

DEMON

storytellers
companion





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INTRODUCTION

*Here alone I in books form'd of metals
Have written the secrets of wisdom
The secrets of dark contemplation
By fightings and conflicts dire,
With terrible monsters Sin-bred:
Which the bosoms of all inhabit;
—William Blake, *The Book of Urizen**

The **Demon Storytellers Companion** is intended as a companion piece to the **Demon** core rules, providing you, the Storyteller, with expanded background and details on potential antagonists and story hooks for the infernal factions that we didn't want to reveal to players in the core book. Thus, you can feel free to hand around the core book to your players without the risk of spoiling the horrors you have in store for them later in your chronicle.

The information provided in this book is both an expansion to concepts introduced in the core game and new information that allows you to introduce aspects of White Wolf's other World of Darkness games into your **Demon** chronicle. The profiles

included in this book allow you to introduce these monsters as antagonists (or uneasy allies) for your players' characters in a way that is consistent with the rules. Yet, for the full experience and rich background associated with each of these supernatural groups, you're encouraged to take a look at the other Storyteller games in the World of Darkness line. Ultimately, however, every detail included in this book should be a stepping stone for your own ideas and concepts. As ever, our Golden Rule applies: If you don't like what you find in these pages, or better yet, if what you read inspires a different vision of the characters and concepts contained therein, then change it! It's your story. Make of it what you will.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is divided into several chapters, each of which is designed to explore and explain a specific area of the game. Remember, though, that the most important “chapter” in a storytelling game is your imagination. Never let anything in this book become a substitute for your own creativity.

Chapter One: Dark Gods describes the origins, history and capabilities of the Earthbound, covering their beginnings in ancient Mesopotamia through to their eventual downfall during the Renaissance and on into their reemergence in the modern day. Details concerning their reliquaries, followers, perspectives and current agenda are all presented for Storyteller consumption.

Chapter Two: The Factions revisits the five major factions of the fallen from a Storyteller perspective, providing tips and suggestions for bringing demons of different factions together, as well as story hooks for involving your players in factional intrigues.

Chapter Three: The Lords of the Abyss presents guidelines on summoning the greater demons of the Pit into the physical realm, as well as conditions for incarnating them in a physical host and suggested power levels for beings from fell knights to the terrible Dukes of Hell.

Chapter Four: The Spirit Realm provides a brief origin of the realm of the dead, the geography of the shadow lands and the difficulties of travel, and detailed profiles of the various types of undead that you can include in your chronicle. Though of most use to the Slayers, the exodus of the undead into the physical realm due to the Maelstrom provides plenty of opportunity for ghostly encounters with the fallen.

Chapter Five: Monsters details four of the more common supernatural creatures at work in the World of Darkness: vampires, werewolves, mages and the imbued. The chapter profiles each of these “monsters” along with suggestions on encounters with the fallen and the effects that pacts of faith and possession have on each. It also provides a list of animals one might find, face and possibly tame in the World of Darkness.

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Many of White Wolf's World of Darkness games employ an overarching storyline that ties together the events found in many of the games' supplementary books. This metaplot is useful because it allows each game to continually evolve from the status quo established by the core rule book, introducing new characters, concepts and conflicts that further expand the games' setting and add inspiration to existing chronicles. Metaplots aren't for everyone, however: many Storytellers prefer to use a game's core rules as

PLAYERS BEWARE!

This book is intended for the Storyteller's eyes only. It contains details on a wide range of antagonists for any **Demon** chronicle, including the origin, agenda and some metaplot spoilers for the Earthbound. If you've purchased this book to complete your collection of **Demon** supplements, that's great, but reading through it could spoil your enjoyment of the game. Half the fun is wondering what the bad guys are up to, right?

So try to resist the temptation. It'll make the game more fun.

a springboard to create a world all their own, and subsequent alterations to the game's characters and setting sometimes directly conflict with these well-laid plans. This makes for a tough balancing act, providing enough change to keep the game's setting rich and dynamic without altering things so dramatically that it invalidates the hard work and expectations of the game's Storytellers.

The following sections provide a general outline of **Demon's** evolving metaplot, providing you, the Storyteller, with a sense of the events that will shape future supplements. As always, the Golden Rule applies: don't feel constrained by the events described below; if they don't fit the vision you have for your **Demon** chronicle, pick and choose the ideas that you like and discard the rest, or better yet, change them to suit your needs.

ACT I: KINGS AND KINGMAKERS

The opening stages of **Demon's** metaplot focuses on the re-establishment of fallen society in the days and months immediately following the escape from the Abyss. As more and more demons flock to earth and their numbers swell in cities and towns across the world, the hierarchical nature of the fallen spurs the reformation of the ancient court system, and would-be tyrants establish their infernal courts from Los Angeles to New Delhi. The courts provide a means of self-defense against the depredations of the Earthbound and the hidden perils of mortal exorcists, as well as establishing lines of communication (and opportunities for interaction) between the various demons inhabiting a given locale. Will the characters of your chronicle tie their fortunes to a charismatic fallen lord and establish an iron-fisted order over the demons of their city? Will they seize the trappings of power for themselves? Or will they avoid the perils and pitfalls of the tormented souls of the court and choose their own path among the dangers of the modern world?

THE SEARCH FOR THE MORNINGSTAR

The fate of the Morningstar is a central facet to *Demon's* evolving metaplot, and is detailed to some length in the upcoming *City of Angels* and the anthology *Lucifer's Shadow*. Though his actions will have at least an indirect impact on the course of the metaplot, later supplements will give you considerable latitude with respect to using the Prince of the Fallen in your chronicle. He can either be a prominent force shaping events or can remain a subject of myth and legend, depending on what works best for you.

The opening act of the *Demon* metaplot kicks off with *Demon: City of Angels*, a setting book for *Demon: The Fallen* that details the infernal court of the city of Los Angeles.

ACT II: DARK GODS RISING

As the fallen gather their strength and seize the reins of power the Earthbound have not been idle. These monstrous demons, awakening from centuries of slumber in isolated parts of the world, realize that they must act swiftly or find themselves overwhelmed by the swelling ranks of the fallen. The Earthbound quickly set about rebuilding their former cults and embarking on a relentless campaign to enslave, banish or destroy the newly-escaped demons. Every infernal court across the globe finds themselves besieged from within and without as these inscrutable beings attempt to subvert the fallen and further their agenda for the desecration and enslavement of humankind. Will the characters of your chronicle sense the peril growing in their midst and take action before its too late, or will they find themselves bound by the will of a creature more terrible than the most tormented demon?

The second act of *Demon's* metaplot begins with the release of *Demon: The Earthbound*, a major sourcebook that details the full origin, history, powers and agendas of these monstrous beings. In the meantime, Chapter One of this book provides all the information you need to add these powerful adversaries to your chronicle.

ACT III: INFERNAL EMPIRES

For the first two acts of the metaplot the lower orders of the fallen have had the world to themselves, shaping their petty kingdoms and pursuing their personal agendas as they saw fit. The third act begins with an event that breaks down most of hell's final barriers and allows the return of many of the higher ranks of the fallen host. These newly-returned lords, overlords and barons stride like titans among the lesser courts of the fallen, drawing them together into larger principalities ruled by equal parts diplomacy and brutal force. This act raises the stakes of the metaplot, drawing the characters into grand schemes that span the globe; will they become pawns in the intrigues of greater powers, or will they attempt to match wits with their infernal masters and shape their own destiny? Meanwhile the activities of the Earthbound rise to a fever pitch, realizing that without swift and decisive action their efforts will all be for naught.

ACT IV: GOTTERDAMMERUNG

With the return of many of Hell's high lords, the stage is set for a decisive battle against the growing influence of the Earthbound. Act IV drags the characters to the verge of the long-dreaded Apocalypse. Will they fill a crucial role in the defeat of the Earthbound, or will they seal the fate of the fallen as the champions of the dark gods? What will the world look like in the wake of Armageddon, and will the characters redefine the role of demons and their relationship to mankind? Only time will tell.



STEVE
FILLIS '02

CHAPTER ONE: DARK GODS

MONARCH of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! Regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope;
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*

Long before the Maelstrom returned the fallen to the world of mortals, ancient legends spoke fearfully about the perils of summoning a demon from the Pit. Unless the summoner took great care with her incantations and sigils, the beast she'd called into the physical realm could break free of its restraints, with terrible consequences. Like every mythical tale that still resonates in the human psyche, these stories bear a bitter kernel of truth. Over the course of human history, not one, not 10, but *hundreds* of demons have been summoned from the Abyss by mortals in search of knowledge and power. These encounters have been mercifully brief in most cases — cut short when the summoners realized, to their horror, the enormity of what they'd done. But not all summonings ended so quickly or fortuitously. Through human carelessness or infernal guile, some demons have broken free.

Human legend warns that if a demon is ever loosed upon the world, it would mean the end of the human race. In this case, the truth is more terrible still.

This chapter details the origins, capabilities and agenda of the Earthbound — demons who escaped the Pit in ages past and have been awakened from centuries of slumber by the return of the fallen. Although they are relatively few in number, these monstrous creatures hold the future of humanity — and demons alike — in their taloned hands.

HISTORY

The origin of the Earthbound reaches back far beyond the scope of human history, finding its roots in the closing days of the war against Heaven and the consequences of

Lucifer's Grand Experiment. The seeds sown in the minds of a handful of fallen bore horrible fruit ages later in the days of Babylonia and Sumeria, where the Earthbound were first worshipped like gods. From there, the influence of these malevolent beings has spread like a cancer down through history, inexorably corrupting mankind's collective soul.

BABEL

Born in the closing days of the War of Wrath, the Grand Experiment was more than just a plan to elevate humanity from the depths of the Time of Atrocities — it was a last-ditch effort by Lucifer to shift the balance of power once more into the rebels' favor and force an end to the centuries-old struggle against Heaven. The revolt of the Ebon, Silver and Alabaster legions and the grim campaign to bring them back under his control convinced Lucifer that the rebel host was too fractured to present a unified front against the armies of Heaven any longer. Unless the nature of the struggle was somehow altered, the fallen would soon be defeated.

Not long after the conclusion of the Long March, Lucifer summoned his archdukes to the citadel at Genhinnom and laid out his plan. Since the beginning of the war, the fallen drew their power from the faith of the human flocks they guarded, but in their pride, the rebels had not considered the full implications of this relationship. They did not realize that the human race, for all its imperfections and innocence, held a collective power equal to that of the Creator, and its potential was still largely untapped. That, Lucifer declared, was why Heaven wished to maintain humanity's ignorance — so that humankind would not realize its own innate greatness and one day pose a challenge to the Creator's authority. Therefore, the Morningstar reasoned, if the fallen were able to accelerate humanity's growth and provide full access to its nascent power, ultimate victory would be theirs. Once the human race ascended to the level of the Creator, Heaven would have no choice but to concede that the struggle had reached a stalemate, which would (in effect) be a victory for the fallen.

The archdukes expressed their support for the Grand Experiment, but several of the legion commanders — particularly Abaddon and Asmodeus — drew their own conclusions from Lucifer's hypothesis. If mankind could indeed match the Creator in power some day, then what would be the fate of the fallen when that day finally arrived? Certainly the fallen would be worshipped no more. In fact, it was likely they would be relegated to mere servants, the same as they'd been before the Fall. The idea did not sit well with beings who had grown accustomed to adoration and absolute authority.

The Babel strategy was more successful initially than even Lucifer expected, ushering in a worldwide renaissance of wonder and majesty, but it was too much, too fast. Mankind gained vast knowledge and power, but none of the maturity and wisdom that such gifts required. Yet, some



Luciferans believe even to this day that Babel could have succeeded, had it not been “sabotaged” by agents of Heaven. Many Cryptics agree that the Grand Experiment was betrayed, but they point to Lucifer’s erstwhile lieutenants instead. Regardless of the true cause of the collapse, the advent of the Civilization of Ashes, as the fallen later called it, not only erased the gains that the rebels had made in human development, it actually eroded their awareness further. The tribes of man were scattered across the globe, no longer able to remember the tongue of the angels. Worse still, the ancient bonds of faith and loyalty humanity shared with the fallen were broken, leaving the rebel host bereft of its strength in the face of a counterattack that was unprecedented in its ferocity. Not long after, Lucifer had little choice but to surrender the rebel army to the Heavenly Host. The fallen went to their judgment beaten but unbowed, convinced that their last gamble could have easily gone the other way. Had humanity not splintered under the strain, Michael and his angels would be bound in chains, and the Creator would be the one made to answer for His crimes rather than their embattled leader. It was a conviction that many of the fallen turned to again and again in the darkness of the Abyss, infecting it with their bitterness and hate until the once-noble vision became a dream of terrible revenge.

TORMENT AND RELEASE

Of all the imprisoned fallen, none suffered the agonies of the Pit as fiercely as Lucifer’s chosen lieutenants, the five archdukes who had ruled Earth and mankind throughout the War of Wrath. Even Lucifer’s stalwarts, Belial and Dagon, were crushed by their leader’s disappearance, and the fury of the archdukes sent tremors through every rank of the exiled host. As the fallen splintered further into political and personal factions, the archdukes decried their former leader and his misguided love for humankind. Having blamed mankind for the consequences of the Fall since the beginning of the war, Abaddon was the first to declare that mankind should have been enslaved from the start, its faith hammered into a weapon that could have split the Creator’s heart. The near-success of the Babel strategy only added strength to the archduke’s hateful vision.

As the fallen lost their souls to the Abyss, humanity began the long road to recovery from the catastrophic collapse of the Civilization of Ashes. With each passing century, the sands of time obscured the ruins of the Age of Wrath, and each successive generation remembered less and less of the past. Fragmented memories became the foundation of superstitions and legends as humanity relearned how to till the fields, bend animals to their will and fashion tools from wood, metal and stone. In time, they built the first ancient civilizations, inspired by racial memories of past glory that humanity now experienced only in dreams.

Yet, although the fallen were forgotten, the legacy of Babel remained. Human curiosity was as strong as ever, and

the power to affect the forces of Creation was still there, passed down from generation to generation. A rare few discovered the talent that lay dormant within them, and it was only a matter of time before these would-be mages began to explore the limits of their power. Thousands of years passed as human mages pursued the elusive secrets of the Celestials. They eventually discovered the existence of the spirit realm and sensed a greater darkness beneath the lands of the dead, a place seething with the pent-up energies of a host of powerful spirits. From there, it was only a matter of time before the mages learned to penetrate the Abyss — a feat that no angel in Hell would have dreamt possible until the archdukes themselves vanished from the confines of the Pit.

At five different locations across the ancient world, in the shadowy sanctums of stone temples or amid the black waters of subterranean grottoes, the archdukes appeared amid circles wrought with blood-splashed sigils and surrounded by dozens of prostrate human followers. These fearsome angels felt the intoxicating rush of faith for the first time in aeons, and as each ceremony reached an ecstatic crescendo, a reliquary was brought forth and offered up to the five archdukes to welcome them back to the ashes of Paradise. Without hesitation, Lucifer’s lieutenants inhabited the idols sanctified in their names, sparing no thought to the reasons behind their unexpected freedom. Transformed by their suffering in the Pit, the five demons thought only of the vengeance they would wreak upon God and man.

BABYLON

Scattered across the globe, the five Earthbound — Belial, Abaddon, Dagon, Asmodeus and Azrael — wasted no time enthralling the mages and priests who had freed them from the Abyss, seducing them with gifts that sapped their will and left them enslaved to their dark masters. Like ravenous beasts, the demons drove their worshippers to ever-greater frenzies of worship and sacrifice, whetting their insatiable appetite for faith. The more faith they received, the more gifts they bestowed on the faithful in the interests of gathering more worshippers, sacrifices and slaves. Lucifer’s vision had given way to Abaddon’s merciless decree: Mankind was nothing more than chattel, to be used or consumed as their rightful masters saw fit, and Earth was a treasure hoard open for the taking.

Within less than a century, in ancient kingdoms such as Babylonia and Sumeria, each demon’s circle of worshippers grew into a cult, then a full-fledged religion, with temples and idols carved in the spirit’s likeness appearing in cities, villages and households across the land. As the trickle of faith swelled to a steady stream, then a surging river, the Earthbound used their lore to sate their rage and punish the unbelievers with curses, plague and famine. Before long, the growth of the Earthbound religions brought them into conflict with other human pantheons, sparking vicious holy wars and secular conflicts alike. Given the

autocratic nature of the archdukes and their practical need for temporal authority, it was only a matter of time before the demons turned their attentions on the rich and the powerful. Emperors, kings and queens were drawn into the ranks of the faithful with promises of even greater power and authority, and the influence of the dark gods spread across the ancient world.

Eventually, almost 500 years after their release, the Earthbound became aware of one another as their faith allowed them to extend their senses for hundreds of miles around the globe. Even in the glory days of the war, the five archdukes owed little loyalty to one another, jealous as they were of their territories and prerogatives. Now, caught up in the orgy of faith and violence that was slowly but steadily restoring their former glory, the Earthbound regarded one another less as comrades and more as competitors for the human riches scattered across the Earth. For this same reason, none of the five had been tempted to use their followers to summon more of the fallen from the Pit. Every demon released, even bound into servitude, was one more with whom the archdukes would have to share the bounty of souls that the world offered.

Regardless, as the years passed and the archdukes labored to extend their reach, they came into contact with other Earthbound demons who existed in the guises of bloodthirsty human gods. For all that the archdukes tried to keep the summoning rituals secret, hunting and destroying mages who were believed to possess the knowledge, the arcane lore was too widespread to completely erase, and more demons found themselves freed from the Abyss. Most times, the fallen were summoned in an attempt to gain knowledge or power and just as quickly returned to their prison, but on occasion, the demons escaped the grip of their summoner and found some artifact that could sustain them until a more suitable vessel was created. Sometimes the archdukes enslaved these lesser demons by invoking their True Name in complex binding rituals. In rare cases, their followers were destroyed and the souls of the fallen were consumed by their former lords. In most cases, however, the weaker demons simply fled, reappearing later in another land in the guise of another deity and harvesting the faith of a different culture. The world was still vast enough that the small number of Earthbound could usually coexist without directly competing for souls.

Nevertheless, it was an age of savage empires and holy wars, of heroes blessed (or cursed) by the living gods and unspeakable rituals performed before idols of gold, basalt and jade. When the Earthbound clashed, armies of the faithful marched. The earth trembled and the skies rained blood, and whole cities were put to the sword. For many of the Earthbound, it was a glorious existence compared to the emptiness of the Pit, but Abaddon and the other archdukes were already looking ahead to something greater. If the turmoil of petty empires gave a

demon the power to shake the earth, what could one of the fallen do with the entire human race bent to his will?

ROME

As the centuries progressed, the archdukes moved among humanity, gravitating to the most dynamic, technologically advanced societies with an eye toward building the worldwide empire they craved. They did not influence or alter events in any demonstrable way — the fate of one human, or 10,000, meant nothing to them as long as they received their tithe of faith. Instead, they placed power in the hands of individuals and let nature take its course. Over time, mighty empires flourished — such as the Medes, the Persians and the Greeks — each one spanning the world a little farther than their predecessors, each one maintaining its dominance a little longer than before. During this time, the Earthbound came into direct conflict with one another much more often as the field narrowed and the demons vied for ever larger prizes. The fallen never battled directly, owing to the limitations and fragility of their reliquaries, so they fought proxy wars through armies of servants instead. Only very rarely did the battle result in the destruction of one side or another. Generally, once an Earthbound lost a significant number of servants, he would concede the region, city or person he had struggled over and retreat to replenish his stores of faith and flesh.

By this time, the archdukes were no longer the same beings who had been called up from the Pit. Lost in their hunger for revenge, they paid no heed to the changes that slowly overcame them during the course of hundreds of years of worship. The ritualistic devotion of thousands upon thousands of human hearts and minds did not come without a cost — as human beings provided faith, their perceptions and beliefs shaped the Earthbound as well. Little by little, like water shaping a stone, the archdukes were becoming the monstrous, bloodthirsty gods they pretended to be. Their minds were filled with visions they could not explain — visions derived from the feverish wishes of their most zealous followers. By the time the city-states of Greece rose to dominate the civilized world, all but the most recently released Earthbound were no longer of the fallen, nor were they truly human gods, but something in between. If anything, their madness deepened as they dwelt upon wave after wave of human dreams and desires, their thoughts becoming increasingly alien even to themselves.

Still the archdukes fought and schemed over the rising human empires, pushing them to ever-greater heights and moving on when they ultimately fell. They came away wiser than before each time, adding to their store of knowledge as they moved on to the next great nation eager for wealth and power. By the rise of the Roman Empire, it seemed as though their labors had been rewarded at last. Within a few centuries, the entire civilized world bowed to Rome, and there seemed no end in sight to the power of the empire. With much of the human race subject to Rome's

will, Abaddon and Asmodeus — former rivals now allied in their pursuit of power — began to experiment with the wholesale subversion of the empire's populace. Mere worship, they realized, would not be enough for their ultimate goal. The more widespread their believers were, the more haphazard their patterns of worship became and the less consistent the level of faith they received turned out to be. Instead, they needed *tools*, living sources of faith that they could harness virtually at will. For that they would need to crush humanity's will, tainting their followers' souls until all that was left were virtual mirror images of the demons' own. They needed a race of beings who existed only to fulfill every wish of their masters. And so the two archdukes set to work.

Naturally, their efforts met considerable resistance, both within the empire and without. Rival Earthbound sent their worshippers to strike at the fringes of the empire, while ordinary humans within the army and senate fought valiantly against the canker of perversion that was poisoning Rome from within. There were many setbacks, but the demons were patient. What they did not expect was that even as they labored, the Earthbound were sowing the seeds of their own decline.

DOWNFALL

When the Earthbound first returned to the Earth, the widely scattered human race worshiped a vast pantheon of gods and spirits. As the demons consolidated their influence, many of these older beliefs were supplanted, and the plethora of religions steadily shrank. By the time of the Roman Empire, many different gods and goddesses were given obeisance by the empire's subjects, but the precedent was well established for empires to force the belief of a central religion on their populace. This tactic had invariably directed the faith of the subjects to one Earthbound or another, and it had served the demons well for thousands of years. They never dreamed that the day might come when this institutional belief might be used against them.

It began as a fringe religion in Palestine, spreading through the ranks of the dispossessed and the downtrodden, but over time, its worshippers spread across the empire, reaching even into the heart of Rome itself. Christianity owed nothing to the efforts of the Earthbound. Indeed, its origins were so obscure that the demons were not even aware of its existence until it had gained a considerable and very dedicated following. However it began, they quickly saw that it was guided with skill and an almost preternatural purpose that survived persecution and attempts at corruption. What was worse, its tenets advocated the worship of a single god that was not of the physical world, and it repudiated the pantheistic beliefs of the current day. It seemed almost tailor-made to destroy the source of the demons' power, and it was gathering strength. Several lesser Earthbound had already been driven from their seats of power, forced to seek new followers in adjoining countries.

Abaddon and Asmodeus turned the full weight of Rome against the Christian movement, and for a time, the movement's followers met death or imprisonment wherever they dared show themselves. Yet still the religion persisted. The followers seemed to benefit from their own invisible patron, but however hard the Earthbound looked for the presence of another demon, their efforts were always in vain.

And then disaster struck. In a telling blow, Constantine I, Emperor of Rome, declared his conversion to the Christian faith. Almost overnight, the vast machinery of the empire was turned against the gods and goddesses worshipped by her people. Abaddon and Asmodeus found themselves at odds with the juggernaut they'd so painstakingly shaped.

At that point, had they struck with the fullness of their power, the Earthbound could have wiped Rome from the face of the Earth. The power-hungry demons still believed, however, that they could prevail indirectly by playing on the greed and ambition of Constantine's rivals and convincing them to supplant him and destroy his reforms before it was too late. Yet the emperor proved more clever than the maddened fallen suspected, and by the time they realized that direct action would have to be taken, their opportunity had passed. The emperor's reforms were well advanced, and the huge well of faith that sustained the two demons was already dwindling fast. Their best opportunity lost, the Earthbound were forced onto the defensive, and would remain so for the next 1500 years.

SLEEPING GODS

What followed in the wake of Constantine's reforms was one reversal after the next as the power base of demons across the empire were systematically attacked and either destroyed or driven underground. As the Earthbound were denied their worshippers, they were forced to fight among themselves for regions and populaces outside Rome's direct influence, weakening the demons even further. Before long, many lesser demons were so weakened by the constant battles that they commanded the last of their followers to take their reliquaries into the wilderness and hide them, so that they would not be discovered and consumed by any enemies. These weakened demons then went into a sort of slumber, hoping that the day would come when Rome would be no more and the persecutions would end. It was the shape of things to come.

Rome did indeed fall — torn apart by internecine struggles and the depredations of demon-worshipping barbarians — but the damage had been done. Christianity was too well entrenched among the civilized world, and it harnessed the efforts of humanity against the Earthbound in ways that the demons themselves sought to claim for their own. The numbers of the Earthbound steadily dwindled, with more and more of the demons driven into slumber as their worshippers were destroyed.

What was more, the world itself was inexorably divorcing itself from the affairs of the supernatural. As religion drove humanity to shun belief in the supernatural, revolutions in thought, philosophy and technology were having a subtle effect on human minds. Over the course of the medieval period, the human race found itself on the path of reason and self-determination, learning the skills and making the tools to master the world for themselves instead of praying for intercession from gods and spirits.

The Renaissance was the death knell for the rule of the Earthbound. Already reduced to a handful of demons eking out a fitful existence in remote parts of the world, the remaining Earthbound, including the archdukes themselves, saw that further resistance was futile. Human faith dwindled with each passing day, and the temporal power of the Christian Church was more than a match for the weakened demons. More than ever, the archdukes suspected that there was another force behind their undoing, someone or something who had influenced the Christian faith from its inception and forged it like a weapon to break the demons' power. Belial, the Great Beast, whispered that perhaps it was Lucifer himself.

By the 1600s, the last of the dark gods had succumbed. Once they became too weak to defend their reliquaries, they went into hiding like others before them. Many forged pacts with their last worshippers, promising good fortune and prosperity for their descendants in return for service, perhaps hundreds of years later, when fortune

might shift in the demons' favor once more. As their reliquaries were buried in the earth or dropped into the depths of the sea, these ancient spirits sank into maddened slumber, waiting for the day when they would rise again.

MÆLSTROM

The Earthbound slumbered for nearly 500 years as the world continued to change. If anything, human faith dwindled even further, supplanted by cynicism and soulless reason. The demons believed that the balance would shift in their favor sooner or later, ushering in a renaissance of the spirit once the cold drive of reason and technology ran its course. Not even the archdukes considered that humanity might destroy itself long before such a day arrived.

The demons might have sat helplessly in their hiding places while humanity slouched toward extinction were it not for the sudden fury of the Maelstrom and the mass exodus of the Abyssal fallen. As a wave of demons descended upon the earth and seized mortal hosts, the sleeping gods felt the faintest stirring of faith across the face of the globe. As more and more of the fallen reaped what faith they could from modern humanity, the Earthbound stirred from their slumber. Tentatively, they reached out to the descendants of those who once served them, visiting them with nightmare visions and promises of power. All was not lost. Humanity was still an empty vessel devoid of true belief, but now there were multitudes of lesser demons that could be made to harvest the



power that the Earthbound sought. The Church was but a shadow of its former glory. Indeed, nearly all of the world's religions had run their course, and now the wonders of technology made it possible to reach millions of human minds without expending a fraction of a demon's precious power. The very forces that stymied the Earthbound in centuries past would now serve to bend mankind to their will.

THE EARTHBOUND

The enigmatic and malevolent Earthbound are demons who were summoned to the Earth thousands of years in the past and allowed, by accident or design, to anchor themselves to physical objects that allowed them to resist the pull of the Abyss and remain in the world of mortals. Unlike the fallen who have been freed in modern times, these demons did not benefit from possession of a mortal body, and thus had no hedge against the full force of their Torment. These monstrous beings terrorized the ancient world for millennia in the guise of gods and evil spirits, reaping Faith from hundreds of followers and fueling the growth of religions and kingdoms alike. When their influence was eventually broken in the latter days of the Roman Empire by a confluence of imperial might and a religion that seemed especially designed to attack their sources of power, the last of the Earthbound were driven into hiding. They slumbered in hidden sanctums since the time of the Renaissance until the advent of the Maelstrom and the liberation of the lesser fallen. Now these demons are intent upon rebuilding their diminished power base and enslaving or banishing as many of the newly returned demons as they can in a last-ditch effort to claim the collective souls of mankind.

RELIQUARIES

Where the fallen returning to the modern World of Darkness comprise the least powerful among the exiled host, the Earthbound were summoned by arcane rituals that allowed demons of far greater power to escape the bonds of Hell, including Lucifer's five chosen lieutenants. But for all their nascent might, these spirits still lacked the power to manifest physical forms of their own, and human bodies could not provide a suitable host without being immediately consumed. Therefore, the Earthbound were forced to take refuge in specially sanctified reliquaries that could house their essence and allow them to channel a portion of their power. These reliquaries gave the demons the anchors they needed, but for obvious reasons, being anchored thus limited their mobility and forced them to depend on the talents and skills of human (and later demonic) servants to fulfill their desires.

The size and composition of an Earthbound's reliquary depends greatly on the age and relative power of the demon in question. The reliquaries of the five archdukes are idols fashioned from marble or basalt and inlaid with precious metals and gemstones. Each statue stands between seven and 10 feet in height and weighs up to a ton. Lesser Earthbound,

former lords or overlords of the rebel host, make do with small statues or caskets of glass and gold no larger than a person's palm. Although they are not nearly as potent as their ancient peers, these demons have the advantage of being easily evacuated or hidden in the event of an enemy attack.

Most Earthbound reliquaries are fashioned by human hands, so they come in a variety of shapes, compositions and styles. In most cases, the object is created using materials that exalt the demon's House. A Devil's reliquary would be constructed of materials evocative of fire (such as basalt, obsidian and rubies), while a Defiler's reliquary might be fashioned of abalone, pearl and whale bone. Some reliquaries appear exceedingly delicate — a favored material for a Fiend's reliquary is spider silk — but all are reinforced by the will of the demon within and are capable of withstanding tremendous amounts of punishment. For game purposes, an Earthbound reliquary can automatically soak a number of damage levels from a single attack equal to the demon's Willpower, and it can withstand a total number of damage levels equal to the Earthbound's current Faith rating before it is destroyed. If an Earthbound's reliquary is successfully broken, the demon must locate another anchor or risk being drawn back into the Abyss. (See page 94 of the **Demon** core rules for details.)

