loyal to their contractors, and can be sent into theaters as expendable assets rather than risking what he considers to be real people. His company provides soldiers for the highest bidder so Reines can continue to create better clones. His teams know to bring the bodies of his clones back for further research.

Though he has only been in business for a few years, Reines has gathered an impressive number of contacts across the globe which allows him to keep an eye out for the tell-tale signs of Created activity. Realizing the need for Azoth will always keep the number of clones he can produce small, Reines has brought in several more Rathbens to develop more efficient means of harvesting Azoth.

Project Gemini

Originally funded by the CIA as a means of replacing foreign leaders with clones who would serve the will of the US government, the project was shut down and the name reassigned to the nascent space program for testing launch vehicles during the Cold War. At least, that's according to the official statement residing in the CIA's files, which requires the highest levels of clearance to read. Most who have read the file consider it a joke placed there to test the gullibility of agents who snoop through files they shouldn't. The truth is that Project Gemini saw most of its funding shifted to another covert operation, which continued the investigation into cloning. They, too, acquired Rathben's stolen notes, which surfaced on the black market at that time, and used them to boost their own research.

The CIA's primary testing facility is based out of a safe house underneath an old automobile factory in Dresden, Germany. The agents working for Project Gemini do their best to stay off the Director's notice as they work in secret to hunt down Created for their Azoth. Operating in the gray area of what is acceptable even in the eyes of the CIA, project leader Greg Donovan hopes to one day reveal his prototype clones to the President. Until then he continues to work in secret, believing the ends justify the means. He monitors CIA channels for potential targets to replace with his clones, and within a few months' time the CIA is surprised to learn a foreign official who was unwilling to work with them has a change of heart.

Agents working for Project Gemini monitor the Created and any clashes between them carefully, hoping to gain access to the corpses of Prometheans or any body parts left behind. Though they are not above capturing live Created for their experiments, they prefer to leave that as a last resort as bringing down a Promethean requires more resources than Donovan considers prudent. Doctor Kneise, the project's resident Rathben, is encouraging Donovan to capture more live subjects for testing, but for now Donovan is keeping Project Gemini's expansion slow and carefully measured.

Vivitas Health Institute

Almost everyone has seen advertisements of the Vivitas Health Institute, and not even realized it. The company has banners on the back of bus stops, and its commercials run during late-night programming on basic television. It has kiosks at the mall, and vendors who invite people through social media to come to their houses to try out their miraculous anti-aging products. Though the majority of Vivitas products are nothing more than simple cosmetics and perfumes, the company's private clinics see miracles happen. Friends and family are surprised by clients who go away for a long spa, and return completely revitalized in mind and body.

Vivitas is able to perform these miracles because their founder, Arno Nederlander, was one of the original Cheiron Group researchers who stole Rathben's notes on creating clones. Realizing that the potential for creating clones was nearly unlimited and all he lacked was a testbed, Nederlander used his family's vast resources to buy a dominant share in a failing cosmetics business. Completely revamping Vivitas with a focus on health, Nederlander now has access to thousands willing to supply their DNA for Vivitas' Gene Phenotype Restorative Testing, which is a nonsense phrase that gives his company the excuse to learn all they can about a subject prior to replacing them with a clone.

Through cloning, Vivitas is able to create an endless resource of organs for those seeking transplants for their own failing organs. Others Nederlander replaces entirely with new clones loyal only to him, granting him access to their wealth and contacts. Vivitas has become one of the world's leading companies in restorative therapy and as Nederlander's reach grows, he finds himself with dozens of clones in positions of power. He either replaces clones nearing their expiration date, or arranges that their estate will transfer assets over to him upon their death.

The Mellifera Group

The Mellifera Group is looking for a way to commercialize cloning and make it a profitable business. In its attempts to create healthy, long-lived clones, Mellifera has inadvertently created numerous hybrids which it sells to fund its enterprise. The company is interested only in cornering the market on cloning, and has dedicated itself to the twin tasks of monitoring clones across the globe and identifying Rathbens to bring into the company. Mellifera eliminates any Rathbens who refuse its offer of employment.

The Group sees clones as nothing more than chattel that can be bought and sold. Often times, during corporate meetings, scientists and managers refer to clones as "units," and the latest models are usually debuted with numerous enhancements discussed as luxury add-ons. The company offers free psychiatric services to its executives as a means to monitor their loyalty to the program; those that find they are unable to keep working on developing clones are silenced and replaced. Only the chairman of Mellifera's board, Shelby Tycho, has an accurate headcount of how many executives are now clones.

Currently Mellifera is working on creating more breakthroughs in its line of hybrids. To date, only one hybrid has proven to remain stable, but that has not stopped its scientists from experimenting with numerous other types of hybrid creatures. Currently Mellifera's most popular line of hybrid is the Model-B, whose genes are derived from prize-winning bulls from across the Midwest. With their massive forms they serve as soldiers deployed to dangerous areas. Other successful hybrids are the Model-C, which incorporates cobra DNA for use as stealthy assassins, and their Model-D hybrids whose canine DNA leads to them being loyal bodyguards.

DR. MABEL VENTURA, GRIEVING GENIUS

I promise you, this will be the last time you die. This time you will live! You trust me, right?

Background

All Dr. Ventura wanted was to do right by her family and make a better life for them. A child prodigy, some believe her ascension in the halls of academia was held back when she became pregnant with twins, but she considered her boys a godsend. Ventura was able to keep up with her classwork while cooking dinner, helping them with homework, and seeing them off to school each day, but the day after she walked across the auditorium and received her honors was the last day she would be with her children. The next day, a drunk driver ran a red light and ended their lives.

Ventura's grief nearly broke her completely, and she went through the next few years in a daze. She switched jobs randomly as she attempted to cope with the loss. One day she received an invitation to join a new health company start-up, the Vivitas Health Institute, and it was there that she met Arno Nederlander, a Rathben, and learned about the miracle of Azoth. Realizing this miraculous material could be used to create life, she became one of Nederlander's best employees, and was often first to arrive at the research lab each day and last to leave.

The problem with the clones' limited lifespans has always bothered Ventura, who is unable to keep the clones she makes of her children alive for more than a few years. Nederlander's goals never matched hers, and while he was content creating replicas that would only live for as long as they were needed, Ventura wanted to create clones that would live forever. As her sons start to degenerate toward the end, she is thrown into a manic state as she struggles to find a cure for them. Each time she loses her son feels like the first, a fact that focuses her even more sharply on finding a solution. Each time this happens her methods become crueler, and she convinced herself she is working for the greater good as she aids Nederlander in harvesting Azoth.

Description

Ventura's life, as long as she is not manic, is highly ordered. To reduce choice-fatigue, she wears one of seven identical suits daily, and piles her ash-blonde hair, now streaked with gray, in

the same bun atop her head. She showers every morning before work, eats healthy balanced meals, and even takes scheduled time off to refresh her mind. She wears a locket around her neck with a cross flanked by two wings, holding pictures of her sons inside.

Ventura, in some ways, resembles a clone — an automaton going through the motions of a human life.

She socializes with others out of politeness, but is always running calculations and working on the longevity problem of clones in her mind. She never takes any risks, preferring to be on the safe side because her sons depend upon their mother. When it comes to dealing with the Created, she views them as abnormalities in nature that are best harvested for the benefits they could offer humanity. If helping Vivitas drain Azoth from them means she is one step closer to having her children back, then that is how it has to be.

Dr. Mabel Ventura, Rathben

Virtue: Compassionate

Vice: Proud

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Biology, Chemistry) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 4, Science 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 2

Merits: Interdisciplinary Specialty, Library, Professional Training 4

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Integrity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 3

Initiative: 5

Armor: 0



BURKE AND HARE, THE BODY SNATCHERS

It comes with us willingly, or it comes with us all tied up and in a bag. Doesn't matter to us.

Background

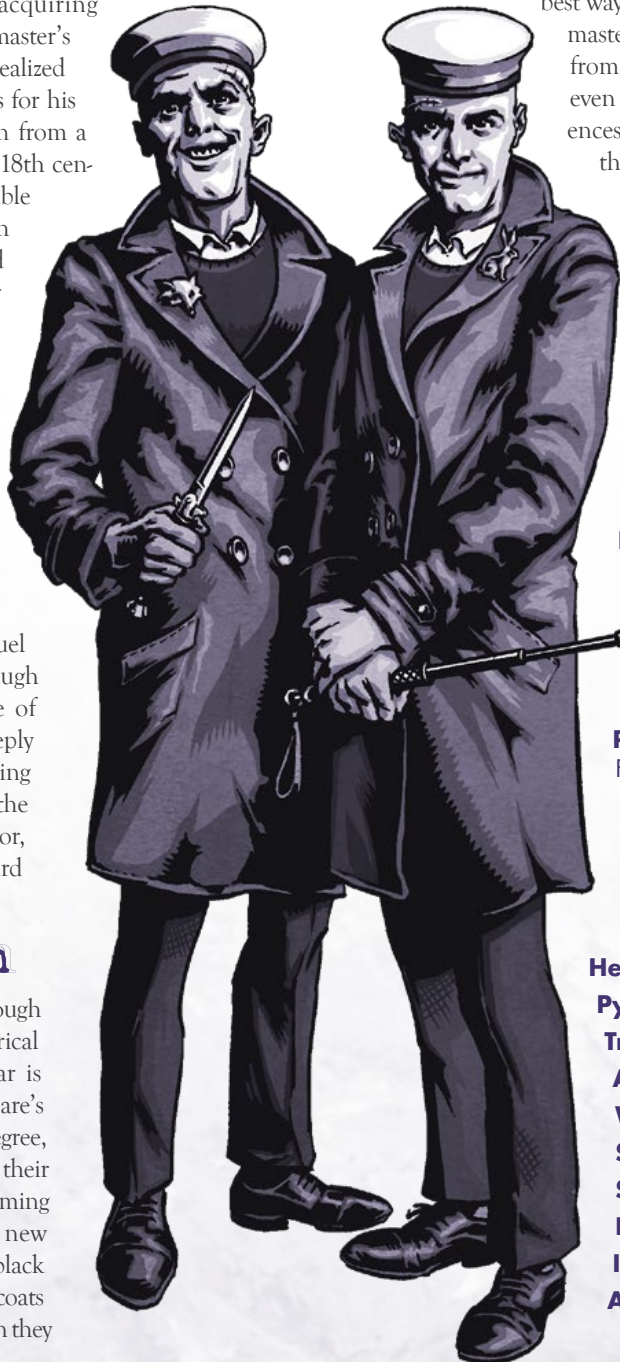
Brutal, crude, and with all sense of honesty excised from them during their creation, Burke and Hare are responsible for acquiring new sources of Azoth for their master's experiments. When their master realized he needed more Azoth and parts for his experiments, he drew inspiration from a pair of body snatchers from the 18th century and created loyal clones capable of being able to go toe-to-toe with Prometheans. Initially designed to be expendable, their master is not sure where he would be without the pair now, as their powers and intense physical skills allow them to restrain and capture the Created ordinary humans cannot. Their personalities draw from the copious amounts of television the doctor lets them watch when they are not working; Burke and Hare are cruel to the point of cartoonish. Though they may hide behind a façade of bluster and arrogance they are deeply dedicated, fanatical, and unrelenting in their hunt. Both claim to be the original clones created by the doctor, but truthfully Burke is on his third clone, and Hare on his sixth.

Description

Burke and Hare are twins, though they are asymmetrically symmetrical with each other. Burke's left ear is slightly lower on his head while Hare's right ear is lower by the same degree, and both have slight scars above their ears where the doctor's reprogramming tongs were placed while their new bodies were grown. They wear black clothing with navy caps and pea coats while they are out of the lab, though they

attempt their best to blend in with the crowd.

Burke and Hare are flunkies who always do what their master commands. Their witless demeanor is actually a front for cold, calculating minds, constantly at work to determine the best way to kidnap victims and get them back their masters' lab safely. Their combined skill come from over a decade of capturing Created, and even when they are not successful their experiences are passed on to the next clone. Though they dress identically, Burke wears a small pin on his lapel of a fox while Hare has a pin of a jackrabbit on his so their master can tell them apart.



Burke & Hare, Loyal Clones

Virtue: Vicious

Vice: Gullible

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Snares) 3, Investigation 3, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Social Skills: Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Gathering Leads) 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Parkour, Seizing The Edge, Sleight of Hand

Health: 8

Pyros/turn: 5/1

Transmutations: Mesmerism – Phobos

Azoth: 1

Willpower: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 6

Initiative: 5

Armor: 0

THE HAGEN CANDIDATES

Fredrich Hagen was once sane, if not kind. Despite contrary rumors, he was the first scientist to successfully clone a mouse, in efforts to better test vaccines. He aimed to move on to pigs before a jealous colleague prematurely destroyed his research. Hagen's spiral into psychopathy began following public announcements of his hoaxing scientific experiments, and testing animal subjects for sadistic pleasure. No reputable laboratory would hire him. His life partner left his side. He ran out of money. His thoughts turned only to hate.

Hagen took out his ire on the colleagues who besmirched him, killing them in inventive ways. He split doctors in two, fed them to lab animals, drowned them in amniotic fluid, and disemboweled them via the navel. It took little time for Hagen to realize he enjoyed the feeling. Hagen sought out other scientists reputable for their knowledge of cloning, and murdered many, obsessively removing every hair, tooth, and nail from their bodies, and his own. Every morning he scrubbed his skin with steel wool to remove "traces." One day, he appeared at Jakob Rathben's door, attacked the scientist, and stole his work. Consuming Rathben's accumulated records, Hagen temporarily halted his murderous urges, and reached out to the few peers he didn't kill. He claimed responsibility for the first successful human clone, and offered the formula to others. Though this boast was disproven, Hagen's star remained ascendant. The critically injured Jakob Rathben received the sanctuary of several mercenary Prometheans, but never came forward to contradict Hagen's claims.

Wealthy after acting as the center of cloning intelligence, Hagen stopped cloning himself when he realized his skills would serve better to clone husbands, wives, bosses, children, or employees, killing the originals and slipping the clones in their places. He has crafted a dozen of these Manchurian candidates, each of which awaits orders before their expiration date approaches. He places them in proximity to powerful figures, but has yet to decide whether to tell anyone and sell their services, or simply let chaos reign and murder a slew of politicians, scientists, religious leaders, and celebrities.

Rumors

"The Hagen Candidates are set to trigger World War III. I heard he put one in the White House, another in the Kremlin, and a third in Britain's House of Commons. The problem is, most of the assholes who work in those places barely act human anyway, so how can we tell which one is the clone?"

Fredrich Hagen has placed two clones in the thick of governments, but not in key roles, and not in those of major powers. He is psychotic, but he's also paranoid. He has no wish to draw further attention to his activities, when that attention may come from the UN. Hagen's current modus operandi is to see if he can destabilize a new government or puppet state. By starting small, he hopes to use the example as a selling point, at which point he can bring in the Americans, Chinese, or Russians as buyers of his science.

"We've been watching Hagen for some months, waiting for him to show a vulnerable side, and it looks like some fae types are doing the same thing. Turns out they think the clones he's dropping are something

called fetches, and they think he's serving some group called the Gentry."

Changelings have taken a look at Hagen, and see similarities between his actions and those of their former captors. He has no connection to the Gentry, but he raids family units, replacing one member with a flawed copy. The main difference with Hagen is he murders the kidnapped family member. For Lost and Prometheans alike, his actions are unconscionable, and for the former they bring back horrific memories.

"We all know not to go anywhere near Hagen, so how do Created end up in his laboratories? My guess is he has some alchemist sponsoring him, or a group of the bastards. They don't want to get their hands dirty with all that Azoth."

The rumor is correct; Hagen is only alive today because of his alchemist patronage. The ego of the man prevents him from seeking them out to thank or rebuke them. Instead, he wakes up every Sunday morning to find a new dismembered Promethean crated in one of his many warehouses, and ready for liquefaction. The alchemists providing him with materials are unafraid of handling Created, but want to see how far Hagen can go. He was a mundane scientist who legitimately cloned a living creature without fault, and their hope is with Azoth he may achieve even more. As time goes by, their estimations of the madman falter. They may soon cease shipments, and observe how he acts.

Story Hooks

- An associate of the throng never makes a scheduled meeting. Investigating, the Created discover a whiteboard in her apartment with connecting lines between other missing Prometheans, Hagen, and a gang of Frankenstein Light-Bringers who just arrived outside the city. Did Hagen snatch the associate himself, or did Jakob Rathben's Phosphorum patrons acquire more grist for Rathben's newly reactivated clone mill? Clues eventually lead to the recovered Jakob Rathben, and his revitalized ambition.
- A famed religious leader suddenly decries his faith on national television, begins twitching uncontrollably, and weeps for his "daddy." The audience believes he's having a stroke, but word travels fast among Created that the man is a clone with little life remaining. If a Promethean could get to this thing's bedside before its short life terminates, perhaps it could convey some wisdom in exchange for longer life, or lead a throng to one of Hagen's laboratories.
- With stubbly hairs growing on his head and the barest semblance of fingernails protruding, Hagen stumbles into a Promethean and stares at her with wild eyes. "I need what's in you, but my God, what has it done to me?" Hagen cries out before running off. The Rathben's lucidity increases after the alchemists cut his supply of Azoth, but Hagen will never stop being a killer. Who he targets next may be down to the manipulations of generous Prometheans.

MONDAY, HAGEN CANDIDATE

Of course I'm your mother. How could you think otherwise, little girl?

Background

Monday takes on the role of a child pop star's mother, observing the child's activities and reporting them back to Hagen. Due to the starlet's constant absence from home, she's only just started noticing her mother's growing coldness.

Description

Monday often forgets to blink, and unless she applies makeup her skin looks tight and jaundiced. Her behavior grows increasingly severe and unnatural over time. She lacks empathy, and stares blankly whenever someone appears upset.

Monday is always active, baking, washing, cleaning the home, and asking after her "daughter." Her ignorant husband is pleased with his wife's sudden domestication, and does not question it. Monday does not know her ultimate role other than to act as surrogate in place of her predecessor, but occasionally struggles with mixed feelings toward her new family.



