

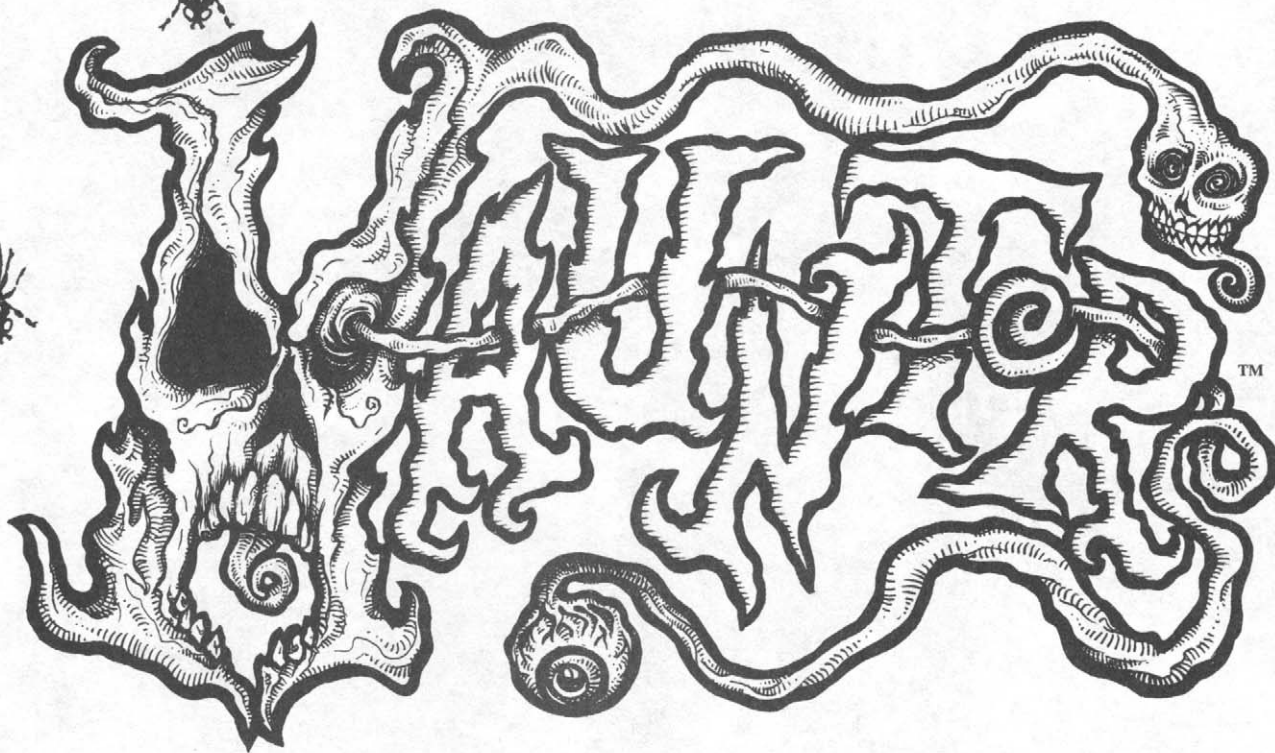
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