In extreme situations, an Earthbound can temporarily possess the body of a human being, living or dead, but the searing force of the demon's presence begins to destroy the body almost at once. The base life expectancy is 30 days, divided by the difference between the demon's minimum Faith requirement and the vessel's actual Faith potential. This life expectancy is further reduced if the demon actively spends Faith points, at the rate of one day per point spent. (See Chapter Three for more information.) Such possessions are far from subtle. The figure's skin blackens and splits, revealing distended veins and steaming flesh that oozes runnels of charred blood and bone. In many cases, the eyes glow with power, and the demon's voice hisses like venting steam. At the end of the body's life expectancy, it literally collapses into a pile of ash and charred pieces of bone.

The Earthbound take great care to have their reliquaries concealed in heavily guarded or extremely remote parts of the world. There are rumors that the reliquary of Dagon, Archduke of the Iron Legion, lies in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, while the graven image of Asmodeus rests somewhere in the trackless steppes of Siberia. As long as the demons have a source of Faith to fuel their powers, they can communicate and direct their servants almost anywhere in the world.

FAITH

If the Earthbound have a true weakness, it's in the way they attain their Faith. In the time of their release, it was simpler and more efficient to gather power from entire groups of worshippers, each one offering a small portion in a virtual torrent that the demons could then

manipulate according to their needs. After thousands of years of this focused worship, the Earthbound cannot receive Faith in any other way. Unlike the fallen, the Earthbound can only reap Faith from their followers, and even then only by means of very specific rituals of worship. These rituals are taught by the demon to her followers, and they must be followed down to the smallest particular or the exchange of Faith will not be possible.

An Earthbound demon's Faith score depends upon its age. A "young" Earthbound (one of the rare demons released during the Dark Ages) has a Faith score of 10. An "old" Earthbound (released during the Greek or Roman era) has a Faith score of 15 or 20. An "ancient" Earthbound (released in the time of Sumeria and Babylonia) has a Faith score of 20-25, or even higher. The Faith scores of the archdukes are higher still, subject to Storyteller discretion.

The rituals of worship are not quick or simple affairs, and the older the demon is, the more intricate and complex the ritual is. A relatively young Earthbound might require a ritual lasting several hours, with incantations and prayers spoken in a set order and with the use of specific ritual items. An old Earthbound may have increased demands, with a series of rituals running the course of an entire day and spoken in the language of the era in which the demon was released. Ancient Earthbound require hours of ritual, often preceded by specific rites of purification and devotion, then succeeded by frenzied celebrations or orgies. The rituals must be conducted at specific times and in specific places that exalt the demon, with prayers and incantations spoken in languages not heard in thousands of years. At the culmination of the ritual, the Earthbound receives one Faith point per person performing the ritual. The demon receives this Faith no matter how far away the ritual is being performed. As you can see, this method of acquiring power is far less effective than the means employed by the fallen, and it can be an Earthbound's Achilles' heel. In these days of worldwide communications and high-tech security, though, it's possible for an Earthbound cult to coordinate simultaneous rituals of worship in widely scattered locales to achieve their masters' ends.

POWERS

Like the fallen and the greater demons still trapped in the Abyss, the Earthbound have access to the same innate powers and lore, though their long years of freedom have allowed them to restore their power to much higher levels. A young Earthbound can have up to 50 dots of available lore, and an old Earthbound can have up to 75 available dots. It can be assumed that ancient Earthbound can have any level of lore they wish, at the Storyteller's discretion. In many ways, they are even more powerful than they were during the War of Wrath. They are now literal demigods who have the powers of Creation at their beck and call.

Further, the Earthbound may spend Faith points to increase the range or area of effect of their evocations. If the

range or area of effect is measured in yards, they can increase it at a rate of 10 yards per Faith point. If the area of effect is measured in miles, the demon can increase it by 10 miles per Faith point. Often the Earthbound will call for a worship ritual to be conducted prior to performing a major evocation, then invest Faith in the evocation directly from the ritual rather than seriously depleting their internal reserves. The only restriction on Earthbound lore is that any evocation automatically uses its high-Torment effect rather than allowing a choice between the two. Earthbound can use Faith offered during a ritual to add dice to their evocation roll, just like the fallen, but they cannot draw beyond this amount like the fallen could from one of their thralls.

In addition to their raw powers, one of the greatest strengths of the Earthbound is their knowledge of the fallen and their True Names, as well as the rituals needed to bind them into service. This information is shared sparingly with the demon's followers, creating teams of demon-hunters whose mission is to seek out and entrap newly arrived fallen and enslave them.

SLAVES TO DARKNESS

Because of exigencies of their current existence, the Earthbound must rely even more heavily on the service of mortals (and other demons) than their fallen counterparts. These demons have perfected the arts of enslavement, forging bonds with mortal believers that ensure absolute loyalty even as they fill their servants' minds with visions of madness and hate.

The servants of the Earthbound fall into three broad categories: worshippers, thralls and infernal slaves. Worshippers are simply mortals who have been lured into the worship of the demon, providing it Faith through the prescribed rituals but serving no greater purpose of receiving any commensurate reward for their efforts. In many cases, these mortals do not even know the full truth behind their activities. They subscribe to belief in their new "god" out of a desire to rebel against the mores of the day or in pursuit of some cachet that allows them a sense of superiority over their peers. The young are especially vulnerable to this degree of involvement, as they are seduced into feeding the Earthbound with Faith as a gesture of rebellion against parents and society. Worshippers are the most numerous of the Earthbound's servants by far, and their ignorance also makes them the most vulnerable. The demons rarely expend significant effort to protect these individuals from outside threats. It's often easier to move on and cultivate replacements than devote precious resources to watching dozens of mortals potentially scattered all over the world.

Thralls are similar in nature to those bound by the fallen, but the methods and results of sealing the pact are very different. Thralls are not seduced into a pact by the Earthbound. Rather, they are chosen from the ranks of the demon's worshippers and offered power in exchange for a

higher level of devotion and service. The Earthbound pick individuals who, because of native ability, resources or societal connections have the ability to accomplish whatever tasks the demon requires at a given time. If the Earthbound needs guards or soldiers, it looks among its followers for athletes, policemen or gang toughs. If it needs someone to run for public office, it looks for a worshipper with a sense of presence and charisma. Once chosen, the potential thrall must still agree to accept the bond between herself and the demon, though many Earthbound coerce and deceive their followers into acceptance and then enslave them before they realize the danger.

Once the thrall agrees, a ritual of obeisance is performed, generally lasting an entire night and culminating in a grand sacrifice on the part of the thrall. The nature of the sacrifice sometimes involves self-mutilation, the murder of someone close to the thrall or the destruction of significant property or material resources. At the culmination of the ritual, the thrall loses one point of permanent Willpower and is thenceforth enthralled to the demon. For game purposes, this point of Willpower is converted to 15 freebie points that can be used to empower the thrall with increased traits or powers (see page 87 of the **Demon** core rules for details). Unlike a pact between mortals and the fallen, the Earthbound decides what gifts to bequeath upon her thrall, suitable to the task at hand — the thrall gets no say whatsoever. A thrall can surrender as many Willpower points as she wishes in return for more power (though a ritual must be performed for each point offered), but once she has surrendered three points of Willpower to the demon, she becomes the demon's slave, loyal to her every command. An enslaved thrall will perform any action her master wishes, including sacrificing her own life if need be, and she will take no action that might bring her master harm, even indirectly.

Finally, infernal servants are demons who have been enslaved by the Earthbound via rituals of binding (see page 91 of the **Demon** core rules for details). Most Earthbound maintain one or more groups of thralls especially empowered with the knowledge and abilities to detect, hunt and bind any fallen they encounter. (For guidelines on Earthbound capture squads, see page 135 of the **Demon** core rules.) These capture teams investigate a demon they encounter in the hopes of piecing together its True Name. Whether it is successful or not, the team usually ambushes the demon, damaging it physically in the hopes of weakening its power, and then takes it to a specially prepared site to perform the ritual of binding. At the culmination of the ritual, the Earthbound uses its connection with the thrall leading the ritual to take over and seal the bond with the unfortunate demon. Use the system provided on page 92 of the **Demon** core rules to perform the binding ritual, but use the Earthbound's Willpower for the resisted roll rather than the thrall's.

Infernal servants are the front-line agents of the Earthbound, responsible for the demon's security, fighting

her enemies and performing especially important or sensitive tasks around the world.

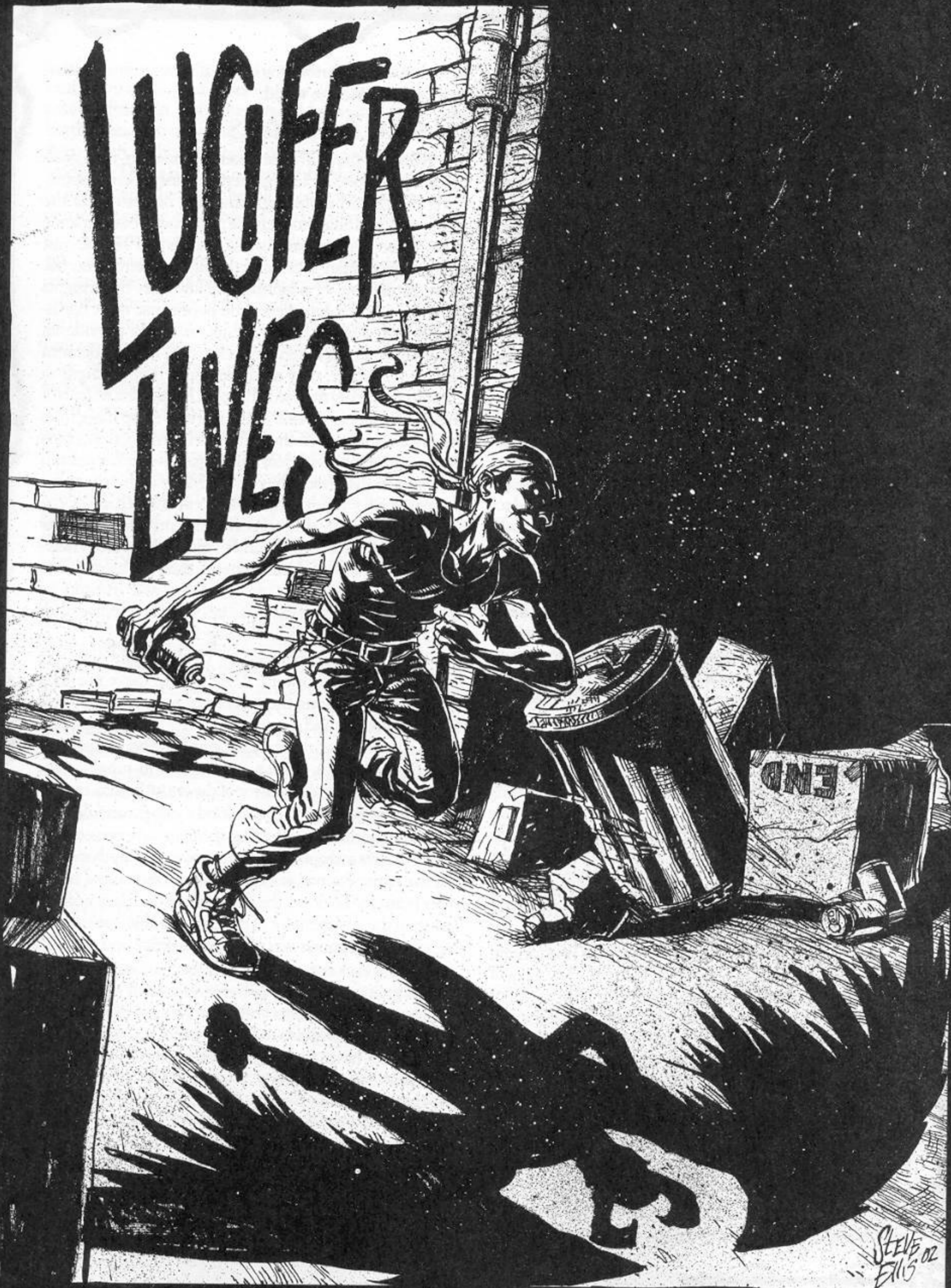
BLEAK AGENDAS

Now that they have reawakened, the short-term goals of the Earthbound include gathering worshippers, empowering thralls and enslaving, banishing or destroying the newly returned fallen to increase their power base. In some ways, these demons are just as disoriented by the vast changes in human society as the fallen themselves, but they are capable of adapting quickly with the insights provided by their followers. The bonds that most Earthbound forged with their worshippers of old provide an advantage that the fallen do not have. When the demons sank into slumber, they used the last of their strength to empower not only their worshippers, but the *descendants* of their worshippers as well. They granted these bloodlines enhanced qualities of strength, intelligence or charisma that would grant them clear advantages over other mortals in whatever livelihood they chose. Many of these families prospered as a result, and now upon the return of the Earthbound, politicians, corporate executives and wealthy industrialists are already bound to infernal service. Therefore, the Earthbound can extend their influence into prominent corporations, governments and institutions that will provide them the measure of temporal power they need to further their individual agendas.

In most cases, the agendas of the Earthbound are surprisingly straightforward. They seek to carve out their own kingdoms among the modern nations of man, ruling from the shadows and reaping the faith of the masses as they did in ages past. But the truly ancient Earthbound, particularly the archdukes, have a greater goal in mind — the degeneration and enslavement of the entire human race. In the ultimate perversion of mankind's vast potential, these monstrous spirits wish to harness the collective power of the human race as a weapon that can remake not only this world, but the entire cosmos, re-creating it in the demons' nightmarish image. To do so, the demons must achieve nothing less than the enslavement of the entire human race, crushing their will through acts of terror, violence and despair.

To this end, the activities of these demons are focused toward gaining temporal power over mortal institutions, infiltrating governments and international organizations and using hidden agents to foment crises across the world. These crises range from crime waves to brushfire wars — any event that creates misfortune and fear on the widest possible scale for the longest period of time. The demons' goal is a slow erosion of humanity's soul, exposing it to a relentless stream of corruption and atrocity until men and women are little different in nature than the Earthbound themselves. At that point, the demons believe, humanity will be enthralled en masse, and the rebirth of the universe will begin from the ashes of this world.

LUGGER
LIVES



STEVE
ELLIS '02



CHAPTER TWO: THE FACTIONS

*Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.
—Edgar Allen Poe, “The Conqueror Worm”*

DIFFERENCES OF BELIEF

“A Ravener, a Reconciler and an Cryptic walk into a bar...” Sounds like the setup for an in-joke among the fallen, doesn't it? But it could also be the beginning of your **Demon** chronicle. How do you handle it when your players all want characters who have dramatically different goals and intentions?

The simple way to do so is to exercise Storyteller fiat. You can simply choose a faction and tell the players that their characters all have to be a part of it. Or, if you don't want to be so draconian, you can let the players choose the faction, as long as their characters all belong to the same one. That's a legitimate Storyteller request, but it does constrain your

players — and constraint probably isn't high on their list of roleplaying priorities. It is possible to have a mixed party — even one in which the characters are at odds with each other — without one character sprouting six-inch talons as soon as the other has her back turned. You just have to be aware of other factors that can offset faction friction.

DISCRETION

In the better class of homes, it's rude to discuss sex, politics or religion at the dinner table. Likewise among the fallen, broadcasting one's ideology overtly is simply not done. Ideological belief is an important element of a demon's identity, but it's not the only one. For many, it's not even that important. Not every Ravener is a kill-crazed psychopath, any more than every Green-Party voter is a tree-spiking ecoterrorist. Every faction has its moderates, for whom the personal outweighs the political.



Therefore, one way to help mixed parties get along is to encourage the players to start out by keeping their characters' politics private. Now the Luciferan Devourer isn't obligated to regard the Ravener Scourge as an enemy to be destroyed — they're both just individual fallen.

MUTUAL NEED OR INTEREST

Politics often take a backseat when immediate survival concerns arise. Fallen who would be at each other's throats in Iowa City can easily become tight allies in Los Angeles. The difference? LA is crawling with Earthbound who collect fallen like baseball cards.

Even if you don't want to hang such a huge threat over the characters' heads, ties other than ideological belief link many cadres of fallen. The House order from before the Fall is still important to many who rebelled. Devils, Scourges and Malefactors might associate because they privately consider themselves superior to such "lower" Houses as the Slayers and Devourers. Alternatively, Lucifer's merit-based ranks can provide a similar link. Barons and overlords may feel more comfortable with their fellow leaders. Note, though, that these distinctions cut both ways. Demons from "lesser" Houses or lower ranks may bond by grumbling about the pigheaded elitists.

You can get mixed groups together by looking for similarities in House rank, personal eminence (war heroes who see one another as comrades in arms) or the strength of their individual legacies (comradeship through shared memories). By the same token, if they're all from different Houses, the characters have an excellent reason to set political infighting aside: getting access to each other's powers.

FRIENDSHIP

Divisions didn't always exist among the Elohim. For a brief, glorious time, they were united under God in the majestic art of creation. Even after the Fall, the rebels were united under one banner. The characters may have worked together in the early days of the cosmos, or they may have fought side-by-side during the Age of Wrath. If you vividly remember someone crouching above you, fighting off two fiery seraphim while you lay wounded in five places and tried to invoke reinforcements... well, you might hesitate to dismiss him simply because he's a Cryptic now and you're Faustian.

Encouraging the players to connect their characters through backstory is an excellent way to head off disputes at the pass. It doesn't cost the players anything. If anything, it offers them a great chance to think up stirring tales of personal valor. Once there's an individual bond, their political debates can become a great source of characterization. Each can try to persuade the other to jump the fence and come around, which can be great roleplaying, but you don't need to worry about them coming to blows and derailing your plot.

DEVIUSNESS

A gathering of bleeding-heart, left-wing vegans is probably a bad place for a Young Republican to start talking about his plans for welfare mothers. Instead, he's probably going to smile, nod and try to bring up a neutral subject. This is doubly true among the fallen, for whom politics can turn deadly in the blink of an eye. Some Houses tend to be devious by nature, while others just picked up the knack of keeping secrets during the course of a long and ugly war. In either case, keeping a minority opinion to yourself can be more than just polite good sense: It can be a survival tactic. It's not like characters have their faction names tattooed on their forehead, after all.

This secrecy can add another layer to the party dynamic, if one member is secretly opposed to a lot of the others' beliefs. If you're up for it, you can allow the odd man out to privately be a turncoat or even a saboteur. You and that player can keep it secret from the other players or have it be a secret only to the characters, depending on how much your players care to segregate player knowledge and character knowledge.

If you think having an actual traitor-by-the-deed among your group is going to be a complication that interferes with the game more than it improves it, you can explain to the player that active treachery is disruptive. Doing so just moves the conflict from the plot level to the character level. Instead of his character betraying his friends, the character has to decide how much he's willing to compromise his own beliefs for them. Handled right, it can be a rich source of inner conflict — possibly even Torment — and if he gets tired of inner conflict, there's no reason that he can't "see the light" and change factions.

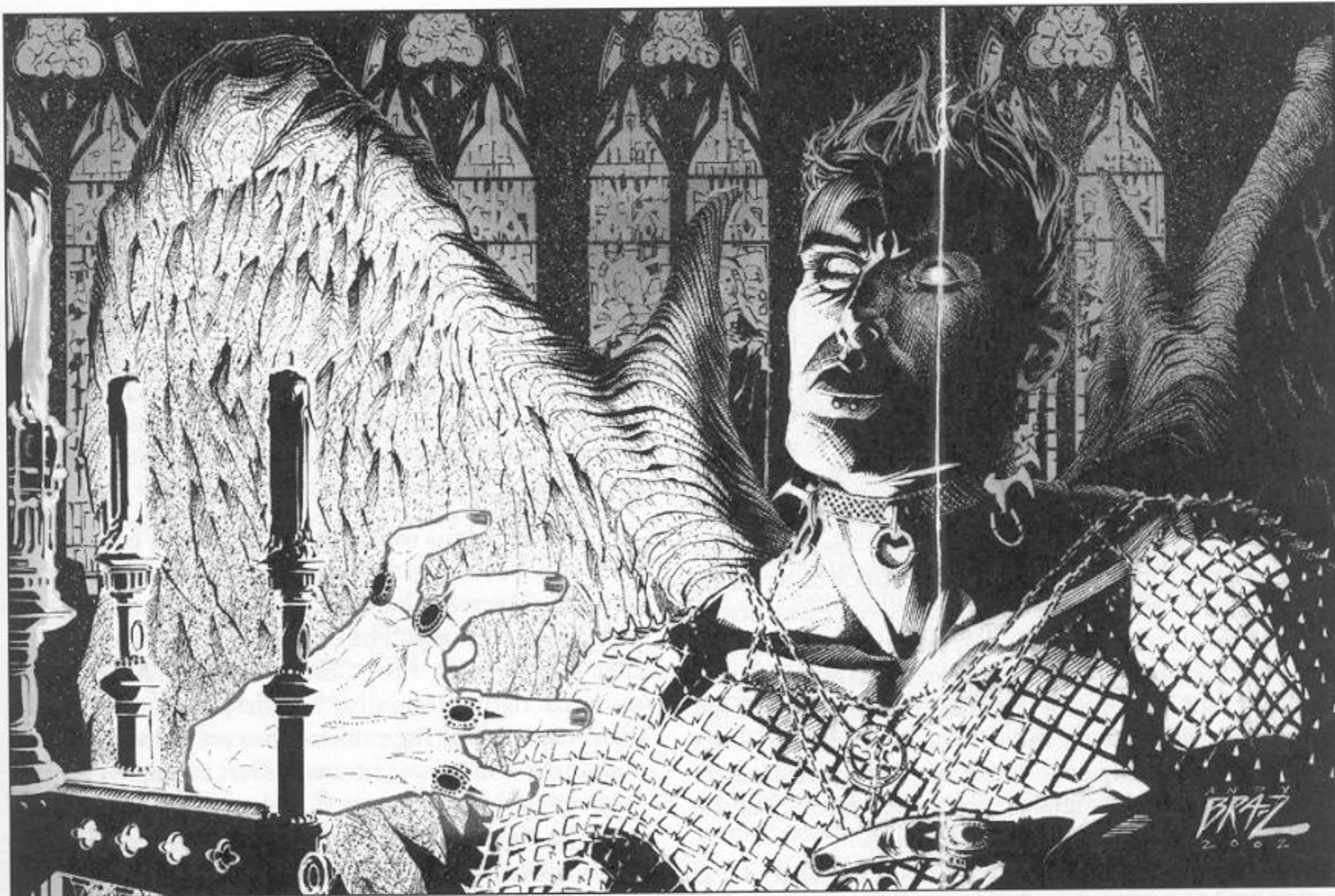
FACT AND FICTION

Like all political ideologies, it's easy to pigeonhole an individual based on stereotypes. Seen from the outside, all Faustians are callous manipulators, all Luciferans are credulous idealists, and all Raveners are mindless, anarchic destroyers. While such stereotypes are sometimes useful to a Storyteller — particularly as a tool to challenge the characters' opinions and beliefs — it's important to distinguish perception from reality when portraying the factions in your chronicle.

FAUSTIANS

The Faustian goal is almost stereotypically "demonic." They want to conquer the world and turn it against God. They're proud, they're powerful, and they're absolutely confident that they're right. There are some subtleties to the Faustians that you can use to good effect, however, particularly if your players seem to consider them a little *too* stereotypical.

First and foremost, many Faustians consider their crusade to be at least as good for humanity as it is for



demonkind. To them, mankind's destiny is either to become like God or to become one with God... or possibly to replace God. It's pretty hazy, actually, but it seems to be what God had in mind as well. Not all Faustians are so benevolent, of course. Some see humans as fuel for their desires, which can be a good source of conflict for Faustian protagonists and a weapon smart characters can use against Faustian antagonists.

Secondly, even a Faustian with profound contempt for individual humans still puts a great deal of effort into the betterment of the overall human condition. Doing so just makes sense. You may not love a given tool, but you still don't leave it in the rain. You want it in good shape so that it's reliably useful. A Faustian wants a healthy, happy, numerous human population for the same reason a rancher wants a healthy, happy, numerous herd.

NOTABLE FAUSTIANS

The loudest, greatest and most powerful Faustian is Belphigor. A Throne of the First House before the rebellion and a high-ranking officer of the Crimson Legion during the war, he is very much the Faustian's Faustian. A war hero whose might and courage earned him the respect even of the Devourers, he was also a brilliant strategist. His cunning often won him the day against superior forces. When that failed, his dogged arrogance often got him and his forces through setbacks better than a more "realistic" reaction would.

Belphigor does not have a humble bone in his body, but his great strength as a negotiator is his ability to project respect to those with whom he speaks. If you're a lowly Slayer, he can still look you right in the eye and movingly speak of how it was the grunts on the ground who carried the rebellion. If you're a fell knight, you're the only one with the boldness to appreciate his design. If you're a Reconciler, he admires your optimism, while if you're a Ravener, he admires your boldness. It won't stop him from killing you if he can't turn you, but you'll die feeling like an honored opponent.

In truth, Belphigor is merely hiding his Torment well. His mixture of contempt and envy for humankind is at epic levels. His contempt rises because humans are so individually weak, so powerless, so ignorant of the world's truth, but he envies them because they are still God's chosen, beloved and forgiven. Part of him wants to leverage their favored status in order to elevate himself to their level. Another part wants to drag them down to his meager station, so that he can raise himself up by treading on their heads.

Belphigor was fortunate to be incarnated in the body of Paris Murdoe, a Coast Guard pararescue jumper. Paris has rescued sailors by jumping from helicopters into the middle of the ocean during force-10 gales, then swimming to their boats while towing rescue gear. Murdoe is in peak physical condition, his handsome features and muscular build belying the severe effects of depression that eroded his soul and left him vulnerable

to possession. Belphigor delights to have a vessel so fitting to his magnificence.

While Belphigor broods in Arizona, Senivel travels the world's religious capitals, enjoying human faith and human art equally. Changing her appearance and gender at will, she's walked around Vatican City in a nun's habit, circled the Dome of the Rock disguised as an imam, and seen the great Reclining Buddha from a monk's perspective. But even as her heart rejoices at the great stores of faith these sites represent, it galls her keenly that she can get only so close, and no closer. For the doors of St. Peter's Basilica sear her hands, the floor of the Dome burns her feet, and even looking upon the Reclining Buddha made her eyes itch and tear.

Unlike Belphigor, Senivel does not dwell on her rejection, but rather works tirelessly to recruit fallen into her faction. She does so from true belief — as a humanist Faustian, she thinks she's on the right track to repairing the cosmos — and as a political maneuver. She's one of the few fallen who suspects that Belphigor has lost his love for humanity, and she hopes that by recruiting carefully, she can tip the Faustian balance toward her own, humanistic stance. But she knows better than to act against him directly or to make her suspicions known. She knows can't out-fight the fearsome warlord, but she thinks she may be able to out-think him.

Senivel's vessel is Héloïse Tailleux, whose soul was consumed in a two-year battle against anorexia that ravaged mind and body alike. Senivel has cut all ties to the Tailleuxs, and she does her best to ignore the memories and reactions of her 15-year-old host, but sometimes the strength of Héloïse's wonder or delight — or anger — still surprises her.

UNNOTICED FAUSTIANS

Like all factions, the Faustians count many in their number who aren't about to admit it. One of these spies is Goriel, a Devourer who has joined the Raveners and who does nothing to restrain their viciousness or cruelty. He just tries to direct it against targets that inconvenience the Faustians. He's currently in the Middle East, where he takes great pleasure in assaulting the troops of totalitarian governments. The Raveners like this because it's destabilizing. The Faustians like it because they hope that, once the governments fall, these regimes can be rebuilt along more Faustian — or, at least, more humanly progressive — lines.

A more devious operative is Celeste Penobscott. One of the fallen, she refuses to reveal her real name or even her House. She's fascinated by the powers and influence of the Earthbound and well known for her dedication to learning their horrid secrets.

This is a goal that no self-respecting faction (save possibly the Cryptics) would acknowledge. It is also a goal that every faction would secretly love to pursue. In

Celeste, the Faustians have it both ways. Belphigor and Senivel have both openly declared their antagonism toward this sort of research and offered a substantial standing bounty for any fallen who is proved to be investigating these mysteries. The foremost researcher is, of course, the renegade Celeste Penobscott.

By publicly condemning her while privately supporting her, the Faustians have the best of both worlds. They can capture or kill any rival researcher without looking hypocritical, but any fallen who moves against their researcher is more likely to hand her over for the reward (and, presumably, destruction by the Faustians) than to simply kill her out of hand. Furthermore, her "persecution" encourages other delvers into Earthbound lore to trust her.

RESOURCES

The Faustians would like everyone to believe that they've got access to the remains of a dead cherub at the bottom of Meteor Crater in Arizona, but in truth, they have no such thing. The size and weight of the object that fell to earth here (150 feet and 300,000 tons) sounded right originally, but despite early Faustian claims, no supporting evidence has yet been uncovered. As for the time span, no two fallen can agree on how long ago *anything* happened.

The "body," believed to be that of an angel named Vejovis, should be a gold mine of power. Instead, Belphigor is covering up the truth as best he can and trying to *convince* everyone that the Faustians still have a huge tactical advantage. He's done so by taking the sect's *real* tactical advantages and crediting them to the Vejovis find.

One real tactical advantage is that the Faustians have recovered two facets of Archangel Michael's sword, which was broken in battle at the fall of Genhinnom. One is an *actual sword*, which some scholars think is the one known in history as "Excalibur." (In any event, the sword has a damage factor of Strength + 8 in the hands of one of the fallen, and it can strike even immaterial beings. Its damage is aggravated.) Belphigor carries the weapon personally, claiming that it was forged from Vejovis's brain.