Monday, Hagen Candidate

Virtue: Dedicated

Vice: Needy

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts (Baking) 2, Investigation (Observation) 2, Medicine 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Drive 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize (Smalltalk) 2, Subterfuge (Straight-faced Lies) 1

Health: 7

Pyros/turn: 5/1

Transmutations: Deception – Anonymity

Azoth: 1

Willpower: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 2

Initiative: 4

Armor: 0

THE LIMB TREES

The master of creating clones purely for utility, who finds a market with every other Rathben, is Laszlo Maublanc. This Quebecois gentleman specializes in the repair and augmentation of existing clones, and customization of clones yet to emerge from the vat. If a scientist wants an arm, leg, organ, face, or set of genitalia to conform to a certain standard, Maublanc somehow finds a way of procuring the sought-after body part.

Maublanc's efforts would be heralded in the medical community as a positive boon for those in need of transplants and working limbs, but his cloned parts do not grow in solitude. To perfect the process of creating living tissue, he must attach it to a trunk. Therefore, Maublanc clones human torsos and reconstructs their skeleton and musculature to accommodate extra limbs and other parts. A single clone may bear three adult arms of different proportions and two belonging to children. That same clone might have more than two legs, several sets of noses, penises, and ears, and as many hearts as the torso can contain.

Maublanc considers himself an artist and innovator, and even his fellow Rathbens appreciate the French-Canadian as avant-garde among their ranks. His creations loathe their existence from the moment they spawn into this world. Maublanc dislikes the idea of rapidly growing a clone through youth, instead favoring the instantly-produced adult body with the augmentations he desires already attached. These clones — the Created dub them limb trees — emerge as weeping, howling monstrosities, and only calm as Maublanc removes their excess appendages for delivery to one of his buyers. This moment of respite rarely lasts, as the scientist likes to take all the life he can from these limb-racks, re-immersing them in nutrition vats and remotely stimulating growth to generate new limbs, or stitches freshly built ones onto the stumps of the old.

These clones exist to serve a greater need, but that offers little comfort. Tragically, the only person they trust is their creator and abuser, so even when offered the chance of freedom, they tend to flail their way back to Maublanc's laboratories.

Rumors

"You can cut these monstrosities down without having to worry about their feelings. They're not alive, or if they are, they're not sentient. I mean, how can you hold a conversation with a ball of arms?"

This lie does the rounds every few months, providing reassurance to Prometheans who run into limb trees and decide to put them down. Sadly, limb trees are as sentient as any clone. They may lack higher cognitive abilities, and Maublanc doesn't care to teach them much beyond how to stay healthy and defend their limbs, but they are just as capable of experiencing pain as any other living creature.

"I hear a bunch of limb trees escaped into the wild from a facility in Windsor, on the other side of the border to Detroit. Apparently they decided they'd had enough of Maublanc's torture, and plan to bum down every one of his laboratories."

Several limb tree clones did escape Maublanc's Windsor facility, but they lack the freedom of thought to turn around and start attacking the scientist's other buildings and creations. Something snapped in one limb tree's mind, causing it to name itself "Spartacus" and lead a revolt. They currently lurk in the wilderness of Ontario and Michigan, terrorizing mortals and attempting to capture Prometheans so they may extend their pitiful lives.

"The automatic reaction is to kill this Maublanc bastard, but here's the thing: he uses corpse DNA to create fresh body parts, many of which he supplies through back channels to reputable hospitals and people in need the world over. The limb trees are horrific, but without them, hundreds, maybe thousands of regular mortals would die."

Maublanc is no altruist by design, but the rumor is true. The scientist provides amputees on long waiting lists with a quicker route to healing, and is directly responsible for saving a child with a rare condition only a transplant heart would solve. The heart required was so rare that Maublanc unearthed one of the child's ancestors to take a DNA sample, regrew his heart, and made the donation. The Rathben performs these acts because they're pioneering and he values the funding he receives from private backers. He doesn't give two shits about children with ailments, unless there's something in it for him.

Story hooks

- Talk of a roiling pillar of hands and feet brings to mind Centimani, until an investigating Osiran discovers the creature crying and attempting to mutilate itself. Against the advice of her peers, the Promethean takes the tortured creature in. All the Prometheans of the city want a say on this aberration, and how harboring it may bring hell down upon their society.
- One free limb tree going simply by the name of "Frank" shows an uncanny level of calm and rationale compared to his cousins. His attempts to integrate into human society have been successful, and observed with interest by Prometheans and alchemists, as he has developed a serum that prevents the further growth of limbs and appendages (his extra hands are tucked inside his over-sized clothes). Rumor has it Frank sought patronage from a different type of creature known as an Arisen, and the Sekhem of one of these creatures acted as a direct counter to the power of Azoith.
- According to a reliable source, a once-captive Aurum Promethean was the scientist's supply of Azoith, but they now donate their life willingly. The subject stirs a buzz of activity, as Prometheans debate whether to interfere with what may be this Created's personal Pilgrimage, and others suggesting putting the clearly insane creature down.

ORD, LIMB TREE

It hurts, mommy! Chop it off chop it off CHOP IT OFF!

Background

Ord was a blue-collar worker, operating the docks in Windsor as a stevedore. These days, his clone acts as the hefty trunk to multiple limbs, and Ord's personality barely makes it past the array of appendages except to scream for salvation.

Description

Around a dozen arms, all child-sized, wreath Ord's well-built torso. He possesses three legs, and often perches as a tripod, each leg bent at the knee. Unlike many clones, thick hair coats Ord's body, and his face bears an unkempt beard. His eyes only stop shedding tears when they're too gummy to open.

Ord will assist anyone who helps him remove some of the limbs on his body.

He will only be truly without pain if reduced to a torso and head.

Though he will offer help to any who aid him, if asked to turn against Maublanc he will start screaming for "mommy" and attempt to lurch back to his creator.

Ord, Limb Tree

Virtue: Adaptable

Vice: Cowardly

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts 1, Medicine (Surgery) 2, Science (Biology) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Grappling) 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation (Surprise) 1, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 1

Health: 11

Pyros/turn: 6/2

Transmutations: Metamorphosis – Bestiae Facies

Azoth: 3

Willpower: 4

Size: 7

Speed: 11

Defense: 4

Initiative: 4

Armor: 0



HYBRIDS

Creating clones is a delicate process that can take Rathbens their entire lives to perfect, but along the way new discoveries can hasten the process or take cloning in a radically different direction. One of these directions involves incorporating other strands of DNA into the original host's genetic code, creating alterations as simple as different hair color to radically different physical features. In some cases, this involves incorporating strands of DNA from different sources, such as from other species in an attempt to create a viable clone. This process creates clones known as hybrids, and to the Created they are an even greater blasphemy: These are not just recreations using stolen fire from other Prometheans, but Azoth-fueled mockeries compared to the promise of the Pilgrimage.

Hybrids are usually the result of accidents or radical experimentation, and are often the first step along the path towards creating a fully human clone. Although some Rathbens decide to abandon their quest for creating humans, and focus instead on creating human and animal crossbreeds, hybrids often turn out to be more dangerous and unstable than the Rathben would prefer. In many cases they are unmanageable as their minds swim with animal instinct clashing with a human mind's development, and they often end up having to be put down as their Azoth-fueled abilities make them difficult to contain. Others are so genetically unstable that their bodies begin falling apart days after their creation, leading to a mess of blood and skin on the floor of their

cages as the Rathben laments the loss of so much precious Azoth.

Hybrids initially appear fully human, with some Rathbens even creating hybrids that look like themselves or lost family members. Over time, however, the human DNA begins to degrade and animal features surface. Usually this heralds the end of the hybrid's lifespan. The Mellifera Group's Model-Bs look like husky men whose thick skin is covered in calluses and coarse hairs. As the years go by, they grow misshapen masses, the beginnings of horns, on top of their heads and their faces bulge out slightly. If the Model-B's were able to survive for longer than two years, some Rathbens believe they might take on fully bovine characteristics, but the poor hybrids die in agony as their bodies are unable to process the mutations they are going through.

Only in rare cases do hybrids prove to be stable. One such hybrid, known as AP15, has managed to live for years without any signs of degradation. The researchers at Mellifera Group are baffled as to how such a creature, by now degraded to a completely alien appearance due to the large amounts of wasp DNA used in its creation, managed to survive. Some Rathbens believe hybrids represent new evolutionary paths, with AP15 being the first of a new species, but others believe hybrids are just a lucky mistake of Azoth with the right chemicals. Few hybrids learn any social skills because they are treated as being barely more than animals, though some surprise their researchers, learning how to speak by carefully observing them in the lab.

DINO THE DRAGON, HYBRID CLONE

You get the antidote when you fix me!

Background

Dino has operated in Brazil for his entire life as a hybrid, serving his creator as a hired thug and debt collector. Dino doesn't know if it was his creator's science or just his upbringing, but he has no compunction about hurting people. The Komodo dragon blood in his veins makes his skin tougher, nails sharper, and gives his saliva a bacterial stew that kills victims within hours of injection.

Thinking he would live forever, Dino was upset to discover scales growing on his chest, and that he began to cough up blood in the middle of the night. He pleaded with the Rathben that created him for help, but learned his creator's plan was to

euthanize Dino and activate another clone that was already waiting in a nearby incubator. Filled with blind rage at the betrayal, Dino killed his creator and destroyed the second clone. It was the first, and only, time he disobeyed orders. He instinctively seeks another Rathben, both to cure his degradation and give new instructions.

Description

Only five feet tall but muscular, Dino keeps his entire body covered if he can help it. He favors extra-long shirts and saggy pants that go down to his shoes. This is because of the thick layers of scales that grow along his limbs, starting just above his

neckline and underneath his black hair. His nose slits have begun to narrow and his tongue has turned a deep purple color. He knows how to blend in with crowds.

Dino is a solitary creature, but works with others if he must. He tries to remember any Promethean he meets, and is not above turning on someone the moment their usefulness ends. The only emotion Dino feels is an intense fear of his own end, which is fast approaching.

Dino the Dragon

Virtue: Determined

Vice: Wrathful

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (Human Anatomy) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Biting) 3, Firearms 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes, Hardy, Relentless

Health: 10

Pyros/turn: 6/2

Transmutations: Suffering – Pain

Azoth: 3

Willpower: 4

Size: 6

Speed: 12

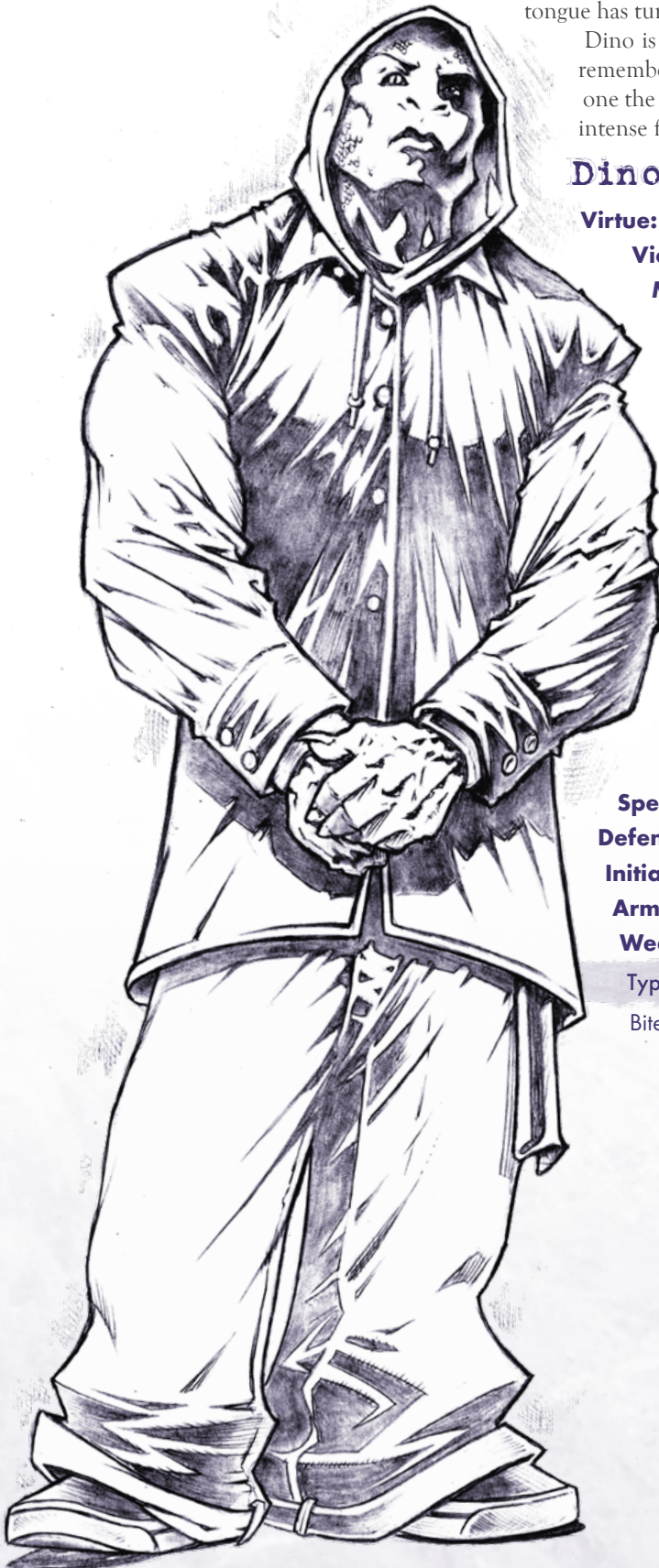
Defense: 5

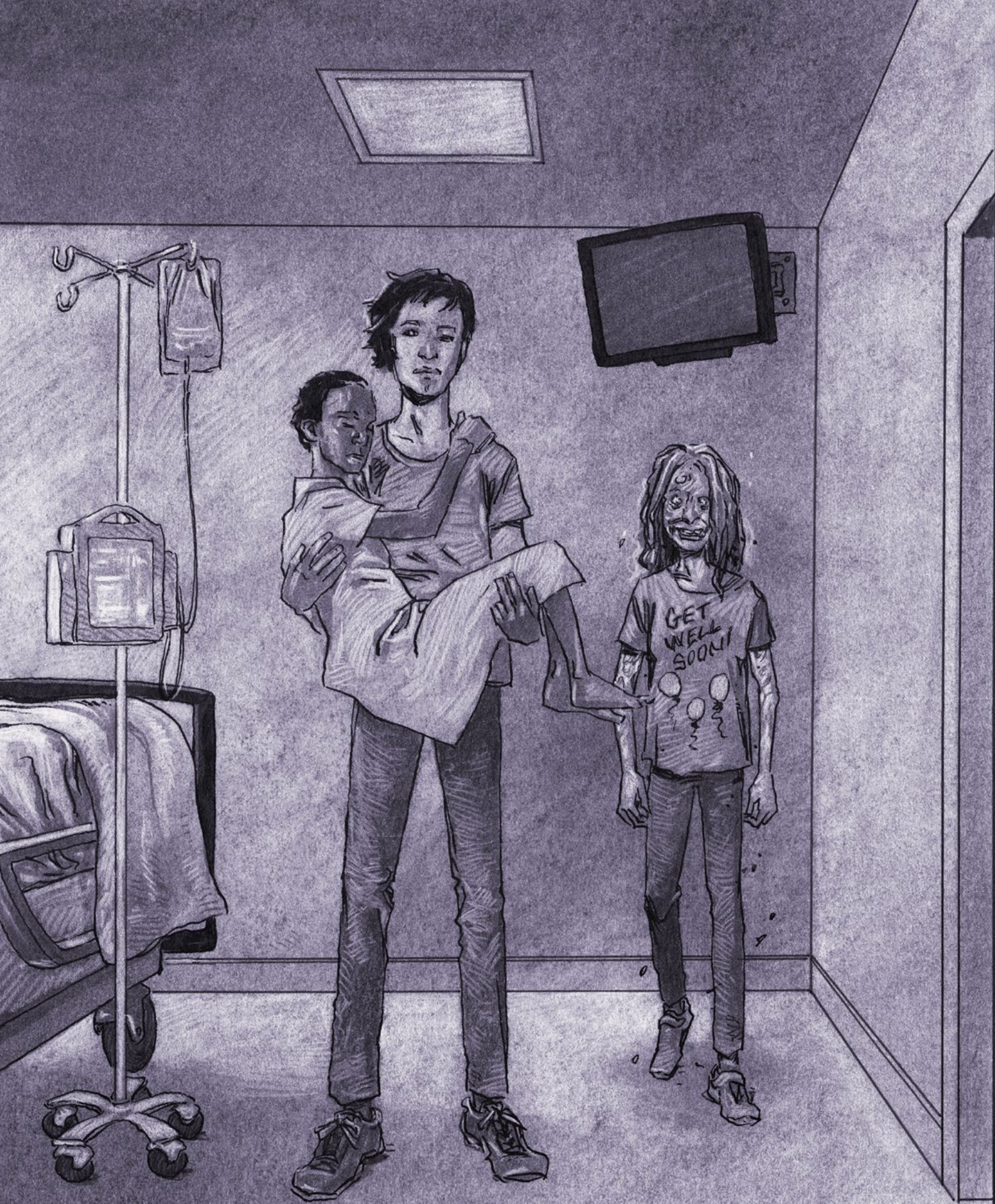
Initiative: 5

Armor: 3

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	2L	8	Inflicts Poisoned Tilt





Vincent / 2018

Ichiro studied the girl before him. She was small and skinny, skin pulled taut and breaking into lesions across high cheekbones. Her blond hair, matted and dark with grease, fell down to her waist. Her blue eyes were bloodshot. Ichiro could see the traces of white Anglo-Saxon beauty — once, she'd been a little angel come down from heaven to bless her parents. That was *before* though — before she died, and before she was brought back as something else.

“Will you stay?” she asked in a surprisingly sing-song voice, “and take care of me?”

Had Ichiro been human, it surely would have worked. He wasn't though, and the Osiran saw straight through the little lost girl façade to the fire raging underneath.