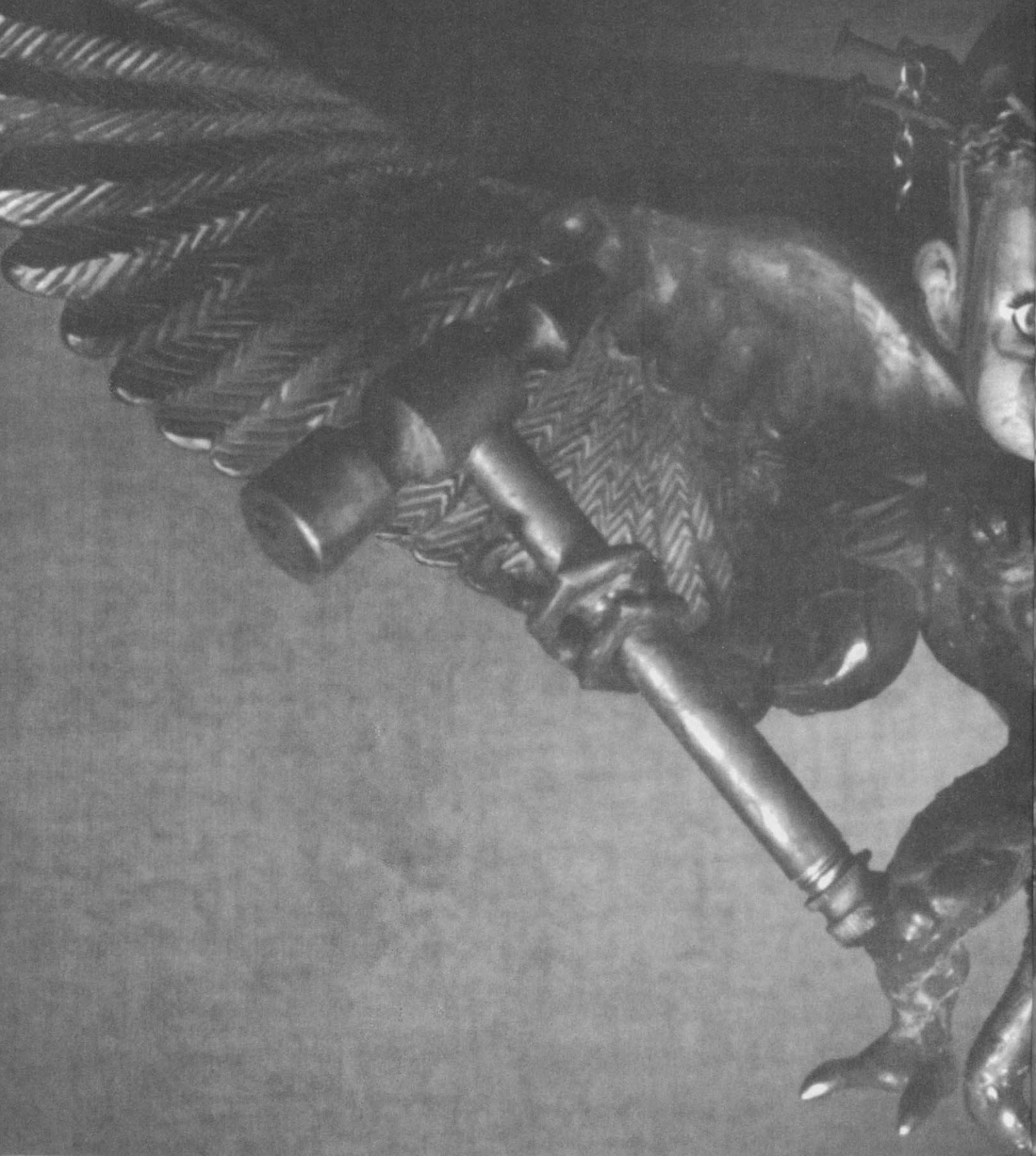
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Guildbook Four