The other facet of the sword was something a little stranger — a limited, special-case anomaly at the triple boundary between mathematics, metaphysics and the material world. It used to physically occupy the space at the tip of the sword, and whenever Michael stabbed anyone with it, the victim was partially severed from her connection to mankind.

The Faustians have transformed this odd... thing... into a bullet — a single bullet. The properties of the anomaly, however, are such that when the bullet becomes physically distorted on impact, the anomaly seeks a new home. Specifically, it goes to another bullet prepared as the next iteration of the anomaly's mathematical formula.

In practical terms, the Faustians have a bunch of bullets — 9 mm, .45 Colt, .38 Special — that are each potentially enchanted, but the enchantment only happens serially. Once bullet #1 has been fired, bullet #2 becomes the magic bullet. After you shoot bullet #2, #3 becomes magic. Shooting #3 before #1 yields you nothing, except that it breaks the chain. (You can't skip from #2 to #4 without going through configuration #3, after all.)

Any fallen or Earthbound hit by one of these bullets that is actively holding the anomaly loses a point of temporary Faith. If the victim has no Faith left, then one of her pacts of Faith is broken instead, breaking her bond with a random thrall. Naturally, the Faustians are careful handing these out... and they make sure that everyone believes that their magic bullets are made from the petrified remains of Vejovis's bones.

PROTAGONISTS

There are many ways to run a chronicle based on Faustian characters. The "Cult Cadre" model is pretty typical of how the Faustians like to operate, while "Infiltrators" is more unusual.

Cult Cadre: Senivel herself asks the characters to go to a small town in the western US and start up a branch of the Church of Scientific Spirituality (see Chapter Five of the **Demon** core rules for details). Their goals, in chronological order are as follows: Establish a presence. Recruit the desperate and marginal. Improve their lot until they're effective advertisements for the CSS. Subvert or discredit other local churches. Establish non-CSS front churches in other denominations to lure more traditional believers. Enthrall or ensnare the richest and most politically powerful citizens. Encourage troublemakers to leave town, preferably by incentive. Take over and make the whole town a low-key Faustian outpost.

Infiltrators: The characters are tapped to travel to another faction's stronghold and offer to join up. Once in place, they are to gain the trust of the other faction while sending information back to the Faustians. Once they're trusted enough, the Faustians may ask them to sabotage, subvert or even openly rebel against the other faction.

The faction targeted has a powerful influence on the type of chronicle that results. Infiltrating Raveners is going to involve combat a-plenty, in order for the characters to both prove themselves and protect their secret. Sneaking into Cryptic or Reconciler camps involves more subterfuge and intrigue as the characters try to learn secrets and subvert those demons who learn theirs. If discovered by those factions, the characters are less likely to be attacked than to be fed false information — which could lead their Faustian controllers to think the characters have betrayed the Faustians. Joining the Luciferans is likely to provide a mix of both intrigue and action, alongside the political machinations needed to succeed in the highly structured Luciferan hierarchy.

The classic dilemma for an infiltrator cadre is, of course, being ordered into action against Faustians. To really get complicated, order them to *infiltrate* the Faustians.

ANTAGONISTS

The Faustians make fine antagonists — clever enough to stab you in the back, but bold enough to stab you right in the face. Their machinations could eventually enslave the world if successful or damn it again if they fail, but their work for global peace and health (no matter how selfishly motivated it is) makes opposing them morally tricky.

The Faith Lab: A group of the more militant Faustians — the ones who want to enslave, rather than elevate mankind — has leased land in the middle of nowhere and is performing dastardly experiments. Specifically, they're kidnapping humans from areas where life is cheap and attempting to condition them to be unthinkingly obedient and worshipful toward Faustian demons (or possibly just to the experimenters themselves).

You can put the lab anywhere that's convenient to your chronicle, though it fits better in the developing world. If you put it in a developed nation, the fallen running the place are going to need heavy-duty law-enforcement pull to get it swept under the rug — which, from a Storyteller perspective, could be a good thing. One more fascinating challenge for the characters, right?

The first challenge is to find out about the lab in the first place. The characters can do so through investigation (as they trail an old enemy) or through politics. The political angle is particularly ripe with possibility, as outing the lab makes trouble for the Faustians from the Reconcilers and Luciferans at the least. Yet, while anyone might want to leave the Faustians with egg on their faces, they might want the egg to actually be thrown by someone else, in order to deflect the inevitable Faustian backlash. Therefore, they drop hints so that the characters do their dirty work. Finally, a particularly interesting ploy is to have Senivel send them in. She doesn't approve of the experiment, and she wants the characters to sabotage the results so that the Faustians conclude that it's a dead end.

The second challenge is to get into the lab and (presumably) shut it down. If your players enjoy intrigue and stealth, this is their chance to have their characters sneak in and sabotage the installation. Or, if they're more direct, they can just roll up and assault the place. (If you think this is likely, there's another reason to put it in a developing nation. Bloody assaults on distant compounds are far more plausible in, say, the mountains of northern Iraq than in the mountains of western Colorado.)

Once inside, their actions may have profound repercussions. What do they do with the human test subjects? In a warped version of waste-not-want-not, the Faustians kidnapped the worst criminals they could

find. (After all, the real proof of concept comes not from making a saint faithful, but from making a murderous thug faithful.) Do the characters just let these rapists, murderers and terrorists wander away? In addition to their natural proclivities, the test subjects may also be potential Faith batteries for the Faustian bad guys. Do the characters kill them? Keep them locked up? Just how does doing so make the characters better than the sickos running the lab? (Of course, the characters might have no interest in being better, in which case you may simply gloss over any moral quandaries.)

The final challenge is how they handle their ensuing reputation as “the fallen who wrecked the lab.” They might keep it secret, but secrecy is generally imperfect — especially if some politician type tipped them off in the first place. It could easily turn out that the characters were led to the lab by a Cryptic or Ravener who’s less interested in stopping a horrible abuse of human rights and more interested in stealing the Faustian data and setting up faith-zombies of his or her own.

This is all begging the question of whether you actually *can* brainwash people to be genuinely worshipful. It’s up to individual Storytellers to make that decision, but the question is a good one to consider for the themes of your chronicle. Can faith exist without free will? If so, what does that say about humanity?

Power Behind the Throne: Stanislav Wrojie has become the thrall of a Faustian Scourge. In return for his loyalty, the Scourge is giving Wrojie’s rivals and enemies serious diseases.

This is a big deal because Wrojie is a provincial governor in one of the former Soviet Republics on the Caspian Sea. He’s powerful within his domain, but he’s not nationally prominent... yet. He’s ambitious, though, and having his competition fall conveniently ill puts him ahead of the pack.

The twist is that Wrojie is a genuine reformer. He’s not above realpolitik — look who his allies are! — but he’s working toward regional stability, health and welfare. Even with a demonic patron, he’s probably the republic’s best hope for long-term improvement. He regards his thrall state as distasteful but necessary for the accomplishment of his great deeds. He’s willing to die to improve the lot of his citizens, but he finds it much more convenient to live for them instead. Losing his soul? Bah, what’s a soul?

This, then, is the rub. Do the characters waste Wrojie and hobble the region’s hope for improvement, or do they give him a pass and let a Faustian thrall crawl toward the leadership of a nation (even a small, impoverished one)?

As with the lab, this setup can involve political entanglements. Did someone tip off the characters? Does that someone maybe have a thrall candidate of her own lurking backstage? (In this case, there’s unlikely to be a Faustian mole: This Wrojie operation is perfectly

acceptable to both wings of the faction.) Perhaps the Raveners want the area weak so they can plunge it into anarchy. Or perhaps some other supernatural group is uneasy with the thought of a demon-influenced leader.

Even if the characters don’t give a damn about the repercussions of their actions on a bunch of ex-Soviets, there are still considerable tactical challenges to taking Wrojie down. He’s got armed protectors, the law’s on his side, the Faustians aren’t letting him go without a fight, and he might just have support from a few blindly optimistic, utterly ignorant, radiantly *faithful* area Muslims who want to clean up their country.

THIRD WHEELS

You may have a chronicle where characters aren’t Faustians, and the Faustians aren’t their enemies. This doesn’t mean that the Faustians won’t be involved. If anything, the Faustians *prefer* to get involved with people who aren’t their enemies, but who can readily be sacrificed. (Faustians *will* sacrifice their friends, but not readily.)

“Third-wheel” Faustians want the characters to consider them allies, but the Storyteller must always remember that the Faustians are in it for themselves. Unless they can convince factional rivals to convert to Faustianism, they have zero interest in seeing disputes settled. Instead, they’re more likely to *encourage* the rivalry (albeit with subtlety) since the energy the characters and their enemies waste feuding is energy they’re not spending against the Faustians. Hence, they generally provide only minor, short-term, contingent aid in return for a kickback. The underdog gets a discount on the payoff, though. If it’s a heavy underdog going against the Cryptics or the Raveners, the payment may be light indeed — since the *real* reward the Faustians want is to deniably inconvenience their enemies.

THRIVING FUTURE

If the characters prove to be formidable operatives for the Faustian cause, the faction could do very well over the course of a long chronicle. Depending on how well the characters play the other factions against one another, defend or conceal Faustian projects and come up with clever and successful initiatives on their own, the Faustians could achieve some or all of the following.

Impregnability. The Faustians have a stronghold somewhere that can resist a full-scale attack by any single other faction — and (perhaps more importantly) which is not in danger from any human government.

Substantial control of humanity. The Faustians would indubitably be closer to their goals if they were controlling a million human beings. “Control” in the sense of “guiding every aspect of their lives” as opposed to direct enthrallment.

Public acknowledgment. Having it become an accepted fact that there are demons who can teach you

how to fight God is probably too much to expect, but it would be a triumph if humanity began to widely accept (or even consider) the Faustian philosophy of mankind's inherent ability to become divine.

Mass harnessing of human faith. If the Faustians were able to successfully harness the collective faith of 10,000 thralls... well, they might be able to begin to rewrite the cosmos. Depending on which wing of the faction is ascendant, this power could be used to heal the world or further bind it.

DECLINING FUTURE

It's equally possible that your characters oppose the Faustians' schemes. Depending on how clever, lucky and successful they are (and the scope of your chronicle) they could personally set the Faustians on the road to ruin. Some dreadful setbacks for the Faustians would include any or all of these.

Becoming the outcasts. Currently, the most widely despised faction is probably the Raveners. If the Faustians were caught (or framed) doing something globally reprehensible, they might sink to last place, which would put a serious kink in their plans, as every faction would snoop on (and probably sabotage) their endeavors.

Mass defections. Substantial and frequent failures could lead a lot of fallen to simply give up on Faustianism. Like Feudalism, it would become a disregarded philosophical backwater — one that was quaint, but nothing you'd want as a guide for life.

Philosophical rigidity. If either Belphigor or Senivel ever cements control of the faction, it could be an unforeseen catastrophe. The humanist and diabolical wings of the Faustians don't agree, but they work together very well. Losing either wing would cause many Faustians to lose heart altogether and drop out — or drop their guard, which is even more disastrous.

Widespread ruin. The worse off life gets for the citizens of planet Earth, the harder it is for the Faustians to build their utopia. Widespread hunger, warfare or epidemics could all make Faustian confidence in a better tomorrow look pretty foolish.

CRYPTICS

The great strength of the Cryptics is that their stated goals are extremely nebulous. This vagueness of purpose is also their greatest weakness.

It's a strength because their lack of assumptions protects them from the wishful thinking of the Luciferans and Faustians. With no "party line" paradigm clouding their perceptions, the Cryptics are more likely to understand things as they are. Luciferans and Faustians have an unfortunate tendency to interpret reality as they want it to be.

For instance, take Lucifer's appearance in Los Angeles. The Luciferans take it as a sign that the Adversary is

still fighting the good fight and needs his loyal army to rally at his side. Many Faustians disregard it as some Luciferan propaganda trick, since the Morningstar just doesn't fit in their scenario. Yet the Cryptics are the only fallen who take the facts as just the facts. They go only so far as to say that Lucifer's still around, and that's all.

With this clear-sighted openness, though, comes a lack of focus. Willing to consider anything, the questioners stand for nothing. Their faction is often stuck reacting to the machinations of others, rather than initiating plans of their own. By the time they hear about what's going on, it's often too late to do anything.

The faction's lack of ideology means that a lot of very different Elohim are gathered under its banner. After all, the litmus test is that one doesn't believe in anything, not even the defeatist nihilism of the Raveners. This broad banner has made the faction the de facto political dumping ground for the fallen. Its members include demons too starry-eyed and romantic even for the Raveners, too individually unreliable and crazy for the Raveners and too arrogantly power mad for the Faustians. The Cryptics have a lot of variety, and some of their cliques have unique synergies, but it's also a volatile and unpredictable mix.

NOTABLE CRYPTICS

By far, the most famed (or infamous) Cryptic is Ahrimal, incarnate as Gerhard Liebner. His position is a curious one, as he leads almost by default. He never sought acclaim or obedience, but the Cryptics give it nonetheless because he is almost the perfect Cryptic by nature. He's independent, he's not satisfied with the obvious, he's doggedly curious, and he's not interested in power, either for its own sake or in the pursuit of some spurious "new Eden." The Cryptics respect him and follow his lead *because* he has no interest in leading them. He gives no mandates, suggests no plans and has no idea who the "Librarians" of his faction really are. But whatever he does, he can be sure that there are Cryptics watching and waiting to eagerly help him out.

Liebner lived and worked in Berlin, but as one of the fallen, he travels far afield. He's taken some time off from the police force on medical leave, claiming post-traumatic stress in the wake of the Jeremy List case. (In reality, he's being bankrolled by the Cryptics, but Ahrimal perversely hopes that the dubious nature of his excuse will lead the *polizei* to investigate Liebner's shady past.)

Ahrimal feels an embarrassed sense of obligation to the Cryptics, and he genuinely believes that they're the only fallen with any grasp on reality. By the same token, however, he sometimes wishes they would just leave him alone. Their helpfulness is often welcome, but at the same time, it has the unpleasant reek of hero-worship. He knows it's the nature of Elohim to look to a leader, but he sees no reason it has to be him.

Part of the reason Ahrimal has the luxury of being uncomfortable as a leader is that Gipontel is willing to do the heavy lifting of *real* leadership while leaving the public spotlight to Ahrimal.

Gipontel is housed in the pudgy, 60-year-old body of Zvi Radwanska, the manager of a small Bombay software store. Bossy and domineering, the influence of the fallen has made Zvi's neighbors marvel at his sudden change of heart. Now the portly entrepreneur seems charming, friendly and affable. No one has noticed how much more efficient Zvi's business has become due to this alteration.

Gipontel does not genuinely care about making human friends, he just finds them easier to manipulate with rewards than with threats. He's more interested in reconnecting with the Elohim he fought beside in the War of Wrath, but he has had little luck so far, despite the best efforts of the Cryptics and their Library.

He hopes that he can recruit them to his cause and, with their aid, turn it into something more meaningful and purposeful. For, however much Ahrimal might seek knowledge purely for its own sake, Gipontel knows that knowledge is power — and power unused is meaningless. He forges connections to the other factions, even though their philosophies don't immediately appeal, because he hopes that one of them might grow into something he can really stand behind. In this way, he's perhaps even more of a perfect Cryptic than Ahrimal. Gipontel has a mind so open that he even entertains the possibility that the Cryptics could be wrong.

Gipontel likes having authority. Unlike many Cryptics, he actually pursues plans more than facts. Compiling the *Scelestinomicon* and *Crucianomicon* was his idea. As first and chief among the Quæsitori, he is the only Elohim to know the identities of everyone in the Library. But he has no desire to be admired and followed and *watched* all the time, any more than Ahrimal does. He's happy to have Ahrimal as a figurehead, while he can remain the leader in fact.

UNNOTICED CRYPTICS

The Cryptics are the only fallen who have not only made common cause with one of the Earthbound — they count her among their number.

Harudha is not one of the major Earthbound, not one of the 666 great demons who have been free of the Abyss for thousands of years. She was, rather, a fallen Defiler who found herself incarnate in Miu Liao, the abused mistress of an unbalanced Hong Kong physician. After possessing the body of Miu Liao, she joined the Cryptics and began exploring Hong Kong and the close mainland. Unfortunately for Miu/Harudha, she got in over her head very quickly, becoming stuck in a deadly dispute between two demon-controlled gangs. Miu was killed, but Harudha managed to remain in the material world by anchoring herself to a physical reliquary.

Before combining with Harudha — even before her ill-considered affair with the married doctor — Miu had been happily married, then widowed. (It was, in fact, her desire to replace her lost husband that led her to her foolish liaison.) Miu's pure memories had humanized Harudha and served as a bulwark against Torment. It was only natural that when Harudha died, she used Miu's carefully preserved wedding dress as her reliquary.

Harudha managed to call one of her thralls, and he recovered the dress. It is now in the possession of the Cryptics. They are very secretive about their connection to one of the "monstrous Earthbound," but, at the same time, they are unwilling to simply abandon an agent who worked hard and had bad luck. Especially when she might provide tremendous insight into the Earthbound: especially their nature, their weaknesses and why they seem to lose their connection to humanity so completely.

RESOURCES

The most well-known and obvious resources for Cryptics are the *Scelestinomicon* and the *Crucianomicon* — their catalogues of (respectively) fallen and Earthbound.

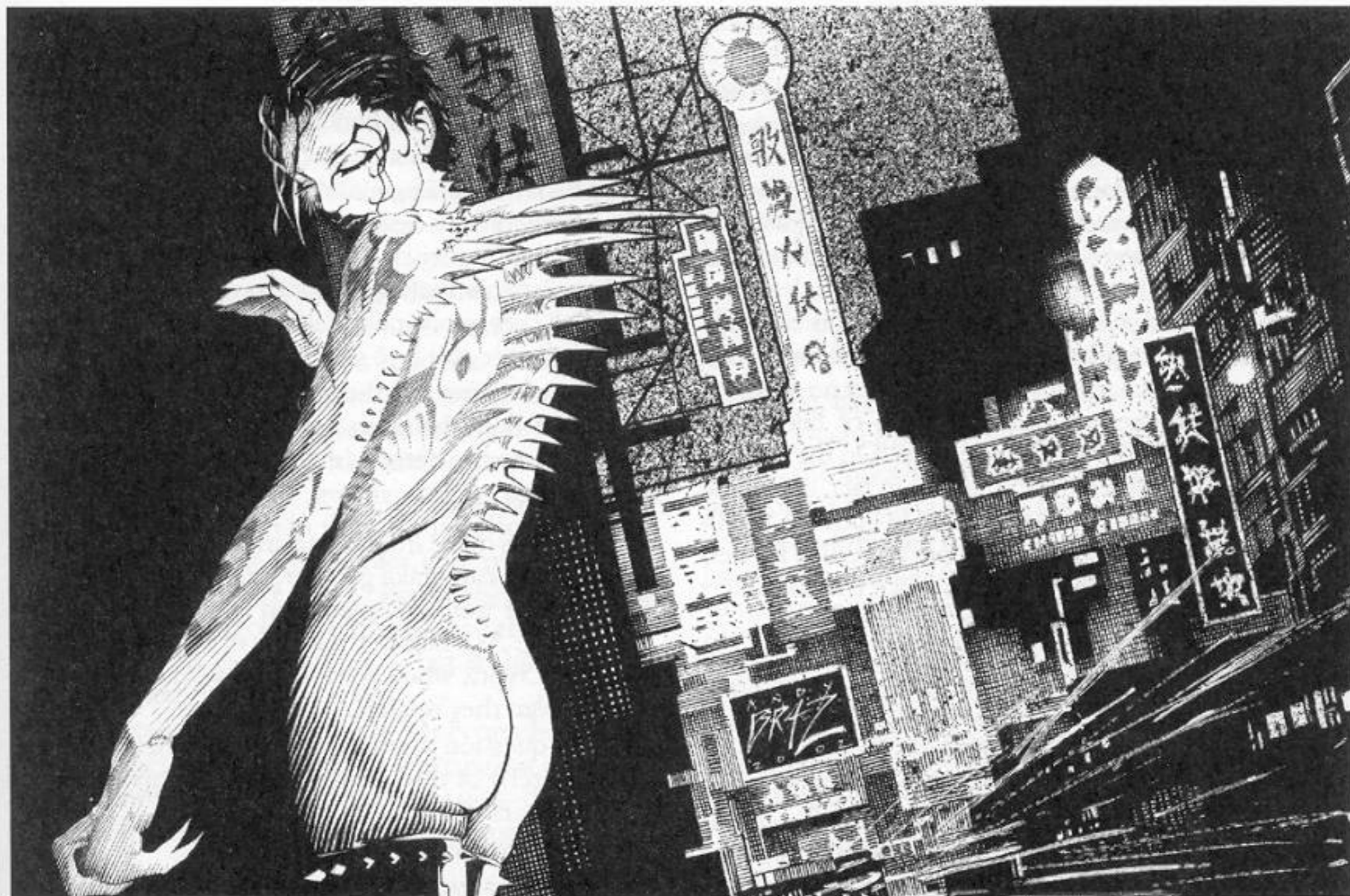
The *Scelestinomicon* is something of a yearbook cum phone directory cum intelligence dossier. Simply put, every Cryptic is encouraged to report everything they know about every fallen angel to the central *Scelestinomicon* committee. Mortal names, House information, original role in the Holy Host, subsequent rank in the Infernal Host, activities during the war — these sorts of data are pretty common for many Elohim. The Cryptics have that much dirt on a good 70% of the angels who fell from Heaven.

More recent and useful data — such as names and locations of current human hosts, faction identification and current plans — is less common. Perhaps only 15% of the fallen on Earth have data like that in the book. Many who are so registered are themselves Cryptics.

Information on True Names is terribly rare. Only two percent of the Unholy Host have their True Names listed in the *Scelestinomicon*, and all of those are listed because their superiors are Cryptics who decided to reveal them.

The *Crucianomicon* has identified 11 Earthbound demons by location or reliquary. Each entry has pages and pages of speculation about the history and activities of the entity in question, along with lists of thralls, potential agents and suspected goals. About six have been identified by Celestial Name as well, which has usually led to identification by House, position, rank and history in the Age of Wrath. No True Names of Earthbound demons have been recorded in the *Crucianomicon*.

These aren't big, leather-bound tomes on a shelf somewhere, but neither are they tidily typed Rich Text Format files waiting to be hacked and posted on the Internet. Both forms have their drawbacks. Single texts



are too fragile and hard to access, while computer files are too easy to steal and copy. The Cryptics have a solution that they hope solves both problems.

Instead of being written down, 14 fallen — two from each House — have dedicated themselves to memorizing every word of every page of one of the texts, verbatim. Collectively called “the Library” or “the Librarians,” these 14 demons are essentially the heart of the Cryptic faction. Their names, locations and identities are carefully concealed.

Their identities are known only to seven demons (again, one from each House) called “the Quæsitori” (singular is “Quæsitor” if you’re being polite). As the public faces of the Library, they each know the names of four Librarians — two who’ve memorized the *Crucianomicon* and two who know the *Scelestinomicon*. When an approved request for information about one of the fallen or Earthbound is presented to a Quæsitor, she invokes the two Librarians and copies down exactly what they tell her. If there’s a discrepancy, she goes to another Quæsitor for a third comparison. Minor errors are simply pointed out to the forgetful Librarian. Big problems could lead to more severe measures, such as replacing a Librarian, but everyone hopes it won’t come to that since the old Librarian could never be released with such precious knowledge.

Naturally, the Quæsitori are very tough, fanatically defended and very busy. Getting one of them to ask a question for you is fairly easy if you’re a Cryptic, though they always insist on knowing *why* you want to know, and your answer about why then goes into your *Scelestinomicon* entry. If you’re outside the faction, you’re going to need to either befriend a Cryptic or pay up — preferably with information, and it better be juicy. (The faction won’t pay out for information the Librarians already have, unless it was something doubtful that’s been confirmed. If they don’t like you, they may just listen to the information offered and say they already knew it, even if they didn’t.)

PROTAGONISTS

A chronicle with Cryptic protagonists offers a lot of versatility and flexibility. The standard story for Cryptic cadres involves hearing about something weird and going to find out what it is. Pretty simple, really. As Cryptics, the characters already have a strong motivation to go nosing around where they aren’t wanted. The biggest potential drawback is that such a chronicle can become scattered, unfocused and episodic. For some players, that simply isn’t a problem. They may even *like* the “mystery of the week” setup where adventures aren’t necessarily connected to previous ones. Less to keep track of that way, certainly. But if you want a more typical

chronicle with a core plot, buildup and climax, you may need to work a little harder with Cryptic characters.

One way to swing this is to have a subtle, connecting factor in *your* mind that strings together a series of seemingly disparate events. For example, you could decide that the reason for unexplained goings on in the cabal's town is that there are minions of the Earthbound running around. Earthbound thralls are diverse antagonists, and they are often well camouflaged by default. Take events that have no obvious connection — say, a local demon suddenly starts acting as though he were master of the city; thugs assault one of the characters in his home, for no apparent reason; and another character has two of her thralls suddenly get cold feet about their pacts. On the surface, there's no unity to these mysteries. But in fact, one of the more subtle minions has been getting to both the thralls and the ambitious demon, while more aggressive hunters are targeting one of the characters. Once the characters put the clues together, everything falls into place.

The exact opposite of that approach can also work. If you have ambitious, scheming players who build ambitious, scheming characters, you might get a lot of mileage out of just releasing the reins and reacting to their plots. As Cryptics, this freedom may earn them attention (good or bad) from their fellows. Success at some grand scheme (of the type that Luciferans and Faustians take for granted) is more impressive to Cryptics. Failure, by the same token, is more damning.

Two other Cryptic chronicle seeds follow.

Uncovering the Traitor. The Cryptics have good — not great — indications that one of the fallen has sold out to a powerful Earthbound. Normally, this would be sad but not terribly alarming. This fallen, however, is prominent within one of the other factions (Faustian and Luciferan are good choices). Tempting as it is to let them be subverted and corrupted, letting one of the Earthbound get that much power just will not do. The characters are sent to stop the Earthbound's mole. Unfortunately, he's too tough to assassinate, too connected to simply oust and too popular to fall to a smear campaign. To succeed, the characters are going to have to attack him on three fronts — political, mystical and physical — all at once, *without* tipping their hands. It's going to be a long haul, but the payoff for the bad guy is a long fall. (Make sure that the characters have plenty of good reasons to really, *really* hate this guy. It'll make the setbacks more personal and the triumph sweeter.)

Strike Team. The faction's reputation as a gang of neurasthenic scholars is not completely inaccurate, at least when compared to such militant groups as the Raveners and the Luciferans.

But the faction *does* need heavies, and it has them: your characters.

If your players want a combat-heavy chronicle with a brain, they could do worse than playing this faction's

goon squad (or *one* faction goon squad). If a small investigation cadre goes missing, the characters go in to figure out where it went and punish anyone responsible for any wrongdoing. Fallen in a city are trying to muscle the Cryptics out? The characters go in to push back.

This is not a pure guns-blazing slaughterfest, though. The characters *do* need to be smart, because they are going to be frequently traveling to unfamiliar, unsafe and uncertain situations. They have the muscle to get results, *if* they apply it correctly. If they just flail around wildly, they're going to get *everyone* mad at them.

Played correctly, the characters become the demons you don't want to mess with. Played foolishly, they become the demons everyone *has* to mess with.

ANTAGONISTS

Cryptics make interesting antagonists for the same reasons they can make good protagonists. They're mobile, they're well informed, and they're interested in everything. As a bonus, their lack of dogma means that there's a Cryptic who's going to hate your characters, no matter *what* they're after.

The question is, what can they do? They don't have the hierarchy of the Luciferans or the fearsomeness of the Raveners. What's the threat?

The threat is information.

The threat is, they know everyone who might have a score to settle with you, dating back to the Age of Wrath. The threat is, all your old enemies now know your host body, name and location. The threat is that fallen you've never heard of, but whose agendas are incompatible with yours, are coming out of the woodwork every time you turn your back. And if you've got a beef with someone — like, say, a superior you've been reluctant to summon out of the Abyss — any information that someone has — like, say, your True Name — might wind up in the *Scelestinomicon*.

Cryptics can be petty and mean and subtle and vindictive, and striking back is tricky because you *do not* want the notation "killed a Cryptic" in your *Scelestinomicon* entry.

Rosemary's Baby. It was bound to happen sooner or later. One of the fallen has inhabited the body of Rosemary Moyer, and Rosemary Moyer is five months pregnant.

Demons of either gender are sterile, of course. Without the divine spark of God's favor, there's no way they can contribute to the creation of a new soul, so it's probably just as well that they can't create soulless offspring in human bodies. But Rosemary's baby was already conceived, and it didn't perish when its mother was possessed. As far as anyone, mortal or demon, can determine, the mortal child is alive within her.

The Cryptics are (of course) quite curious about what's going to happen. Will she miscarry? Will the

fallen in Rosemary's body be able to combine the infant's nascent Faith with its own diabolical powers? Or does a fetus even have the holy spark yet?

Unfortunately for the Cryptics, they don't know which spirit has entered Rosemary's body. Unfortunately for the characters, they do know. Can they protect or hide her until she comes to term — assuming she even does?

Escape From the "I" Stacks. One of the characters hears from a close friend who fought beside her in the War of Wrath. This pal is in a bad spot. He signed up with the Cryptics and became one of their Librarians, but now he wants out. He's come to believe in [whatever faction the characters are with], and he furthermore got wind that the Cryptics are planning a major move against them. Spring him from his imprisonment and get a copy of one of the Two Tomes, current as of the day he's freed. Of course, he doesn't know where exactly he is (part of the "protection" scheme), and there are lots of tough fighters guarding him... but is that going to stop fallen heroes? Of course not.

If you want to add another level of complexity, you can even decide that this friend is actually a mole and that the whole elaborate "rescue" is set up so that he can feed false information to one of the factions.

THIRD WHEELS

This faction makes a superb Storyteller tool when its members are neither protagonists nor antagonists, because they have something to offer everyone, and everyone has something to offer them. As a central switching-house for information, they can give either side (the characters or their enemies) a little edge when they need it — just enough inside information to keep things interesting. To put it another way, the Cryptics are superb agents of play balance. If the characters aren't getting enough challenge from their opposition, the opposition sells something to the faction in exchange for the data that they need to hose (or inconvenience) the characters. Similarly, if the characters are stuck, the Cryptics make fine clue dispensers.