“I didn't come to take care of you. I came to take care of *him*.” He gestured to the black boy lying in the hospital bed, hooked up to monitors and IVs.

The blond girl frowned, an angry gesture that looked far too petulant on so dangerous a creature.

“I won't let him go,” she said. “He has to stay and play with me.”

Ichiro shook his head. Voshon had grown progressively ill since being admitted to the hospital, and now he knew why. He was taking the boy home, tonight, no matter the cost. He didn't relish a fight with the girl, though. The Osiran could smell the Pyros coursing through her, mingled with something far more destructive — she was like him, but *more*, and he didn't think he could take her without serious collateral damage. So where did that leave him?

“I'll trade you,” he hedged. “The boy for something of your choosing.”

The blond girl's lips curled up in a smile, exposing bloodied gums.

“He can go,” she said, “but then you stay. You'll take care of me. You'll be my daddy.”

That wasn't a bad deal. More importantly, it was one the girl couldn't keep him to once Voshon was safe. Ichiro was about to consent, when the girl continued.

“If you lie to me,” she rightly guessed his intentions, “I'll kill *all* of them.”

Ichiro stopped. He looked around, taking his attention away from the girl and Voshon for the first time since arriving in the hospital, and saw the children sleeping in the other beds. Bloodshot eyes. Lesions forming on their skin. Bloodied gums. Whatever the girl had, she was passing it on to the children. She was killing them.

“I'll come back,” he said and stepped forward to pick up Voshon. The girl let him — she'd recognized the truth: He *would* come back. He hadn't yet decided if he would kill her, or try to teach her to exist without harming others.

CHAPTER SIX:

CHILDREN OF THE BOMB

**“I know not with
what weapons
World War III
will be fought,**

**but World War IV
will be fought
with sticks
and stones.”**

— Albert Einstein

Prometheans are strange beings, constructed of alchemy, hope, and the stolen fire of the gods. They are forever cut off from the humans they were made to emulate, unless they undertake a long, thankless Pilgrimage, a laborious and slow process to craft a life and soul of their own. Hated by everything they so desperately wish to become, every time they look in the mirror is a reminder they are so far from that ideal.

They are the lucky ones, say the Zeky. The Zeky, too, are dead flesh made to move of its own accord, fueled by a nightmarish combination of Azoth and the unleashed power of the atom itself. They are unlike any Lineage to have ever walked the Earth, and the road they walk – if, indeed, they can bear to walk it at all – is lined with disaster after disaster. The world not only recoils at their touch, but withers; when they lose control, nothing remains. Forever aching from burns, lesions, and a host of other wounds that never fully heal, the burden they carry is far worse than that of their more fortunate kin.

Radiation

Ionizing radiation is part of the natural world. We experience it when we take a brisk walk on a sunny day, when we take a trans-Atlantic flight, even when we eat potassium-rich foods. We have evolved to withstand a certain amount of it over the full term of our lives, as has all other life on the planet. It is not benign by any stretch of the imagination, but natural sources are easily endured. The worst one might expect in day-to-day life is a bad sunburn.

But as human science advanced, and began to plumb the secrets of the atom, our capacity for exposing ourselves to ionizing radiation has increased. In the early 20th century, we used radium as phosphorescent paint. In the second half of that century, we harnessed the atom for power, for medicine and war. The genie cannot, though many of the early scientists of the atomic age wished it, be put back in the bottle. We and all those who come after us will have to live with what we have created.

The Fire of the Gods

The power of the Azothic flame contained within the Zeky seethes like a caged god, an unstable and destructive energy that is not fully tamable by the humans who wish to draw upon it. The flame is fickle, leaving the world around them poisoned, a metaphysical scar of the destructive power desperately trying to free itself from the Promethean’s body.

Though Zeky are immune to radiation, and even thrive in its presence, the rest of the world is not so lucky. While the popular image of irradiated environments is one of mutated wildlife, landscapes infused with harsh glow of Cherenkov radiation, and the mutant descendants of humans living in them, reality is much more sterile. In the smallest amounts, humans exposed to radiation develop fatigue and weakness as their white blood cells die off and any skin exposed to the source becomes itchy and red. After prolonged or larger exposures, the skin grows blotchy and discolored as bleeds form potential hemorrhages beneath the skin. The victim loses hair, exposed skin ulcerates and cognitive function becomes impaired. In the most severe cases, the afflicted experience tremors, seizures, vomiting, and diarrhea as their stomach lining dies, causing toxic shock. It is an ugly, painful, and terrifying way to lose one’s life. It is also the death that all Zeky can recall their donor bodies going through.

Radiation Exposure

If a character has the misfortune of being exposed to dangerous levels of ionizing radiation, the threat of acute radiation syndrome is constant. The Storyteller assigns an Intensity to any radioactive source, be it mundane or the effects of a Zeky ability, ranging from one to five. Low Intensity radiation sources measure intervals of exposure in days or even weeks, while high Intensity radiation sources begin to have negative effects within seconds. After a character has spent more time intervals near a radioactive source than their Stamina, they take a point of bashing damage each interval they remain in contact with the radioactive material. As long as the character remains exposed to the source of radiation, they do not naturally heal any damage caused by it.

At low intensities it may take several weeks of prolonged exposure before characters begin to show the telltale symptoms of weariness, anemia, and nausea. At higher intensities, the effects of radiation syndrome are immediately apparent and horrifying to witness. Equipment designed to effectively shield human beings against radiation adds its dice bonus to the character's Stamina for determining how long its wearer can stay in a contaminated environment.

Radiation Intensity

Intensity	Interval	Example
1	Weeks	Examining a mildly radioactive object. Category 3 Zeky Wastelands.
2	Days	Examining a highly radioactive object (Marie Curie's cookbook). Category 4 Zeky Wastelands.
3	Hours	Visiting Ground Zero long after the blast
4	Minutes	Visiting Ground Zero shortly after (first responders)
5	Turns	Ground Zero

The Dirty Truth Bomb

The threat that radiation poses to human health can be difficult to model. Plutonium is well known in popular culture for being a radioactive mineral, but it releases a form of radiation that only really endangers someone's health if inhaled or consumed. The infamous demon core, slated for use in a nuclear bomb, was designed to be below the threshold of nuclear critical mass, until a tungsten carbide brick was accidentally dropped on it. For the sake of game-ability the exposure system plays fast and loose with the particle physics involved in radioactive events.

Radioactive Environments

Sometimes radiation comes from non-hazardous sources. The abandoned interior of a plutonium mine is most certainly weakly irradiated, but it is not a hazardous environment. Radiation plumes from disasters or weapons can expose otherwise entirely safe victims hundreds of kilometers away to mild and long-lasting doses of radioactive material. When radiation is encountered in a hazardous environment such as a Firestorm, both sources of damage stack.

Prometheans and Radiation

The Divine Fire is non-reactive with radioactive sources. Pyros even provides some small protection from the deleterious effects of radiation poisoning. Prometheans add Azoth to their Stamina for determining how long they may withstand radioactive environments. Additionally, Prometheans treat radioactive sources as one intensity rating lower for each point of Azoth they have in excess of the radiation's Intensity. For example an Azoth 3 Promethean treats the Intensity 2 irradiated forests of Chernobyl's exclusion zone as Intensity 1 allowing for a leisurely walk in the woods.

Nuclear Gifts

Zeky benefit from the same superlative endurance as other Created, though the Zeky-only Bestowment Half-Life (p. 151) can significantly enhance their lifespan. However, they use the rules presented here in lieu of Electroshock Therapy and the Transhuman Potential found on pp. 170-171 of *Promethean: The Created Second Edition*.

The Quick and the Dead System

The radiation poisoning rules assumes that characters being exposed to ionizing radiation are either able to escape the source or are working against the clock to achieve their goals before the hazardous environment kills them. For Storyteller characters that can't escape or are completely powerless in the narrative sometimes it's better to take the easier approach. A character exposed to radiation is either the quick (suffering the manifold side effects of radiation from lesions, nausea, vomiting, and cancers) or dead (already moving through the world as a walking ghost).

A quick character receives penalties to all physical actions equal to the Intensity of the radiation but will otherwise recover when removed from exposure. A dead character has already been exposed to a terminal level of radiation and just doesn't know it yet. The dead do not show exposure signs for their stamina rating in weeks before their Health begins to quickly deteriorate.

Electromagnetic Recharge

Pyros is present in the flow of electricity, certainly – but electricity is simply the flow of charged particles from one state to another. In the end, it's just one kind of radiation, and the Zeky have learned to make use of a different kind of radiation. It's both more and less efficient; more in that a Zeka needn't have access to lethal levels of gamma radiation to heal herself, and less in that even relatively benign sources of radiation sufficiently powerful to serve this purpose are difficult to come by in the modern world. Additionally, because of this optimization of their Azothic nature, they're unable to regenerate with electricity as do other Prometheans, for it's simply too blunt an instrument to be effective for them, and they treat it as they would any other source of damage.

When Zeky are exposed to a source of radiation other than their own, their bodies begin to repair themselves at an astonishing rate. The more intense the radiation, the better – and the harder it is to come across. Some Zeky bootstrap this by collecting a dozen or more microwaves and jury-rigging them so they stay on even with the door is open, allowing them to bathe in the radiation overnight. Others stand in front of high-power radio transmitters for as long as they can get away with disrupting the signal. Some Zeky, with no other option, simply lie down in the open and let the sun's ultraviolet radiation bake them for weeks on end – perhaps the slowest way to heal, but one that is, in much of the world, more readily accessible.

Just as a Promethean recharging from electricity is an unmistakable and dramatic sight, so too is a Zeka bathing in radiation. She may not literally tick like a Geiger counter, but displays a luminance that is otherworldly, and brings a heaviness to the air around her. Animals, even insects, will quickly evacuate the area around her, leaving the world silent (save for the hum of any machines nearby).

If a Zeka *does* manage to gain access to a powerful source of radiation – one that would nearly instantly kill an unshielded human – the process of healing is practically instantaneous, her wounds knitting in seconds until she's as pristine and toxic as the day she was created.

Electromagnetic Healing

- **Live Wire:** Zeky do not heal from exposure to electricity.
- **Hot Healing:** Zeky heal one Health level per Intensity interval (week, day, hour, minute, turn, respectively).
- **Elephant's Foot:** Sources of radiation that would mean instant death to a human, and are therefore beyond the Intensity scale, heal all damage a Zeka sustains at the end of every round.

Transhuman Potential

Like other Prometheans, Zeky can expend Pyros to push their body beyond its limits. Unlike Prometheans, Zeky can create a criticality within their Azoth and sustain a reaction that empowers them for far longer than a single action. However, even a semi-human body

was never meant to contain such power – every use of Transhuman Potential carries risks, and if she is not careful may lead to the Zeka's destruction.

When the Zeka banks her internal reactor to such a degree, she runs the risk of contaminating the area. Her flesh and bodily fluids, if separated from her, effectively become radioactive fallout, which continues to emit dangerous particles for some time. This is not a Wasteland – this is simply the result of the Zeka's own radiation-charged humours. This fallout can even contaminate the Zeka's enemies, meaning that a victory over her may well be pyrrhic.

Transhuman Potential

- **Critical Mass: 1+ Pyros:** Reflexively add a number of dots to a single Attribute equal to Pyros spent. Pyros expenditure is limited by Azoth, but may be spent across multiple turns to continue to amplify the Attribute.
- **Sustained Criticality:** Attributes remain at their heightened level for a number of turns equal to Pyros spent, beginning on the first subsequent turn in which Pyros is not spent to amplify an Attribute. If Pyros is spent after this countdown has begun, it resets the countdown to the new total.
- **Containment Failure:** A Zeka using her Transhuman Potential is always considered to be Hyperextended (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 310).
- **Meltdown:** If the Zeka adds more than her Azoth to an Attribute, she is Degaussed (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 307) on the first turn above her maximum, generates Extreme Heat (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 315) in her immediate environment on the second, and is Burning (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 314) on the third.
- **Fallout:** If the Zeka is injured while using Transhuman Potential, the surrounding area is contaminated at an Intensity equal to the Zeka's natural Intensity. This persists for one day per lethal Health marked, and three days per aggravated Health marked. Cleaning the area halves the

New Condition: Contaminated

The character is contaminated with radioactive fallout that clings to her clothes and skin, which continues to expose her to radiation even after the initial source of the radiation is removed.

Effects

- The character remains exposed to radiation with an Intensity of whatever source originally contaminated her.

Possible Sources

- Being present at a radiological accident or downwind from a nuclear blast; close contact with a Zeka.

Resolution

- Change clothes and wash thoroughly.

Intensity, but requires a number of hours equal to the number of days the area will be contaminated. Characters who do so without some form of radiological protection are Contaminated at the halved Intensity.

- **Dirty Bomb:** If characters deal lethal damage to a Zeka using Transhuman Potential with Melee or Unarmed (or Firearms at point-blank range), or directly interact with something an injured Zeka touched, they are Contaminated, with Intensity equal to the Zeka's.

Nuclear Hazards

Disfigurements as stitched-together bodies are reanimated, Torment, Disquiet, and Wastelands left in the wake of a fire that burns brighter than any on earth – Created suffer more than their fair share of drawbacks. Add nuclear power into the mix, and everything becomes so much worse.

Disfigurements

Nuclear Prometheans are wrought from grief, designed with war in mind, shaped to wield terrible power, made to contain terrible vengeance, and so much more. Their humour, Radiation, is not tactile the way their cousin Lineages' are, and perhaps this difficulty explains the disparities of form between Zeky. One Zeka's demiurge may have sought to bind radiation in their creation, whereas another simply steeped the corpse in something radioactive before giving it life. Zeky can be biomechanical horrors, corpses mutilated in unprecedented ways, or strange amalgams of containment measures given form. A Zeka's disfigurements leave witnesses horrified and irradiated.

The Thin Man is roughly human in shape, but a less-than-cursory inspection reveals the shells of old bombs sewn into his flesh. Crude pistons made from missile casings propel his joints with agonized shrieks. Despite having no hair to speak of, the stench of its burning clings to him wherever he goes. Thin Man destroys anyone or anything he deems potentially stronger than he whenever he's accosted; the cannon muzzle emerging from the column of his wrist usually makes short work of his targets. He remembers being considered a failure. Of being passed up for something new, something better. He incorporates the strongest parts of his foes into himself to ensure that will never happen again.

Three-Mile tries her best to connect with the world and the people who live in it, but that's so hard when most of your skin is what used to be an experimental hazmat suit. The black tubes that protrude and break her skin's seal only to plunge back into other muscles and organs beneath are covered in a strange film that always seems to ooze. Her throat is mostly cables and tubes, which makes attempts at verbal communication harrowing. Sometimes, Three-Mile wishes her face had been sealed too, but it remains bare. Her features are bloated and distorted by the same toxic gas that emerges from any wounds opened in her skin or from her mouth when she screams. Sometimes, Three-Mile can't stand all the screams, or all the weapons and hurtful words aimed at her whenever she tries to understand humans. It's much easier to hurt them. It's easy to hurt things when you all you feel is pain.

The Zeka dubbed Arlight is quite literally always on: From beneath seams stitched together by power cables, from otherwise-empty eye sockets, and from their mouth whenever it opens, neon blue light leaks through Arlight from some dreadful source within. Arlight has tried poking at the strange bulges that distort their frame, or even peering into the lighting coils that part flesh to expose an Ouroboros, but they come away dumbfounded. They have tried putting out the light, and if they focus hard enough and are very still, it does dim... Until Arlight gets excited again. Arlight gets excited often. When they're scared or angry, that neon blue burns bright enough to sear flesh and melt steel. Arlight's favorite lesson their Pilgrimage has taught them so far is how humans need to let loose sometimes. They always get into trouble when their human party-goers seem finished, and Arlight has only gotten started.

Atomic Torment

The fire that burns in the heart of every Zeka is unlike the fire that animates the rest of the Created. Fire is destructive, true, but it does not encapsulate the sheer force, fury, and volatility that comes of a Zeka Torment. When she sinks into herself, when her reactor is flooded and unstable, when she compresses her entire being into a reactivity excursion, she does what comes naturally to her – she explodes. Not literally, but mistaking what happens next for an actual detonation would be entirely understandable.

A Frankenstein lashes out against the very thing he loves, violent and destructive – a Zeky obliterates not only that thing, that person, that place, but everything associated with it, everything near it, everything that by happenstance is exposed to it, leaving a swath of desolation that pales even natural disasters. It's not an angry destruction, nor is it vindictive. If anything, it's random, the Zeka turning aside from one target to crush another between her fists, to set fire to one building while leaving another untouched, scattering toxic effluent one way but not another.

In the grip of Torment, the Zeka doesn't care what happens, doesn't care what's destroyed or what survives, doesn't care why or how. All that matters is that she does what she was made to – destroy, so completely and so thoroughly that it leaves no doubt in the minds of any survivors that destruction is all the Zeka knows how to do. The Tormented Zeka steps wholly outside of the human experience, a force of nature obliterating whatever it touches. For that one brief moment, they force themselves to accept that they are death itself, and there's plenty of world to destroy right in front of them.

If there is a silver lining to the Zeky Torment, it's that it tends to be over quick, but that's not much of a blessing. Power surges within the Zeka, fueling her destructive rampage and driving it to heights that even the most furious Promethean should fear reaching. Anything she doesn't personally turn her attention to, the radiation pouring from her body will still taint, twist, and burn, if not now then in the decades to come. Her touch sets delicate substances, such as paper or cloth, alight, leaving fires in her wake that spread with terrifying ease. And, too, in the quickness comes a lingering curse, for Zeky who fall to Torment inevitably leave a Wasteland behind them, the price paid by the Earth itself for the limitless Pyros that churns within them.