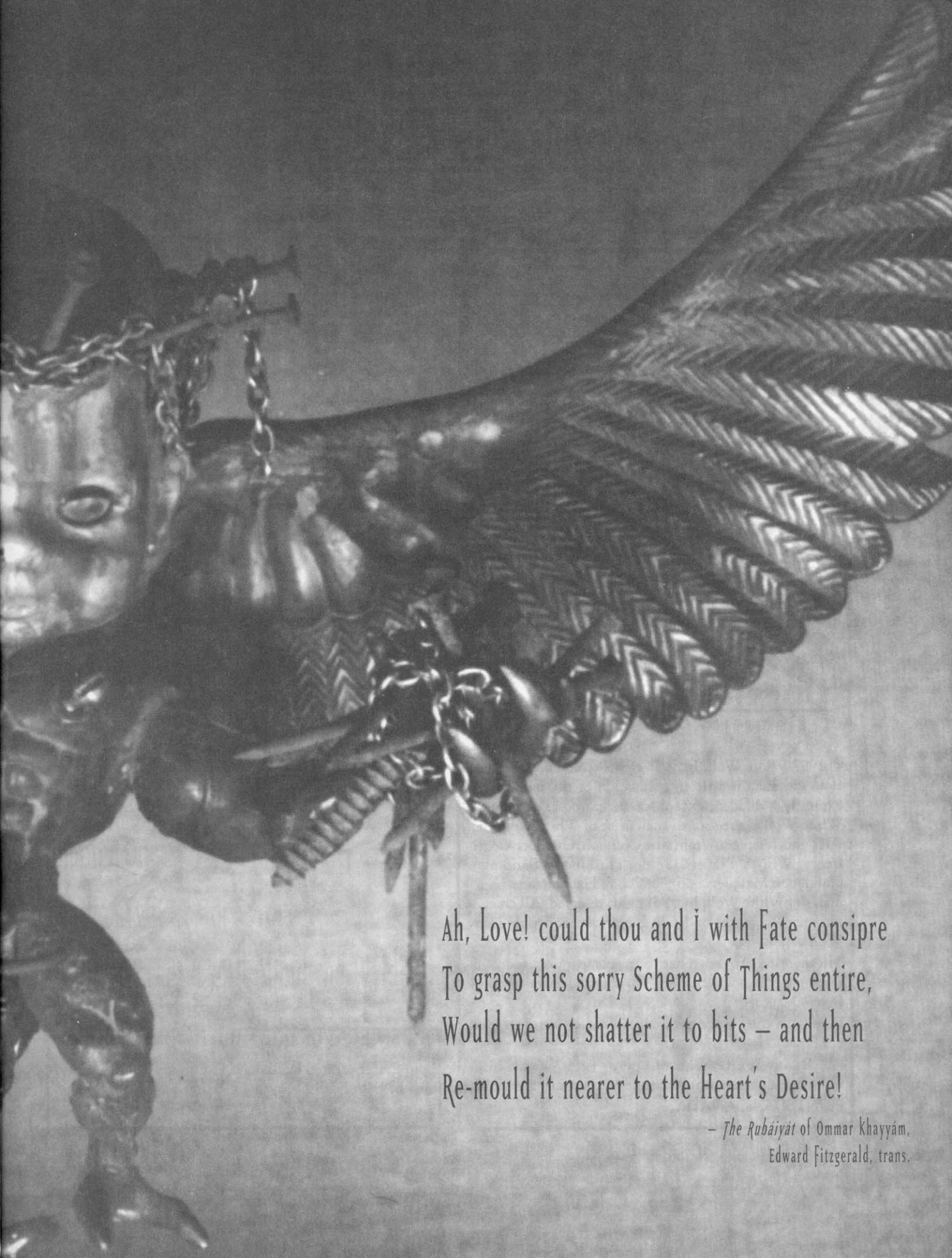
J. Cobb 99

GUILDBOOK:



By Lucien Soulban





Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

— *The Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám,
Edward Fitzgerald, trans.

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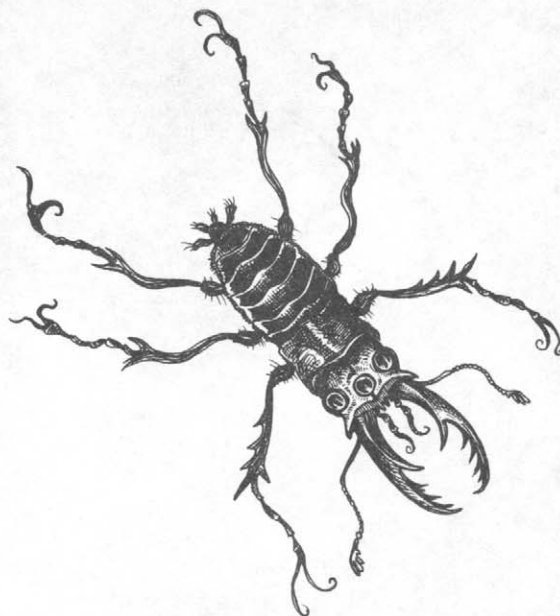
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Lord Ember created by Richard E. Dansky. Thusimos created by Beth Fischl. Midian created by Lucien Soulban.

GUILD BOOK:

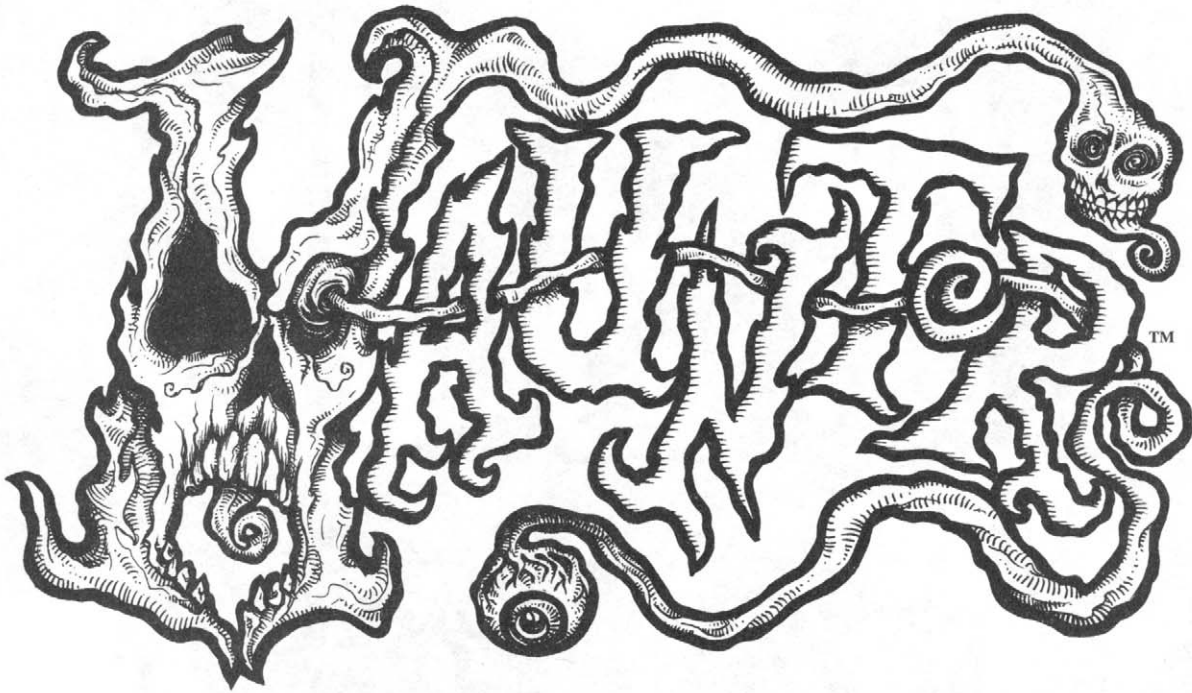



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Hoop 9



Ghost Story: A Road of Steel and Souls

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Chapter 4: Midian's Game

niaG s'naidiM



Somewhere, on a hill of cracked earth, a house stood placidly beneath sandpaper skies. Its presence within the Shadowlands was betrayed by its unique condition. The lower half of the house did not exist there; having never been consumed by the flames that brought the remainder of the building to this bleak place, it appeared hazy and translucent at best. A set of charred stairs served as the only passage from the open ground floor into the skeleton of the second story. The attic, however, floated above the ground like a dark dream, anchored to the hill by the odd support beam spearing the flesh of the earth.

Lord Ember observed the house carefully, studying it with somber curiosity. The parallel between the condition of the building and his own appearance did not escape him. Blackened and cracked by centuries in the forges, Lord Ember could blend in easily against the flame-licked wood of the floating attic, should he choose. It was ironic, seeing as there were very few places where he could blend in at all.

Frowning, the Guildmaster continued toward the farmhouse, taking time only to study the shadow of a fence that was not there. Without further hesitation, Lord Ember mounted the rickety stairs. The attic was devoid of furniture, save for a

table and two chairs, all covered with a thick layer of soot. One of the seats was taken by the Restless Midian, leader of an influential Haunter faction and the closest thing to a proper Guild representative that the Haunters possessed. Midian's attention was entirely focused on a chessboard that was marred by missing pieces and gap-toothed tiles; it looked as if the craftsman who had made the set had given up the job halfway through.

Midian himself was covered head to foot in strips of bandages, leaving only his face exposed. The illusion that Midian sat restless was due solely to his animated bindings as they moved over his frame in a slow danse macabre. His expressionless face revealed an even greater enigma. The mask that protected his identity, like a Caul of Stygian metal, was imbedded inches beneath his Corpus visage, and reflected the full range of emotional countenance that one would have expected from his true, but neutral face.

"Well?" spoke the mask of Midian. "Are you planning on studying me or do you wish to sit down?"

"I would prefer the latter," the Artificer answered. Midian motioned to the empty chair opposite, and moved the chess pieces back to their starting positions. Without comment, Lord Ember took up a black rook and examined it carefully. "One of your best pieces," commented Midian.

Ember nodded with a satisfied grin as a milky tear of Corpus rolled down the rook's face. "How is your collection proceeding, Midian?"

"People no longer wish to play me," he sighed with mock-sadness.

"Can you blame them? Those who lose end up as either a tile or a piece."

"Better a pawn here than in the other games being played," Midian stated, and shrugged casually as he continued setting his half-finished board.

Ember regarded him with a stern glance. "Surely you don't think I'm going to play against you, Haunter. I have no interest in ending up as one of your pieces."