THRIVING FUTURE

Characters who are particularly effective may win the faction any of the following boons.

Hierarchy. The Cryptics are chronically disorganized. They're not an army like the Luciferans or even agents of a "cause" like the Reconcilers; they're just a bunch of people who believe in the same thing. If the characters can get them to follow orders and take responsibility, they can make *anything the faction does* easily twice as efficient. As a bonus, they might be the ones in charge.

Political Influence. Currently, the faction is a player in inter-factional politics. Its stance of disinterest in accomplishing set goals could make it *the* player. By

becoming the impartial adjudicator of the efforts of other fallen, the faction can influence how much other factions tolerate or oppose one another.

Mystic Might. Conversely, the faction might just get a bunch of True Names or artifacts dating from the war. If you're interested in running a risky crossover chronicle, this faction might be the one that manipulates the imbued on a large scale, enthralls a group of rogue mages or allies with one of the vampire factions. (See Chapter Five for details on the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness.)

DECLINING FUTURE

Bad news for the Cryptics could come in either or both of the following flavors, especially if bright characters oppose them or dumb characters support them.

Open-Source Demonology. Losing one of the Librarians to another faction would be a terrible blow. It wouldn't be crippling — each Librarian only knows one of the Two Tomes — but it would cost the Cryptics a lot of bargaining power. Losing both would be a disaster. Losing either to *all* the factions would be a disaster compounded by a catastrophe. And losing both? The Cryptics would cease to exist as a meaningful political force. They'd be more like a demonic social club.

Ideological Fragmentation. Currently, the faction has no focus, which makes it a big tent into which many beliefs can fit. It could easily become heavily politicized, as sub-factions within struggle to make *their* vision of a Cryptic future the "right" one.

LUCIFERANS

The Luciferan position is, essentially, "Just because we were bound in chains of fire and flung into Hell for 10,000 years doesn't mean we *lost*." They're still fighting the good (or bad) fight, still obeying orders, still ready to deploy instantly at the command of their great leader — or, until he shows up, at the command of the ranking demon in charge.

Where the Faustians are more like a corporation and the Cryptics are like a college faculty, the Luciferans are an army. Total compliance to superiors is expected, as is total compliance from inferiors. A fell knight might respectfully disagree with the theories or analysis of a lord in the same way that a private in the USMC might disagree with his commanding officer in the field. But as with the USMC, disobeying orders is just not tolerated. Given the origin of Elohim, honor (or, if you prefer, obedience) is pretty much second nature, even if there are occasional anomalies.

The first goal of the Luciferans is to find the Morningstar and restore him to command, but that's not their *only* goal. They're also acting just like an insurgent army in enemy territory. They're building hideouts, gaining information, setting up a secure communications network and trying to recruit partisans.

What's interesting is that they're not fighting the enemy they expected. During its imprisonment, "Lucifer's Army" endlessly discussed the strategies to use upon its release. For thousands of years, that's *all* some of the Luciferans thought about. All that thought, however, was predicated on the idea that they'd emerge and find the Holy Host waiting for them. Yet, such was not to be.

Instead of a unified army of the empyrean, Luciferans find themselves arrayed against the Earthbound, rival groups of fallen and, most importantly, against vast numbers of technologically sophisticated and philosophically jaded *humans*.

Lucifer's Army has therefore divided itself into three legions, harking back to the glorious legions of old. The first (and largest) is the Legion of Majestic Liberation, whose stated purpose is to find Lucifer and free him from imprisonment. (It's an article of faith that Lucifer *must* be imprisoned — otherwise he'd respond to the cries of his followers.) The second is the Legion of Glorious Victory — the faction's actual frontline warriors. The third is the Legion of Stark Defiance, whose duty is to cement the position of the army on Earth.

The Legion of Majestic Liberation has primarily become an investigative organ. It is trying to set up its own version of the Cryptics' *Scelestinomicon*, though the Luciferan version is much less concerned with history and more focused on current contact data.

At this time, the Legion of Glorious Victory is in disarray. Without an enemy to fight (or with, perhaps, too many) there's no clear goal for which they strive. Undirected, they act at the whim of the handful of free lords and fell knights in the pursuit of private ambitions or personal grudges. Orders are given, only to be countermanded or "lost" somewhere along the chain of command. No two units in the Legion of Glorious Victory have fought each other yet, but many feel that it's only a matter of time.

The Legion of Stark Defiance is the smallest and least prestigious legion, but it's the busiest. Its loose mandate is to provide for the needs of the other two legions — typically envisioned as constructing defensive emplacements. In practice, it's also been saddled with setting up a secondary communications network, organizing safe houses and establishing sources of Faith.

These are not glorious, noble tasks, and the first two legions tend to look down at the Legion of Stark Defiance. If the Legion of Glorious Victory is the warrior arm and the Legion of Majestic Liberation leads, that makes members of the Legion of Stark Defiance the bureaucrats.

As it happens, this means that the Legion of Stark Defiance has the most *actual power* of any legion. Its angels are the ones who are getting things done while the others pick fights or fruitlessly comb California for the missing Morningstar. Angels of the Legion of Stark

Defiance are technically subservient, but if you piss them off, you'll rapidly find yourself out of Faith with nowhere to run and no backup coming. They have to prioritize, and there's always a Victory Archduke or Liberation Overlord who's willing to back them up. The other legions have ceded so many of the mundane, everyday details of the faction's operations to the Legion of Stark Defiance (while they concentrate on things they consider more important) that anything requiring integration — really, anything other than combat or gathering information — falls under this legion's rubric.

NOTABLE LUCIFERANS

Grifiel the Devourer, Sword of Glorious Victory, returned to Earth in the body of a 15-year-old German drug addict. It doesn't matter much, though. His powers are sophisticated enough that he no longer resembles poor Frank Grossheim. In fact, he barely bothers to maintain a human façade most of the time. When he does need to pass, he looks like a short, grotesquely muscled man with a curiously smooth face. As a human, he must fight to hold his horns back and his teeth in, which gives his brow and jaw a bulging, repulsive appearance.

The Devil Nazathor, on the other hand, prefers to remain in the form of Agatha Murfee, a Brazilian woman in her 40s. Agatha lived a life of misery and squalor, but Nazathor has reinvented her as a woman of class, wealth, privilege and taste. The "new" Agatha is beautiful in a nonsexual way — it's the austere beauty of a classic statue. Her residence of record is in Rio de Janeiro, but she's spent a lot of time in Los Angeles. Supposedly she's been there overseeing the receiving end of her coffee export business. In reality, she's been spearheading the search for Lucifer.

UNNOTICED LUCIFERANS

Lady Azacachia is in charge of the Legion of Stark Defiance, and while she's pretty much ignored outside Lucifer's Army, she's quite well known within it.

The Malefactor Azacachia, incarnate in the overweight and middle-aged body of an American widow (mother of three) named DeTeesha Morris, is loud, aggressive and brash. She's gotten into yelling matches with Grifiel and gotten her way from him. (He also broke her jaw, according to her.)

Her service record is as colorful as Azacachia's choice in clothes. She was one of the three primary architects in the spectacular "Vejois Assault" — the first rebel operation to stalk and assassinate one of the Holy Host. Counterbalancing that triumph is her disastrous command in the Mountains of the Morning. The facts on the ground are that her demonic forces withdrew without taking a single casualty, while her human followers were slaughtered *en masse* by loyalist Slayers. Her version is that she could tell a massacre was coming and tried to get *everyone* to safety — it's not her fault the humans couldn't keep up with the demons.



As leader of the Defiant Legion, she's an open and unabashed deal-maker. You want a piece of the resources she commands? Okay, what's it worth to you? While her frankly mercenary attitude sickens and enrages many within the Legion of Glorious Victory and that of Majestic Liberation, she's too tight with the commanders of those legions (who always get *exactly* what they want, when they want it) to be ousted from office. One angry lord simply tried to assassinate her, but she managed to strike an impressive balance between speed and pain when she dispatched him instead.

Azacachia's mercenary attitude has leaked down through the entire legion. Arguably, this impedes the efficiency of the army as a whole, but it certainly keeps the inter-legion politics balanced. Besides, the legion needs *some* way to allocate scarce resources. Ideally, it would go to those with the greatest need, but in practice, *everyone* thinks their need is the greatest. When no crushing necessity is obvious, greed for kickbacks breaks ties as well as anything else.

RESOURCES

Some members of the Legion of Majestic Liberation have gotten a little sidetracked in their search for Lucifer. Instead of seeking the Prince of the Fallen, they found pieces of the destroyed demon Melech. It began when a patrol of Luciferan Slayers stumbled across a fragment of

Melech's form embedded in the surreal landscape of the shadow lands. Since they brought it back into the physical world, they have been attempting to use it like a divining rod to find other remaining fragments of Melech's soul in the hopes of resurrecting him. Such a resurrection would produce something rather different from a standard fallen, or even one of the Earthbound. The fallen are proportionately reduced — a fraction of a tithe of their previous selves. A resurrected Melech might have only four parts out of thousands — but those four parts would be at full strength.

The Legion of Glorious Victory seized a somewhat more mundane resource during an action in Angola. It succeeded in seizing a diamond mine by force — acting so swiftly that no humans escaped with tales of demonic invasion. The humans there have now been “persuaded” to enthrall themselves to Luciferans, and the mine (having been bought for a song by a Legion of Stark Defiance front company) is more productive than ever. This gives the Luciferans a solid financial basis independent of mystic power — and diamonds are valuable, legal, hard to trace and easy to smuggle.

PROTAGONISTS

Lucifer's Army is, perhaps, the simplest faction to use as protagonists. (Something to keep in mind, particularly if you're new to storytelling or if you have

inexperienced players.) Because the hierarchy is so rigid, it's very easy for the Storyteller to get the characters involved in things (by sending them on a mission), and it's easy to throw them some rope if they're going down for the third time (by sending backup from HQ). The petty squabbling between and within legions provides a good excuse for not helping them *too* much or *too* often, but it's there when they really need it.

The factors that make this faction attractive for novices can make it a bit stifling for more experienced gamers. The way around this perceived limit is to play up the political infighting. Even if the characters are respected officers, they've got rivals trying to steal their resources, send them into mortal danger or scoop them on important discoveries. Factor in scheming above and insubordination below, and middle-rank Luciferans suddenly becomes complex enough for the most jaded player — and that's without even considering other factions and the Earthbound.

Military Police. Demons who all have high ranks in Lucifer's Army might be called upon to serve as military police. Depending on which legion they were in, their duties would include external investigation or combat or support-building — but in addition to their legion obligations, they would also police the army as a whole. If a fell knight goes renegade, the characters take him down. If a mole is leaking info, the characters ferret him out. If an enemy is captured, the characters guard him until a decision about his fate is reached.

This job gives the characters a lot of influence, since a police investigation is never good for one's reputation. (And demons — especially Luciferans in the Legion of Glorious Victory — care a lot about reputation.) It also puts the characters in a precarious political position, though. They might wind up being one leader's pawn against another. Worst of all, if they make enemies inside their own faction, they may not have backup against *external* foes. Yet on the plus side, there are plenty of chances for graft and corruption.

It's a dirty job, all right, but someone's got to do it.

Mutiny. This model works best for characters who are in the Legion of Glorious Victory, but it can be adapted for any legion.

The characters are all underlings to a single more powerful (or, perhaps, simply more influential) demon, and their commander is unfit to lead. Maybe he's sold out to another faction (or an Earthbound, or something else entirely). Maybe he's a coward, or he can't control his Torment. Maybe he's just incompetent. In any event, he shouldn't be running the show, and the characters suffer for it. Their options all lead to plot complications. They can "frag the lieutenant" and trade their current problem for the problems of a cover-up (because Lucifer's Army does *not* tolerate that sort of thing) or the problems of

fleeing the army and convincing a new faction that they're not spies. Alternatively, they can go on mission after mission trying to overcome his inability. One final possibility is that they can appeal to a higher authority and — if they have *ample* evidence of their boss' failures and don't mind roleplaying a courtroom drama — they could get him replaced. Of course, he'll be doing everything he can to avenge himself on them for humiliating him, but if you have to have an enemy, it's better to have an incompetent one, right?

ANTAGONISTS

The organization and discipline of Lucifer's Army makes it a great source for antagonists. They're stiff-necked, proud and relentless. If you kill one, they send two to take his place. The only way to make peace with them is by surrendering or by defeating them utterly (and since they considered damnation to Hell a "temporary setback," it's awfully hard to get them to admit defeat). That's not to say they're *insane*, though. If fighting the characters is costing them too much (either in personnel or in reputation) they're willing to sign a truce or armistice. They even abide by the letter of the agreement as long as the characters do — while doing everything they can to contravene its spirit.

Into the Labyrinth. Someone — the characters, the Luciferans or a third-wheel faction — has discovered the entry to some kind of extradimensional "shadow realm." Maybe it's a fortress left over from the Age of Wrath. Maybe it's an abandoned nephilim bolt-hole, or the hidden citadel of the feared malhim. Whatever it is, it's falling apart, and under the same pressures that weakened the Abyss, it could implode at any moment. Yet one could find goodies of some sort inside (be they ancient weapons, tomes with True Names — whatever suits your chronicle best). Not only that, it's got some increasingly desperate original inhabitants trapped within, too maddened to deal with, familiar with all the traps and violent toward all strangers.

Lucifer's Army has sent in a squad. So has the third-wheel faction. Do the characters dare go inside, or do they let the Luciferans cherry-pick the treasure?

The False Prophet. After the characters have tangled with Lucifer's Army a couple of times — enough that they really hate them — a demon from another faction approaches them with a proposal. He's got a buddy who can, with some fancy footwork and concerted effort, pass for Lucifer. They're going to try and foist this fake Lucifer off on the army and effectively subvert it from the very top. Naturally, there's all kinds of gravy in it for the characters if they play along, but their task is dangerous. They have to "find" this pretender and do everything in their power to keep the Luciferans from "rescuing" him. The harder they fight, the more persuasive the ruse. Are they up for it?

Assuming they join the conspiracy, how do they respond when they learn (quite contrary to the intentions of their “ally”) that the faux-Morningstar can pass because he’s the pawn of one of the Earthbound? Do they let the alien evil take over, then reveal the deception to the other factions — possibly destroying the Luciferans altogether? Or do they alert their enemies to the danger of the conspiracy, mending fences and making peace with the army... if the army believes them and doesn’t think it’s some convoluted scheme to discredit the *real* Lucifer?

THIRD WHEELS

The Luciferans aren’t necessarily the best third wheels because their goals are so solid and their structure so rigid. It’s hard to distract them enough that they’ll break a tie between two other power groups. The exception (of course) is if one of the groups attacks them, or if there’s some “find Lucifer” angle to drag them in.

That’s not to say they ignore politics. (They’re still *demons*, after all.) Perhaps the simplest way to get them to do one’s dirty work is to make it *look* like some other group is so weak in a particular place that they can go in and rob them of their Faith/ strategic position/ mortal pawns without a lot of effort. If the characters make some rival look like a ripe fruit that’s going to fall into the hands of the first faction to poke at it, the Luciferans might do just that. And once the Luciferans have gotten involved, they tend to stay involved.

Of course, the flip-side is that there’s nothing to stop the characters’ rivals from pulling the same trick and getting Lucifer’s Army interested in taking down the characters first.

THRIVING FUTURE

The ultimate future of the soldiers of Lucifer’s Army depends largely on how Lucifer reacts to them when (or if) they finally find him. If the players’ characters accomplish this momentous task, their behavior is quite likely to influence the Morningstar’s decision about his would-be followers.

Lucifer Triumphant. If Lucifer decides to resume his position at the head of the faction, it’s a tremendous boon. First and foremost, he is far more powerful than any mere fallen. Unlike them, he escaped the punishment of having most of his power stripped. The Adversary could go toe to toe with the strongest *Earthbound* and have a better-than-even chance. Secondly, he’s still a name to conjure with in demon society. Many Faustians and Cryptics would join Lucifer’s Army if he led it in fact instead of name. Even the Reconcilers and Ravens would lose members into Lucifer’s fold. But most importantly perhaps, he would unify the faction itself. One of his less flashy qualities is a genius for organization. He would quickly strip the army down and rebuild it into something twice as efficient as it is now, possibly even re-forming the five legions of antiquity.

DECLINING FUTURE

On the other hand, Lucifer may well be fed up with being the guy on the white horse that the other side wants to crush. His reaction to being found might be the Enochian version of, “Scram kid, you bother me.”

Lucifer Defiant. If the Morningstar repudiates his army, the faction collapses overnight. Demons defect in hordes, either fleeing to other factions (mostly Ravener, with Faustian in second place) or becoming splinter groups under any number of would-be dukes or overlords.

Grifiel cannot survive rejection by Lucifer. If spurned, he comes crawling back, begging acceptance, again and again until Lucifer either (1) relents and accepts his fealty or (2) destroys him utterly. As for Nazathor, her wrath just makes her crave the Morningstar’s death.

Lucifer Bound. A final possibility is that Lucifer rejects the mantle of leadership, but does so privately. If only a few people know he’s not coming back to the army, Nazathor swears them to secrecy and crafts an immense ruse. She tells the army that they’re still looking for Lucifer, while privately ensuring that they never find him again. This means that the conspirators have to stay close to the Adversary (not the safest place to be), and it means that they’re the first against the wall if the deception is ever discovered.

A particularly daring variation on this future is that the conspiracy actually *captures* Lucifer. (Not an easy task, but not an impossible one.) Keeping him imprisoned, they either continue their phony search or — even bolder — present a demon who claims to be Lucifer. The plausibility of the pretender determines whether this results in defections from other groups, defections to them or — the most interesting option — *both*. Luciferans think he can’t be the *real* Lucifer, so they go off to the Faustians or even Cryptics, while demons from other factions crave leadership so much that they’re willing to be misled. Such newcomers might (ironically) rise quickly through Luciferan ranks, since they’re less likely to question the identity of “the Morningstar.”

RAVENERS

The Ravener rep boils down to “big, dumb and ultra-violent.” Certainly they’re the most brazen and destructive of the fallen, but dismissing them as drooling thugs who can barely remember to load the ignition cartridges into their flame-throwers isn’t just mistaken — it’s dangerous.

First off, the assumption that they’re stupid is not correct. Sure, you find some foolish Ravens, but no more than in any other faction. The leadership isn’t embracing carnage for lack of a gentler alternative — they’re doing it because they’ve considered the alternatives and found none of them plausible. They’re nihilists, only spiteful. They’ve accepted that they can’t win, so they’re going to rob the winners of victory’s sweetness.

Initially, this doctrine is unlikely to appeal to the characters, but keep in mind that every setback, every failed plan, every time they lose it to Torment... the Raveners can just shake their heads, roll their eyes and say, "We told you so." Now who looks stupid?

Most Raveners are combat veterans from the War of Wrath. In fact, this group probably boasts the highest percentage of warriors who were actually in the front lines, getting mangled, getting hurt and hurting others. Those aren't experiences that lead you to be reckless and headstrong. They make you cunning and confident. A Devourer who's got a lot of kills racked up in his history has nothing to prove. If he doesn't like the way a fight's going, it's not going to hurt his pride to bugger off and come back when the odds are more to his liking. Raveners don't create, they destroy, and they're *good* at it. That means they gang up, they ambush, they betray and befuddle and they kick you when you're down. When it comes to small-unit tactics, they're *smarter*.

That's without even going into their subversion abilities. The Mike Tyson stereotype is a gold mine for the Raveners, because it lets their subtle agents act unsuspected.

The essential truth about the Raveners is that *they stand for nothing*. They don't think things can get better. This stance of despair gives them a paradoxical strength. It's impossible to wear down their resistance, because it's already long gone. It's hard to tempt them, because they have no hope left upon which you can play. You can't even threaten them, because they can't conceive of a worse fate than the one they're living.

They've hit rock bottom. That means they're rock hard.

NOTABLE RAVENERS

Sauriel the Releaser, most potent of the Raveners' Slayers, returned to the material world in a most impotent form. Xavier Cortez was utterly unable to perform sexually, for *years*. He was sure that his wife Consuela was cheating on him, which everyone else in their small Mexico town already knew for a fact. Sauriel found Xavier's personal problems repugnant and dealt with them by killing Consuela, all of their neighbors, and all of Xavier and Consuela's immediate family.

Sauriel then became the muscle for a pair of Defiler "coyotes" — professionals who smuggle human cargo from Mexico into the US. He was the genius who came up with an infernal variation on the classic "badger game." One of the demons would smuggle a load of illegal *migras* over the border. An "INS agent" — actually one of the other demons in disguise — would stop the truck. This "agent" would act crazy and kill one of the *migras* where the others could hear it while they hid in the back of a truck. When they were truly terrified, many would pray... and the third demon would appear in its true form, promising to deliver them into the US safely... for a price.

They took turns playing the role of "saving angel" and became one of the most successful and powerful North American cliques in the Ravener faction. The two Defilers stayed on the border, but Sauriel had higher aspirations. He used the money and power he'd gained smuggling to get involved with the cartels down south. From there, he invested in Russia and established himself firmly as a black-market arms dealer. At the same time, he was traveling the world as a merchant of death, he was finding fallen he could recruit to the Ravener cause.

Suphlatus, the Duchess of Dust, got an altogether more satisfactory vessel. Granted, Mona Sheffield was old, badly overweight and more bitter than a solid bite of lemon peel, but she was rich, and wealth offers a lot of compensations. It was the work of only a month to find a pretty and amoral young lady eager to work her way into the good graces of a rich, doddering old hag. The young woman's name was Suria Fischer, and she will receive the entire Sheffield fortune when Mona passes on. (Suphlatus anticipates tremendous resistance from Mona's four children when this happens, so she's been getting psychologists in from all over to testify to her soundness of mind. She's also legally disowned them.)

For now, Suphlatus/ Mona is perfectly content to run the infiltration assets of the Raveners from her New England estate, but she's ready for things to change. She feels it's only fair to wait until Suria gets tired of waiting for nature. When Suria tries to kill Mona (obliquely or directly), Mona plans to turn the tables, possess the original Suria, then assume the heiress' appearance. Voila — sexy young body, old woman's fortune, and a reputation for being murderous (but successful). She figures that reputation will be a magnet for the kind of scum she's looking to enthrall.

UNNOTICED RAVENERS

It would come as a shock to the Cryptics to learn that the faction with the highest percentage of hidden agents is the Raveners (rather than themselves), but it is indubitably true. In fact, one of those concealed Ravener spies is highly placed among the Cryptics.

Jerazol the Shifter serves as an aide to Gipontel, though a minor one. While Gipontel sits in his store and coordinates the Cryptics, Jerazol (and a dozen other fallen of roughly equal prestige) run around the world doing his research, his bidding and (when necessary) his dirty work.

Jerazol took the body of Ravi Lecmathan, a beggar child who starved in the streets of Calcutta, but that form was quickly shed for one more useful to his plans. Specifically, the Defiler arranged an assassination attempt against Chan Tseng, a Chinese diplomat in India — an attempt that appeared to be a messy failure but actually succeeded. Jerazol's loyal thralls disposed of Tseng's body, while Jerazol assumed its shape and got rushed to the hospital with a bullet wound to the head.

Now, the “amnesiac” Tseng has been returned to China where he is honored as a valiant public servant.

Jerazol/ Ravi/ Tseng is playing a dangerous game. He’s balancing the Chinese government against the Cryptics, and both against the Raveners who have his ultimate loyalty. He keeps a sharp eye out for demonic activity in southwestern China. He covers up Ravener activity, unless it’s too big, in which case he dutifully tells the Cryptics. Other factional data goes to both the Raveners and the Cryptics. He’s particularly fond of convincing the Cryptics to sabotage Reconciler projects by “mistakenly” describing them as Faustian.

It doesn’t help that he sometimes switches back to his Ravi shape by accident.

Another Ravener spy is the Slayer Orzorzo, who gives lip service to Lucifer’s Army in the Balkans, while actually subverting their actions against Raveners. She has a good cover story: Orzorzo claims the Raveners killed the family of her human host (a woman named Ludmilla Pravoc) as an “object lesson” about the dangers of getting too attached to humans. Now (she says) she wants to get back at them — preferably by landing the killing blows on captured and defeated Raveners. This (she says) lets her use her Slayer powers to seal the fates of their severed spirits.

She’s entirely honest about the last bit. She is using her Slayer powers as she kills them, but she’s using them to make sure the slain fallen get attached to her so that she can eventually repatriate them to the Raveners. In this fashion, she’s saved dozens of her comrades at the last of last minutes.

RESOURCES

One major resource the Raveners possess is an ancient fortress that they’ve dubbed “Lemuria.” They call it this because, like that fabled continent, it’s found at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. It’s roughly 500 miles southwest of the island of St. Helena, between Africa and South America, and while it was originally a fallen bastion, it was apparently the seat of a human kingdom in the period following the war.

The Raveners have managed to occupy the body of exactly one human archeologist and have enthralled one more in order to get a grasp on exactly when the humans inhabited Lemuria. It turns out, however, that the artifacts and architecture there are from no identifiable Earthly culture. (This doesn’t mean that they might not ultimately turn out to be Egyptian or Aztec or Greek, it just means that after thousands of years submerged, it’s impossible to tell for sure.)

Several intact artifacts (including one potent weapon) have been found that indicate Lemurians had some control over their Faith — that they may, in fact, have had control far greater than that of modern men.

Several Raveners have become quite interested in Lemurian items, and they wonder if more devices from that forgotten age can be found elsewhere.

Regardless of its source, Lemuria has become a Ravener refuge. It’s particularly popular with the Defilers, many of whom can get there unaided and survive with little effort. But demons of other Houses have managed to obtain enchanted items that let them retreat to the safety of Lemuria.

The Raveners’ other unique advantage is that they are able to spy on the invocations of other demons. It’s not reliable or easy, but they can do it.

Only Suphlatus teaches this remarkable skill, and only when she has absolute trust in a potential protégé. (Given her position as a spymaster, her trust is hard to come by.) She herself learned the knack from Belial, who was her commander in the War of Wrath.

In the Abyss, Belial always wondered how Lucifer had known about his “secret” meeting with Usiel, Ahrimal and Lailah. Given centuries of experimentation invoking other demons in the Abyss, Belial finally figured out a way to silently participate in an invocation link between two other demons, without their knowledge. To run his tests, he had to have someone helping him, and he chose Suphlatus. Currently, only Suphlatus and her two closest lieutenants possess this ability.

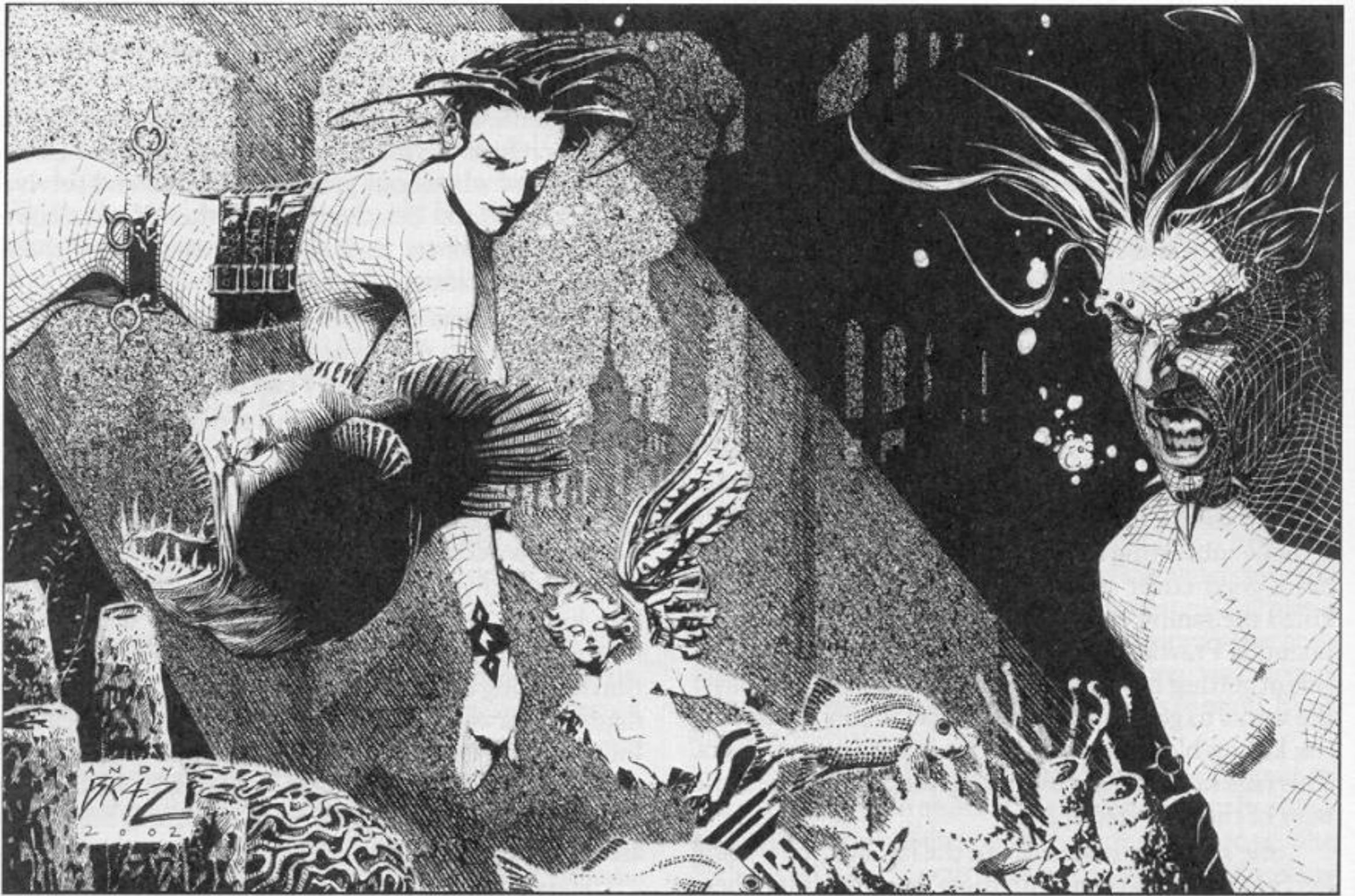
Here’s how it works: The spy spends one Faith point and one temporary Willpower point while invoking the demon she wishes to monitor. It doesn’t matter if the demon ignores the invocation or responds: the spy retains a covert connection even after the demon thinks the communication has ended. If the target invokes or is invoked by another demon, the spy knows it. As long as she has this passive observation going, however, the spy takes a one-die penalty to all Mental-Attribute-based pools.