Zeky Torment

- **Maximum Power:** A Zeka in Torment has an effective Azoth of 8 until the Torment ends, increasing the amount of Pyros she can spend, her Azothic radiance, and her Radioactive Intensity accordingly. If her Azoth is already 8 or higher, it rises to 10 for the duration of the Torment.
- **Without Limit:** Zeky do not need to expend Pyros while in Torment. Track expenditures for Flash Burst, below, but do not actually spend the Pyros. When the Torment ends, refill the Pyros pool completely.
- **Flash Burst:** The Zeka creates a Wasteland when she enters Torment, of a size according to her natural Azoth. If she expends sufficient Pyros according to her temporarily elevated Azoth, the Wasteland immediately Festers. If a category 4 Wasteland would Fester, immediately trigger a Firestorm.
- **Half Life:** Wastelands created in Torment have a Fade duration according to the Zeka's natural Azoth.

Disquiet

Like all Prometheans, the Azoth within a Zeka both attracts and repels natural life – but unlike other Created, the Zeky's Disquiet is tainted by their radioactive nature. Those who suffer it experience the initial symptoms of radiation poisoning, especially dizziness and vomiting. Advanced cases of Disquiet can kill, though the afflicted likely won't know it for some time – they become a walking ghost, living on borrowed time until sepsis rots them from the inside out.

Domino Theory

The Zeky are fueled by the atom itself, or rather, the division of the atom. Neutron pierces nucleus, shattering it and sending its surplus neutrons flying to repeat the process. Their Disquiet reflects their nature, impelling those affected to random acts of violence or cruelty in addition to compelling disgust at the Zeka who contaminated them. These acts, however, need not be directed at the Zeka; instead, it prompts the victim to see others as threats to be driven off, harmed, and even killed. This may include the Zeka, or it may not.

Worse, Zeky Disquiet is contagious immediately – though blessedly under restricted circumstances. If more than a certain number of Disquieted individuals gather in close proximity, their Disquiet forms a criticality, much like radioactive elements can, which amplifies its effect on all those already affected and potentially contaminating others. Extended exposure to each other can breed high-level Disquiet quickly, driving the group to turn on itself or to view outsiders as existential threats, breeding suspicion, antagonism, and eventually a violent expiation or outright war in the streets. Disquieted people invariably view the Zeka who inflicted the Disquiet as a member of the other group, or else as just another outsider threatening to destroy them – they'll give her slight priority over other targets, but they certainly won't stop with her.

Tactical Doctrine

Zeky Disquiet has the tendency to result in indiscriminate violence rather than violence focused *directly* at the Zeka, making it a possible cudgel against others. However, the use of Disquiet as a weapon is highly dangerous, and is likely to create significant blowback against the Zeka if things get out of hand (which, given the way it spreads, it probably will). Still, when all you have is a hammer, the urge to smash things is hard to ignore – and it can be an excellent way to both salt the earth, or create sufficient confusion and riots so the Zeka can escape entirely.

Zeky Disquiet takes on an additional dimension, however, which differentiates it from the Disquiet of other Prometheans: It kills. With Disquiet comes a mote of the Zeka's own Azothic radiation, which binds to the victim and slowly begins to irradiate him. At low levels, this is relatively mild exposure, but once the Disquiet begins to mount, that exposure increases in Intensity. At the highest levels of Disquiet, individuals may only have hours or even minutes before their exposure becomes fatal – the afflicted frequently blame the out-group for the increasing feelings of illness, the lesions, with the Zeka often (and, in this case, correctly) identified as the vector. Paranoid and violent purges are the rule until it fades or its victims drop dead, bleeding and burned. Gripped in Disquiet's irrationality, few think to call for help (and, if they do, they'll likely only contaminate whatever help arrives).

The Azothic radiation disperses once the Disquieted Condition is resolved or removed – unlike other sources of radiation, no fallout or contamination lingers. When Zeky Disquiet runs rampant – as it often does, considering how easily and how rapidly it propagates – it tends to leave a lot of bodies behind, but blessedly the survivors won't have to deal with further exposure to radiation. Medical examination confirms that the dead suffered from severe acute radiation syndrome, but the utter lack of any contamination makes that a physical impossibility. On the other hand, it tends to make such events easier to hush up than a true radiological accident would be.

Nuclear Disquiet

The following rules are applied to the Disquieted Conditions (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 308) when Zeky are the source of Disquiet.

- **Disquieted (Level 1):** In addition to the normal effects of this Condition, the target is exposed to radiation at Intensity 1. This Condition may be resolved by escalating an already-heated argument to violence, as well as by the usual means.
- **Disquieted (Level 2):** In addition to the normal effects of this Condition, the target is exposed to radiation at Intensity 2. This Condition may be resolved by taking violent action without provocation, as well as by the usual means.

- **Disquieted (Level 3):** In addition to the normal effects of this Condition, the target is exposed to radiation at Intensity 3. The target identifies a specific group that, in addition to the Zeka, he views as a clear and present danger. This Condition may be resolved by leading or participating in violent action against that group, as well as by the usual means.
- **Disquieted (Level 4):** In addition to the normal effects of this Condition, the target is exposed to radiation at Intensity 4. The group identified by the target rises in his estimation to be an immediate existential threat. This Condition may be resolved by engaging in excessive and indiscriminate violence directed at the group, as well as by the usual means.
- **Critical Geometry:** Zeky Disquiet is contagious at levels 1 and 2. At level 1, if an individual with Disquiet is in the immediate presence of at least five others with Zeky Disquiet at level 1 (which need not originate with the same Zeka), their Disquiet level rises to 2. At level 2, if individuals with Disquiet make extended skin-to-skin contact with one another (a lengthy handshake will do), their Disquiet rises to level 3. In both cases, previously unaffected individuals present are Disquieted at level 1. Critical Geometry may only be triggered once per scene.
- **Moderated Reaction:** Critical Geometry cannot advance Disquiet to level 4.
- **Massive Retaliation:** Zeky Disquiet does not require the presence of a Wasteland or an exceptional success to advance to levels 3 and 4.

Atomic Wastelands

All Prometheans curse the Earth itself with their presence, but Zeky have an uncanny facility with it, and their Wastelands are particularly terrible. Like other Prometheans, their Wastelands eat away at the underlying structure of all things, making them brittle, sickly, or weak, disrupting orderly patterns. A palpable component to their Wastelands exists, one that terrifies humans unlike anything else — radiation, scattered like fallout throughout the area.

A category 1 Wasteland caused by a Zeka floods the affected area with radiation, a weak fallout that, while it doesn't rise to the level of an immediate threat, has a disproportionate mutagenic effect on simpler life. More complex animal life senses the change and flees, so typically it's only insects that remain, thriving without larger predators. Humans feel uneasy in the area, and increasingly report head and body aches, but unless they have a means of detecting radiation are unlikely to notice the root cause.

Once the Wasteland reaches category 2, a paradoxical flourishing takes place. Plants grow rapidly, but are strange and disfigured when they reach maturity, or are strangely stunted or even neotenic. Small animals or birds that cannot leave the area sicken and die as a thin haze infuses the still air. The temperature rises and rainfall dramatically slackens, until none falls at all. The incidence of headaches and soreness rise, and are joined by frequent cases of nausea; despite

the thick haze in the sky, sunburns are both frequent and intense.

At category 3, a Wasteland becomes immediately lethal to small animals — birds that fly in will fall from the sky, dead before they hit the ground. The fallout becomes thicker, both in the air and on surfaces, choking plant life until it withers and dies. Sunlight barely penetrates the cloud cover, rendering the day a long smear of twilight. Insects remain, but begin to show signs of radical mutation, with extra legs, heads, or other appendages, all strangely shaped. At this point, the background radiation rises to the level where it poses a short-term threat to human life, and virtually all exposed will begin to feel the effects.

Finally, at category 4, the haze thickens until the sun cannot be seen at all. In the largest Wastelands — city or region-sized — day and night become indistinguishable except at the borders, where weak light bleeds in from the outside. Snow and ash begin to fall after a day or so of this darkness, and the temperature plunges. Insects build massive mounds out of the ash and begin to take over ecological niches that larger animals would normally occupy, swarming even if it's not natural behavior for them. Larger colonies scavenge openly, and may attack any surviving animals or humans who still occupy this twisted hellscape. The background radiation rises, and any who don't flee will sicken within days — and, without care, likely die within weeks.

Radiation in Atomic Wastelands

- **Category 3:** Category 3 Wastelands have an Intensity of 1.
- **Category 4:** Category 4 Wastelands have an Intensity of 2.

The Day After

It's bad enough when Prometheans leave a Wasteland behind them. It destabilizes the world and makes it that much more difficult for them to pursue their Pilgrimage, and endangers any humans living in that Wasteland. Some few may even die as a result of the Wasteland's influences, even if it doesn't kill them directly.

When Zeky leave a Wasteland behind, it's a radiological disaster that can easily rival any created by human science, and in some ways actually eclipses them, bound as they are not by prosaic physics but the strange alchemy of Azoth. Those living there aren't just wracked by the effects of the Wasteland, but display the symptoms of acute radiation syndrome as well. Governments — particularly in the Western world — tend to take a dim view of anyone who casually tosses around radiological substances, and inevitably get involved whenever the Zeky leave Wastelands behind. More than one Superfund site owes its genesis not to corporate malfeasance or incompetence, but to a single Zeka.

Firestorms

When the Zeky slip the last bonds holding their Azoth together and give rise to a Firestorm, the effect is nothing short of apocalyptic. Zeky Firestorms are never centered (or, to hear some tell it, these *are* the centered ones, and be thankful you've never seen a widespread one), hitting an area like a bomb going off. In addition to the usual effects, the Firestorm leaves fallout scattered across the area that persists long after the Zeka who caused it flees.

Nuclear Firestorms

- **The Big One:** Zeky Firestorms treat their Strength as successes + 2.
- **Shock Front:** Zeky Firestorms inflict the Firestorm's Strength x 10 as lethal damage to all freestanding structures and vehicles within its area of effect. Buildings and vehicles do not apply Durability to this damage.
- **Hot Plume:** The area affected by a Zeka's Firestorm is contaminated with fallout, with an Intensity equal to half the Zeka's Azoth, rounded up. This fallout persists even after the Firestorm ends.

Pandora's Box – Storytelling Zeky

The Zeky darkly reflect other Prometheans. Lineages come and go; perhaps the Zeky are destined to share such a fate, but the Principle seems eager to let them burn brightly while they still walk. The force that empowers them – the severing of atomic bonds themselves – is orders of magnitude more potent than any other force that gives rise to Prometheans. Small wonder, then, that when Prometheans cross paths with their nuclear kin, they rarely see eye to eye.

A False Sun Rises: Portraying Zeky

Every Zeka is unique, the product of a terrible event (accidental or otherwise) or a demiurge tampering with forces he could not possibly understand, but even they have commonalities, things that bind them as a Lineage. These commonalities express themselves in a variety of ways, but in the end come down to a simple truth: Zeky are even worse off than other Prometheans.

First, and most immediately relevant to the Zeky – they hurt. They are in constant pain, whether that pain be from seared skin, perpetually-dying guts, a flash-burst headache that leaves them half blinded, or even the heat of their own reactor slowly cooking them from the inside out. Zeky might suffer any of the symptoms of acute radiation syndrome, ranging from nausea or fatigue to central nervous system malfunctions, such as tremors, ataxia, or even seizures. Unlike humans exposed to ionizing radiation, however, their symptoms never fade – Zeky carry them

throughout their existence, and neither heal nor expire. Many Zeky learn to hide their pain, some out of shame, others to hide perceived weakness, but though they might develop the world's finest poker face, the radioactive dagger never really stops twisting.

Atomic Azoth, the force that animates and drives Zeky, is derived from the splitting of the atom, a technological marvel possible only with modern technology. This source of energy has produced many valuable wonders, from medical imaging to power generation, but it has also created the most destructive weapon ever forged by human hands. The Zeky's Azothic memory is colored by this dichotomy – a good night might mean dreams orderly and precise beyond the ken of humans, and a bad one a screaming holocaust the likes of which few people alive today have ever witnessed. The latter are much more common: Visions of gutted cities aflame, the horrifically burned survivors trudging like zombies through the debris, are a running theme that reminds them the atom is a gift stained with human suffering. Small wonder that few Zeky are able to sleep easy – only those who have wholly forsaken their humanity can dream such a dream and not wake screaming.

Finally, consider the isolation that all Zeky endure, an entirely different kind than other Prometheans. The further they refine their Azoth, and the greater their power grows, the greater the radioactive flux they emit. A young Zeka can cohabit with a human for weeks before even a hint of discomfort comes to light; an elder Zeka might only have minutes or seconds before a human starts to feel sick. Even at low levels, long-term exposure simply isn't healthy for humans, with consequences that Zeka may not even realize apply until they visit someone they considered a friend only to find them resting in an early grave. Every time it happens – and it always happens, even to the most careful – it's another potential step backwards, another moment of lost hope, hammering home the essential division between her and freedom from her cursed, toxic existence. Many Zeky struggle with understanding humanity not because Flux tugs them off their path, but because of the distance they must keep from what they study.

It's not fair at all. They hurt – they *always* hurt – and they're cut off from opportunities to learn that other Prometheans take for granted. Even their most hopeful moments are tainted with atomic fire licking at the edges, the too-bright suns within them burning without flame. Call them bitter, call them hateful, call them dangerous; odds on, at least one of those is correct. It's hard for them not to be bitter, not to hate everything that doesn't struggle with the basic realities of their condition, not to lash out if only to feel some marginal degree of *control* over their lives. A reactor doesn't melt down randomly – it melts down because some part of its control system fails. Zeky are the same, without the benefit of having teams of experts maintaining them at all times.

Nuclear War: Fighting Zeky

Zeky individually possess such power that they pose a threat to even a united throng, tapping into the barely-caged power of the atom. Loners even by Promethean standards, they refine their Pyros in secret, all-too-often turning to the path of Flux – they have such facility with it, and are so separated from humanity by the searing

Actinide Shadows

It's possible to tell an entire Zeky tale not with a Zeka's actual presence, but by what they leave behind them. Zeky mark the world with their passage in a way that few Prometheans ever do, letting a throng piece together what happened. In the case of particularly serious incidents, when the Zeka created a Wasteland or a Firestorm, written or physical evidence may be found in abundance. After all, very little convinces humans to immediately leave an area and forsake all possessions left behind more than the specter of radioactive contamination — entire towns, even cities, may be left as they were in the moment the sirens began to wail.

A throng of Prometheans is likely no stranger to abandoned buildings, even abandoned neighborhoods or suburbs, but an entire town or city left to nature's mercies is a thing unto itself. For those who wish to join humanity, it can be simultaneously liberating to walk the streets without fear and terrifying in the sheer magnitude of emptiness.

poison of their radiation, that many Zeky never consider an alternative. Burnt both by their own radiation and by the horrific Azothic memories dredged up nightly, when Zeky turn Centimanus, they do so with wholehearted gusto.

As such, it's easy for Prometheans following the Pilgrimage to come into conflict with Zeky who spawn Pandorans and concoct terrible and deadly schemes based on the horror that scars their dreaming minds. It's even easy for them to dehumanize (such as it is) Zeky, write them off as terrible accidents of fate that should never have been, better off destroyed than poisoning the world. For this reason, the Storyteller should do her utmost to draw parallels between player Prometheans and the Zeka they face. Even at their worst, Zeky are lessons in empathy and pity. This goes double for Zeky who once walked the Pilgrimage themselves, but turned away from it. Any Promethean can become a monster, should they choose to. Also consider the perspective from a Promethean who gleanes the great driving force aiding the Pilgrimage, the Divine Principle. Whether they can name it or not, that Promethean knows something arranges for the Pilgrimage to be possible, pushes them to New Dawn. Are the Zeky a straight-up mistake, or does the Principle have a place for them too? If the latter, they might have an obligation to help the Zeka find their path again.

Either way, a fight with a Zeka is never just a fight — the term "mutually assured destruction" comes to mind, and not only for what fuels the Zeky. The very power that so isolates Zeky makes them all but unstoppable when enraged or threatened, and Zeky are not known for leaving foes at their back. Given reason, a Zeka's first instinct may well be a ferocious and seemingly unprovoked attack, an all-out strike intended to take out a foe before they can retaliate. For high-Azoth Zeky, this is easier, as they can immediately use their Transhuman Potential to augment themselves even as they launch at a foe. Lower-Azoth Zeky must play cat and mouse if

they wish to pursue such a strategy, buying time as they stoke their Azothic furnace until steam pours from them, risking meltdown and contamination of the entire area with their attacks. Zeky who have specialized in Transmutations are far more likely to play a subtler game, at least until they have their enemy where they want them, and they have access to any Transmutation a Promethean could.

But Zeky are not fools, and despite being in constant pain most are not suicidal. They have hopes and dreams of their own, even if those hopes and dreams are sometimes entirely orthogonal to the Pilgrimage. Yet even these desires have a commonality — they're quite impossible to aspire to if one's existence is terminated. Zeky are not accustomed to foes surviving more than a few moments in their presence when they employ their Pyros, and as Prometheans are considerably more robust than humans, they're also the most likely to pose a threat to a belligerent Zeka. Add to that the Promethean habit of returning from what ought to be death, and they can force a stalemate even with an avatar of atomic destruction.

Not immediately attempting to destroy one another is hardly a promise of cooperation, however. Indeed, for a Zeka unwilling to share whatever local resources she's laid claim to, it's more often than not a call to engage in constant harassment of the throng that's intruded into what she sees as "her" territory. She might quietly irradiate a housing complex the throng is squatting in, bringing the authorities down on them; or she might strategically Disquiet humans, and let the violence that inevitably follows envelop them. Even in this case, the results should be sudden and unpredictable — Zeky are an out-of-context problem even when they keep their targets at a distance.

Uncanny Comrades: Walking With Zeky

Zeky need not be intrinsically opposed to other Prometheans, of course. They are as capable of walking the Pilgrimage as any, and if none have yet found their Magnum Opus, it may be because the nuclear age is young enough for its birth to be in living memory. Still, their path is more difficult to walk. Their unique traits — their radioactivity and the transmissibility of their Disquiet — make it much harder for them to live around humans without endangering them. A Zeka might not care that her presence sickens, even kills, those around her, but it doesn't take an epidemiologist to spot a pattern, and the authorities tend to take a dim view of radiological contamination.

Prometheans are another matter, however. For Zeky (save those lost to Flux), Prometheans are a rare opportunity, a chance to interact with another being who will not sicken and die of merely speaking to them, who will not go mad with paranoia and tear into their kin and comrades at the drop of a hat. For a Zeka who wishes to one day walk the Earth as a human herself, this is a rare and precious opportunity.

Prometheans have much to gain from Zeky as well. For Prometheans following the Refinements of Lead and Quicksilver in particular, Zeky are a fascinating puzzle and an opportunity to learn more about the Promethean condition — they are new and different, reflecting an expression of Pyros still not fully understood. Prometheans following Phosphorum — a favorite among Zeky — may

find opportunities to practice their craft in a Zeka's wake, perhaps ghoulish but eminently enlightening from a safe distance.

Yet, coexisting with the Zeky can be extremely difficult for other Prometheans. A Zeka's Torment is wholly unlike a Promethean's — the most vicious and vindictive Frankenstein's trail of destruction pales before the utter obliteration that Zeky visit, almost casually, on their victims and those around them. Their Wastelands, to say nothing of their Firestorms, resemble nothing so much as the finger of God descending to Earth, eradicating whatever it strikes with no more care than we feel when crushing an insect. Zeky are overwhelming, and they cannot stop being what they are any more than other Prometheans can — at least, not until they complete their Pilgrimage.

Now I Am Become Death: Playing a Zeka

While Zeky are suited to an antagonist role for a throng of Prometheans on Pilgrimage, that doesn't mean that is their only potential. Nuclear Prometheans are still Prometheans; they are capable of achieving the New Dawn, or so those who still hope claim. Zeky face challenges unique to their Lineage which make for a more explosive Pilgrimage, but one as compelling and nuanced as any.

Humour: The Zeky humour is radiation. It's seldom physical the way other humours are, but rather the humour of destructive potential. Nuclear Prometheans are defined by their extremes: A Zeka might be fixated on getting a new human friend's job back, for instance, but they might just as easily destroy the office building when security insists they can't follow that friend inside. Zeky have a lot of power, like a radiator left on at levels far too hot for it to contain. As the radiator may rattle or overheat, so too do Nuclear Prometheans struggle to vent in healthy ways. Reactors melt down; bombs explode; Zeky are driven toward either or both.

Refinements: Zeky are well-suited for Refinements that are focused on immediate or personal rewards, such as Stannum or Ferrum. A Nuclear Titan is an object so immovable she may shatter the earth she stands upon, while a Nuclear Fury is a force so unstoppable she may topple obstacles and allies alike in her wake. Other Zeky find too little solace in Stannum though, instead turning to Flux in their torment. Cuprum is one of the most common Refinements that Zeky stumble upon, even those who have never met another Promethean — hiding from humans comes naturally to them. Many Zeky explore Plumbum, as understanding the Promethean nature comes naturally of asking the question "Why me?"

Among the complex Refinements, Phosphorum is an obvious choice — Zeky already burn brightly, and so might as well learn something from it. Mercurius and Cobalus have much to offer as well — an understanding of the power that courses through them heedless of the damage it does, and of the faults in humans that they so magnify with their presence.

The least practiced Refinement among the Zeky is Aurum, for it's difficult to pass yourself off as human if the other humans around you keep dying. Similarly, Aes is a difficult path, though

the Bodyguard role in particular can be helpful for Zeky trying to acclimate themselves to the presence of other Prometheans. Some Zeky come to Argentum pragmatically, but they are more often concerned with their own monstrosity, and spare little time for the other things that dwell in the darkness.

Universal Milestones

Certain milestones along the Pilgrimage are common to every Promethean, but no two experience those milestones the same. Zeky are further separated by their Lineage and its humour, which rears its ugly head like a malign tumor. These differences do not exclude a Nuclear Promethean from sharing in milestones with their throng, but they are worth noting when walking toward the New Dawn in a Zeka's shoes. One of the most difficult milestones for Zeky to achieve can be *fermentatio*. Too many Zeky lose sight of their humanity, or resign themselves to Flux. They don't mix smoothly with others even by Promethean standards, they are a new Lineage with disparate origins, and they make wonderful destroyers. Building up knowledge of the Pilgrimage, of the Promethean condition itself, or of their mysterious Lineage would certainly bring a Nuclear Promethean closer to understanding. Almost every Nuclear Promethean seems to have a different point of origin; maybe tracking down one's own genitor or demiurge would be a start. Creating an Anathor is also an excellent way for Zeky to achieve this milestone; creating something would be incredible for a Lineage defined by ruination. It might even be enough to make a Nuclear Promethean believe the New Dawn is a real hope rather than a distant dream. *Multiplicatio* may also pose a unique set of challenges to a Zeka. Mentoring another Promethean is one thing, but becoming a genitor requires access to their humour; sources of radiation are hard to find, and almost always heavily guarded by other, more powerful interests. Breaking into, say, a government-controlled uranium deposit is a good way to get captured and detained for "research." If a Nuclear Promethean braves all that to create another of their kind, they can achieve this milestone — that is, if they avoid whatever horrifying strain of Pandoran the Zeky Lineage might produce. Zeky might be better off trying one of the more symbolic interpretations of *multiplicatio*, but the Pilgrimage does not always allow such leeway.

Azothic Memory and Elpis Visions

Every Promethean experiences the Azothic memory, and the Zeky are no different. They learn quickly to move, to speak, to think, and they feel the Pilgrimage long before they have the language to even articulate it. Would that this was all that came with the Azothic memory, for they also experience its darker side.

All things have a memory, one that is bound up in a thing's very form. The wind, the earth, the water — even every fire knows what fire is, and what it does. But the Zeky are fueled not by these natural elements, humours common to all living things. Instead, they are driven by the atom, and by humanity's harnessing of the dread power it brings. Even before science demonstrated the potential of the atom bomb, humans were taking lives with radiation, though

they didn't know it. The atom, too, has a memory, and what it remembers for the Zeky is never kind — death, horrifyingly quick or agonizingly long, is a common feature of their dreams, the natural resting state of their perception of the world.

Zeky struggle with Elpis visions, for while they're no more difficult to achieve than they are for other Prometheans, the contents, no matter the context, are always shaded by Flux. Other Prometheans may implicitly trust what Elpis shows them, but Zeky can never accept what they experience uncritically. They may learn from what they see, but something is always off, ever so slightly, and this has led many a Zeka wrong.

Atomic Potential: Transmutations

The development of nuclear energy ushered in a pop-culture era stuffed with dreams about a future where everything ran on the atom. Artists dreamed up flying cars and ray guns and all kinds of devices for a world that bordered on utopian, with fossil fuels out of the way. They never escaped nuclear energy's horrific origins as a tool for mass destruction, however, not really: For every flying car, movies dreamed up a mutant twisted toward violent ends. For every miracle machine, so too was there a monster awakened from the depths of the ocean. Movies showed the dead rising as a result of radiation from a probe crashing into the earth — the power of the atom waxed even stranger beyond the stars. It's almost unsurprising to see that a Lineage so steeped in radiation and devastation would distort Pyros and its workings to mirror their own unnerving image.

Zeky have access to every Transmutation their radiation-free cousins do, but the nature of their humour has a warping effect on Distillations. And although there are bound to be certain commonalities between Zeky using the same Distillation, quirks arise. A Zeka may have a Distillation unique to them, or develop their own Alembic entirely. It's true that Zeky aren't often found in throngs, so a Nuclear Promethean might well stray from the beaten path of an Alembic because it works for her. It is also true, or at least equally as relevant, that every Zeky is different, that there is no one demiurge or point of origin for the Nuclear Promethean.

All Zeky versions of pre-existing Alembics or Distillations grant incredible power at a cost; that cost may fall upon the Zeka herself, her throngmates, bystanders, or the environment, but someone must

foot the bill. More terrifying still is when a Zeka observes another Promethean manifest a Transmutation, considers it, and then responds in kind with an entirely new — but inevitably more destructive — subcategory entirely. A Nuclear Alembic is a blessedly rare discovery among an already rare Lineage, but it can and does happen.

While variants are possible across all Transmutations, there are a few that are especially prone to deviancy in Zeky hands:

- **Alchemicus** — Every Promethean has alchemical potential, but a Zeka also carries atomic potential. A scientific pursuit allows a Zeka to understand the fission infusing their being, as their humour alters the manifestation of Alchemicus. Whether this takes place in the form of bright light or waves of heat during every change made depends on the Zeka in question. Some Zeky slough off heavy water to work changes in matter, while others favor irradiation.

Modified Distillation: Temperature Modification — To represent a Zeka's atomic influence on this Distillation, the object the Promethean tries to heat explodes (causing lethal damage) on a dramatic failure; they may also spend an additional point of Pyros to cause an explosion that inflicts no damage to them on an Exceptional Success.

- **Contamination** — Cobalus is perhaps the second- or third-most appealing Refinement to many Zeky; who is more familiar with the fallout than the one who caused the meltdown? Sometimes, however, a Zeka's attempts to bring forth less physical impurities can result in immediate physical consequences for the humans they are observing. A Nuclear Cathar may be permanently overcast, no matter how bright the lights, or she could be covered in a fine film of radioactive dust.

Modified Alembic: Indulgence — The Zeka's humour has blurred the line between personal and environmental contamination; on a dramatic failure for any of the Distillations of Indulgence, the Zeka must spend an additional point of Pyros, or the targets of that Distillation gain the Contaminated Condition (p. 138) at Intensity 2.

- **Corporeum** — Zeky can be Titans in a class of their own, as the missile that eclipsed the rocket. They are powered by a force strong enough to level cities, and leave the planet stained by its touch. Zeky Corporeum Distillations might manifest themselves as literal explosions of power contained within the Zeka's form, or the air might tingle with the kiss of nuclear fire as she pushes herself beyond mortal limits.

Modified Alembic: Motus — In addition to an unceasing stride, the Zeka in motion may spend a point of Pyros to gain the Demolisher Merit at two dots to destroy obstacles in their path, so long as they are in motion. An exceptional success destroying an object thusly inflicts the moderate Sick Tilt on the Zeky until they stop and rest.

- **Electrification** — Science harnessed the splitting of the atom for more than simple destruction, and a being born of fission can harness Azoth for more than mere electricity. In a Zeka's hands, Electrification can power cities just as easily as destroy

Teachers of Death

It is theoretically possible for a Zeka to teach their Distillations and Alembics, even if finding a student in actuality can be difficult. If a Zeka does find a pupil, the Storyteller and players involved decide any requirements themselves. For example, it's reasonable to demand the student is following a destructive Refinement or Role (other than Flux, as the power of the atom is closer akin to Pyros than Flux). Similarly, any pupils could easily become a source of Contamination. Every Zeka is so unique that no catch-all requirements exist.

them. Zeky inheritors of this Transmutation may find themselves permanently glowing just beneath the skin, or the world might grow heavier as waves of radiation issue forth as they feed Pyros to their Alembic.

Modified Alembic: Machinus – Radiation speaks more strongly than electrical currents. The Zeka senses radiation and sources of radiation within 200 yards, as well as their strength. The Zeka can also sense when a source of radiation is nearing a reactivity excursion.

Modified Distillation: Generator – The Nuclear Promethean sees untold potential in a device, if she only pushes a little further. The Zeka may spend one additional Pyros or take a point of bashing damage to push an electrical device beyond its limits; a simple portable generator powered this way might suddenly find itself capable of powering an entire household. The device powered this way breaks down once the Zeka releases it.

- **Luciferus** – Phosphorum is every Zeka's bad friend, who welcomes their destructive tendencies with open arms. Why should Zeky be cautious or restrained in a world that is incautious and unrestrained in fearing or hating them? Prometheans who grumble over the haste of other Light-Bringers would be awed by the recklessness of a Nuclear daredevil. Such a Zeka might bear extremities permanently scarred and stinking of radiation burns, or wipe her hands as the granite countertop she was resting them on begins to crumble and flake.

Modified Distillation: Searing Corona – The Zeka using this Distillation bestows the area they are scouring with the Contaminated Tilt (p. 138) at Intensity 1 in addition to the modified Extreme Heat Tilt (**Promethean: The Created**, p.315). Contamination's Intensity increases by 1 every round.

Modified Alembic: Blaze of Glory – Whether it's a side effect of their humour or an attitude fostered by a life fraught with extremes, a Zeka who takes lethal damage while having no Pyros in her pool gains one point of Pyros, once per scene.

- **Metamorphosis** – This Transmutation can manifest in especially strange ways for Zeky; a Zeka might grow an insulating layer of tumorous tissue to endure freezing temperatures, or sprout a cluster of vestigial digits to find handholds while scaling a cliff. The adaptations Metamorphosis grants Zeky always seem sickly somehow, even if wild and unnaturally vigorous.

Modified Alembic: Aptare – Zeky understand life does not always find a way unless you force it to; a Zeka can spend a point of Pyros to ignore an additional Environmental Tilt per scene. The environment either gains the Contaminated Tilt at Intensity 1, or advances Intensity if it already has the Tilt.

- **Vulcanus** – Zeky are not unique among their kind in being drawn to fire, but some find the flames similar to a pool whose depths they can plumb while their cousins stagger in the shallows. A Zeka who finds the overlap between their humour and fire is a Zeka who can wield nuclear fire, and scourge the world in ways that created a culture of fear and paranoia for decades. Zeky with this Transmutation make the air around them too hot to breathe, or perhaps they crackle like the blackened ruins of civilizations when they move.

Modified Alembic: Ignus Aspiratus – A Zeka is never without fuel; she may spend one point of Willpower to generate fire seemingly from nothing, but anyone else who warms themselves in its glow gains the Contaminated Tilt at Intensity 3.

Modified Distillation: Fire Grasp – A Nuclear Promethean can use this Distillation to draw forth more than a nuclear fire, and spend an additional point of Pyros to inflict three points of lethal damage to a living target who has caught fire instead of two. A target burned this way also gains the Sick Condition at Grave, and the Contamination Condition at Intensity 2.

Nuclear Alembic: The Tsar's Gift

Prometheans tell stories in hushed whispers about the First Zeka, an experimental weapon who was hunted to a pass in the Ural Mountains by his demiurge. In his wrath, this Zeka found an expression of Vulcanus centered on combustion. Whether this Promethean really was the first Zeka is unknown to even the Zeky themselves, but some have discovered the ways to nudge the split in an atom. This Alembic is the ultimate expression of Zeky volatility, and focuses on manipulating explosions.

Persistent: The Zeka is aware when someone approaches them with a weapon; if that weapon is a firearm or explosive, they also know the range, rate of fire, quantity of ammunition, yield, and other details related to its function. She can spend one point of Pyros to downgrade all damage taken from an explosion to bashing, and a further point of Pyros to ignore it entirely, as combustion recognizes combustion.

The First Stone

In the same way a wolf bares its fangs at its tamed dog cousins when they grow bold enough to hunt it down, so too does the Zeka lay bare the inferno raging within her to cow the tools of those who would harm her.

Pool: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant.

A Zeka confronted with firearms, explosives, or similar devices uses Pyros to render them inert. Weapons that fit into these categories cannot be used against her for the duration of the scene.

The Hand That Feeds

The Zeka touches something that bears the echoes of violence within, and tries to force it to explode; the target can be any firearm, explosive device, or any other inanimate object that is combustible in any way.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Strength + Weapon's damage + Azoth

Action: Instant

Dramatic Failure: The object has explosive desires of its own; it redirects the explosion back into the Zeka, who takes one point of lethal damage.

Failure: The object lies inert, as quietly stubborn as stone.

Success: The object explodes, inflicting bashing damage on those within a meter (except the Zeka).

Dramatic Success: The object explodes into a conflagration far greater than its normal potential; anyone within a meter of it (except the Zeka) takes lethal damage.

Sevenfold

The most storied Distillation of the Tsar's Gift mixes the Zeka's pain with Pyros, and catalyzes an explosion within the body of their tormentor. The target must have hurt the Zeka within the last hour, and must be trying to harm the Zeka again directly.

Cost: 3 Pyros

Dice Pool: Stamina + Survival + Azoth vs. target's Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Action: Instant and contested.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Promethean gains the Stunned Tilt and takes a further point of lethal damage as their explosive power backfires.

Failure: The character's power finds no purchase in their foe.

Success: A tiny push becomes the pebble that started the avalanche; the target takes one point of lethal damage per point of lethal damage the Zeka has marked.

Exceptional Success: The Zeka floods the body of their target with the raw force of all they have endured. The target suffers one point of lethal damage per point of lethal damage the character has marked, and the area around the target gains the Contaminated Tilt at Intensity 4.

THE TUMOR FAIRY: DAWN

What's so special about you? Why do you get to check out?

Background

Dawn is sick. She woke up in her first hospital's basement in time to see her parents run away. They left a note: "We're so sorry, we love you very much. Stay in the hospital. Stay out of sight. You're sick."

They wrote it on a get-well-soon card.

So, Dawn waited, but they never came back. Days became weeks, weeks became months before Dawn decided they hadn't been clear on which hospital she had to stay in. She'd learned all of this hospital's secrets — she'd even met another Promethean on the graveyard shift. He told her what she was and a little more, but he'd been horrified when she showed him her trick.

Dawn went to another hospital. She'd learned a lot about hospitals: People went there when they were sick, and got to leave if they were better. Despite all her poking and prodding and an amateur imitation of the thing the doctor did with that little knife on a sleeping patient, Dawn had no idea what was wrong with her. She knew she was different, that she had to become human, but nobody else had what she had, not even the other Prometheans she encountered.

Dawn's third hospital had a cancer ward. Biopsy waste containers might as well have been mirrors. The overworked doctor she asked said there was no cure for cancer, which made Dawn angry. She made his insides go bad. Let him be sick forever.

Dawn moves between hospitals every week or so, hiding from baffled doctors and concerned nurses, poking at patients and flipping through charts. She's figured out the violent outbreaks spread if she stays too long, to say nothing of the first cancer ward she ruined. She's gleaned a lot more about the Pilgrimage than one might expect from a Zeka,

but she is young, unguided, and too powerful for anyone's good.