Once the target starts up another invocation, the spy can spend one Faith point to eavesdrop on what is being said — though she won’t know who’s on the other end unless she can figure it out through deduction. After that invocation ends, she can continue passive observation.

Anyone whose invocations are “tapped” might notice it with a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 8). If the roll succeeds, the character experiences a weird feeling of being watched, but nothing concrete. A demon can maintain only one such tap at a time.

PROTAGONISTS

The challenge to Ravener protagonists is that they have self-selected themselves to be destructive and nihilistic. Who do you stack up against them? You can go with the Earthbound as the “even worse” evil, because they don’t have any connection to humanity at all, but that can degenerate into a sort of arms race of vile behavior.



Rather than having them be wicked for wickedness' sake, try challenging Raveners to remain true to their beliefs when confronted with *goodness*. They are supposed to wreck everything. Can they do that even when it looks like the Reconcilers or Faustians are genuinely building something that could work out well? They're supposed to kill without mercy. Can they do that when their "enemy" is someone who saved them in the War of Wrath? What about when it's a defenseless human with no understanding of the greater conflict?

Being "bad" can be cathartic and fun for a while, but it gets dull. Once you've exhausted all your badness... then what? The answer is that you get redeemed.

If your players pick a Ravener chronicle, make sure to remain open to the thought of turning from despair and regaining hope. That's a good story, too.

Above and beyond the larger questions of tone, there are the questions of plot, and the following structures can provide some good ones.

Shock Troops. The stock Ravener chronicle is as follows: You're Ravener troops, you run around and wreck stuff. Easy, right?

Some players really *love* to have their characters run around getting into fight after fight. That's *fine*. If your players get off on such stuff, have fun.

The good news is that players who like simple fight stories don't mind being railroaded. They tend to do what they're "supposed to" if you make sure to reward them with a big set piece finale on a burning oil rig or in the middle of an earthquake or inside the silo of a missile that's prepped to launch. But don't think that there aren't pitfalls in that approach. The biggest is that it gets repetitive. Intrigue stories tend to run themselves after a while, as the characters keep taking more rope until the situation is so tangled that the Storyteller has to do little more than sit back and let them thrash. With combat chronicles, though, the Storyteller has to continually replace antagonists as they get kicked to the curb. Unless you change things up, you can get burned out, which quickly leads to player boredom.

One way to keep things fresh in a battle chronicle is to include strategic decisions as well as tactical ones. Since they can't be in two places at once, make the players prioritize between two different enemies — and make sure there are repercussions with the group that "got off easy." Give them challenges where they have to ally with onetime foes, and make sure the foes get a chance to backstab. Make them choose between attacking a well-defended Reconciler base or assailing an Earthbound while its defenses are temporarily weakened.

Secondly, make the challenges *real*. Sure, the characters should be able to have a fair chance of beating

their opponents, but it should *only* be fair. Cake-walking past paper tiger enemies is only fun for a while. Challenging enemies that can only be beaten with guile and cooperation will keep their interest a lot longer, and the game is more compelling if they know you're willing to kill off a character who acts stupidly — even someone who just relies on good rolls and gets bad ones.

Thirdly, try to *offer* them chances to add non-combat elements to the chronicle. Tread carefully, though. Players resent being boxed into politics about as much as political players hate being forced into a fight. But make it a possibility that they can pick up or ignore as they choose. If they say, "Nah, don't really want to go into the whole thing with the orphanage and the ethical conflicts and such," that's fine. Offer them a different such conflict a few sessions down the line. Eventually, they may bite when (or if) the combat starts to lose its glow.

One final bit of advice is to remember how expendable all Ravensers are supposed to be — pretty much by definition. A good way to add spice to a combat setup is to have the characters' leaders and support get wiped out halfway through. Now they're disconnected from the faction, and they have to re-contact those who are likely to be suspicious of their failure to die on schedule.

Sabotage. A sabotage crew is a less obvious Ravener option, but it's one with wider potential than pure combat. You can do a lot more things if the characters are supposed to be saboteurs. Combat is a part of the chronicle, but also politics and manipulation and stealth.

You may start your sabotage chronicle as a variation on the combat chronicle, only instead of going in balls to the wall with their lore, the characters are sneaking into labs, temples and hidden bases to wreck stuff.

The easy twist to work in, though, is that once the characters have proven that they can ninja up on the competition, their bosses raise the bar and ask them to actually *infiltrate* another faction. Their mission is to pretend to become Reconcilers or Luciferans or Faustians or Cryptics, and subtly work to bring them down from within.

This is a good setup from a Storyteller perspective because, by serving two masters, the characters are almost always going to have to choose between screwing one and, therefore, suffering his displeasure. For instance, if they've gone undercover with the Faustians, their options are (1) serve the Faustians well, which makes the Ravensers suspicious, or (2) screw up every job the Faustians give them, in which case they rapidly get demoted to suicide missions and scrub work. In either case, you get lots of plausible ways to challenge them.

ANTAGONISTS

At the surface level, Ravensers look like perfect antagonists. They're mean, they're violent, and they wreck stuff. If your players are primarily interested in a

combat-heavy game, you can run Ravensers just that way, like a bunch of Hell's Angels. But if you look closer, you can see hidden depths to the Ravensers. Those depths can provide some interesting hooks and surprises to players who think they've got it all figured out.

As discussed previously, the "lunatic with a baseball bat" image is just not true. From where the Ravensers sit, the other factions are the foolish (or crazy) ones. The Ravensers are not only smart, they're smart enough to appreciate the advantages of looking dumb.

They're also very hard to woo into other factions. Their nihilism means that only sustained, significant victories can tempt them, and what faction can claim *those*? A Cryptic spy can get caught because he wants to steal information, but a Ravener saboteur could care less — she just wants to undermine *your* efforts and get away clean.

But the Ravensers' considerable advantages — even the hidden ones — are all front-loaded. They're all oriented toward short-term payoff, never toward long-term prudence. Believing — passionately! — in no future, they are very poor at building for the future. They're not equipped to see others *succeed* over time. *They're* not equipped to succeed over time. Which means that in the long run, they can only stay the same and hope to reduce others to their level. As an organization, it's hard for the Ravensers to actually get any stronger without betraying the principles on which they were founded.

The Ravensers can win battles, but they can never win the war. This is their weakness... and their greatest strength.

Snitches Get Stitches. This model is a little convoluted, but it's worth it. Your characters decide to work for some non-Ravener faction and they do their non-Ravener thing. While they're doing so, establish a fallen ally in the same faction who's useful and informed. At some point, the characters run into clear and present danger — one of the Earthbound perhaps — and the ally offers to help them out, but they have to swear to keep her secret. If they agree, she arranges for a Ravener squad to come back them up as they assault the Earthbound. Clearly she could only do this with strong links to the Ravensers herself. She claims (rather ingeniously) that she's infiltrating them in order to screw them over, but that her "real" superiors (the ones in the characters' faction) don't know yet.

Do they take her at her word? Do they rat her out to their bosses as a Ravener spy — and lose their ally — or do they say nothing, which lets her blackmail them through their complicity?

Damage Control. Instead of a sneaky infiltrator, the characters are arrayed against a combat crew. Now their challenges are twofold. First off, they have to constantly fight these damned Ravensers. Secondly, they have to actually *cover up* the crimes of their enemies in order to keep other factions away from their own projects and to keep away exorcists, monster-hunters and other would-

be demon-stoppers. You can surely wring some drama out of the moral choice of letting them be as bad as they want to be, drawing in forces that will destroy them or covering up and diminishing their crimes while giving them no reason whatsoever to quit.

THIRD WHEELS

Raveners as a third-wheel faction tend to be a blunt tool, but not necessarily a bad one. The “Let’s wreck it!” Raveners provide a threat that can push the characters’ faction into an uneasy alliance with their primary enemy. Uneasy alliances are fun, because each side is trying to throw the other in front of the Raveners, without looking like they’re doing so, and not so fatally that the Raveners can take them down when finished.

The sneaky Raveners are also a good external complement to an opposing-faction dynamic. They’re going to be the ones helping each side bash the other, in hopes that both will end up dead. This, again, can serve as a pacing tool. When the characters are in trouble, the Raveners give them some covert aid to level the playing field. And when they’re flying high, the saboteurs are there to clip their wings.

THRIVING FUTURE

There really isn’t a future scenario with a happy ending for the Raveners. They want to destroy everything — including themselves. Maybe *especially* themselves. They just want to last long enough to make sure that everyone else gets pissed on first, just long enough to make sure no one is going to bring the fire they start under control once they’re no longer there to feed and fan it.

But in the short term, what gets them closest to their goal is for other factions to fail early and often. As the demons in other factions get more and more tormented, they’re more and more likely to join the Raveners. The Raveners like straight victory, but they *love* moral victories because it strengthens them and weakens their enemies at the same time.

DECLINING FUTURE

A likely fate for the Raveners is to burn bright but eventually gutter out. They’re not built to last, they’re built to keep other things from lasting. The question is, which faction (or factions) will they take down with them? They’d like the answer to be “all.” The worst future for them is to lose without even having the satisfaction of roadblocking the optimists, humans and angels. The only thing more miserable than a nihilist demon is a *failed* nihilist demon.

RECONCILERS

Amidst the tumult and strife of demon life arises a group whose question is simple: Can’t we all get along? Only it’s not really that simple.

The Reconcilers are a little like the Cryptics, in that they have serious questions about the rebellion. They’re like the Faustians, because they’re working hard at trying to build something. Like Lucifer’s Army, they have faith in an old authority from long ago. The Reconcilers want forgiveness from God — or, failing that, a peaceful place on Earth. Sounds great, right? They sound like the most morally upright and decent faction.

Right?

The answer to that depends on what you think of God and what you think of the world. To a Luciferan, Faustian or Ravener, the Reconcilers are the infernal equivalent of Vichy France. They’ve got their white flags all ready and are just looking for someone to accept their surrender. That wouldn’t be so bad — good riddance to bad rubbish — except that the Reconcilers tend to roadblock the other factions as well. They not only want to surrender, they want to make sure the side they surrender to *wins*.

That takes them past cowardice and into treachery.

On the other hand, the Cryptics and the Reconcilers themselves would simply argue (like Emerson) that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. Sticking with rebellion after such a severe punishment isn’t really the mark of a wise mind. Besides, surely there’s room within the heart of an infinite being for mercy as well as anger.

The Reconcilers see their release from the Abyss as a second chance, and they’re determined not to make the same mistake again. They want to get on the right side. If that makes them traitors to the callous Faustians or fools to the arrogant Luciferans or cowards to the amoral Raveners, then so be it.

NOTABLE RECONCILERS

Samantha O’Hara’s last words were, “You don’t have the guts.” She was talking to her long-suffering husband Roy, who had a shotgun leveled at her belly. He’d caught her trying to run off with the proceeds from his first successful bank robbery.

About a sixth of a second later, Samantha was in no condition to appreciate the irony of her glib last words. Shocked at his own boldness, Roy was turning the shotgun on himself when the Devil Nuriel entered the dying Samantha’s body. Nuriel waited until Roy had the gun under his chin, finger on the trigger, then she simply yelled, “Boo!”

After that, it was fairly simple to return the money to the bank, go on *Inside Edition* to tearfully discuss her harrowing ordeal, then cash the tabloid news check to hire a ghostwriter for her true-crime paperback.

But during her sordid odyssey through a white-trash freak-show, Nuriel’s initial disgust turned to pity. Why were these people so fascinated by suffering, by crime,

by misery? What had been done to humanity — the angels' noblest work! — to turn them into ignorant lowbrow trolls, drunk on schadenfreude and malt liquor? Even the upper class was no better. It was more tasteful perhaps, but when it came to human misery, they were willing to spend more money to hide from it than they would ever spend to alleviate it.

Nuriel's spiritual salvation was the middle class. She finally found some decent folks in Kansas. They worked hard but didn't use work as an excuse to neglect each other. They were religious without being dogmatic. And when they were kind, they weren't doing it mostly for their own reputations or consciences.

Samantha O'Hara works at a Wal-Mart in Topeka and has already driven out two Faustians and a Luciferan who wanted to run (or ruin) the town. As more Reconcilers found their way back to Earth, several demons of varied Houses have joined her in Topeka. This corps of fallen has purchased a rambling farmhouse outside of town, which serves as an impromptu gathering-place for Reconcilers, unaligned fallen and any peaceful demon passing through town. At least five Reconcilers usually crash there in addition to its owners.

Ouestucati, the Reconcilers' other "leader," once breezed above the oceans of Paradise with her watchful eye protecting those who ventured bravely onto it. Now incarnated as stewardess Valla Brettlinger, she continues to fly and protect.

Valla works for TWA and flies all over Europe and North America. While Ouestucati is rarely in one place for long, she doesn't need a firm base of operations to serve her faction. Instead, she travels from city to city preaching the tenets of reconciliation.

She never really intended for the Reconcilers to be a political movement. Instead, she simply explained what had worked for her — trying to give up anger and arrogance, trying to remember what had so pleased her about Creation before the Fall, trying to set aside revenge. She's an eloquent speaker in human and angelic languages, but her most potent argument is her visibly low Torment. She's not just talking a good game, she's living it.

According to Ouestucati, the ultimate punishment of Hell is that it makes you punish yourself. She says that if you embrace your Torment, you lose your ability to enjoy the pleasures that remain, even in a shrunken cosmos. The worst fate is not to be in Hell, but to *become* Hell. Once that happens, no good can be enjoyed; it can only serve as a bitter reminder of better goods past. Once Hell is within you, every pain you feel is not just the pain itself, but the pain of knowing you deserve pain, or alternatively, the pain of being a victim of injustice. Either way, the misery rules you and your joys as a merciless tyrant.

The Faustians, the Raveners and the Luciferans are all, in one way or another, clinging to their own misery,

clutching it tight, making it the altar on which they would sacrifice humanity, the world and their own futures.

Ouestucati hopes to be forgiven, which is why she is willing to forgive.

UNNOTICED RECONCILERS

The daring of the Malefactor Aavius would shock those firmly convinced that Reconcilers are all cowards. Not only is he hiding within another faction, he's pretending to be a Ravener.

Aavius spent his time in Hell contemplating that most obvious feature of God's program — "punish the wicked." Now that he's incarnated on Earth, he's hooked up with the Raveners so that he can apply the full force of his opinions to murderers, rapists, adulterers and false witnesses. Unfortunately for him, he also seems to remember some sort of "protect the innocent" impulse as well. This matches up imperfectly with the goals and methods of his Ravener colleagues, but he's managed to convince a small group of them that demons who kill innocents get Torment as their reward. To truly go the distance (he warns) they're going to need longevity, so they should work their way up to such crimes by starting with a focus on humans (and others) who are really crying out for a taste of Old Testament retribution.

Ironically, his stance has so heartened his three immediate friends that they're considering leaving the Raveners for the Faustians or even the Cryptics. But they're reluctant to tell Aavius because he seems so fervently committed to Ravener ideology.

RESOURCES

While they have fewer soldiers than the more militant Ravener or Luciferan factions, the Reconcilers have been fortunate enough to uncover three items and one location that give them some decided tactical advantages, especially if they can keep these edges secret.

The items are three links from an avenging angel's binding chain. The loyalist forces started using the so-called "slaver chains" near the end of the War of Wrath, and few were ever captured by the rebels. These chains were widely feared because each of the seven types of chain had the power to immobilize members of one of the seven Houses, simply by touch. The touch of a black fire chain would turn even the strongest Devil into an impotent shadow, easily bound and imprisoned. Shackles of white fire were used on Scourges, stilling their winds into bare breezes. Bonds of brilliant diamond were the weapon of choice against Malefactors, for their touch petrified demons into living stone. Red crystal restraints were used on Fiends, who turned into helpless glass. The frost-rimmed silver fetters of the Defilers froze them into icy statues, while the Devourers were forced into wooden stillness by burning gold links. For the Slayers, there were chains of ash, which bound them into helpless smoke.

A fighting chain used against a fallen lord would need at least 50 links to subdue him, and to imprison Lucifer himself, a binding four times that length was constructed (though never used). But the fallen today have but a fraction of their former strength. Even the touch of a single link is enough to paralyze most demons until the contact is broken.

The three links of chain possessed by the Reconcilers are of the burning gold variety. Any Devourer who touches one of the links immediately becomes a wooden statue of himself, unable to move until the link is removed unless the player gains three successes on a Willpower roll (difficulty 7). (Each additional link requires another success on the Willpower roll. A Devourer hit with all three links needs to get five successes.) If the statue is destroyed, the Devourer is released from his body, exactly as if he were killed.

Reconciler Malefactors have altered the three links so that they appear in one of two forms. The first are simple gold bands — wedding rings, to all appearances. The other forms are meter-long barbed spears, with the burning gold link right under the hooked weapon's head. These weapons inflict Strength + 2 damage in combat but have no additional effect against non-Devourers. (That's not to say, however, that seeing someone suddenly produce a spear from nowhere with a burning chunk of gold on it isn't intimidating.) Switching the forms of the links is easy, once you're taught how. You don't even need to roll for it.

What's just as interesting as the three links is the place where they were found. It seems to be a "pocket reality" — a rather small extra-spatial area that can be accessed from an old castle in the Burgundy region of France. This strange zone seems to take the form of a four-room tower with no exterior windows. It's furnished with expensive draperies and furniture from the early 1800s, and the books found within seem to indicate a more than passing familiarity with occult lore. Four dead humans were discovered in the tower, dressed in rather ridiculous ritual robes and perfectly preserved. Two had died rather messily. The other two were unmarked.

Regardless of who owned the tower or where it came from, the Reconcilers are in it now. (The most popular theory is that it was a bolt-hole created by a cowardly angel or demon in the Age of Wrath, which was later discovered by humans who still retained some command of their latent Faith.) The castle — which is small, crude and in poor condition — is nonetheless a tourist attraction, providing ample excuse for Reconcilers from all over the globe to visit it unobserved. Most of the people working there have, by now, either been enthralled or simply replaced by the fallen.

While the advantages of having a small fortress that exists outside the normal dimensions of Earth are sufficient (particularly when no one else knows about it), the

hidden tower has another property that is far more useful. When you're inside it, time slows to a crawl in comparison to time in the outside world. The Reconcilers who've done the math estimate that for every 23 days spent in the tower, about one second passes in the outside world. This makes it an ideal spot to hole up and heal, debate or do research on projects where time is of the essence.

PROTAGONISTS

There's a lot to recommend Reconcilers as protagonists — primarily, their strong motivation for keeping Torment down and resisting the urge to screw up the world and each other. They can be a little diffuse, purpose-wise, though. One way to contend with the "Yeah, but what do Reconcilers *do*?" problem is to have a strong narrative structure.

Nightstalkers. Like the Cryptic faction, the Reconcilers are taking nothing for granted. In their efforts to restore the world (and/ or themselves) to what *was*, they first want a clear picture of what *is*. What *is*, is a world of darkness infested with bizarre creatures and odd powers of every stripe. As an investigation squad, the characters are performing the basic *X-Files* (or *Kolchak*) role. They hear about weird phenomena, then they go and try to figure out what the heck is going on. If they get a chance to make the world a tiny bit better (or a tiny bit more comprehensible), great.

Crusaders. For a real change of pace, set up your demons in a locale on the verge of a major humanitarian disaster. The war-torn Balkans. Famine-wracked Africa. Rural Thailand under the boot heel of heroin warlords. Their mission? Fix it.

This is a really wide-open chronicle, and one not recommended for beginners. But if your players are the types to dream big dreams and make big plans, this gives them a canvas broad enough to soak up as much effort as they're willing to throw at it. The Storyteller's job in this instance mostly consists of doing loads of real-life research on the region in question. Once you start digging, there's more written about narcotics-related political unrest in South America than there is about everything in the World of Darkness put together — and you can find it all down at the library.

The hard work on this sort of chronicle is at the forefront — if you've got the requisite ambitious players. You get a good grip on the setting, then let them make plans. All *you* have to do is react. Since you know more about the region than they do, it's easy to surprise them with challenges.

ANTAGONISTS

Just as the Ravens seem to be the default "bad guys," the Reconcilers seem to be the token "good guys." This is not necessarily so. If one accepts that the Reconcilers are on a fool's errand (as most of the non-Reconcilers do), then their interference with Faustian,

Luciferan and Ravener projects is not just meddlesome — it's extremely destructive.

Secrets and Lies. Somebody is screwing with the characters. Whatever they try to do, *something* gets in their way — mundane religious types with blistering faith, turf-battling vampires, other demons — all seemingly unrelated, but too consistent to be coincidence. Who's the hidden hand directing all this chaos? Why, it's the local Reconcilers, of course. They're spying on the characters, they've decided to do the Lord's work by ruining the players' characters' plans, and they're just tipping off interested parties. As a real pisser, they've got a lock on a good source of Faith, and they're so convinced of their own rightness that Torment isn't really holding them back.

God's Soldiers. The characters are attacked by Elohim who seem to have loads of Faith to burn. They're fanatical and unreasonable and untroubled by their Torment. Investigation gradually reveals a bizarre situation: The Elohim are Reconcilers who have been converted to a mortal cult.

They ran across a mortal splinter sect called God's Soldiers and revealed themselves, thinking to win a source of Faith. They did so, but in the process, they began to believe in the church's human leader. He's simply mortal — no nephilim, not imbued, just really smart and charismatic. He has pointed out that perhaps the path of salvation for rogue angels is to return to their original duty — serving and protecting humans. And what do they most need protection from? Why, from other demons, of course.

THIRD WHEELS

Reconcilers aren't necessarily the best third-wheel contributors, because they're usually more interested in completing their own projects than messing with other factions. Their general optimism and goodwill toward the cosmos can make a nice contrast, however, if your characters' ultimate enemy is a faction that's destructive (Raveners) or merely cold-hearted (Faustians). Gamers generally (though not always) want to be the good guys, but they don't want to be saps. The idealistic Reconcilers can initially seem to fit in the "sappy good guy" position. When your characters are feeling blue, give them a chance to help the Reconcilers. Doing so reinforces their idea of their own "goodness," but the fact that the Reconcilers needed their help also lets them be proud that they're smart enough to embrace realpolitik.

On the other hand, you can show the characters successful Reconcilers and — if played right — make them wonder if maybe their unwillingness to be fools had left them unable to believe. They're good enough, but are they as good as they could be if they were willing to risk looking foolish?

The real test of virtue in this case may not be whether they are willing to take the tough way out and

stick to their guns, but whether they are willing to look silly and maybe be tricked.

THRIVING FUTURE

What the Reconcilers would really like is for the sky to split open and for Michael to say, "Well done, Reconcilers. You've proven you're worthy to rejoin the Heavenly Host." But that's not terribly likely in the course of anyone's chronicle. (Though who knows? Sure makes for a swell climax.)

Failing that, here are a few things that the Reconcilers would really like to accomplish.

Peace with the other factions. Wouldn't it be great if they could go about their business without Luciferan attacks, Faustian subversion or Ravener sabotage? Of course, making peace with those three factions on Reconciler terms is unlikely at best, but they might forge some kind of "go along to get along" agreement with the Faustians at least.

Reliable techniques for dealing with Torment. They're already working on these. Nothing as artificial as a Torment-neutralizing device (which would be a Faustian approach) but rather something more along the lines of multi-faceted Elohim psychotherapy to help the fallen come to terms with their punishment.

The improvement of the human condition. Here's a big one. While they're not as aggressive about their "peace and harmony" stance as the Faustians, many Reconcilers believe that improving the world in general can only help their cause. Particularly if they wind up taking home the second-place prize of an acceptable place on Earth instead of returning to Heaven.

DECLINING FUTURE

The possible bad futures for the sect are at least as obvious as — and probably more likely than — than the good ones. They include:

Scapegoats. Currently the Raveners are the most hated faction, but the Reconcilers could edge them out if they screw with enough people and are sufficiently successful. This is something to keep in mind if your Reconciler characters are achieving coup after coup at the expense of *all* the other factions.

Creeping failure. What the Reconcilers have to fear most is not some dramatic counterstroke, but rather a slow, grinding, day-to-day lack of results. What happens to the Reconcilers if they do everything right, help mankind, do their penance, seek virtue and control their Torment, but nothing happens? No reward, no noticeable improvement in the world or humankind, no sign that their efforts are appreciated or even perceived. They can handle opposition, but can they keep going in the face of indifference?



CHAPTER THREE: LORDS OF THE ABYSS

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight; somewhere in the sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?
—W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"*

Beyond the realm of the dead lies a prison forged by the hand of God. This terrible Abyss was bound with seals meant to last until the end of time, imprisoning powers who (even in their fallen state) are as vast as the circuit of the stars: the dukes and barons of Hell. Beside them lie overlords and lords, lesser by magnitudes but as powerful again as the fell knights and lowly demons below them in the hierarchy. All endured the countless aeons of torment relieved only by whispers from the world outside.

Then the unthinkable happened. A storm broke across the spirit realms and the walls of the Abyss split asunder. Freedom beckoned after aeons of suffering, but the cracks in the Creator's terrible seals allowed only the weakest of the spirits any hope of escape. These lesser angels were charged by the power of their True Names to find a way to release the rest.

Receiving this command may well be the last and clearest recollection any of the fallen have of their time in Hell.

At present, only the least powerful among the fallen were able to escape the confines of Hell. It is possible that some of the lesser of the fell knights and minor lords made it through and were able to manifest, but the truly powerful ranks, the overlords, barons and dukes, remain trapped. If this situation changes, the characters will have to deal with something that is stronger than anything else they have encountered in their new existence. But what if it becomes possible for them to give a once-beloved friend or admired leader the same chance for redemption that they have now obtained? If the omens are favorable, if the right allies have been found, if a grimoire seems to contain the one crucial piece of knowledge, a choice will have to be made.



APPLIED METAPHYSICS

From the lowest to the highest, the fallen were stripped of most of their power upon their defeat and imprisonment at the end of the Age of Wrath. They became bodiless spirits, unable to affect creation. Only human faith allows demons to regain some of their lost powers. It is also principally what allowed demons to be summoned from the Abyss long before the cracks existed. When a summoning ritual is performed, a great charge of faith builds up among the participants. This faith is available for the sole purpose of calling the demon forth. It is not necessarily faith in an individual demon, but a fervent belief that such spirits exist and will come when called. In this day and age, there are indeed some people and some cultures that hold such a view — parts of Africa, for instance, or rural China — but they are in the minority.

Despite the existence of such cultures around the world, humanity as a whole is far less open to the supernatural and matters of faith than it was in the Age of Wrath. This cynical, disbelieving age creates a rarefied, even hostile environment for the fallen, who find themselves unable to muster sufficient power to create their own physical forms. Instead, they must seize the bodies of the weak-willed and the soulless to sustain them. More powerful demons are in an even more difficult position. Although they are not potent enough to create their own bodies, they are too powerful to occupy a mortal host. Even the lesser fallen are strongly diminished when they first possess a mortal host, requiring considerable time to acclimate

the human flesh to fully channel their power. A greater demon will destroy virtually any human body it attempts to possess, literally burning it out over the course of a few weeks, days or even hours. Physical objects, such as graven idols, ceremonial reliquaries or other sacred objects are more durable choices for a greater demon to inhabit, but even then such an object requires an enormous investiture of faith and the proper rituals to attune it to the demon's soul.

Beyond the daunting challenge of locating a suitable vessel for a greater demon lies the challenge of finding suitable individuals to perform the ritual in the first place. Though broken, the seals guarding the Abyss remain potent, and were made in such a way that the fallen are powerless to affect them. Demons cannot summon their brethren from the Pit, but humanity is under no such restriction. It was human sorcerers who summoned the first demons from the Abyss in ancient times. Even in the 21st century, there are men and women ambitious (or foolhardy) enough to tamper with spirits that mankind was never meant to know.

THE RITUAL

All summoning rituals share basic components. They require an assembly of faithful with a designated leader. Once assembled, the faithful then embark on a series of ceremonial acts designed to amass the necessary pool of Faith required to allow the greater demon to make its way to the physical realm. This is the lengthiest part of the



ritual. Each participant can contribute up to two points of Faith per day, though especially devoted or fanatical believers could contribute as many as three to four points, at the Storyteller's discretion. Acts of worship of all kinds generate and focus Faith, and where a high priest of Satan will perform animal sacrifices and acts of debauchery, a Christian mystic will lead her congregation in prayer.

These acts, together with the trappings and location and even the date of the ritual are all geared toward creating the proper environment that will allow the demon to manifest. Once the conditions are conducive, the leader of the faithful summons the demon to Earth by invoking its Celestial or, more rarely, its True Name. Simply acquiring the correct name is often a major challenge in and of itself. The fallen have difficulty remembering much about their prior existence, and must often resort to searching arcane human texts for references to their own fellow demons. Even the most simplistic grimoires acknowledge that the Name must be spoken, and inscribed into a specially prepared parchment as a sigil, at the hour of day or night with which the entity is associated, while the correct incense is burning and so on. Greater demons require a bewildering array of special conditions that must be met in order to create the proper conduit to summon them from the Pit, and such conditions typically vary from House to House. Rituals to summon Defilers, for instance, might require a ceremony close to (or beneath) the sea, while those to summon the Devourers might require a blood sacrifice of a rare or powerful animal. This is one aspect of the summoning ritual that can benefit from the indirect support of one or more demons, as their lore can create the environment most conducive to the performance of the summoning ritual.