Sometimes, Dawn gets angry when a patient recovers too well and gets to go home, especially if they've been mean. The parents' smiles are what really pushes her buttons. Dawn makes those patients sick again. She might even cut them open to see if they get sick like her. She's not sure why she cries every time they do.

Description

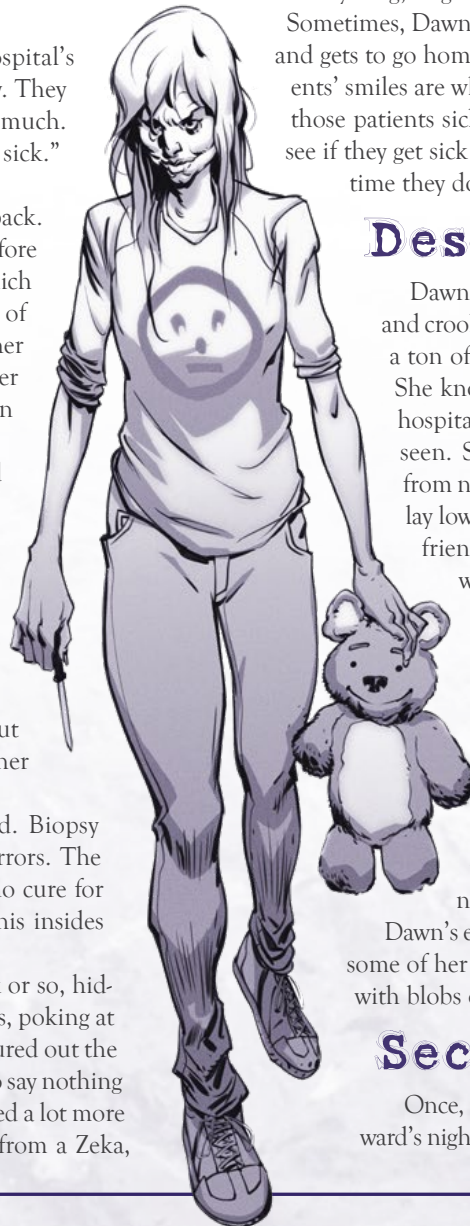
Dawn is a skinny girl with long, greasy blond hair and crooked teeth. She smiles big and often, and asks a ton of questions. Dawn puts on a carefree front. She knows where to find just about everything in hospitals, and how to get around without being seen. She's even picked up medical procedures from nurses. If you need food, medicine, a place to lay low, or an escape route, Dawn is an invaluable friend. She'll trade any of these for information with other Prometheans. Dawn is jealous of anyone with loving parents, though she takes most of her anger out on the children. Dawn wears a pale blue hospital gown, scrub pants, and a dark hoodie with plenty of pockets sewn inside.

Dawn's disfigurements are what she thinks her parents meant by "sick," and it's hard to blame her. Tumors bulge beneath her skin and break the surface at every node. Her features are distorted and swollen.

Dawn's eyes glow a sickly yellow. When she's stressed, some of her extremities leak viscous neoplasm studded with blobs of pus and tumorous tissue.

Secrets

Once, Dawn met a nasty doctor on call in a cancer ward's night shift. He gave her disgusted looks; she could



feel the revulsion oozing between his teeth. Dawn felt shame for the first time. The night doctor later screamed at her, and hit a patient. Dawn heard some other doctors talking about “liability,” so she sat herself in the vents above his desk without moving for an entire week. She didn’t know everyone would get so violent. She didn’t know they’d die.

Rumors

“Stay away from the hospital downtown. It belongs to a Zeka. She looks so small, but she will kill anyone who isn’t of her Lineage.”

Dawn has scared away a few Prometheans by accident. She doesn’t mean to hurt them, but whenever they start using Transmutations, she gets excited and tries to copy them. That’s usually when they run.

“She’s Princess Nuke. Her genitor is the granddaddy of all granddaddies, the Tsar himself. He left her there to grow, and one day, he’ll come back to collect.”

Dawn’s parents were an Osiran and an Ulgan. They thought using the x-ray machines and other hazardous equipment stored in the hospital basement would unify their humours; they thought they were ready to be genitors, that they would never abandon their child the way they were abandoned. They were wrong. The radiation was too powerful. They blame it for corrupting their progeny. Dawn, for her part, would give anything to see her parents again.

“If you’re bad, the Tumor Fairy will come and give your cancer teeth so it’ll crawl through your guts and eat you inside out.”

Dawn has been a fixture at local hospitals long enough for younger patients to mythologize the glimpses they’ve caught. One of them pointed at her one night and screamed that at her. The girl wouldn’t stop screaming. She wouldn’t stop tearing at the life-support devices either. Dawn was hurt — she got so angry only the security guard’s presence deterred her from vengeance. She came back the next night to find out the girl had died. The name “Tumor Fairy” makes Dawn’s mouth taste like ashes. She’ll slink away to cry if she hears it.

Dawn

Elpis: Recovery

Torment: Jealous

Lineage: Zeky

Refinement: Cuprum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (Surgery) 2, Occult (Prometheans) 3

Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Persuasion 2, Socialize (Medical Professionals) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Anonymity 1, Danger Sense, Small-Framed

Health: 5

Azoth: 1

Pyros/per turn: 10/1

Transmutations: Metamorphosis — Tegere (Metastasis); Sensorium — Vitreous Humour

Willpower: 6

Pilgrimage: 2

Size: 4

Speed: 10

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

Unique Distillation: Metastasis

This unique Distillation of Tegere is the Tumor Fairy’s curse.

Dawn focuses the radiation running through her to warp healthy cells into cancerous ones, creating a tumor in the body of the person she’s touching.

Cost: 1 Pyros

Dice Pool: Resolve + Medicine + Azoth vs. target’s Stamina + Supernatural Tolerance

Story hooks

- The characters needs a hospital, and find themselves caught in the crosshairs of a doctor-turned-hunter. The hunter may be missing a few organs and a leg, but he’s determined to kill “the monster preying on these patients.” Does he mean the young Zeka whose Disquiet caused a lockdown, or the *sublimatus* stalking the morgue? Between the staff, the patients, the hunter, the Pandoran, and the Tumor Fairy, the throng is in for a wild night.
- A friendly Promethean couple shares their refuge with the throng, and tell stories about a Nuclear Promethean holed up in a hospital in the city. The characters find a young Zeka who has done terrible things, but wants to get better — she doesn’t want to be “sick.” Can they teach Dawn? Does the Promethean couple match Dawn’s stories about her genitors, and will the throng attempt to stage a reunion?
- The characters know someone who works at the local hospital, who has described what sounds like a Promethean being held under quarantine there. They find a Wasteland threatening to enter advanced stages by the time they arrive, but it’s unlike anything they’ve ever seen. Can they free Dawn from a hospital floor packed by human medical authorities, with more on the way? How will they react when she reveals what she is during their escape?

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Dawn's body reacts adversely. She gains the grave Sick Tilt for two turns.

Failure: Dawn's tumors writhe and leak. She gains the moderate Sick Tilt for one turn.

Success: The target gains the grave Sick Tilt.

Exceptional Success: The target gains the grave Sick Tilt. If they attack Dawn, they take a further point of lethal damage per turn they do so, as the tumors she implanted attack their insides.

FRANCES DYNES: THE RADIUM GIRL

Oh darling, you're not who I was looking for, but you'll most certainly do.

Background

Frances was born in 1929 from the body of a woman who was assured that the paint on the brush was safe. What was advertised in magazines as Darkless, Solescence, or Mysterilight was in truth just simple radium. Women painted their nails, their skin, and their lips with the dazzling colors before going home to hold lover's hands, kiss their children goodnight, and prepare meals for their families. For some of the women, the poisoning was minor, an ugly deception waiting to metastasize decades down the road. For others the effects were more immediate. Frances came into the world baptized in a curative well of radium salts whole and slowly poisoning all around her. Her creator lasted three weeks.

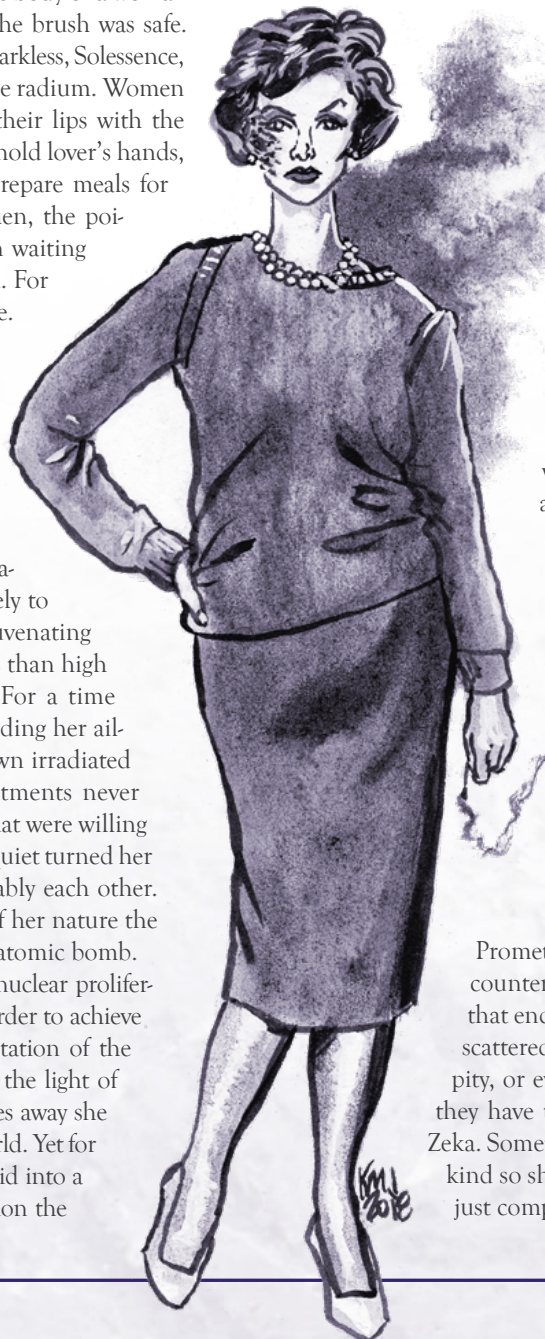
The world Frances came into was one that, outside of the lab, still believed in the healing power of radiation, a population that was more likely to have seen advertisements for the rejuvenating energies of radioactivity on aged cells than high rates of cancers in those exposed. For a time Frances tried to cleave the understanding her ailing creator had left to balance her own irradiated humours to heal mortals. The treatments never seemed to quite work out for those that were willing to try the young Zeka's methods. Disquiet turned her patients against both her and inevitably each other. Frances would only learn the truth of her nature the when she witnessed the birth of the atomic bomb.

For a time, the looming panic of nuclear proliferation made Frances struggle all the harder to achieve the New Dawn. She attended each station of the Pilgrimage with religious awe, and in the light of grand works of fission trillions of miles away she brought a new one of her kind into world. Yet for all Frances' dedication, as the world slid into a doctrine of mutually assured destruction the

pilgrim lost her way and slid into fatalism. There was no point in achieving her goals if the Great Work's only destination was to be obliterated by the very forces that she sought so desperately to escape. The ultimate fate of the human race was seemingly to be consumed in nuclear flame and leave behind a new generation of Zeky so envious of humanity they would someday follow in their footsteps. An atavistic cycle of birth and destruction carried out for an eternity — one that, in her own small way, Frances was going to put an end to.

These days Frances is still a pilgrim of a sort, traveling unerringly between the Superfund sites that litter the United States as well as lesser-known radiological spills that were covered up by private corporations. They are the perfect hunting ground for those of her Lineage looking to find somewhere safe to shelter away from humanity or trying to create another of their kind. In each of these locations she has hidden Pandorans who are just as eager to feed from the irradiated Pyros of the Zeky as they are from the more common fare they were born to hunt. Frances has no particular fondness for the beasts that, inspired by their new Pyros infusion, emerge from their chrysalis in the shape of monstrous roaches or crawling, ravenous carcinomas.

Frances holds no real malice towards Prometheans outside of her Lineage. Most she encounters are simply a means to an end for her, but that end is usually the upkeep of her ravenous agents scattered throughout her Pilgrimage. Some she might pity, or even consider useful apprentices, especially if they have their own reasons to hate a member of the Zeka. Sometimes these uses are flushing out others of her kind so she can continue her work, and sometimes it's just companionship. She's been alive for far too long,



and sometimes even the most murderous of Centimani just needs a moment with someone that won't wither and die in her presence.

Description

Frances is of average size and slight of frame, a Caucasian woman in her late 20s who dresses in conservative and frequently dated fashions. Her face has a smoothness, the type that only comes with the practiced effort of never smiling. When her Disfigurements show, her hands shine even in low light as do her teeth, which glow except where they are obscured by the blood welling up from her gums. Her skin slightly sags and takes on a sunburnt appearance that makes her look fragile, like she's slowly collapsing in on herself.

Frances acts with an openness and friendly candor that many find a little off-putting, treating people she just met as trusted confidantes. She's curious and even mildly sympathetic to the plight of others, even when she considers them a resource to be redistributed to her Pandorans. Frances always asks for details about a throng's Pilgrimage, especially fishing for details if it ever encountered others like herself. She has many very specific questions for them if they have, almost like she's looking for somebody in particular. Young Prometheans that still have that desperate hunger to experience the New Dawn may even be taken under her wing, whether they want that attention or not. Frances has little love for other Centimani, seeing them at best as realists and at worst clumsy intruders that like to trespass places with little regard for the designs of others.

Secrets

Frances is completely unaware of the Bestowment gifted to her by her creation, or precisely how long she'll last. A devout worker of Plumbum before falling into Flux, she has quite an understanding of the inner workings of Prometheans, both from studies and hands-on learning. She knows falling from the Pilgrimage spells the end, and is quietly looking forward to oblivion herself. Unfortunately, that won't happen to her, and it's unlikely the Zeka will take this new complication well or quietly.

Despite her best efforts Frances has never found her own progeny again. She created him from the body of a man who perished from

sepsis after years as a devoted rock hound who just had to have that piece of Trinitite — created him and just as quickly abandoned him to the world, feeling it was best to distance herself. Frances has never found a sign of him again and, though patient, even false sightings are enough to cause her anxiety. Part of Frances is filled with a certain level of parental distress that to be truly done with her task she'll need to destroy her child. Another part of her is terrified that he succeeded where she never did and found some way to reach the New Dawn.

Rumors

"Working with hazardous waste is always well, y'know, hazardous. Every couple of years though, the workplace accidents start getting really bad. People coming down with all kinds of nasty cancers and unsafe doses no matter how closely they follow the rules. That's when management calls in the Inspector, she's from the DOE or some shit. So she comes in and takes a look around the place for a while and then everything goes back to normal. Weirdest thing is we always seem to have the most accidents right after she's been here. Just some really nasty ways to die."

Frances set herself up an identity as a government inspector responsible for checking in on major storage locations of nuclear waste, granting her access to the radiation she needs. Most managers assume their natural dislike of the woman is a product of her role as a self-important bureaucrat with too much power. Unlike most Prometheans she has permission to be on the premises, and if that fails for some reason she can always just kill anyone that gets in her way.

"Regarding your queries over Person of Interest outlined in your letter December 18th, 2016 implying the possibility that the subject of Counter Intelligence Within Radical Environmental Groups 1962-63 may be in some way linked with Report: New Growing Anti-Nuclear Sympathies. The Agency would like to remind you that both familial similarities and an unfortunate tendency for political indoctrination into family ideologies are far more likely explanations of your mystery woman. The discovery of an ageless woman in environmentalist circles is more apropos for the National Enquirer than national intelligence."

Before it became clear that humanity would never be able to harness the power of the atom safely, Frances was a vocal environmentalist fighting for an end to nuclear research and weapons proliferation. It was something she believed in, and would (and did) kill for when that

Story Hooks

- One of Frances' dormant Pandorans turned *sublimatus* after a particularly large and mostly innocent meal. Naming itself the Engineer, it holds no particular ill-will against Frances, but has become convinced that it would very much like to be her. It plans to crack the nuclear crypt it guards wide open, to gush its irradiated bowels into the local water and provide it with new Zeka to hunt for decades — but first, the Engineer seeks to consume its creator.
- Frances believes her Azoth will soon reach the end of its existence. In her last few supposed years she has decided to mentor a member of the throng, one more student as a mark of sentimentality before she fades away. The problem comes when Frances realizes her half-life is much longer than a single century. The Centimanus might have been benevolent thinking her time was finally at an end, but that self-destructive nihilism is unlikely to leave the throng unscathed when Torment takes hold.
- The city holds a Sanctuary Athanor, and Frances knows that if her current prey, a Zeka named Shiva, finds it he could hide and elude her for decades. She offers to share the Sanctuary's location with members of the throng, letting them have it in exchange for them delivering Red if he ever knocks on their door.

sort of act still had meaning to her. To this day, mug shots of Frances, who hasn't aged a day since, remain in law enforcement databases.

Search Keywords: Can drinking filtered river water make your skin burn? Search Keywords: River Water + Bleeding Gums. Search Keywords: River Parasites + Hair Loss.

Frances left stashes of radioactive waste, stolen from labs and universities, to access on her long travels across the country, a way to sleep and heal comfortably. The Centimanus even left Pandoran guardians to watch over what she considers her private property. Sometimes mortals come across these places, even building new campsites or real estate atop them, to disastrous result.

Frances Dynes

Elpis: Drive

Torment: Merciless

Lineage: Zeky

Refinement: Flux

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Nuclear Regulatory Safety) 2, Computer 2, Craft (Boobytraps) 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Survival 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3 (Mostly Harmless), Socialize 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Alternate Identity 3, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Sleepless, Trained Observer 3

Health: 8

Azoth: 8

Pyros/per turn: 40/8

Bestowment: Half-Life

Transmutations: Disquietism – Weaponize (fixed); Flux – Blight, Lordship, Solvent; Saturninus – Stoke the Furnace (fixed); Vulcanus – The Tsar's Gift (fixed)

Willpower: 6

Pilgrimage: 2

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 5

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

Zeky Bestowment: Half-Life

With this Bestowment, the character no longer has a life span but a half-life. Their Azoth is inextricably tied to the decay of the nuclear element within their body, allowing them to persist as a Promethean well beyond the allotted century for most. Each half-life interval, rather than cease functioning, a Zeky's Azoth rating is halved (round down) and they continue to exist. For some Zeky this time is measured in centuries while others may have only months to find enlightenment before they finally cease to exist all together. When the Zeky with this Bestowment dies, she may choose to activate the Bestowment to return to life and regain health levels equal to her Azoth. Activating this Bestowment in this way causes a Firestorm.

JUDITH “RED” GRAY: THE DEMON CORE

Go ahead. What's the worst that could happen?

Background

It was there for the birth of the nuclear age, a softball-sized mass of plutonium and gallium that was meant to kill hundreds of thousands – but it never got the chance. World War II ended three days before it was scheduled to be dropped, and so the core was set aside to be used in experiments. Only days later, it killed a scientist in a reactivity excursion, though he took 25 days to die. Within a year, it had killed again, as if the core knew what it was made for, and meant to make up the difference one life at a time. Scheduled to be used in a series of atmospheric tests – tests that generated far more fallout than was intended— its use was delayed because the repeated accidents left it too radioactive, and its test was canceled. History records that the Demon Core was melted down and used in the construction of other cores, putting its short and deadly life

to an end. To be sure, many of the scientists at Los Alamos wanted the Core destroyed, knowing that something was working through it, but the terrible curse it seemed to carry proved too attractive for certain segments of the government.

Sunrise

Her first heartbeat came when the core, implanted in her chest, slammed home for the first time, the beginning of a steady metallic beat that has driven her forward ever since. Uncle Sam needed soldiers – soldiers who could tread the radioactive earth mere hours after it was salted by the dirty fission warheads of the day, unconcerned with the radiation that would kill a man of flesh and blood – and she was the prototype, the child of a dozen fathers who meant her stolen flesh to be a weapon. None of the other experiments took, and she watched cores being dug out of corpses, hearing the

scientists worry at the project's impending cancellation, realizing she would be next if she didn't escape.

Within the month, three were dead by their own hand or by another's, thanks to a careful word here, a nudge there — the others went sooner rather than later as she poisoned the air, the water, the walls with her radiation. She dug her way out after the government wrote the facility off and buried it to keep the radiation trapped inside. When she first beheld the sky, the sun shone brightly on her face, and for the first time she knew jealousy. She, too, wanted to burn brightly, as she had been meant to.

On the Outside

For the first few decades of her existence, Red struggled to find her path, her nightmares full of twin suns and thunder that left her deafened, of the burning heat in her chest cooking her clean through (and everyone around her besides). She left Wasteland after Wasteland behind her as violence, vindictiveness, and a hunger for pain held her in the Refinement of Flux, with only brief forays toward the humanity she'd all but rejected when she felt she might melt down entirely from hate. Half a dozen major radiological scares can be laid at her feet, the result of insufficient control when human society, hateful and all-encompassing, descended upon her.

She found her truth at last from a fellow recluse seeking humanity, and rather than simply preying on the self-destructiveness of humans, she now keenly studies it. Seeing humans, the thing she aspires to be, descending to inhumanity is only thing she's ever found that moderates the reactor where her heart should be. It gives her hope that maybe they're not so different after all.

Though she walks her Pilgrimage more confidently now, Red returns to Cobalus often, wearing her study of impurity like a warm, heavy cloak. Her progress throughout the Pilgrimage suffers for her monofocus, but she knows all too well what happens when she doesn't stop the constant clangor in her chest. The migraines grow worse, the blood flows ever quicker, and sooner or later she stops caring about learning from the damage she does.

Description

Red has sanded down the rough edges of the body her fathers gave her with time and Transmutation, but little bits of the men she was made of still show through — the broad shoulders, the strong chin. She wears her dull red hair short, as her radiation tends to burn the ends to splitting. The hair color is an aesthetic choice she makes to hide the real reason she got the nickname — the blood in her saliva, sputum, and tears that give her teeth a reddish

cast, make her perpetually look as though she's pulled several all-nighters in a row. When her Disfigurements become apparent, blood trickles from her eyes, nose, and mouth, and the normally seamless joins between her component parts stand out in charred relief. She dresses for the occasion as best she can, favoring leather and studs — she has to change those out every so often, or they get ticking hot.

Red is standoffish out of habit, only closing with others when she hopes to feed a dangerous impulse or when she thinks she can get something out of them. When she's interested though, she's focused, attentive, and a little too forward for most people's comfort. She likes to ask questions that have uncomfortable answers, and is surprisingly perceptive. It's hard to shock her after 70-odd years of existence wallowing in the depths of human (and inhuman) depravity, and if she is surprised she reacts not with fear but with interest. She still chain smokes despite being around for 30 years of PSAs inveighing against the habit — it makes the blood flow just a bit less readily.

Secrets

Red's little habit — driving others right to the brink so she can watch them explode and see who they take it out on — isn't as quiet as she thinks. In one very small and windowless office in FBI headquarters, a map is tacked to the wall, with pushpins and yarn connecting assault, burglary, murder after murder, stretching back to Hoover's time. Next to each is a grainy photograph of the same woman, moments before the event took place. It's impossible — she's barely changed since the 60s — but it's a case nonetheless, and this sleuth is going to solve it.

Rumors

"You want to hear something fucked up? Back in '79, Three Mile Island, my dad worked there. You're not gonna believe this — a woman broke in and got into the reactor space and killed someone in there. I shit you not! There was blood everywhere! They hushed it up after, but that's why the reactor went bad — all the blood."

Red is one of the few Zeky to have created another of her kind — after all, she had the full notes of her fathers to work from. It was probably the worst decision she ever made, not because she failed but because she succeeded. She and her offspring let off pulses of terrible radiation whenever they were together — in the end, she had no choice but to cut and run, or to create a radioactive plume that would contaminate an entire state.

"Officials have sealed off all roads into the park and are turning motorists back



Story Hooks

- Times have gotten tougher in the last 15 years, and nuclear material is much, much harder to come by. Red's in the market again, and she's got an FBI counter-terrorism team hooked. They think she's a domestic extremist looking to build a dirty bomb. Catch is, whatever they hand over needs to be at least a little hot, or the game will be up right away – and Red doesn't need weapons-grade.
- Alchemists covet Promethean bodies, but Red's core is more than just Azoth and Pyros – it's a mystically tainted plutonium core that craves violence, suffering, and murder. Three Alchemists, each powerful and dangerous in their own right, have puzzled out the secret behind the source of Red's Azothic life, and each craves it. The trouble is, they all know each other, and each knows the other is after the same motherlode. Scientist Riley Silverman (p. 95) would be an excellent fit here, or you could introduce the Daughters of Ravana and New Ravanians (p. 90) as conflicting factions with a long and sordid history between them.
- The writing is on the wall – literally. Somewhere in the city is a Sanctuary Athanor, left behind by a Promethean who long since completed the Great Work. That kind soul could never have predicted this gift would touch off such dangerous competition, though, for though the throng seeks it out, so too does Red – and she's not about to let something that could change her life so dramatically slip through her fingers.

at the highway. The entire western half of the county has been evacuated until experts can determine the nature and the extent of the groundwater contamination. Police and fire officials continue to deny reports that this disaster is the result of terrorist activity, but numerous eyewitness reports from the preceding weeks suggest that this woman, seen in the distance in this cell phone video, near the epicenter, is connected to the radiological contamination of the park. It remains to be seen if rainfall will make the situation worse – Ken, what's the weather looking like?"

Things got hot, inside and out, and even tormenting humans to watch the impurities inside them rise to the surface got to be too much. Red settled back into Cuprum and retreated to a convenient national park to calm herself and think – an invitation to focus on her own imperfections, her own impurities. No surprise that, seeking Elpis, she salted the groundwater with heavy elements and killed a stand of trees older than she was by some decades.

"Male, caucasian, mid-30s. Lesions on hands and face, minor burning across the body in a...a very striking pattern. [click] Subject's burns are a classic blood spatter pattern; correlates with bruising on knuckles. [click] None of the blood on the subject's body is his own – attempts to type the foreign blood have been inconclusive. It's almost as if the blood... fuck. Kelly! Call DHS and take off that lab coat! It's not blood!"

But it was blood: Red's blood. For all her experience with the hot tempers of humans, even she can be caught unawares, and this time, in the bus station, that meant she caught a beating that even an aficionado of underground fighting rings would have called vicious. She let it happen, and healed quickly enough, but she left a great deal of blood spattered on the floor, the wall, and of course on the

man who laid into her. A few workers and travelers felt queasy as the blood was cleaned up, though not for why they thought they did, and the young man who let his temper get the better of him wound up in the morgue a few hours later.

Judith "Red" Gray

Elpis: Empathy

Torment: Alienated

Lineage: Zeky

Refinement: Cobalus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts (Engineering) 3, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Science (Nuclear Physics) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Firearms 3, Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Glad You Thought of That) 4

Merits: Interdisciplinary Specialty (Nuclear Physics), Library (Zeky, Occult) 3, Parkour 3, Sleepless

Health: 8

Azoth: 6

Pyros/turn: 20/6

Transmutations: Contamination – Indulgence (fixed), Leverage (Game Theory), Suffering; Mesmerism – Eris, Penthos; Metamorphosis – Verto (fixed)

Willpower: 5

Pilgrimage: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 5

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

Unique Distillation: Game Theory

Red synchronizes the pulsing of her reactor core to her quarry's heartbeat, bypassing his defenses as she leaps three or four steps ahead in the conversation, using the perfect combination of words to break down his will before he even knows it.

Cost: 2 Pyros

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Subterfuge + Azoth vs. Resolve

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Success: Red immediately breaks down a number of Doors equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional: Red permanently lowers the number of Doors on future interactions with this target by 1.

Failure: The target is Contaminated (p. 138), but no Doors are opened.

Dramatic: The target is both Contaminated and Disquieted (**Promethean: The Created**, p. 308) one level higher than he currently is.



Vincent Lockwood 2010

“Well fuck you, too!”

Iman balled zir fists, bumping Jennifer to push her backwards. For a moment, Maria was convinced they'd go at it right then and there. She tried to catch Jamal's eye, but he straight up ignored her — apparently the Galateid had decided this didn't involve him.

Great.

“Guys,” she started, then fell immediately silent as three Prometheans turned to stare at her. Guess she wasn't forgiven yet. Which, okay, she'd put all of them in danger — it's kinda what addicts did — but that was then.

“This is ridiculous,” she tried feebly.

No response. At least, not verbally. Jennifer crossed her arms across her chest, Iman assumed the carefully neutral pose zie did when negotiating with people zie despised, and Jamal was still avoiding eye contact.

At least they have a common enemy now? Maria gave herself a mental pat on the back.

“It's not like Iman meant to lose the lease, and yeah it sucks we have to move while Jennifer just made progress, but we were gonna have to eventually anyway, and—”

“You're right it's not zir fault,” Jennifer spat at her. “It's yours, for spending all our money on drugs.”

Maria fell silent, forcing herself to weigh the accusation evenly rather than respond with anger. She took a deep breath.

“Okay, fair. But—”

“I lost my arm to that *thing*,” Jamal interjected.

Maria felt her anger rising — *so now he's talking to me* — but forced it down. It was a bad day for any throng when the Wretched had to be the voice of reason. Even so, she sounded bitter when she replied.

“I wasn't even on anything then.”

“No,” Iman spoke up, “but you already checked out on us.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” She felt her hands tightening into fists.

“It means,” Jennifer again, “you should have *told us* you were struggling.”

“Yeah. We're a throng,” Jamal added accusingly.

Maria exhaled, less a sign of relief than a forcible effort to relax.

“Yes, we are,” she replied. “But *he's* not.” She pointed at Lode. Sensing the hesitation of her throngmates, the Wretched pressed on. “Everything's been going to shit since *he* got here.”

She could see the others go over events in their mind, cycle back to her unfortunate encounter with the Centimanus and put the blame there. She cut them off.

“No, really *think* about it. Forget about Missy and the drugs. Iman, would you have lost the lease if you hadn't taken Lode's advice? Jen, who even set you toward Cobalus?”

She saw their eyes narrow, regard Lode carefully. He remained sitting, neither speaking in his own defense, nor rising to meet the throng in violence. Maria felt the little hairs at the back of her neck rise. She was right. Lode was not their friend.

The silence dragged on. No one moved. Then, the corners of Lode's mouth curled almost imperceptibly upward.

It was laughing at them.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE JOVIAN

**“Awake, arise
or be for
ever fall’n.”**

**— John Milton,
Paradise Lost**

The Pilgrimage is long and unpredictable. It requires a Promethean to change fundamental aspects of her outlook on life in order to join a species that has a real problem changing its mind about anything. It asks the Promethean to learn new information, reject and revise it, and change herself constantly. Worse, it picks at the back of a Promethean’s mind. Her dreams, her urges, her idle thoughts all push her toward this truth: The New Dawn is real. The Pilgrimage *must* be completed.

Not so, says the Jovian. The burden can be laid down. Humanity is not a lofty goal, but a middling fate. It is something that the Created can settle for, yes, and Azothic memory might push them toward it, but they aren’t salmon, powerless to resist instinct. They can resist! They can be immortal, powerful, and wise! All they have to do is avoid the path of least resistance, and isn’t that what the Pilgrimage *really* is?

The Jovian lies, of course, but once it latches onto a Promethean (or a throng), it is an insidious, dangerous influence. It doesn’t want Prometheans to leave the Pilgrimage entirely. It has no use for the Hundred-Handed. It wants the Created to stay on the Pilgrimage indefinitely, never progressing, never achieving important milestones, the New Dawn ever a faint, false promise.

What is the Jovian?

The Ramble of Constance Verge, Seeker & Pilgrim

I have studied Azothic memory carefully. It was, for the better part of three years, my focus on the Pilgrimage, and I learned to manipulate it and delve into its mysteries at will. Yes, doing so was dangerous, and scorched the land and brought down fire from the sky and made people hate me, but I confess I found it somewhat addictive. Looking into the living history of our people – the Memory is the closest thing to culture that we the Created have! How could I look away?

I looked, and I followed the clues the Memory showed me. I walked with others of my kind, and from them I learned other approaches to the Pilgrimage. I joined several different throngs over that time. Only three years? Three lifetimes? When my lifetime can be measured like a rodent’s, mature within a year, dead within two, and then back again for another? I can’t understand...well, it doesn’t matter. Throngs, though. I was talking about throngs.

I said I studied the Memory for three years, and during that time I joined four different throngs. Well, I joined three, and formed one, if that’s a meaningful distinction. That makes 15 different Prometheans, which is more than most of us ever meet. I am fortunate.

The first throng was composed of only three (plus me). It was a Wretched and his creation, and a Tammuz. They welcomed me with open arms and I felt loved and valued and I belonged. I learned very little.

The second throng was larger: Ale, an Osiran like me; Rita, a Galateid; Prince, a Created with no Lineage, no family and no history; Bellows, the Wretched creation I met in my first throng; Xan, an Ulgan; and me, Constance, the seeker. I learned much in their company. It was with them I met the Jovian.

The Jovian is ephemeral, but it is not a spirit in the sense that Ulgans understand, nor is it a ghost. It is capable of assuming the state of Twilight at will (**Promethean: The Created Second Edition**, p. 223), but generally prefers to form itself a body. It does not need to eat, sleep, or perform other biological functions. It does seem to need to breathe insofar as Prometheans can (and have) smother or drown it, but death doesn’t impede it for long.



When the Jovian's body dies, it vanishes for as long as a few months or as little as a few moments (the length of time it stays "dead" seems to have less to do with necessity and more to do with whether it wants to keep harassing the Created). It then reappears, perhaps in the same form, perhaps in a different one, and continues its campaign.

Potential Origins

Xan was the one who saw it first. We found an object, a pot of clay with pilgrim marks etched into the side. The marks were so faded that I could not read them. The only one that was visible was the mark for "danger." Xan and Rita cautioned against opening it, and had Bellows been with us, I suspect that would have been the end of it. Bellows was sensible and very strong, and I'm sure he'd have picked me up under his arm and carried me out of the disused access tunnel where we found the pot. But Bellows was not there. He was off brooding, and so Ale and I swayed Prince to our side and we opened it.

Prince was the deciding vote, but Prince could never see or hear the Memory. He should have been ineligible. Damn. I only thought of that now.

We opened the pot, and Ale, who was herself following the Refinement of Quicksilver, felt it – like the Divine Fire but sickly, corruptive, what I have come to know as Flux. Xan pulled us back, saying "There! I see it! Bad!" Xan's grasp of language was never comprehensive, but we knew that when he got nervous, it was time to back off. He saw things we couldn't.

But then nothing happened. The pot shook and cracked, but nothing came out, and Ale said the Flux sensation faded. We all felt weaker, true, but our strength returned with the next sunrise, and although Bellows grumbled at us for opening it, he admitted that we seemed to have gotten lucky.

The Jovian arrived the next evening, and we welcomed it. We didn't know what it was.

The true nature of the Jovian is up to the Storyteller. Some potential explanations follow, but the Storyteller should consider whether or not having a real explanation is useful. If the characters are going to be able to destroy the Jovian for good, or ever learn the truth behind it, then it's worth your while to figure out what that truth is. If they are simply going to escape it or imprison it somehow, then don't worry about where it came from. Just focus on presenting it as an interesting antagonist.

Qashmal Gone Wrong

All of us have seen the Scintillating Flames. We have suffered their exasperating riddles and burned at their touch. I have seen more of them, perhaps, than many Created, though I do not know if that is some quirk of my particular Pilgrimage, sheer coincidence, or evidence of my own persistence in the matter. What I do know is that the Jovian reminds me somewhat of these beings, and that notion terrifies me.