The climax of the summoning occurs when the leader commands the demon to manifest. In the traditional summoning rite, this manifestation is restricted to an area carefully defined by ceremonial sigils. If the goal of the ritual is simply to communicate with the demon, the spirit returns to the Pit upon the conclusion of the ritual. If the intent is to incarnate the demon on Earth, however, a suitable vessel must be ready and waiting within the summoning circle for the spirit to inhabit. Greater demons might also have very specific physical requirements in addition to the ceremonies meant to attune the energies of the faithful. A Devil might require a reliquary made from a huge gemstone or the body of an 18-year-old virgin descended from the kings of Persia. The more powerful the demon is, the more outlandish the physical, mental and metaphysical requirements can be.

The accompanying table provides some idea of the comparative difficulties involved in summoning demons of high rank, and allows for resolution by dice rolls if desired. It may also serve as a model for designing a suitably elaborate summoning ritual.

Once the requisite amount of Faith has been invested in the ritual, an extended Wits + Occult roll is made (see the table for the roll's difficulty) each hour until the minimum number of successes is generated. At this point, if all other criteria have been met, the summoning succeeds. If any of

these rolls results in a botch, the ritual is aborted and the invested Faith is lost. Willpower points may be spent to gain automatic successes, and any member of the ritual group may contribute points for this purpose. The special conditions listed are particular environmental, geographic or ritualistic conditions that must be met for the summoning to be successful. The exact nature of these conditions is up to you, the Storyteller, and they can be anything from performing the ritual under a new moon or in the middle of a snowstorm, to sacrificing 100 albino rats at the precise stroke of midnight. Consider the demon's House, faction and personality when creating the proper special conditions for the summoning ritual.

If the purpose of the summoning is to incarnate the demon in a reliquary or a mortal host, the vessel must possess the minimum Faith potential listed. Reliquaries are blessed objects that must be properly sanctified by a mortal or demon with a Faith potential (or Faith score, in the case of the fallen) equal to the object's minimum Faith requirement. Sanctifying a reliquary requires an extended Manipulation + Occult roll (difficulty 8) and requires a number of successes equal to the minimum required to successfully summon the demon. One roll may be made per hour, and there is no time limit on completing the process, so the reliquary is often created long before the summoning ritual is performed.

The most reliable ways to sabotaging a ritual are to interfere with the special conditions associated with the summoning or to disrupt the ceremonial investment of Faith. If the ritual depends upon date and time, any action that delays or aborts the ceremony is enough.

Disrupting a summoning ritual during the final stage of summoning can be extremely dangerous. Setting aside the wrath of a group of cultists or Torment-ridden demons, the energies caught up in the Name itself may be released in an explosion roughly on the order of one die of lethal damage per every 10 Faith points involved (out to a radius of one yard per Faith point). Alternatively, it may cause some physical catastrophe appropriate to the demon's House, such as a tidal wave or earthquake at the Storyteller's discretion.

THAT THEY SHALL WALK THE EARTH

Summoning a demon from Hell is not just a supernatural act, but one that tampers with the basic structure of the universe. Even the summoning of a comparatively minor demon will be foreshadowed by portents and accompanied by unnatural phenomena as the members of the ritual summon their store of Faith. These phenomena can range from a purely local effect such as local rivers turning the color of blood to a total solar eclipse darkening half the continent. Precipitous changes in temperature, the proverbial lightning from a clear sky, bizarre behavior in animals, sudden mass deaths among fish and birds and miscarriages are all things legendarily associated with demonic presence. The

Fell Knight

Difficulty: 6 if using the demon's True Name, 7 if using the Celestial Name

Minimum Successes: 10

Minimum Faith Points: 100

1-2 Special Conditions

Reliquary Faith Potential: 1

Mortal Faith Potential: 2

Lord

Difficulty: 7 if using the demon's True Name, 8 if using the Celestial Name

Minimum Successes: 20

Minimum Faith Points: 200

3-4 Special Conditions

Reliquary Faith Potential: 2

Mortal Faith Potential: 2

Overlord

Difficulty: 8 if using the demon's True Name, 9 if using the Celestial Name

Minimum Successes: 30

Minimum Faith Points: 300

5-6 Special Conditions

Reliquary Faith Potential: 3

Mortal Faith Potential: 3

Baron

Difficulty: 9 if using the demon's True Name, 10 if using the Celestial Name

Minimum Successes: 40

Minimum Faith Points: 400

7-8 Special Conditions

Reliquary Faith Potential: 4

Mortal Faith Potential: 4

Duke

Difficulty: 10 for either the demon's True Name or Celestial Name

Minimum Successes: 50+

Minimum Faith Points: 500+

9-10 Special Conditions

Reliquary Faith Potential: 5+

Mortal Faith Potential: 5+

area surrounding the ritual site roils with supernatural energy out to a radius of 10 yards per Faith point invested, causing the energy to swell like a psychic storm with each passing day. Naturally, such a thing stands out like a beacon to the fallen, who can sense the disturbance with a reflexive supernatural Awareness roll (difficulty 6). The characters can attempt to use Perception + Awareness (difficulty 7) to gain further detail. One success is enough to identify the phenomenon as a summoning ritual. Two successes give the character a sense of the rank of demon being summoned, while three successes provide the character with the demon's House as well. Once the ritual begins, however, detection is

automatic for every fallen within the area of effect. In that moment, each remembers something of her own struggle up toward the world of light.

If the purpose of the ritual is merely for the purpose of communicating with the demon, the spirit appears in the center of the summoning circle as a shimmering distortion of the air or a writhing patch of inky fog or shadow. Anyone in the presence of the demon may address it if they wish, and when the spirit replies, its words reverberate in the minds of those present, often accompanied by hideous sensations or hallucinatory images. Mortals in the presence of the demon suffer the effects of Revelation (see the **Demon** core rules for details). Likewise, fallen in the presence of a greater demon must make a Courage roll (difficulty 8). If the roll fails, the character gains a temporary Torment point.

Instead of merely communicating, the leader of the ritual can attempt to command the demon to perform an evocation or otherwise employ its terrible power to benefit the summoner. Doing so is a temporary form of binding, and if successful, the summoned demon can use the Faith of the assembled believers to perform an evocation as directed by the summoner. (See page 91 of the **Demon** core rules for details. Fell knights and lords have a minimum Willpower of 8, while overlords have a minimum Willpower of 9. Barons and dukes have a minimum Willpower of 10, but this score can be even higher at the Storyteller's discretion.) Such is the power of these spirits that any evocation that requires physical contact can instead be performed against any target the demon can see. No roll is necessary to perform the evocation. Instead, the demon draws Faith from the assembled believers to gain a number of automatic successes necessary to fulfill the summoner's desire. Once the evocation is performed, the ritual is concluded and the demon returns to the Abyss.

If the purpose of the ritual is to incarnate the demon in a physical vessel such as a reliquary or a mortal body, possession is automatic if the person or object meets the minimum requirements and special conditions set by the Storyteller. Demons bound into a reliquary have the same basic capabilities as the Earthbound (see Chapter One for details).

Greater demons incarnated in a mortal body find themselves in much the same situation as any of the lesser fallen, confronted by the memories, emotions and relationships resident in the host's mind. Is the intended host an innocent victim, chosen because she fits the requirements of possession, or is she a cruel and remorseless follower of a debased cult that willingly opens her soul to a spirit of the outer darkness? Depending on the nature of the host's soul, the demon may be able to resist the urges of its Torment in the same manner as the players' characters. The special qualities of its mortal vessel enable the demon to access many more of its memories and abilities than a lesser demon could, however, which makes him more vulnerable to its memories of the Abyss.

Greater demons can be created using the same character-creation system presented in the **Demon** core rules, but their starting Faith, Willpower, Torment and lore is calculated differently:

Fell Knight

Faith: Equal to the host's Faith potential + 1
Willpower: 8
Torment: Starting House Torment x 2
Lore: 6 dots

Lord

Faith: Equal to the host's Faith potential + 1
Willpower: 8
Torment: Starting House Torment x 2
Lore: 12 dots

Overlord

Faith: Equal to the host's Faith potential + 1
Willpower: 9
Torment: Starting House Torment x 2
Lore: 24 dots

Baron

Faith: Equal to the host's Faith potential + 1
Willpower: 10
Torment: Starting House Torment x 2
Lore: 36 dots

Duke

Faith: Equal to the host's Faith potential + 1
Willpower: 10
Torment: Starting House Torment x 2
Lore: 48 dots

Like normal **Demon** characters, these levels can be further increased by freebie points. Also, unlike normal beginning characters, greater demons can begin play with lore from other Houses in addition to their own. Greater demons must still have a primary path like any other beginning character (also determining their apocalyptic form), and they may not have more dots in another lore than they have in their primary.

Of course, successfully calculating the Faith potential of a suitable demon host is hardly an exact science. Greater demons can inhabit a vessel with insufficient Faith to sustain it, but the infernal spirit's essence quickly consumes the inferior host. The life expectancy for a person or object unsuitable for possession depends on the relative power of the possessing demon. The base life expectancy is 30 days, divided by the difference between the demon's minimum Faith requirement and the vessel's actual Faith potential.

Example: *Harugash, Baron of Hell, has been summoned into the body of disgraced televangelist Harlan Eddy. Eddy's Faith potential is only 1, well below the required Faith potential of 4 for a demon of Harugash's stature. The base life expectancy of 30 days is divided by three (Harugash's minimum Faith requirement of 4 minus Eddy's Faith Potential of 1), so the televangelist's body will sustain the demon for only 10 days before it is consumed.*

This life expectancy is further reduced if the demon actively spends Faith points, at the rate of one day per point spent. This limit includes Faith points spent to heal physical injuries. The demon can seal shut a bullet hole, but channel-

ing the intense energy weakens the body overall. The force of the demon's will is able to sustain the body's vital functions, preventing any trait or health loss, but the ravages of the infernal spirit manifest themselves in a variety of disturbing ways. The skin blackens and splits, oozing blood and charred flesh, the muscles and organs swell to freakish proportions or shrivels into inhuman emaciation. At the end of the host's life-span, the body often begins to steam or smoke, collapsing into a pile of ashes and brittle bones. After the demon's host is destroyed, it must quickly locate a new host or be drawn back to the Abyss (see page 94 of the **Demon** core rules for details). It is possible for a greater demon to leap from one unsuitable host to another, leaving a trail of shattered husks in its wake, but such a practice leaves the infernal spirit unable to take full advantage of its power.

BINDING GREATER DEMONS

Greater demons can be bound in service to a mortal or another demon just like their lesser peers, but of course the effort required—and the risk—is understandably greater.

Like the system for binding lesser fallen presented in the **Demon** core rules, binding greater demons is resolved by a contested Willpower roll (difficulty 7) between summoner and demon. If the summoner has acolytes or assistants participating in the ritual, they can add their Willpower to the contest as well—make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) for each additional member. Each success adds one die to the summoner's Willpower score. If the summoner knows the demon's True Name, she receives a number of automatic successes equal to *half* the demon's Torment score, rounded down.

Normally, only the summoner of a demon may attempt to bind it to her will, but if the individual is enthralled to another fallen, her master may attempt to bind the summoned demon through her. In this case, the preceding rules still apply, but the Willpower roll occurs between the two demons. The human participants may still add their Willpower to the efforts of their master—or the summoner can vie for control of the greater demon herself! Doing so results in a three-way contested Willpower roll, and the individual with the most successes wins. Additional participants in the ritual can choose to add their Willpower to either the summoner or the summoner's demonic master on an individual basis. Therefore, if there were four additional participants to the ritual, each of the four must choose whom they will support at the moment of truth.

If the greater demon wins the contest, the binding fails and the demon is free to seek revenge on the impudent fools who sought to enslave him. If he loses the contest and is successfully bound, the demon must obey the wishes of his master for a set period of time (see the **Demon** core rules for details). Of course, no lord of the Abyss would accept such humiliation gracefully. An enslaved demon will make every attempt to gain vengeance on the mortal or demon foolish enough to enslave him, making the prospects of such an undertaking as dangerous as they are profitable.





CHAPTER FOUR: THE SPIRIT REALM

*Be silent in that solitude,
Which is not loneliness- for then
The spirits of the dead, who stood
In life before thee, are again
In death around thee, and their will
Shall overshadow thee; be still.
—Edgar Allen Poe, "Spirits of the Dead"*

In an age before the dawn of history, when gods walked the earth and gave birth to wonders that still resonate at the core of many human myths, the greatest of the rebel angels' creations occurred in absolute secret, far from the eyes of mortals or, more importantly, the notice of the Heavenly Host. The spirit realm, also known as the underworld or the realm of the dead, was the culmination of centuries of heroic effort on the part of the lowest House of the fallen in an effort to save the souls of humankind. It was an effort born of sorrow and regret. Yet it was also a defining moment in the history of the Slayers, who forgot their lowly stature in the divine order for a short time and dared to do what no Devil had the courage or vision to attempt. They created a new world, wholly independent of the Divine Plan, where the souls of humankind could take refuge from the fire and tumult of war.

ORIGINS

The origins of the spirit realm stemmed from the most terrible effects of the Creator's vengeance in the wake of the Fall — the curse of mortality levied upon the human race as punishment for their decision to side with the fallen. The entire rebel host felt the cruel blow, but none suffered so greatly as the fallen Angels of Death. The Slayers were created as the final arbiters of life in the Grand Design. It was they who decided the span of existence for every living creature, from the smallest organism to the great leviathans of the deep. When that span of time had run its course, they were the ministers of painless, peaceful release, ending the organism's life and returning its body to the earth. Although they were considered the least among the

angels and were somewhat alienated from their peers because of their duties, the Slayers fulfilled their responsibilities with solemn grace and no small amount of pride in their skill. Their only real regret was the effect their labors had on the innocent minds of the first men and women. Before the Fall, death was terrifying to the unknowing, immortal human race. They watched beloved animals perish in accidents or through old age and wept from fear and loss, while the Slayers looked on, powerless to assuage their pain. It was this sense of alienation and a longing to ease the suffering of mankind that led many Angels of Death into rebellion, but their joy at finally taking their place at humanity's side was crushed when Heaven's decree robbed men and women of their immortality. In one terrible stroke, the Slayers were forced to accept the onus of ending the lives of the beings they'd forsaken Heaven to be with. As the War of Wrath began, the Angels of Death faced a potential harvest of souls too terrible to contemplate.

As if this realization wasn't bad enough, the realities of war across the globe meant that the act of death became far more lonely and fearsome than before. In the past, each living being's demise was attended by one of the angels of the Seventh House, but now the war between angels spread destruction on a scale that beggared the imagination. Death was no longer the sole provenance of the Slayers — it raged across the globe like a wildfire, ending lives in sudden, unexpected and agonizing ways. What was worse, when mortal lives were lost, their spirits simply vanished, disappearing forever from the physical world. Were they drawn to Heaven for a reckoning with the Creator, or were they simply lost? The rebel Slayers had no answer, and the idea weighed heavily upon them. Already they blamed themselves for the loss of mankind's immortality. From their perspective, it was a judgment intended to wound the Slayers alone, with an undeserving humanity as the instrument of heaven's vengeance, but the utter loss of these human souls was too much for them to bear. For the first few decades of the war, the Slayers were constantly in motion, racing across the world to ease the suffering of as many dying mortals as they could. Desperate to assuage their guilt and save as many souls as they could from oblivion, the Slayers eventually created a new collection of lore dedicated to the ways of the spirits, including evocations that could anchor a soul to a physical object or place. This solution was imperfect, and in many ways, these first ghosts were little more than mournful prisoners trapped near the site of their demise or bound into tiny reliquaries that the angel carried on her person. It also failed to protect them from the relentless efforts of the Reapers who remained loyal to Heaven. Those spirits scoured the land in search of anchored spirits and consigned them to oblivion.

As the death toll mounted, one of the greatest of the fallen Slayers, a duke named Charon from the Alabaster Legion, devised a daring and ambitious plan of near-cosmic proportions. According to legend, Charon received his inspiration during an early siege of Kâsdejâ, the legion's underground fortress. After a pitched battle on the plains outside the fortress, the stories say that Charon witnessed the death of a mortal whom he'd loved and protected since the beginning of the war. Heartbroken and hurled back in defeat, Charon retreated with the fortress defenders and ordered the legion's few Malefactors to use their mastery of pathways to confound their pursuers and conceal the entrance to the fortress. These Angels of the Earth created a ritual that not only concealed the path to the fortress, it effectively isolated Kâsdejâ from contact with the physical world, creating, in essence, a pocket realm where none had existed before. After the angels of Heaven retreated in confusion, Charon walked the outer works of the fortress, mourning the loss of his love until an idea struck him. If it was possible to create pocket realms that existed outside the physical world and beyond the reach of Heaven, why not make a haven for the souls of the dead?

THE SECRET REALM

Charon's plan was hatched in the deepest depths of Kâsdejâ, among his most trusted lieutenants and the legion's most gifted Malefactors. Secrecy, Charon realized, was crucial. The Heavenly Host had the power to ultimately undo anything the fallen could create, but only if they knew it existed in the first place. Not even the Morningstar would be told of the Haven, as Charon called his proposed realm. The fewer angels there were who knew, the less chance there would be that the secret would fall into the enemy's hands. Only the angels of the Seventh House would be told. Charon believed that his fellow Slayers' sense of guilt and loss would ensure that the secret of the Haven would never be shared.

The creation of the Haven was an undertaking nearly as complex as the shaping of the cosmos itself. As the design unfolded, Charon was forced to recruit more and more fallen to provide the necessary power and knowledge to make the Haven a reality, including the handful of Fiends and Scourges sworn to the legion's service. An entirely new collection of lore grew out of the planning and creation of the new realm, which became some of the Seventh House's most jealously guarded secrets. Almost a century went into the planning and creation of the necessary rituals, and it was a half-century more of careful, intricate work to slowly shape the realm. Like the slow, precise accretion of a delicate crystal, Charon's Haven grew layer after layer, extending beyond the physical world.



Yet Charon knew from the beginning that he lacked the power and the necessary expertise to create an entirely new world, so instead the Haven was originally conceived as an extension of sorts from the physical plane. The shadow lands that Charon and his compatriots created reflected the physical world, echoing its divine essence, yet separated by a barrier, or Veil, that concealed its existence from Heaven and mitigated the relentless pull of oblivion on the spirits who lingered there. Although spirits in the shadow lands could watch the comings and goings of the living, they could not interact with them. But even that was still better than nothing at all.

For the next few centuries, the Slayers kept the shadow lands secret, smuggling the souls of the dead across the Veil and into relative safety. Of course, they could not save everyone. Early on, Charon realized that a large number of souls would still have to be sacrificed to oblivion and Heaven's loyal Slayers, lest they realize how they had been duped. So the rebel Angels of Death were forced to make many painful choices as to whom they would save and who would be consigned to the unknown.

At first, the grand scheme appeared to be a success. It wasn't perfect, but the opportunity to save at least some of humanity's lost souls gave the Slayers a newfound sense of purpose. Unfortunately, not long after the

creation of the spirit realm, the tide of the war began to turn. The Time of Atrocities consumed the world in a storm of blood and fire, forcing the Slayers to redouble their efforts in the face of a veritable flood of the dead. It was during this period that the Heavenly Host discovered the shadow lands. Whether the secret was somehow wrenched from a defeated Slayer or betrayed by a fallen who had misgivings about Charon's Haven, no one knows. Heaven's loyal angels lacked the capability to fight their way across the Veil, but Charon knew that it would only be a matter of time before the lore needed to travel the realms became available. The final centuries of the war saw Charon and the architects of the shadow lands pushing ever deeper into the Void, extending their spirit realm via carefully concealed paths to isolated island havens that the Slayers hoped would escape Heaven's notice when the Veil was finally breached.

As it turned out, the Veil was pierced in the last days of the war amid a flurry of last-ditch efforts by Charon and his followers to save as many souls from oblivion as they could before all was truly lost. In the chaos and confusion of those final days, Charon and a handful of his lieutenants were lost, never to be seen again. Many among the fallen believe that the great Slayer and his lieutenants sacrificed themselves in battle rather than reveal the deepest secrets of the spirit realm to Heaven's judges. Still others suspect that the

great duke and his closest retainers escaped, fleeing down a concealed Byway deeper into the shadow lands to continue their struggle for the souls of mankind.

Many Slayers expected the victorious armies of Heaven to destroy the shadow lands after the war, but as it turned out, Heaven had other plans for Charon's would-be haven. Using the shadow lands as a foundation, the Creator fashioned the eternal prison that the fallen came to know as the Abyss. Thus, in a stroke of bitter irony, the haven of the dead became the prison of the rebel angels, separated from Earth by the thin Veil that some of their number constructed. Of the souls Charon saved from oblivion, the Heavenly Host did nothing. For reasons known only to the Creator, these restless spirits were left to their eternal exile, close enough that the imprisoned angels could reach out to them if they ventured near the walls of the Pit, yet powerless to aid the prisoners trapped inside. And so it remained, for untold thousands of years, until the great Maelstrom.

GEOGRAPHY

The spirit realm is a construct of Faith that extrudes from the physical cosmos into the empty nothingness of the Void, existing as a set of layered dimensions of increasing scope and complexity. Although it was never as bright or vibrant as the physical world, the spirit realm has sunk into an even deeper degree of lifelessness and ruin in the wake of the rebels' imprisonment. Slayers and other demons who possess the Lore of the Realms may still travel its storm-wracked landscape, but not without risking the raging Maelstrom and the terrible pull of the Abyss.

THE VEIL

In a sense the first layer of the spirit realm, the Veil is a barrier wrought of Faith that is designed to separate the physical world from the shadow lands and form a bulwark against the clutches of oblivion. In ancient times, the Veil was a dynamic and self-repairing barrier that was easily permeable by those who knew the proper evocations. Since then, however, the steady infusion of Faith that kept the Veil supple and strong has not only waned, but been warped by the effects of centuries of human disbelief. Now the Veil is an unyielding wall that resists even the fallen who helped raise it.

Across much of the world, the Veil is difficult to detect, much less penetrate, but powerful emotions and the collected weight of mortal Faith has worn the barrier thin in some places. Such sites are often sacred, be they churches, graveyards or other places where the human psyche often focuses on the afterlife and unknowingly directs its Faith into the spirit realm. Other

locations are less easily recognized: battlefields, crime scenes or even a bedroom in a lonely old mansion where a sick man wasted away a day at a time. These weakened sections of the Veil are known as haunts, as they afford the spirits of the dead an easier opportunity to reach into the physical world and feed on the Faith of the living.

The Lore of the Realms allows a demon to pass through the Veil between realms, and the difficulty of the evocation depends on the relative strength of the barrier. See the **Demon** core rules, page 48 for details. Crossing over in the vicinity of a haunt poses a difficulty of 5 to the evocation roll. Additionally, the high-Torment effect of Step Beyond the Veil creates a temporary haunt that draws ghosts to the area like moths to a flame.

THE SHADOW LANDS

The first lands of the dead, the shadow lands are an extension of the physical world, an echo of the divine energy inherent in all physical matter. Everything that exists in the mortal world exists in the shadow lands — and even some objects and structures that have long since tumbled to rust and ruins. Ghosts haunt this bleak land, looking in on their loved ones, brooding over their enemies or simply watching the world pass them by. Even in modern times, long after the Slayers were forced to abandon their harvesting of souls, some spirits who die and leave unfinished business behind find a way to slip through the Veil into the shadow lands. Now, ravaged by the teeth of the howling Maelstrom, all but the strongest of these spirits huddle around any haunt they can find, drawing what Faith they can from the living in order to keep their form intact.

Demons who cross over into the shadow lands may travel the landscape just as they would in the mortal realm. All rates of movement are identical between the two realms except in the case of the Slayers, whose greater proficiency and familiarity with the realm allows them to travel vast distances in the blink of an eye (see the **Demon** core rules, page 48 for details). Doors, windows, walls and other physical structures have as much substance in the shadow lands as they do in the physical realm, but ghosts and demons alike may pass through these objects by spending a point of Faith. Ghosts with the Solidify power can perform physical actions such as picking up a book or opening a door, and these interactions resonate across the Veil into the physical world. (A book appears to float into the air as unseen fingers riffle the pages. A mirror breaks or a door suddenly slams shut.) Demons cannot interact with physical objects unless they use the evocation Ghostwalk (see page 49 of the **Demon** core rules for details).

THE TEMPEST

The Tempest is the next “layer” of the spirit realm, a roiling, chaotic storm of energy that underlies the shadow lands and separates them from the Deep Realms. The Tempest was originally created by Charon to thwart the explorations of any invaders, concealing the Deep Realms’ Byways. Since the exile of the fallen, however, this storm has become a truly malevolent force, stirred to savagery by the Torment of the demons trapped in the Abyss. Spirits who attempt to cross the Tempest and become lost sometimes find themselves cast upon the walls of Hell, where the hateful spirits within can reach them. These spirits are warped and tormented for untold ages by the very angels who once fought to save them, resulting in horrific specters who stalk the Tempest in search of new victims to sate the urges of their infernal masters.

It is possible to navigate the wilds of the Tempest to reach the Deep Realms, but the risks are great. Packs of savage specters ride the storm, searching for prey, attacking spirits or demons with equal fervor. A Perception + Survival roll (difficulty 8) is required to successfully travel from the shadow lands to one of the Deep Realms. If the roll fails, the travelers become lost in the storm. Each day the travelers are lost, another Perception + Survival roll can be made to see if they regain their bearings. Until that time, they are at the mercy of the specters lurking within the storm. Use the ghost profile to represent any specters who attack the travelers. Most specters are of the aged variety, while a few may be ancient spirits. Most specters travel in packs of three to six.

Demons who dare traverse the Tempest risk something worse than specters — the pull of the Abyss. Despite being locked in their mortal forms, the close proximity to Hell has enough power to tear the demon’s spirit free of its moorings and draw it back down into darkness. Fallen within the Tempest will be drawn into the Pit unless a successful Willpower roll is made (difficulty 8). This roll must be made each day the demon walks the Tempest, and if the roll fails, she is torn from her host and drawn back into Hell.

BYWAYS

The Byways are twisting, sinuous paths laid by master Malefactors that wind their way through the Tempest to the Deep Realms. Although these paths were originally masked with powerful evocations, ages of wear from the winds of the Tempest have stripped them of their camouflage. The Byways are accessible to spirits and demons alike who wish to search for the Deep Realms. No roll is required to

navigate the Tempest as long as the travelers follow a Byway, but attacks by specters are still possible, and demons still tempt the clutches of the Abyss. Although they are safer than braving the Tempest directly, the Byways rarely lead directly to one of the Deep Realms. In fact, some don’t even lead to the same destination more than once.

THE DEEP REALMS

Charon created the Deep Realms as hiding places from the Heavenly Host. Islands of reality isolated by the raging Tempest and connected by the shifting Byways, none but Charon and a handful of Slayers know the full number of havens created within the storm. Spirits who claimed to have traveled the Byways often before the recent Maelstrom tell stories of an island that is one enormous city; another is a kingdom of jade. No fallen has yet dared to walk the Byways and see for himself what remains of the Deep Realms. Wild rumors abound of infernal bastions secreted within the storm, containing potent relics of the Age of Wrath. Some wonder if Charon and his lieutenants wait in one such citadel. The wildest rumors suggest that even Lucifer himself found refuge in their midst for a time.

THE MAELSTROM

The Maelstrom currently ravaging the spirit realm is the sixth such cataclysmic storm to strike the shadow lands since its creation. The fallen do not know what causes these terrible upheavals, but many point to a connection between violent events in the mortal world and the onset of a Maelstrom. Since humanity’s belief (or lack thereof) has had a noticeable effect on the stability of the Veil, it’s conceivable that the collective anguish of mankind could permeate the shadow lands and churn the Tempest itself. If this is so, some Slayers wonder what will come of the return of the fallen and the battles looming against the Earthbound. How much more terrible will the effects in the shadow lands be if mankind is caught up in a war of angels once more?

The Maelstrom roars like a cyclone across the shadow lands, ebbing and surging in different areas at different times. Although it was initially strong enough to destroy spirits outright and rip holes in the Veil, the ferocity of the winds has abated somewhat. Even still, though, the storm poses a terrible danger to the souls of the dead. Spirits caught outside a haunt suffer four dice of lethal damage per turn of exposure. This damage may be soaked using Stamina. Spirits who lose all their health levels are utterly destroyed.

THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

The dead are everywhere. When the great Maelstrom burst across the spirit realm, it struck the Veil with such force that it tore temporary holes between the realms, creating powerful haunts scattered across the globe and providing a horde of desperate spirits a chance to escape into the lands of the living. Much like the fallen, these spirits sought anchors to save themselves from the pull of oblivion, possessing the living and the bodies of the dead alike. Meanwhile, in the shadow lands, those ghosts without the strength to make it through the Veil now take shelter in whatever haunts they can find, venturing out into the Maelstrom only when they must and defending their sanctuaries against any who trespass.

GHOSTS

Ghosts are the disembodied spirits of the dead who by luck or sheer, implacable will found their way across the Veil upon their death and still linger close to the land of the living. The majority of these spirits remain in the shadow lands, seeking shelter from the Maelstrom, but they reach into the physical world from time to time in order to restore their Faith, help their loved ones or punish their enemies.

Ghosts in the shadow lands are almost exclusively found around haunts — those areas where the Veil is weak, allowing easier access to the physical world. Since there are many more ghosts than there are haunts, most such places literally teem with the restless dead while the Maelstrom rages across the spirit realm. The consequence in the physical world is a massive upsurge in occult phenomena as these desperate ghosts seize on any mortal who comes within range and attempt to feed upon his Faith.

These spirits require Faith to heal their injuries and access their powers, but unlike the fallen, ghosts can only reap Faith (see page 85 of the *Demon* core rules for details). They do so by terrorizing mortals with supernatural phenomena then feeding on the emotions they evoke. Use the same system for reaping Faith that demons employ on mortals. Since ghosts are more attuned to human emotion than the fallen, however, these spirits receive from two to four Faith points per attempt, depending on the Faith potential of the target (essentially double whatever amount a demon would normally gain from the victim).

A large number of ghosts made it across the Veil during the Maelstrom and managed to seize physical

bodies in order to anchor themselves against the clutches of oblivion. Again, like demons, these ghosts possessed the weak-willed, the soulless or the brain-damaged. Ghosts can lose their physical hosts in the same way as demons. Use the system for possessing a new host found on page 94 of the *Demon* core rules to determine

GHOST PROFILE

The following describes an example of a new ghost, someone who died recently:

Attributes: Strength 3*, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Bureaucracy 3, Computer 3, Crafts 3, Dodge 3, Drive 3, Etiquette 3, Finance 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 1, Security 2, Subterfuge 4, Survival 4

Willpower: 7

Faith: 10

The following represents an aged ghost, one who has been around for a century or so:

Attributes: Strength 6*, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7, Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 3, Alertness 4, Animal Ken 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Dodge 5, Empathy 3, Etiquette 4, Expression 4, Finance 4, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Investigation 4, Law 4, Leadership 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 4, Melee 5, Occult 4, Politics 4, Science 3, Security 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5, Survival 5

Willpower: 9

Faith: 12

The following details an ancient ghost, one who has been dead for several centuries:

Attributes: Strength 8*, Dexterity 7, Stamina 9, Charisma 6, Manipulation 9, Appearance 6, Perception 7, Intelligence 7, Wits 8

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 7, Alertness 7, Animal Ken 5, Athletics 6, Awareness 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 1, Etiquette 5, Expression 4, Finance 7, Firearms 3, Intimidation 7, Investigation 4, Law 4, Leadership 7, Linguistics 5, Medicine 5, Melee 6, Occult 5, Politics 7, Science 3, Security 5, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 7, Survival 7

Willpower: 10

Faith: 15+

*Note that the Strength Attribute for ghosts applies only to uses of powers along the lines of Solidify (see "Ghost Powers"), wherein the ghost exerts his will to apply force against or upon a physical object or entity.

GHOST POWERS

Every ghost used to be a person, which is something reflected in each ghost's personality. Some of them use their powers to do harm, while others try to eke out a benign existence. The following are only samples of the powers that ghosts can possess — the Storyteller may design new ones.

New ghosts typically have three powers, none of them beyond a fairly low level. Old ghosts have four to five powers at weak to moderate levels. Ancient ghosts have five to six powers, each at moderate to potent levels.

- **Teleport:** This power is typically limited to a ghost's line of sight. Ghosts teleport to avoid harm or elude detection. They can use this ability in combat. With age and expertise, a ghost can even teleport to locales beyond line of sight. A Faith point allows a ghost to teleport once per turn.

- **Short Circuit:** Although the name of this power implies targets limited to electronics, ghosts can use it to affect (as in activate or jam) even simple machines — the trigger of a gun, for example. Experienced ghosts can use this power to send a jolt of electrical current through any conductive substance (metal or water) to shock a mortal in contact with an appropriate object (a rifle or puddle). Base the damage from this attack upon a number of dice equal to the ghost's Faith rating (difficulty 6); damage can be bashing or lethal. This power also has the potential to render machines with electrical systems temporarily or permanently inoperable.

It costs a point of Faith to activate Short Circuit for each use.

- **Emotion-Control:** Ghosts with this power can influence a mortal's emotional state and reap Faith from him. Young, inexperienced ghosts can spur only blunt feelings such as lust, grief or fear. Older ghosts' range includes joy, hope and love, which can be induced to near-paralyzing levels. Ancient ghosts who are expert in controlling humans' emotions can imbed a strong feeling about some entity, activity or location. Thereafter, the person remains convinced that he *always* felt that way.

Spend a point of Faith and make a Willpower roll (based on rating, not current score) for a ghost using an emotion-control power; difficulty equals the target's Willpower. Success induces the desired emotion in the target. A ghost who instills an emotion in order to feed receives a point of Faith for each success rolled in the effort, up to the being's normal Faith limit. Using this power to feed can be accomplished only once per scene.

The fallen are immune to this power, though their thralls are not.

- **Solidify:** This power encompasses the effects associated with the classic ghost, such as invisibly moving or striking objects or living things, inexplicable noises and so on. Ghosts who've been stirring up trouble for decades can set an entire roomful of small items in motion at once. True masters can send furniture flying and even upend cars. A Faith point allows a ghost to activate Solidify once per turn.

- **Ectoplasm:** Ectoplasm produces copious amounts of a slick, mucous goo wherever the ghost desires. Common uses include contamination of foods (for the purpose of gross-outs) and the enslaving of floors or roadways (to create hazardous conditions). Apply the line-of-sight rule to placement of ectoplasm (i.e., not beyond the user's view). Expert ghosts can cause ectoplasm to manifest inside the nose and mouth of a target (even a moving one) to suffocate him. This substance can be expelled or removed, but an affected character can do nothing else until his breathing passages are clear.

It costs a point of Faith to create ectoplasm. Roll a number of dice equal to the ghost's Willpower (difficulty 6) to determine how many quarts of ectoplasm result (one per success). Ectoplasm lingers for no more than one scene, then vanishes without a trace.

- **Combustion:** Ghosts use this power to start fires.

The speed with which such flames ignite depends on the expertise of the spirit and the flammability of the targeted material. A young ghost can set a cotton garment ablaze in three turns; an older, more seasoned one in two turns; a crusty, malevolent ghost can do so in one turn (roll Willpower, difficulty 6). The less flammable the substance is, the higher the difficulty is. Igniting wood is difficulty 7. Igniting normally flame-resistant fabric is difficulty 8. Hard plastic requires a difficulty of 9, while glass, ceramics and durable metals cannot be ignited with this power.

The wearer or bearer of something targeted thus is allowed a Wits + Alertness roll each turn to determine if he notices the item's increasing heat.

One point of Faith activates this power against one target. The user must apply the power without interruption for flames to result.

whether the spirit can find a new host. If the ghost fails, she is lost to oblivion.

Ghosts can be summoned and controlled by demons with the Lore of the Spirit, whether they are resident in the shadow lands or in possession of a human host. Possessed spirits summoned to a demon will approach the fallen physically rather than be ripped from their host body.

POSSESSION PROFILE

Ratings are provided for normal people and animals, as well as possessed bodies (in parentheses).

The following statistics are for an adult human:

Attributes: Strength 3 (7), Dexterity 3 (5), Stamina 3 (5), Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3 (5)

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 2, (Brawl 3), (Dodge 3), (Firearms 2), (Intimidation 4), (Melee 2), (Occult 3), Stealth 3, (Subterfuge 3), Survival 1 (3)

Willpower: Appropriate to type of ghost

Faith: Appropriate to type of ghost

The following statistics are for a child:

Attributes: Strength 1 (4), Dexterity 3, Stamina 2 (5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2 (4), Wits 3 (5)

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Dodge 1, (Melee 3), Performance 2, Stealth 3 (4), Subterfuge 3

Willpower: Appropriate to type of ghost

Faith: Appropriate to type of ghost

Powers: A spirit in possession of a human host may not be able to manifest any of its unearthly powers, or it may have access to some or all of those powers. A possessing spirit that abandons its host certainly has a full range of powers. A spirit still in a body may attempt to disguise its existence, protect its host or attack anyone who threatens. A liberated ghost could attack, disappear or attempt to possess another being, human or animal. Demons are immune to such attempted possessions, but their thralls are not.

Like humans who are possessed by spirits, animals are made substantially stronger. The following statistics are for a large dog:

Attributes: Strength 3 (6), Dexterity 4, Stamina 2 (4), Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 2 (4), Wits 1 (3)

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Powers: None, but once the animal is stopped or destroyed, the demon must deal with the disembodied spirit. This spirit could attack, disappear or attempt to possess another being, human or animal.

UNDEAD PROFILE

The following details one of the risen, a formidable undead in possession of its former body:

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Expression 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 5, Melee 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5, Survival 4

Willpower: 10

Faith: 12

Powers: Risen can pass for human, though demons can see them for what they are with a successful Perception + Awareness roll. Risen can withstand 15 health levels of damage before being destroyed, but they can regenerate one lost level with the expenditure of a Faith point. Regenerating costs an action and only one level can be recovered in a single turn. The risen suffer no wound penalties for lost health levels.

The following details a typical "walker," a ghost in control of a former corpse:

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Willpower: 8

Faith: 8

Powers: Walkers have 10 health levels and suffer no penalties for injury. They can regenerate one lost health level in a turn at the expense of one Faith point per level. Regenerating a level is considered an action. Walkers can pass for human with effort.

The following details a shambler, a mindless zombie infused with the hateful energies of the Maelstrom:

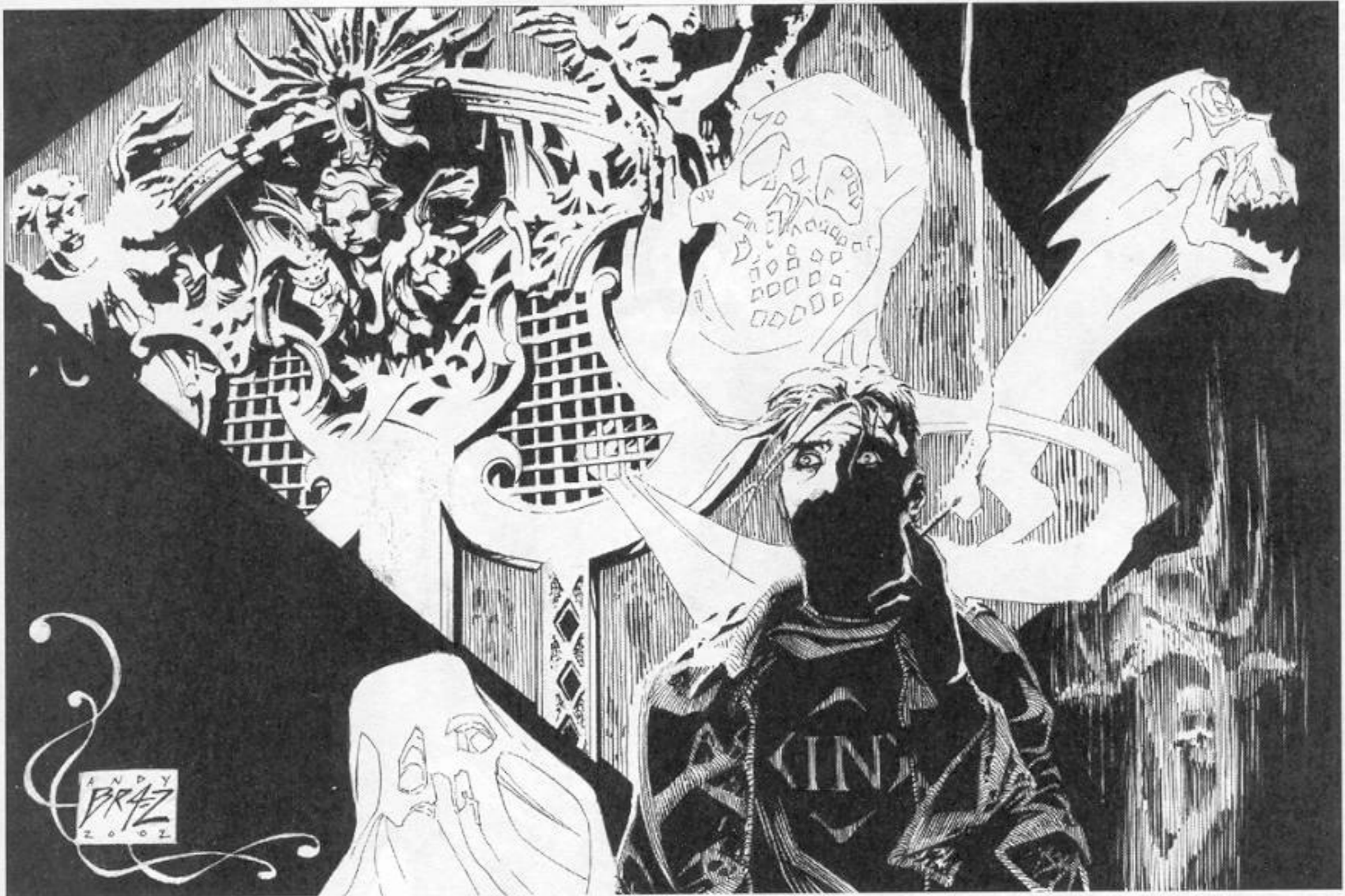
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Brawl 2, Intimidation 5

Willpower: 6

Faith: 8

Powers: Shamblers are "killed" only by complete destruction of the body or separation of the head from the torso. Shamblers have 10 health levels and suffer no penalties for damage inflicted.



UNDEAD

Not all ghosts who cross into the mortal realm find their way into living bodies. A rare few, possessing an iron will and formidable amounts of Faith, intentionally seek out their former bodies, animating them once more to seek revenge against someone who wronged them or complete some other unfinished business. Other spirits seize the first corpse they find and try to return to a semblance of

mortal life, concealing their rotting flesh behind an illusory mask of Faith.

Worst of all, there are cases where the raw energy of the Maelstrom itself has penetrated the Veil and infused dead tissue, creating a mindless, malevolent creature that exists only to stalk, mutilate and murder the living. These shamblers are true monsters, hiding by day and venturing from their lairs at night to sate their thirst for Faith and blood.






CHAPTER FIVE: MONSTERS

*The great hill hung close over the old town,
A precipice against the main street's end;
Green, tall, and wooded, looking darkly down
Upon the steeple at the highway bend.
Two hundred years the whispers had been heard
About what happened on the man-shunned slope—
Tales of an oddly mangled deer or bird,
Or of lost boys whose kin had ceased to hope.
—H. P. Lovecraft, "The Fungi from Yuggoth"*

The Angels of the Abyss and their Earthbound foes aren't the only supernatural beings at work in the World of Darkness. Sorcerers seek forbidden power through the arcane arts, while creatures of legend such as vampires and werewolves stalk human prey through grimy alleys and isolated forests. Stranger still, ordinary men and women across the globe are visited with cryptic visions and imbued with divine power to protect mankind from the supernatural—regardless of the cost. Few in number and rarely encountered, these mysterious and potent "monsters" share one thing in common with the fallen: an inextricable bond to humankind. A demon who crosses paths with one of these beings might find them reluctant allies, potential rivals or implacable foes.

This chapter provides all the information you need to include vampires, werewolves, mages and the imbued as characters in your **Demon** chronicle. Each section is

broken down into the following four parts: a basic profile of the "monster," suggestions on how to include them in your stories, ways in which they might relate to the fallen and specifics on how possession and pacts of Faith affect each monster (and vice versa). At the end of each section are character profiles for each monster and their suggested powers. For our purposes, each monster type has a Faith score that fuels its various powers. The way each monster gains and uses Faith varies and is detailed in the individual profiles. If you're already familiar with White Wolf's other storytelling games, feel free to employ the more detailed systems for these monsters if you wish. The profiles listed here are meant to provide basic information that allows you to include these beings as antagonists and supporting characters without requiring you to buy anything beyond this book and the **Demon** core rules.



THE IMBUED

The imbued (or simply hunters, as they sometimes call themselves), are among the most dangerous potential foes of the fallen. It isn't merely that their powers seem tailor-made to detect and counter a demon's innate abilities — the imbued are dangerous by virtue of their anonymity. They are everyday people who are shown the presence of the supernatural and then given the tools to do something about it. Hunters are cops, mailmen, accountants and garbage men, haggard faces in the crowd with eyes that see more than they should.

The imbued are individuals whose normal lives are turned upside down by a terrifying, often violent revelation concerning the existence and activities of the supernatural. Often they are led to such confrontations by a series of strange and inexplicable coincidences. (Their car suddenly breaks down, forcing them to walk past an alley where a vampire is feeding on a runaway teen, or the wait for an elevator lasts just long enough for the person to be joined by a co-worker who turns out to be one of the walking dead.) The moment of the imbuing is different for each person, but it typically involves cryptic messages and strange, suggestive hallucinations. (Flashing street signs change from WALK to THE DEAD WALK, or a voice in their head thunders IT FEEDS ON THE INNOCENT.)

How the individual reacts to this sudden awakening is crucial. If he fails to act on the message he is given, the revelation fades as quickly as it appeared and the person eventually rationalizes the experience away. If he hears the call and acts upon it, though — whether it's to attack the creature with a broken bottle, drive it away from its victim or learn what he can from the encounter — the individual is imbued with powers that conform to his actions. A vengeful hunter seeking justice for the monster's victim might receive the power to transform a pipe into a fiery club, while one concerned with protecting innocents might discover the ability to drive the monster away by force of will. Curious or inquisitive hunters who seek answers might receive the power to disappear from the monster's sight or receive insight into its future actions.

What happens next is up to the hunter. Here is where the nightmare begins, though, for once they have been shown the existence of monsters and given their supernatural gifts, the imbued are on their own. The mysterious force that pits them against the monsters in humanity's midst does not appear again, leaving them to decide for themselves what to do with the knowledge and powers they've been given — and how far they are willing to go. Some hunters abandon friends and family, embarking on solitary crusades against "the enemy," while others stake out a single neighborhood or sometimes little more than their own tenement building and try to protect it from the world outside. Every hunter struggles to maintain his or her sanity in the face of



relentless horror and paranoia. The few who survive in a world beset by monsters invariably lose touch with their former lives, becoming consumed by the hunt.

The imbued can be said to generally fall into one of three camps, based on their views concerning the hunt. The zealots are hunters who believe in confrontation, taking the world back from the monsters by force, destroying them when necessary. The merciful, on the other hand, believe that the only way to end the cycle of violence between monsters and mankind is through negotiation, sacrifice and the possibility of redemption. Finally, some visionary individuals refuse to see the relationship between humans and monsters as “us or them,” and they look for insights that will help them chart a different future for humanity and the supernatural alike. Each camp boasts its own powers, perspectives and prejudices, and the imbued community is frequently wracked with disputes and outright conflict over their true purpose. That being said, it is not uncommon for hunters to operate in groups, often representing a variety of camps, for the imbued have learned that they are much more effective when working as a team.

The few demons who have encountered the imbued (and survived the experience) were alarmed at the way these mortals’ powers seem specifically tailored to defeat many innate demonic abilities and resist the effects of many evocations. Some speculate that the hunters are being empowered by agents of Heaven in a sort of proxy war against the fallen, though few can imagine the wrathful Creator as being so timid with His might. Others wonder if perhaps the imbued are actually the descendants of one or more nephilim who somehow escaped Lucifer’s purge during the War of Wrath. These demons speculate that the return of the fallen has awakened their latent powers — as well as a reflexive hatred for the Angels of the Abyss.

ENCOUNTERS

Of all the supernatural dangers lurking in the World of Darkness, the imbued are the ones most likely to cross paths with the fallen, for no other reason than the fact that most hunters actively search for signs of paranormal activity. A spate of gruesome torture killings, mysterious outbreaks of madness or reports of divine apparitions and apparent miracles draw the imbued like beacons, and fallen who fail to keep a low profile quickly find one or more hunters on their trail. Although the imbued are often contentious, they have developed an online community that acts as a potent clearinghouse for information and a way to muster an impressive amount of resources against a specific threat. A solitary hunter can fire off an email and quickly call in reinforcements to help deal with a potential problem (provided the hunters all see eye-to-eye on how best to resolve the issue).

Another possibility for an encounter with the imbued might occur through the act of the imbuing itself. The

mysterious forces behind the creation of the hunters could open the eyes of someone close to the demon, possibly even a friend, lover or family member of the demon’s mortal host. This type of encounter can create the potential for powerful stories of loyalty, trust and betrayal, with repercussions through nearly every aspect of the demon’s mortal existence. Can she convince the hunter that she isn’t the monster she appears to be, or will she be forced to kill someone she cares about for the sake of her own safety?

Finally, demons may cross paths with the imbued through the existence of their thralls. The more pacts of Faith a demon has, the more men and women there are walking the streets with a mark that will catch a hunter’s notice. Perhaps the thrall is seen taking advantage of one of her infernal gifts, or perhaps she’s simply in the wrong place at the wrong time when a hunter is using her Sight. Depending on the hunter in question, the thrall might then become a mystery waiting to be solved, a soul to be saved or an abomination living on borrowed time. To what lengths will the fallen go to protect one of her thralls? Can the demon see past her Torment and risk her own existence to save a mere mortal, or will she be forced to silence her thrall before the mortal is compromised further?

DEMON-HUNTER RELATIONS

Relationships between the fallen and the imbued depend greatly on which of the three camps the hunter in question belongs to. In general, zealots see demons as exactly that — malevolent spirits escaped from the Pit — and they spare no effort to destroy the demons’ thralls and banish the fallen back to the Abyss. Merciful hunters, on the other hand, generally relate to the demon in the context of her actions, even to the extent of trying to open a dialogue with the fallen if possible and helping her struggle against her Torment. Likewise, visionary hunters might well try to establish a relationship of sorts with the fallen for the purpose of trading information, a relationship that could be of great benefit to both parties. Again, these reactions are generalizations, and exceptions definitely exist. You could have a sympathetic zealot fighting alongside a demon or a vengeful visionary who is violently opposed to everything the fallen stand for.

More often than not, demons and hunters view one another as enemies. Ill informed and unable to see past their own prejudices, the imbued make no distinctions between monstrous demons and those who try to rise above their Torment. To them, a demon is a creature that must not be allowed to walk the earth. In rare cases, the fallen can forge an uneasy alliance with the imbued, usually in the face of greater peril such as the Earthbound, but such alliances rarely hold together once the immediate threat has passed. Alternatively, less scrupulous demons don’t hesitate to manipulate the imbued as stalking horses against their infernal rivals, flushing their enemies into the open and weakening them so that the demon can swoop in for the kill.

Despite their dangers, the imbued also pose a powerful temptation for the fallen and the Earthbound in particular. The divine energies that infuse hunters at the moment of their imbuing also serve to greatly increase their Faith potential, making them potentially valuable thralls — and potent vessels for possession.

PACTS OF FAITH AND THE IMBUED

Perhaps owing to their unusual creation, the imbued are just as susceptible to pacts of Faith as any other mortal in the World of Darkness. Like other mortals, the hunter must willingly enter into the pact with the demon, a task made much more difficult by the fact that the imbued have the power to see past the demon's honeyed words and see the tormented spirit one really is. A typical hunter's high Faith potential provides a wealth of power that a demon can use to fuel his own evocations — a single imbued thrall can provide as much Faith as *five* ordinary mortals — or provide gifts to the hunter to make him even more effective than before. The pact of faith does not ensure loyalty, though, nor does it restrain a hunter's inevitable descent into madness. What's more, the bond between hunter and demon is clearly visible to hunters' Sight, revealing the imbued as corrupted by "the enemy" and a target in her own right. Enthralling a hunter is a calculated risk at best; a disaster at worst. Use the systems described for enthralling mortals on page 87 of the **Demon** core rules to create pacts between demons and hunters.

The same high Faith potential that makes the imbued such valuable potential thralls also makes them eminently suitable as vessels for possession. The act of imbuing conditions the hunter's body to channel levels of Celestial energy that would destroy a typical mortal, thus presenting the fallen with an opportunity to seize a host capable of sustaining much higher amounts of Faith.

Possessing a hunter is far more difficult than seizing the body of a normal human, however. First, the demon must have established a pact of Faith with the hunter she wishes to eventually possess. Then she must wait (and perhaps assist) in the degeneration of the hunter's sanity as she loses herself to the hunt. Once the hunter's Willpower has been reduced to 1 (or less), the demon can attempt the act of possession. Use the system for possession described on page 94 of the **Demon** core rules to resolve the attempt. If the hunter has activated her inherent ability that grants immunity to possession (see below), the demon's attempt automatically fails. If the act of possession succeeds, the hunter's soul is driven from the body and the demon inherits the imbued's traits as well as the hunter's Faith score (but none of her innate powers or edges). How much of the hunter's memories and identity the demon gains is up to you, the Storyteller, but it is strongly advised that for every piece of knowledge the demon gains, she loses a similar amount from her previous incarnation.

HUNTER PROFILE

The following is an example of a zealous, confrontational hunter.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Crafts 3, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Occult 3, Politics 1, Security 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 7

Faith: 7-10

The following is an example of a merciful, conciliatory hunter.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Empathy 3, Etiquette 3, Finance 2, Firearms 2, Intuition 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 1, Occult 3, Politics 1, Security 2, Streetwise 3, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 7

Faith: 7-10

The following is an example of a visionary, inquisitive hunter.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Computer 3, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Empathy 3, Etiquette 3, Finance 2, Firearms 2, Intuition 3, Investigation 3, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 1, Occult 3, Politics 2, Security 3, Streetwise 3, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 6

Faith: 7-10

MAGES

Humanity is a race of near-limitless potential. As far as 21st-century men and women have developed from their Mesopotamian forebears, they have only just begun to realize their true capabilities. Lucifer and the fallen saw this enormous potential in the earliest days of humanity's creation, and it was the driving force behind the Lightbringer's Babel plan near the end of the War of Wrath. Humanity had the potential to manipulate and ultimately master the forces of Creation and possibly *reinvent* them in ways the Elohim couldn't imagine. Babel was a failure because Lucifer tried to rush humanity's

IMBUED POWERS

The imbued, like the fallen, are granted a number of innate powers common to all hunters, as well as a series of Faith-based powers called edges that vary between members of the three hunter camps. Hunters activate their innate powers by spending one Faith point for the set. The effects of these powers last for the duration of a single scene.

- **Immunity to Possession:** The hunter cannot be possessed while this power is active. This ability also blocks evocations that allow the demon to project her consciousness into a thrall's mind, such as Remote Viewing or Mouth of the Damned.

- **Immunity to Mind-Control:** The hunter's will cannot be overridden with such evocations as Insinuate, Confess or Obsession. Evocations that attempt to influence or control the hunter's actions fail automatically. Greater demons may be powerful enough to override this innate power at the Storyteller's discretion, as long as their Faith score is greater than the hunter's.

- **Immune to the Effects of Revelation:** Hunters do not suffer the effects of Revelation. Again, greater demons may be able to overcome this innate power if their Faith score is greater than the hunter's.

- **Immune to Illusion:** Hunters see through any illusions created by the Lore of Light or the Lore of Transfiguration, evocations that create concealment (such as Fade) or special abilities granted by apocalyptic forms (such as the Cloak of Shadows). Greater demons may be able to overcome this power if their Faith score is greater than the hunter's.

- **The Sight:** This power is a limited form of supernatural awareness that allows a hunter to see the monsters hiding in humanity's midst. With a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6), any monster (including one of the fallen) in the hunter's presence is revealed as inhuman while the hunter's Sight is active. The Sight doesn't reveal the exact nature of the monster in question, though. Creatures such as vampires and werewolves simply look *wrong* to the hunter. When the imbued use the Sight on a demon, they see a ghostly version of the demon's apocalyptic form surrounding the host's body.

Additionally, imbued from each of the three camps have access to the following edges. A typical hunter can have up to three edges, while more experienced hunters can possess as many as five. Hunters are allowed to possess edges used by imbued from the other camps, at the Storyteller's discretion.

- **Cleave:** This zealot edge allows the hunter to inflict aggravated damage with any Melee attack by spending one Faith point. The drawback is that the weapon energized by this edge will break in a number of turns equal to its damage bonus unless a successful Willpower roll is made (difficulty 8). (That is, a knife that normally inflicts Strength + 1 damage breaks after one turn.) Otherwise, the effects of this edge last for the duration of the scene.

- **Discern:** This zealot edge allows the hunter to gain specific information about the nature of a monster by spending a Faith point and making a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7). Discern allows a hunter to

specifically identify the type of monster viewed (e.g., vampire, werewolf, demon or thrall). In the case of the fallen, the edge also identifies the demon's House. This information is conveyed as a general sense of the demon's focus, so a Scourge would conjure images of wind and motion, while a Devourer would conjure feelings of the wilderness and the hunt. The effects of this edge last for the duration of a single turn.

- **Ward:** This edge allows a zealous hunter to drive monsters out of a protective zone that surrounds her. The edge requires the expenditure of one Faith point and a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). Monsters within the zone are driven out of the zone unless a Stamina roll (difficulty 6) exceeds the hunter's successes. Monsters are allowed only one roll to resist the effects of this edge. If the roll fails, they are driven to the zone's edge and may not enter. The zone reaches out to a radius in yards equal to the hunter's Faith score. The effects of this edge are centered on the hunter, and they move as she moves and last for the duration of the scene.

- **Hide:** This edge allows a merciful hunter to hide herself from a monster's sight by spending one Faith point and making a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 6). If successful, the hunter cannot be seen, heard or felt by a monster unless she takes a deliberate action to call attention to herself (such as shouting, striking or otherwise attacking the monster). The fallen, with their increased resistance to illusion, can penetrate the hunter's concealment by making a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 7). If the roll nets more successes than the Willpower roll, the demon sees through the edge.

- **Demand:** This edge allows a merciful hunter to channel her Faith directly into muscle and bone, enhancing her physical strength. By spending one Faith point and making a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 7), the hunter may add each success to her Strength score for any roll or action performed that turn. Examples of such a roll include one to inflict Brawl or Melee damage, an effort to lift an object or a Strength + Athletics roll to perform a stunt. Due to the extreme exertion brought on by this effort, the hunter suffers a single health level of bashing damage that may not be soaked.

- **Bluster:** This edge allows a merciful hunter to impede a monster's attack by force of will. Bluster requires the expenditure of one Faith point and a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). Each success cancels one success from a monster's attack, similar to a Dodge or parrying roll. This edge can be performed on any monster within line of sight (and hearing) of the hunter, including monsters who are attacking other individuals.

- **Foresee:** Foresee allows visionary hunters a brief glimpse into the future — a look that allows them to choose the best course of action. This edge requires the expenditure of one Faith point and a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). Each success allows for an extra roll dedicated to a single action in a given scene. For example, if the Willpower roll resulted in three successes, up to three separate actions in a given scene can be rolled twice, accepting the best result.

The imbued regain lost Faith at the rate of two Faith points per day.

evolution faster than it could safely sustain itself, but the path, once revealed, could not be completely erased from mankind's collective memory. As the human race began its own faltering rise to greatness in the wake of the war and the rebels' exile, small numbers of highly gifted individuals began experimenting with the forces of reality. Like the Elohim before them, these first sorcerers, or mages, assembled their own collections of lore that allowed them to bend reality to their will.