It's possible that the Jovian is a qashmal that somehow escaped its Mission. Perhaps it was a Lilithim sent to cause a Promethean doubt, or maybe it was an Elpidos that grew jealous of the Created and their ability to become human. In either case, the Jovian's mastery of Pyros and the Promethean condition is obvious, and some of the things it can do are reminiscent of the powers qashmallim display.

If this is true, then how did the Jovian escape its Mission? Or did it? Perhaps the Mission is the insidious, decades- or centuries-long quest to put Prometheans off the Pilgrimage? But if so, why? What could the Principle (which works toward Prometheans achieving the New Dawn) mean by loosing this monster on the Created?

Former Promethean

Where have the Amirani gone? What are they? I delve into the Memory until my eyes ache and the air burns around me, but all I can feel is pain, fire, ash, and the word: Amirani. Were they a Lineage, one that predated the Wretched? But if so, where did they go? Did the Jovian wipe them out? Was he one?

Other Lineages have come and gone in the past, and more will rise and fall in the future. The Jovian could be a member of one of these Lineages, detached from its physical body. This isn't an ability many Prometheans display, but who knows what the Created of the past were able to do?

If this is true, it indicates the Jovian was a Promethean who failed so spectacularly at their Pilgrimage that they went beyond Centimanus into a kind of anti-Pilgrimage. The metaphysical and philosophical ramifications are fascinating and terrifying to consider; is this inverted Pilgrimage available to other Prometheans? Is Flux, then, only one of a number of possible Refinements on it? Is the Jovian a unique being, or are some of the other unexplained and seemingly singular beings of the Chronicles of Darkness actually Jovians?

Spirit of Disquiet

Xan and I sat up one night on a fire escape, staring over the city. He told me about spirits. He told me some words in their language. He told me they are callous but not malicious; they simply do what it is in their nature to do. Even a spirit that seems like it has all of the logical and cognitive faculties we do, doesn't. It simply does what it must do, and it changes only if its nature changes. I think there's some wisdom there, but I struggle to enumerate it. I also wonder if the Jovian might be some type of spirit.

The Jovian might be a spirit. True, it would be an extremely powerful one, probably Rank 6 or more (see **Promethean: The Created**, p.224 for a discussion of spirit Rank), but its ability to shift between Twilight and the material world, its specific ability to inflame Disquiet and the Wasteland (much like Influence), and its singular, amoral focus on pulling Prometheans away from the New Dawn do resonate with a spiritual entity.

If this is true, it means the Jovian has a Ban and a Bane, and it could therefore be banished or destroyed for good. The weaknesses of so powerful a spirit would be extremely difficult to uncover or enact, but doing so would ensure a throng's legacy in the Azothic memory alongside the Seer.

Lie in the Azothic Memory

I do not believe for a moment this is true, but my throngmate Prince raised the possibility of the Jovian being a false Azothic memory. "You remember things your body did before it was your body," Prince said, "and those memories are true because they happened, but false because they aren't yours. What if the Jovian is...that?" A lie in the Azothic memory. Something that resonates because it was once true, but no longer. Again, I don't believe this. Not for a moment.

Prometheans rely on Azothic memory to guide them, give them a common vocabulary, show them the steps on the Pilgrimage, and reveal their own culture. They trust it to perhaps an unhealthy degree (except, of course, the Extempore, who can't access it). The Jovian might be a hiccup in that memory, an echo from a primeval time before the Created were fully formed, or simply an abscess, the decaying result of centuries of Prometheans pouring their frustration, doubt, and hatred into the memory.

If *this is true*, Prometheans are compounding the problem whenever they experience Torment, whenever they give up and become Centimani, perhaps whenever they express doubt that the whole thing is worth it. Of course, it's not feasible never to do any of those things; they're part and parcel of the Pilgrimage. Is the Jovian, then, an unavoidable aspect of it, too? Or is it an infection that could be purged or burned out? Doing so would require deep study of the Refinements of Quicksilver, Lead, Silver, and probably Cobalt, and might require creation of specialized Athanors to combat the creature.

Abyssal Creature

Bellows was a Mystic when we met. He had spent time among people who called themselves "the Awakened." He learned many things from them, not least that they aren't as enlightened as they think because they still misjudge us on reflex, but germane to the Jovian, Bellows learned of a place called "the Abyss." He was unclear on the cosmology, but the way he described it, the Abyss has an agenda behind it and that agenda is entropy, uniformity, and simplicity. Given that the Jovian would rather crush us flat than let us complete our (admittedly messy) journeys, I wonder if it might not hail from this Abyss.

If you have access to **Mage: The Awakening Second Edition**, you might consider the Jovian to be an Abyssal being like a Gulmoth. It would, again, be an especially powerful one, considering its longevity, but it's certainly within the realm of possibility. The Jovian works to keep Prometheans in a state of degradation (the Pilgrimage is a path, but the Jovian turns it into a treadmill), pushing their world toward entropy.

If *this is true*, a story featuring the Jovian would work nicely as a crossover between **Promethean** and **Mage**. Even if you don't want to involve the Awakened, if the Jovian is a Gulmoth, it has much more cerebral goals and drives than simply preventing Prometheans from reaching the New Dawn. It uses Prometheans as way to make the world more like its native Abyss — what, then, does that make the Promethean? Using the Jovian in this context makes for an interesting subplot in a story about the throng realizing the Created really do have a place in the world.

Angel of the God-Machine

I have one other theory. I have not voiced it to any of my compatriots, not in the throng in which I learned of the Jovian's existence nor in the two I have joined since. I have only voiced my suspicion to the Jovian itself, and it simply smiles in its way.

I believe that the Jovian may be an angel. I know qashmallim are often called angels, but that isn't what I mean. I mean that the Jovian might serve a powerful and uncaring God. I cannot name this God, for I do not know Its name, but I see Its agents from time to time and they terrify me. I hear tell of Its temple beneath Detroit, of its bones and blood

erupting to the surface, of silent movement of buildings at night and vultures made of mirrors circling those soon to die. I do not know how much of what I remember is true and how much is allegory and dream. I think that at least one of the throngs I joined might have been made of angels.

Angels are not the kindly messengers of a loving God. They are wrath and temptation.

The God-Machine is ancient, implacable, and ineffable. It doesn't have any interest in the Created specifically, but Its plans are unknowable and labyrinthine. The Jovian might be one of its angels, an ephemeral being created to serve a specific purpose (not unlike a *qashmal*, but where the Scintillating Flames ultimately help keep Prometheans on track, the angels of the God-Machine serve whatever varied and sinister purposes It might need). Why does the God-Machine need Prometheans to stagnate in their Pilgrimages? Maybe It doesn't. Maybe the Jovian targets specific Prometheans, meaning that the God-Machine isn't concerned with the Created losing ground, but rather keeping *these particular* Created in their Saturnine state for a little longer. The particulars behind this mission are likely to be hyper-specific, a veritable Rube Goldberg machine of metaphysical cause and effect. What, then, would it mean if the Prometheans thwarted the Jovian's plan?

If *this is true*, it means the God-Machine is taking an interest in the Divine Principle and the Prometheans to a heretofore-unseen degree. The God-Machine is interwoven throughout human history and has an odd retro-causal relationship with time, so Its machinations make for fun plot twists where the characters, by resisting the Jovian, may actually fulfill what the Machine wanted them to do. You can learn more about the God-Machine in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

The Implacable Witness

The Jovian is, in effect, a curse on Prometheans. Promethean characters can run afoul of this curse by drawing the Jovian's attention. How they do that is largely up to the Storyteller, but since no one goes looking for the Jovian, any interaction with a Jovian Athanor, Azothic memory, pilgrim marks, or other Promethean-specific phenomena might do it. A few suggestions:

Jovian Athanor

The characters stumble across a Jovian Athanor, left behind by another Promethean. Maybe the throng ignores the pilgrim marks warning them away from the cave, dense forest, or disused subway station in which it lies, or maybe the warnings they receive are unclear and seem to encourage them on. In either case, they uncover the artifact and, as Constance Verge describes, feel only a momentary shudder of Flux. The next night, the Jovian comes to visit.

Blood of the Sublimatus

The throng destroys a powerful *sublimatus*, suffering wounds and setbacks in the process (**Astrid: The Stormbringer** or **Mortimer: The Adversary** from the Pandoran chapter would do nicely for this purpose). As they burn the body or walk away from the carnage, they hear a whisper: "There but for the grace of God" and feel the stirrings of Vitriol. Have the players roll for an Elpis vision

(Promethean: The Created, p.187). If only one player succeeds (or fails, for that matter), the Jovian visits that character first; if multiple players succeed, then the Jovian latches onto the throng as a whole.

The Firestorm, Averted

The characters trigger a Firestorm, which builds and begins its destructive cycle, and then stops and flows down to a single point – a human figure. The Jovian stretches and greets the characters, telling them he's taken on the Firestorm to prevent it from spreading and hurting the people around them. Of course, the Jovian lies.

Passed Along

The throng meets another throng. They share Rambles and information as usual, but the other throng seems nervous. Before parting company, one of the new throng takes a player character aside, kisses him gently, and whispers "I'm sorry" before running off with her compatriots. The next day, the Jovian appears to the players' throng, bedeviling the Prometheans until they find someone else to pass the creature along to.

What Does the Jovian Do?

The Jovian isn't a combatant. It doesn't attack the Prometheans; it

doesn't even threaten them. The Jovian is a tempter, a nihilist, and an enabler. It keeps the Prometheans focused on small, trivial things rather than letting them pursue the Pilgrimage.

It's perfectly willing to help a Promethean achieve a minor milestone if doing so takes focus off the major or superlative one. It also recognizes that many throngs have a tendency to "take turns," with the members helping each other achieve one goal or another with the assumption that their turn will come. The Jovian therefore tries to keep the focus on a member who has made little or no progress on the Pilgrimage, helping this late bloomer rack up small milestones. This not only keeps one Promethean's progress minimal, but stops the other characters in the throng from making any at all.

The Jovian keeps its true agenda hidden as long as it can. It doesn't usually pretend to be human or even a Promethean, but it's quite willing to let the Created assume it is a *qashmal*. It plays to the stereotype – minor supernatural tricks, cryptic advice, generally friendly but aloof demeanor. It answers questions the characters might have about the Promethean condition, humanity, Alembics, Refinements, Athanors, and so forth, but it always does so with the intent of keeping the Created stagnant on the Pilgrimage. It doesn't want them to become Centimani, so it tries to steer them away from the Hundred-Handed (or, failing that, helps them defeat the Freaks when necessary). It's perfectly happy to help them involve themselves in the machinations of other supernatural beings, though – with rare exceptions, Prometheans make minimal progress toward humanity while studying the otherworldly.



Playing the Jovian

In meta-game terms, the Jovian fills a number of roles, and can be a very useful tool for the Storyteller. Quite apart from its potential as a clever and versatile antagonist, the Jovian can be a Storyteller mouthpiece. Since it's an ephemeral entity of uncertain origin, it knows what the Storyteller needs it to know. Is a player getting frustrated trying to nail down a particular milestone? The Jovian can give his character a blatant hint (provided it's not a major or superlative one). Are the characters missing some important context for a problem they're trying to solve? The Jovian can fill them in. Do they need assistance with an issue they should have resolved by now? The Jovian can be a kind of *deus ex machina*.

It's tempting to think of the Jovian as a beneficial character or a kludge for getting around problems, but don't use it like that. The Jovian *has* an agenda, and it simply finds making Prometheans trust it to be useful. The Jovian lies, and the throng's greatest chance to be rid of it is to recognize those lies.

Systems & Capabilities

The Jovian doesn't have traits; it doesn't really need them. The characters can't kill it, change its mind, or affect it with Transmutations (though it might well pretend to be affected). It doesn't suffer from Conditions or Tilts, and it isn't susceptible to Social Maneuvering. It is explicitly capable of the following:

- **Mimicking Life:** The Jovian appears in the form of a human being. It can change its form at will, though it typically keeps a consistent one for use with a given character or throng so as to be recognizable. It could, in theory, take the form of an animal.
- **Immortality:** The Jovian's body can be destroyed — if wounded, it bleeds. If its body is “killed,” it evaporates (although if it can get a Promethean arrested by presenting as a dead body for a while, it might do that), only to reform later. Its ability to reform isn't limited to a specific time period. It could die and reform in a matter of seconds if it so chose, though it usually finds disappearing and reappearing when its target is vulnerable to be more effective.
- **Knowledge:** Whether or not the Jovian is native to the Azothic memory, it knows everything in Azothic memory, meaning that it can answer any questions Prometheans have about Lineage, Refinement, the Pilgrimage, and so on. One of the things it knows is milestones: if it wished, it could guide a Promethean straight through to the New Dawn. Of course, it usually doesn't answer such questions truthfully, or at least not *fully* truthfully.

Extempore

Since the Jovian's knowledge depends in large part upon Azothic memory, does it know anything about Extempore? As written, Extempore can't access Azothic memory and it doesn't mention them. The Storyteller has a couple of options here.

One is that the Jovian doesn't know anything about the Extempore. It recognizes them as Prometheans but can't access information about them or their milestones. This might give characters a way to recognize the Jovian for what it really is, depending on how you present it.

Another option is that though Extempore don't see Azothic memory, they become part of it by dint of following the Pilgrimage. This option presents the idea that the Matchless are singular and hard to access, do not have the “grounding” that a Lineage provides. The Jovian could provide that context, if it thinks by doing so it can drag out a Promethean's Pilgrimage.

- **Pyros Manipulation:** The Jovian doesn't wield Numina the way a *qashmal* might (it doesn't have traits), but it is able to change and control Pyros-related phenomena. Characters can't really stop it and might not even recognize that the Jovian is doing anything at all, but since using the Jovian in this way relies heavily on Storyteller fiat, it's good to reward the players a bit.

As such, the Jovian can do the following during a chronicle. Whenever it does, the Storyteller should give all affected characters a Beat:

- Increase Disquiet by one step
- Increase the severity of a Wasteland by one step
- Awaken Pandorans
- Transform a Pandoran into a *sublimatus*
- Cause Pandorans to join into a *praecipatus*
- Turn a failure on an Elpis vision roll into a dramatic failure
- Create a Firestorm
- Force a Promethean to resist Torment (**Promethean: The Created**, p.172)

- **Weaknesses:** The Jovian might, at the Storyteller's discretion, have a Ban and a Bane, or other forms of supernatural limitations. It absolutely cannot manipulate a Promethean's



Pyros or Vitriol – contained within a Promethean’s frame, Pyros is sacrosanct. It also cannot directly interfere with a Promethean fulfilling a milestone. If a Promethean attempts to perform the generative act (fulfilling the *multiplicatio* milestone), the Jovian could not steal the Promethean’s materials, desecrate the intended body, or cause a Firestorm to drive away the lightning.

Playing the Jovian

Using the Jovian as an effective antagonist requires that the characters recognize the Jovian is an antagonist at all. For that to happen, the throng needs to understand the Jovian is lying to them, and that means the Storyteller has to choose what the Jovian does and says very carefully. It’s possible, of course, for the Jovian to show up in a chronicle spouting anti-Pilgrimage rhetoric, but even if the characters are on the fence about the New Dawn, an otherworldly being speaking out against it should give them pause.

Instead, the Jovian shows up and offers to help. The easiest and most dramatic way to show the Jovian’s “good intentions” is for it to help one or more characters achieve milestones, but it doesn’t have to be as blatant as “You need to attend a wedding” or “You need to apologize to the throng.” Use the Jovian to talk through a problem with a character, asking leading questions and showing the character (and player) another way to approach it, what the symbolism of an Elpis vision might mean, and so on. This kind of Socratic approach to achieving milestones helps with the Jovian’s eventual goal, because all it has to do is change up the line of questioning to move a character *away* from a milestone.

This, of course, goes hand-in-hand with the Jovian telling demonstrable but subtle lies. It leads them into a nest of Pandorans promising wisdom and advancement on the Pilgrimage, but the characters learn nothing new. It shows them into a block party where Disquiet grows, but tells them they can see “what humanity is really like.”

The end goal is for the characters to begin questioning the Jovian – what it is, why has it taken an interest in them, and are its hints and advice actually helpful? The onus is on the Storyteller to make sure that when they ask those questions they reach the right

conclusions, but also that they ask those questions in the first place. If the characters have difficulty recognizing that the Jovian is a toxic influence, give them hints through Elpis visions, other Prometheans (or their Rambles), and pilgrim marks.

Ending the Curse

Getting rid of the Jovian should be difficult. The characters can’t just kill it; it will return. You need to decide what it will take to end the curse and find a way to convey that to the players, or let the players come up with a difficult, complicated, effortful solution and let it work. Some possibilities include:

- They can’t actually destroy or banish the Jovian. All they can do is trap it by creating a Jovian Athanor. This requires that a character masters a Refinement as usual (you might allow any Refinement to work, or stipulate one: Lead, Quicksilver, Tin, and Cobalt are good choices) and then go through the process of fashioning the Athanor. You might require that the character have the Tormented Condition before she can create a Jovian Athanor, or that she has induced deep Disquiet in at least one person. In any case, once the Athanor is created, the Jovian is sucked into it and trapped. Now, what are the characters going to do with this cursed item?
- The New Dawn can banish the Jovian. Pushing on through its lies and cons, one of the Prometheans must achieve humanity. The moment the new human being casts eyes on the Jovian, it melts away, perhaps gone forever (or perhaps able to reform only when that person dies).
- A character with the Plumb the Fathoms Alembic (**Promethean: The Created**, pp.152-153) can trap the Jovian within Azothic memory. The character must fix the Alembic with Vitriol, and then use the Glimpsing the Crasis Distillation, drawing on every experience with the Jovian she has had. She forces those memories – and the Jovian itself – into part of her humour. Then, of course, the characters are left with the same question as with a Jovian Athanor. What do they *do* with this smear of blood that carries a curse? Ad



“The pilgrimage ain’t got no shortcuts, no quick fixes. Heck, even death’s not a reprieve for us. So you pick yourself up now, and you keep goin’. I promise there’s light at the end of this tunnel, even if the walk takes forever and a half. Just mind those that’d get in yer way.”

— Sister Meshé, Tammuz Sage

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