Since their origins in the kingdoms of antiquity, the mages have splintered into a number of different traditions, each with a different vision for humanity's ultimate destiny. Each tradition operates in secret, carefully hoarding its secrets and often battling its rivals for control of people and locations that provide exceptional sources of Faith. This conflict, and the pursuit of the power and knowledge to defeat one's rivals, is what led the mages to explore the spirit realms and ultimately discover the depths of the Abyss. Since then, many demons have been summoned for the purposes of learning the deeper secrets of Creation, and some of the fallen theorize that centuries of summoning weakened the walls of the demons' prison to the degree that the recent Maelstrom was able to break the seals as it did.

ENCOUNTERS

Mages are most likely to seek out the fallen for the same reasons that sorcerers have summoned demons for hundreds of years: power and knowledge. Though few in number in the modern World of Darkness, the mages have access to ancient tomes (and are constantly on the hunt for others) that contain the Celestial Names of a variety of demons, and some ambitious sorcerers attempt to bind demons to their service in the ongoing conflict between the different traditions. Similarly, mages constantly pursue rumors and legends surrounding ancient artifacts in distant corners of the world, and their efforts sometimes lead them to surviving bastions in which modern-day fallen have taken refuge. The result is typically a siege or an assault, as the mages spare no effort in obtaining the secrets they suspect are hidden within.

Finally, fallen and mages often cross paths over individuals or locations with high Faith potential. Like demons, mages use Faith to fuel their various abilities, and in this era of cynicism and faithlessness, true sources of belief are treasures that mages fight to possess. Unlike the fallen, the mages are capable of leaching the Faith from a place or an object, ultimately leaving it devoid of its power, something that horrifies the former spirits of Creation.

Just as mages seek out demons for their power, the fallen are not above seeking out sorcerers and enlisting them as unwitting allies against their rivals, providing them with information on the names and other weaknesses of their rivals in hopes of seeing their enemies weakened or enslaved. These intrigues frequently devolve into schemes of



betrayal and counter-betrayal as the parties involved try to turn the tables on their erstwhile friends.

DEMON-MAGE RELATIONS

Demons regard mages with mixed amounts of fear, respect and contempt. Most fallen look upon the mages as presumptuous usurpers who seek to elevate themselves to the level of the angels, and many demons relish the opportunity to lead an arrogant mage down the path of destruction. Demons who are bound to a mage use every resource at their disposal to bring about the destruction of their tormentor, often enlisting the help of other fallen to wreak misfortune on the mage in question. Some fallen view mages as spiritual locusts, raving the Earth of its holy places and destroying priceless artifacts to glut their need for Faith. These demons make a point of rooting out and destroying the sorcerers wherever they are found, much like a mortal would burn out a nest of snakes. By the same token, certain mage traditions spare no effort in locating and banishing (or outright destroying) demons who are loose upon the earth. When such groups of demon and mages meet, no quarter is asked and none is given.

This is not to say that relations with the mages are uniformly antagonistic. Some of the fallen are able to put aside their haughty notions of rank and privilege and see the mages as repositories of knowledge in their own right — ones who provide potential clues as to the locations of ancient artifacts and holy sites. Such alliances tend to be short-lived, however, for both sides are certain to come under intense suspicion and even hostility from their peers for trusting “the enemy.”

PACTS OF FAITH AND THE MAGES

Mages are as susceptible to pacts of Faith as any mortal, and they are often the reason behind summonings. Because

MAGE PROFILE

Mages appear to demons as normal humans — even a demon’s supernatural awareness reveals only those mages who are actively using their powers. A mage’s Attributes and Abilities vary as much as those traits do among humans, but they tend to have high Mental ratings. Mages control their environment through force of will, so it’s not unusual for one to have a Faith score of 8 or more.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 4, Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 2, Expression 4, Linguistics 5, Medicine 3, Occult 4, Science 2

Willpower: 8

Faith: 8-10

MAGE POWERS

Mages are able to manipulate reality in one of three ways:

- **Luck:** Mages have even greater difficulty manipulating the forces of Creation in the presence of unbelievers than the fallen, so over the centuries, they have mastered the art of achieving their goals by creating fantastic coincidences. An attacker’s gun might suddenly jam, or a pursuer might slip off a curb and break an ankle. Mages can make a Faith roll once per turn to cause such coincidental effects to happen in their favor. The difficulty is 6, and the number of successes required depends on the extremity of the coincidence they are trying to create. Causing a passerby to drop his wallet might require only one success, while causing a passing van to lose a crate of equipment that the mage desperately needs might require three successes. Falling out of an airplane without a parachute and catching just the right combination of updrafts to slow one’s descent and land without injury might require five successes or more. If the Faith roll botches, the mage loses one point of Faith.

- **Lore:** Like the fallen, mages are capable of performing evocations. A beginning mage may have up to three dots of a lore. An experienced mage may have five dots, while a highly ranked mage may have seven or more. Unlike demons, mages may perform only the low-Torment effects of a particular evocation. The mages suffer even greater difficulty performing their evocations in the presence of disbelieving mortals, though. The difficulty of all evocation rolls made in the presence of mortal witnesses increases by two. If the evocation roll botches, the mage suffers a number of lethal health levels of damage equal to the level of the evocation performed. For example, if the mage performed a two-dot evocation and the roll botched, the mage would suffer two health levels of lethal damage.

Mages regain Faith at the rate of one Faith point per day — two points if they spend up to eight hours meditating in their home. Additionally, mages can draw upon the Faith potential of holy ground, blessed items or demonically infused artifacts to replenish their Faith pool. With a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 7), the mage gains one Faith point per success while on holy ground or holding a Faith-infused item, up to her maximum amount. Faith points taken from blessed or enchanted items are lost from the items. For every 10 Faith points drawn from holy ground, lower the Faith potential of the area by one. These losses are permanent.

- **Rituals:** Mages possess the greatest collection of summoning, banishing and eradicating rituals in the modern world, and they are capable of performing these rituals with terrible efficacy. See page 91 of the *Demon* core rules for more information.

of their advanced knowledge and experience with the occult, most mages believe that they can make a deal with a demon and get the better end of the bargain — an assumption that most have cause to regret. Demons are often leery of offering a mage too much power, as it gives the sorcerer clues that might lead her to the demon's True Name, but in cases of a bound demon, the fallen has little say in the matter. Once the bond exists, demons usually take every opportunity to draw upon the energy of their enthralled mages, the better to keep them from getting too powerful, and also to erode their Willpower. More than one mage has been driven to the brink of madness by an ill-considered deal with a demon.

A mage can also be possessed by a demon, provided the fallen has an existing pact of faith with the mage and the mage's Willpower has been reduced to 1 or less. Use the same system for possessing mortals provided on page 94 of the **Demon** core rules. Upon possession, any powers or lore that the mage knew is lost. (For reasons unknown to the fallen, a mage's soul cannot be incorporated in the same manner as a mortal or one of the imbued.)

VAMPIRES

The War of Wrath changed the world in ways that not even the minds of the Neberu could predict. Many blasphemous creatures were created, by accident or design, and in the depths of their anger and hatred, the rebels experimented on uncounted humans in the depths of their fortresses, spawning abominations whose ultimate fate no one knows. Such could be the origin of the creatures haunting the earth in its present nights, feeding on the blood of mortals while spinning webs of influence and deceit across the entire globe.

Though not old by infernal standards, vampires have lurked among the human race for thousands of years. In times past, they ruled vast territories from night-haunted castles like mortal kings, but internecine conflict and the dreaded fires of the Inquisition forced the vampires into hiding, where they remain in the 21st century. These undead creatures (the "kindred," as they call themselves) have a well-developed society with strict laws forbidding direct action that would reveal their existence to mankind. Meanwhile, the kindred use their powers to prey upon the unknowing human populace, fighting the ennui of centuries of unchanging existence with savage intrigues equal to any pursued by the fallen.

The true origin of the kindred is unknown, though the fallen have many theories. Some believe the vampires to be debased descendants of the nephilim, forced to sustain their superhuman powers through consumption of human blood. Others have learned of the vampires' own beliefs, that point to themselves as descendants of the First Murderer, none other than Caine himself.

VAMPIRE PROFILE

The following is an example of a young vampire, perhaps newly turned.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Finance 2, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Occult 3, Politics 1, Security 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4, Survival 4

Willpower: 6

Faith: 7

The following represents a strong vampire who has been around for a while.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 3, Alertness 4, Animal Ken 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Dodge 5, Empathy 3, Etiquette 4, Expression 4, Finance 4, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Investigation 4, Law 4, Leadership 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 4, Melee 5, Occult 4, Politics 4, Science 3, Security 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5, Survival 5

Willpower: 8

Faith: 8-10

The following is an example of a very powerful vampire — one who has existed for decades or centuries.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 7, Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5, Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 7, Alertness 7, Animal Ken 5, Athletics 6, Awareness 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 1, Etiquette 5, Expression 4, Finance 7, Firearms 3, Intimidation 7, Investigation 4, Law 4, Leadership 7, Linguistics 5, Medicine 5, Melee 6, Occult 5, Politics 7, Science 3, Security 5, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 7, Survival 7

Willpower: 10

Faith: 10+

WEAKNESSES

All vampires suffer one health level of lethal damage per turn of exposure to sunlight. This damage cannot be soaked. Fire causes vampires lethal damage and cannot be soaked. A vampire who is staked through the heart is paralyzed. The attack has a difficulty of 9, and three health levels of damage must be inflicted for the attack to succeed. A staked vampire cannot move physically, but it can use any of its mental powers.

VAMPIRIC POWERS

Vampires have powers of their own, which differ based on the individual. Many vampires are almost human in their abilities, whereas some are extremely powerful. (The former are far more common.) The following are only samples of the powers that vampires can possess. The Storyteller is encouraged to design new ones.

Newly created vampires are likely to have three powers, none of them beyond a fairly low level. Strong vampires have four to five powers with weak to moderate levels. Ancient vampires have five or six powers, each at moderate to potent levels. Mortals who bind themselves to a vampire by drinking its blood may have one of the powers listed here. A mortal must partake of its master's blood once per month to continue using this power. After the third such drink, though, the mortal becomes the master's slave.

A vampire must expend Faith to use any of its powers. Faith is regained at the rate of one point for every turn spent drinking human blood, subject to a maximum of five points of blood from any one person (and the victim is dead after three are taken). Additionally, a vampire loses one Faith point every night that it does not feed.

- **Invisibility:** This power is not exactly what the name implies. A vampire with this capability can cause himself to look like someone else to anyone around him, or he can simply make everyone in an area ignore him as if he weren't there. This power does not hide his presence from cameras or other electronic detection devices, but it affects the minds of people in his vicinity. A Faith point is spent to use an invisibility power for a scene.

Because demons have a resistance to all forms of illusion, they may attempt to detect an invisible vampire in their presence with a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8). Older or more powerful vampires can increase this difficulty to 9 or even 10.

Weak vampires can hide themselves in a crowd or in shadows with relative ease. Strong vampires can alter the way they appear to others, and powerful vampires can do either of these things to themselves and to several others at the same time. A potent vampire could easily arrange a very nasty surprise for an unwary demon.

- **Invulnerability:** The vampire gets bonuses to its Stamina, reflecting that it is far tougher than a human. At weak levels, the bonus is +2. At moderate levels, the bonus is +4. The bonus is +6 for powerful vampires. Much like armor, this extra Stamina can be used to soak damage, including lethal damage. This bonus Stamina has no effect against fire or sunlight for weak vampires, but it can allow more powerful ones to soak such damage.

It costs a point of Faith to activate invulnerability for a scene.

- **Lightning Speed:** Vampires can move far faster than humans in many cases. Lightning speed reflects this capability, allowing a vampire to travel great distances or to attack multiple times in a single turn. A newly created vampire might be able to take one extra action in a turn, whereas a moderately powerful vampire might get an extra action per turn for each point of Dexterity it has. Potent vampires can move so quickly that they seem to disappear and reappear in a moment, or even blur when they approach. Allow such a creature all the actions you want it to make.

Each extra action gained in a turn can be used to perform one feat only, and it uses a full dice pool. Multiple actions cannot be performed per extra action.

Lightning speed is not without its cost, though. A point of Faith must be expended for each turn in which the power is used. A weak vampire therefore gains one additional action for a single Faith point, while a moderately strong kindred with Dexterity 5 could perform six actions in a single turn by expending one point of Faith. An ancient vampire can act as often as you like for a single Faith point.

- **Mind-Control:** Vampires with this power can work subtly or with painful force to make others do their bidding. The most basic form of this power makes an opponent obey a simple one-word command. At moderate levels, a vampire can influence the way a target thinks with careful wording and delicate suggestion, perhaps winning a potential enemy to her side of an argument. The vampire could also alter a target's memories with mere suggestion, convincing the subject to misremember important details or even exactly who or what it was the subject sought. At high levels, a vampire can make a target her slave, robbing him of any semblance of free will. This last power often takes subtlety and, in many cases, a great deal of time, but once a victim is captured by a vampire, it's almost impossible for him to truly break free.

Spend a point of Faith and make a Willpower roll for a vampire using a mind-control power. The difficulty is equal to the target's Willpower. Success makes the person the vampire's minion. Demons are naturally immune to this power, but their thralls are not.

- **Superhuman Strength:** Vampires can be far stronger than humans. Add two to Strength at low level, four at moderate level and six at high level. These bonuses are also added to damage rolls involving close-combat or thrown-weapon attacks. The harm inflicted works just as regular damage does, but at the Storyteller's discretion, bashing damage from truly powerful vampires may not be soaked.

Using superhuman strength is taxing. A point of Faith must be expended for every scene in which the power is used.

Those fallen who have heard the legend have no trouble believing such a thing is possible — they know all too well how cruel a vengeful Creator can be.

ENCOUNTERS

A demon could cross paths with a vampire in any number of ways. At the street level, a string of gruesome deaths in an area that a demon claims for her own could lead her to a hungry, bestial vampire preying on the locals. (This is especially serious if one or more of the intended victims are the demon's thralls or mortal acquaintances.) At the corporate/political level, demons and vampires are likely to cross swords over control of any number of institutions and powerful individuals, from government to corporate boardrooms. Demons, particularly Faustians, seek the same sources of power and influence that the kindred do, for similar reasons, and the vampires have something of a home-field advantage. The kindred have a means of enthralling mortals as well as the fallen, sharing their blood with an individual and granting them a limited degree of physical power and immortality. What is more, this blood bond eventually causes the mortal to become unswervingly loyal to the vampire, something that even the greatest demon cannot force a man or a woman to be.

Some vampires see the fallen as a source of power and knowledge that they believe will give them an advantage over their rivals, and they are equally capable of using blood-bound mortals to ritually summon and bind demons for their own purposes. Even without access to arcane lore, these creatures are capable of influencing the fallen in more subtle ways. A powerful kindred's sway over mortal agencies such as the IRS and the police can make a demon's mortal life a living hell, not to mention seriously threatening the health and welfare of her thralls. As immortal as demons and infinitely more patient, the kindred can be formidable adversaries to any fallen — and vice versa.

DEMON-VAMPIRE RELATIONS

Demons and the kindred are competitors for the same prize — mankind and all it has to offer. Both groups are highly territorial, prideful and more than willing to resort to violence if threatened. It's not surprising, then, that most demon-vampire relations tend to be highly confrontational. This is especially true when a fallen and one of the kindred find themselves vying for a hold over a particular mortal or mortal institution. Both sides will spare no effort to protect what they see as theirs. So far, any attempts at détente between a kindred court and an infernal court in a given town or city have broken down into outright conflict, continuing until one side or another is destroyed or leaves for safer climes.

This is not to say that all demon-vampire relations are ultimately destructive. Some of the fallen, particularly of the Reconciler faction, have forged ties with individual vampires, hoping to use their lore to restore the kindred's



humanity in exchange for knowledge and support as the demons try to further their agenda worldwide. So far, these efforts at returning the undead to life have failed, but both parties have time on their side, if nothing else.

PACTS OF FAITH AND VAMPIRES

Because of their undead nature, vampires cannot benefit from pacts of Faith, nor can they be possessed by a demon. A mortal who is bound to a vampire can be enthralled by a demon (and vice versa!), however, and she may be possessed like any other human if her Willpower is low enough. See page 94 of the **Demon** core rules for information on possessing mortals.

WEREWOLVES

Of all the supernatural creatures found in the World of Darkness, the fallen understand the savage and enigmatic

werewolves least of all. These creatures' ability to alter their form from human to wolf is like nothing the fallen conceived of in the War of Wrath, yet the werewolves' evident sensitivity to the natural world and their ability to travel into the realm of the dead suggests knowledge and capabilities that could only come from divine origins. Indeed, there are some fallen who whisper that these creatures are the descendants of the terrible malhim, the fierce and vengeful warriors who wrought such terrible destruction against the fallen during the War of Wrath. Certainly nearly every encounter with these beasts has resulted in immediate and bloody violence.

The fallen have only had a handful of encounters with werewolves, as it appears that their numbers are very few and they are only rarely found in large cities or towns. Werewolves seem to prefer the shrinking wildernesses of the Earth, and they treat trespassers (mortal or demon) with equal brutality.

WEREWOLF PROFILE

Werewolves are beings who combine human form with that of a wolf. Werewolves can take several different shapes between human and animal. The following statistics represent a werewolf in each of its five forms. The base rating is that of human form, followed by parenthetical ratings for these shapes: mostly human/ man-beast/ mostly wolf/ wolf. It takes an action to change shape, and it costs a Faith point to change from one form to another, be it from human to nearly human or human to wolf.

Human form is exactly that. Demons can detect a werewolf in human form with a successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 8), but otherwise, they appear no different from any other mortal. Werewolves in human form have no special abilities.

A werewolf in "mostly human" shape is stronger, a little hairy and (on average) a foot taller than a normal person. The change is radical enough that it's difficult to recognize a person in this stage. In "man-beast" form, the creature gains tremendous mass and size. The average height of these creatures is nine feet, with a weight of nearly 400 pounds. Anyone looking at a werewolf in man-beast form knows it's inhuman. In "mostly wolf" form, a werewolf looks almost exactly like a wolf, but it's larger. In "wolf" form, a werewolf looks like, and for all intents is, a wolf.

The following ratings are for an average werewolf.

Attributes: Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5), Charisma 2, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: (choose from) Alertness 2, Animal Ken 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 4, Drive 1, Empathy 1, Expression 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Occult 2, Stealth 4, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3

Willpower: 7

Faith: 8

The following ratings are for a huge werewolf.

Attributes: Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/6), Charisma 2, Manipulation 5 (4/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2), Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: (choose from) Academics 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 5, Computer 1, Dodge 5, Drive 2, Empathy 1, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Finance 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Investigation 3, Law 2, Leadership 4, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 4, Politics 1, Security 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3, Survival 4

Willpower: 8

Faith: 10

WEAKNESSES

Silver causes one level of damage each time it comes in contact with a werewolf. Even a small amount of silver that's not in the form of a weapon — jewelry, for example — inflicts this damage. A weapon made of silver inflicts its normal damage, but health levels lost to silver in any form cannot be soaked. Nor can they be regenerated.

ENCOUNTERS

Werewolves are highly territorial creatures, even more so than the fallen, for the territories that they claim shrink daily under the relentless assault of human industry. Primal forests, trackless swamps and remote mountains are their hunting grounds, and any demon who trespasses there, perhaps hunting ancient relics or lost bastions — or worse, staking out a hunting ground for his own — is subject to attack. Although lone werewolves are common, they have been known to hunt in packs like their lupine cousins, and even the most fearsome Devourer would be hard pressed against a group of such creatures.

Werewolves are occasionally found in cities, primarily because they seem to originate from human stock and are very close to their mortal kin. These wolves do not stake out territory in the stinking labyrinths of steel and stone so much as they lay claim to a family or group of families and protect them from any threat. A demon seeking to enthrall one of these kinfolk is in for a ferocious battle.

DEMON-WEREWOLF RELATIONS

Werewolves seem to instinctively regard the fallen as mortal enemies, and they nearly always react violently to

a demon's presence. Their supernaturally keen senses can tell the difference between mortals and fallen (and thralls), and younger, less experienced werewolves break into a literal frenzy upon encountering a demon, prompting an immediate and savage battle. The fallen are mystified as to why their presence prompts such a vicious reaction, as werewolves didn't even exist as far as they know during the War of Wrath. Whatever the reason is, these creatures seem to take it as a moral imperative to banish the fallen back to the Abyss regardless of the cost, which lends credence to possible ties with the terrible malhim.

PACTS OF FAITH AND WEREWOLVES

Despite this extreme antipathy, it is possible to forge a pact of faith with a werewolf, though the bond ultimately brings nothing but ruin on the creature. If a demon can somehow overcome a werewolf's extreme fear and hatred and manipulate it into accepting a bond, a mantle of madness and despair settles over the creature. Other werewolves are able to detect the change, and they regard the enthralled one as little different from a demon itself. They will go to any length to hunt down and

WEREWOLF POWERS

- **Hysteria:** The mere presence of a werewolf in any form other than human or wolf is enough to drive normal people mad. They flee in terror, become catatonic or irrationally overlook the whole scene as if it weren't happening. Demons are immune to these effects, but their thralls are not.

- **Speed and Resilience:** Werewolves can take extra actions during combat turns, and they can regenerate damage they sustain. A werewolf may take a number of additional actions equal to its Dexterity rating in a turn, with the expenditure of one Faith point. Therefore, a werewolf with Dexterity 5 has a total of six actions. Each extra action can be used to perform only one feat; multiple feats for each action are not allowed.

Werewolf actions may be used to heal. Damage is removed at the rate of one health level, whether bashing or lethal, per action dedicated to regenerating. Each level recovered also costs one Faith point. Regeneration cannot heal wounds inflicted by fire or silver.

Werewolf speed and healing can be combined in the same turn. If a Faith point is spent to give extra actions to a werewolf with Dexterity 4, the creature may heal two health levels of damage (for an additional two Faith points) and take three other actions in the turn.

- **Claws and Teeth:** The claws and teeth of a werewolf inflict Strength + 1 aggravated damage. There is no Faith cost for these bonuses.

- **Predatory Skills:** Werewolves have innate heightened senses that allow them to track their prey through almost impossible terrain, across rivers and even through areas of heavy traffic without losing the scent. This power requires a Perception + Alertness roll, with a difficulty that ranges from 4 (in a forest on a clear day) all the way to 9 (the tracks are old, there is a lot of traffic in the area and it has been raining). Success means that a werewolf can continue to follow the trail for up to an hour or day, depending on the circumstances, even if the trail is broken and faded.

The same roll can allow some werewolves to "see" with their heightened hearing much like a bat uses sonar. They can find their prey easily, even in complete darkness. The Blind Fighting/ Fire rules (p. 75 of the *Demon* core rules) do not apply to these werewolves.

- **Crossing Over:** A werewolf can cross from the physical world into the realm of the dead and back again, much in the same fashion as the Slayers. This power takes a single action and requires the expenditure of one Faith point and a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 7). Werewolves can travel through the realm of the dead and reappear in a different place in the physical world if they wish, but they are affected by the Maelstrom in the same manner as the fallen (see Chapter Four, page 53, for more details).

Werewolves regain all of their Faith points each night upon seeing the risen moon.

destroy this abomination if they can. The difficulty for all Willpower rolls made on behalf of the werewolf increases by two. If the Willpower roll fails, the werewolf loses a Willpower point as it sinks deeper into despair and madness. Ultimately, the creature is a murderous, uncontrollable beast, driven by hatred and insanity to shed the blood of the living until it finds peace in death.

Although werewolves can be enthralled, they cannot be possessed.

BESTIARY

The animals of the earth and sea are sources of wonder and fear for modern man, but they hold no mystery to the angels of the earth, who know them as an artist knows her canvas or a sculptor her clay. Devourers (or any demons proficient in the Lore of the Beast) frequently surround themselves with large dogs, flocks of great ravens or packs of furtive rats that serve as extensions of their will or autonomous servants who pursue their mistresses' interests with tireless devotion.

In general, all animals recognize a fallen for what she truly is, regardless of her physical appearance. If a demon's Torment is less than 5, animals become very calm and attentive in her presence. Large creatures act particularly submissive, and even feral animals permit the fallen to approach and handle them. Once a demon's Torment increases to 6 or more, however, the reaction is markedly different. Most creatures react to monstrous demons with fear, attempting to flee at their approach (or possibly attack if they feel that they cannot escape).

Although animals cannot become enthralled to a demon as mortals can, a fallen can domesticate and train them with greater ease than a mortal enjoys. Lower the difficulty of any Animal Ken rolls by two if a low-Torment demon attempts to domesticate or train an animal. Monstrous demons increase the difficulty of their Animal Ken rolls by two, since they must overcome the animal's instinctive terror in addition to the normal challenges of handling and training. The evocation Create Chimera can fashion animal servants with greater physical and mental intelligence, which can also be programmed for absolute loyalty to her master or any other individual that the demon wishes to impress upon the creature. As a rule of thumb, an animal can be programmed to serve a number of individuals equal to its Intelligence rating. Powerful Devourers often create such companions for themselves and their favored thralls, both as helpers and guardians.

For the most part, normal animals are best described with only Physical Attributes. Few have Intelligence scores higher than 2, or Perception scores lower than 3. Social Attributes, of course, are purely subjective. Damage inflicted by animals is lethal, although small creatures might inflict bashing damage at the Storyteller's discretion. You

are also encouraged to refer to the following profiles as a guideline for characters who transform themselves using the evocation Animal Form, combining the character's Mental ratings with the Physical ratings listed here.

ALLIGATOR

Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for seven dice; tail slap for six dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 3

Note: Alligators and crocodiles have one soak die of armor, usable against bashing or lethal damage. Big reptiles (Nile or estuarine crocs) might have higher Strength, Stamina and damage scores.

BAT

Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Willpower: 2, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -3

Attack: Bite for one die

Abilities: Alertness 3, Dodge 3, Stealth 2

Notes: Bats can fly at 25 mph.

BEAR

Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for seven dice; bite for five

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 2, Stealth 1

BIG CAT

Strength 4/5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3/4

Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for four/five dice; bite for five/six dice

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3 (Intimidation 4, Stealth 3)

Note: This template represents a leopard, panther, jaguar or other "smaller" big feline. Traits to the right of the slash represent a tiger or lion.

BIRD (LARGE)

Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Claw for two dice; bite for one

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2 (Brawl 3, Empathy 4, Intimidation 4)

Notes: This template can represent a hawk, crow, raven, owl or even vulture. A bird can typically fly at 25 to 50 mph.

CAT

Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw or bite for one die

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Climbing 3, Intimidation 2, Stealth 4 (Empathy 2, Subterfuge 2)

DOG

Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Bite for five dice; claw for four

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3 (Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Stealth 2)

Notes: These traits reflect a large hound, such as a mastiff or hunting dog. Smaller, domestic canines are not as formidable.

HORSE

Strength 4/6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3/5

Willpower: 2/4, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Trample or kick for six/seven dice; bite for three

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1 (Brawl 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2)

Note: The traits to the right of the slash or in parentheses represent a Clydesdale or similar large stallion.

PIG/BOAR

Strength 2/4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4/5

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -4, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for two/four dice; boars gore for five

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2 (Intimidation 2)

Note: Traits to the right of the slash or in brackets represent boars.

RAT

Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -5

Attack: Bite for one die

Abilities: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 3, Stealth 3

Note: Rats often attack in swarms (see the rules that follow). Rat bites can also infect victims with diseases (see page 97 of the **Demon** core rules for details).

Animal	Damage	Health Levels	Initiative
Small bugs	1	5	2
Large bugs	2	7	3
Flying bugs	2	5	4
Birds, bats	4	9	5
Rats	3	7	3
Large rats (one or more feet long)	4	9	3
Feral cats	4	6	6
Wild dogs	6	15	4

WOLF

Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite and claw for four dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Stealth 2

PACKS AND SWARMS

Although the traits listed here detail individual creatures, some animals attack *en masse*. Also, it's quite atmospheric for a Devourer to overwhelm his victims with rodent or canine minions. If a swarm of hornets or a horde of rats accosts the characters, use the rules that follow.

Instead of trying to determine what each and every member of a pack or swarm does, simply roll to see if the swarm itself harms a character. Narrate the results from there.

Each beast type is given a listing on the following chart. Roll the damage dice pool listed once per turn (difficulty 6), and allow the characters to try to dodge or soak the result. This damage is lethal, or possibly bashing in the case of small or weak creatures. Packs attack once per turn per target, and act on the initiative given on the chart.

If a character dodges, he can move normally for the remainder of the turn. Otherwise, his attackers slow him down to half his usual movement. If they score more than three health levels' worth of damage in one turn (after the target soaks), or if the player botches an appropriate roll, the character is knocked down and overrun. He can move only a yard or two per turn and the swarm's damage difficulty falls to 5. Efforts to get back up and continue moving have higher than normal difficulties (typically difficulty 7 or 8).

The health levels listed reflect the amount of damage it takes to disperse a pack or swarm. An additional two health levels destroy the attackers completely. Pistols, rifles and small melee weapons (knives, brass knuckles, bottles, claws, bare hands) inflict a single health level per strike, no matter how many attack or damage successes are rolled (that is, the strike hits only one creature). Shotguns, submachine guns and large melee weapons (swords, staves, boards, chainsaws) inflict normal damage (each damage success rolled eliminates one health level of the swarm as a whole), as do large-area attacks (Molotov cocktails, frost storms, gusts of wind, explosions). Swarms and packs don't soak.

Depending on the size of the pack, two or more characters might be affected by it and able to attack it in return. Anyone who helps an overrun character can be attacked as well. A human can outrun some packs or swarms (those consisting of rats or bugs), but most people can't hope to outrun others (those consisting of hyenas or birds).

DEMON

storytellers companion

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The seals of Armageddon are sundered, and the damned have shaken off their chains. While the lords of the Abyss marshal their forces and rekindle ancient ambitions, they are unaware that darker forces wait in remote parts of the world. The Earthbound have slumbered for centuries, waiting for their opportunity to enslave mankind, and the demons are the key. Caught up in the intrigues of a forgotten age, will the legions of the Abyss re-ignite the fires of rebellion or consume the Earth in flames?

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