Midian looked up, his mask aghast with mock concern. "You cannot believe that I would do you any harm?" he chuckled. "Who then would I commission to forge new pieces for me? Lord knows your Artificers regard my kind with a great deal of suspicion, and finding someone as capable as you would be next to impossible. I promise you that no harm will befall you over this game of chess." Lord Ember still looked vaguely unconvinced. Midian finally reached over, took Ember's white king and placed it by the side of the board. "Feel better? You cannot lose without your king, and without mine—" Midian placed his black king on the table, "—neither can I."

"Intriguing. What we have here, then, is a game that remains a perpetual stalemate." Ember paused, considered. "Unless, of course, all the pieces are devoured? Your promise is not good enough, Midian. There are still degrees of victory and loss."

"But you're still going to play, aren't you? You can't resist the pull of this conversation or the direction it may take you in?"

"You mean the direction it may take the both of us in."

"It's all a matter of perception," Midian said. He motioned to Ember to open play, his fingers toying with a pawn. "Besides," he continued, "that's what we are doing now, anyway." Seeing Ember's confusion, Midian clarified his statement. "I mean that we are playing without the benefit of a king or all the tiles in place."

"You refer to the search for Charon?" Midian's mask smiled as he contemplated the next move. "I was wondering about that. I hear you refused to send anyone from your Guild into the Labyrinth to investigate the Sandman Thusimos' claim that Charon may be hidden there. Why? Frightened?"

Midian shook his head, his mask still smiling. "I have a healthy fear of the Labyrinth. Everyone should, after all. It is not fear, however, that is the issue in this case."

"Then what is?"

"I have found that the best secrets are often uncovered where the arrows *don't* point."

Ember thought about Midian's statement for a moment. "Then you don't trust the Sandman?" he finally asked.

"Why should I? What reason have I been offered to place my trust in him? He isn't the only one with information, you know."

"If you know something else," Ember cajoled in an ashen purr, "then I advise you to share it."

With a look of innocent hurt on one face, Midian glanced up. "No threats, Ember. I am willing to share what I know."

"Then speak."

"Well, I would, but this conversation is disrupting your concentration. You just lost a pawn. Pity."

Ember would have reached across the board for Midian's throat, but he remembered how much of an appetite the Haunter's Corpus rags were rumored to possess. "Enough games, Midian. What do you know?"

"Enough games? What do you think this entire quest for Charon is? Either you've decided to keep us distracted from your true intentions by distracting us with the idiotic rumor that Charon was betrayed, or someone is playing you for a fool."

"Then you do know something?"

"If anything, I know that Charon is not in the Labyrinth." Midian's inner face smiled, a Cheshire grin.

Veins of angry red traced themselves out on the Artificer's charred skin. "What makes you so sure?"

"A trade, Lord Artificer. What do you have that I could use?"

"Your worthless existence, Haunter!" roared Ember. "I was a power in Stygia when your 10-times grandfather was still painting himself blue, and I'll be here long after you're gone."

Midian's Corpus bandages slithered around his body like agitated snakes. The Haunter himself, however, remained calm, his mask an image of placid thought. "Perhaps you are good at politics, but games are actually my *forté*. Take this chess match, for example. The white king is lacking from this equation."

Lord Ember regarded the board for a moment, then commented, his tone much more subdued. "As is the black king. We've already been over this. Is there a point to your comment?"

"There is a balance to things. No gift is entirely beneficial, and no curse entirely destructive. As I've said, it's all a matter of perspective. Charon is missing, correct?" Midian asked as he tapped the white king next to him with a spindly finger.



"Yes," Ember answered cautiously, unsure as to where this was leading.

"And if we are to assume that Charon is the white king in this equation, then my question to you is this: Who is playing the black king? It's a pertinent matter, I think."

Lord Ember sat back for a moment, allowing the question to sink in. "Gorool," he decided. "But they both vanished in the struggle."

"Did they really?" Midian purred like a great cat on the hunt. "Was Charon even destroyed, for that matter? At the moment of his great 'sacrifice,' we Hunters sensed something queer with the Shroud. Personally, I suspect the whole thing was a charade."

"You believe he stepped through?"

"Now I didn't say *that*, but why not?" replied Midian.

Visibly agitated, Lord Ember pondered the ramifications of the Hunter's statement. It was Midian who finally broke the resultant silence with a casual, "Which piece would you like to be?"

Lord Ember straightened up, his fierce scowl back in place. "So much for your 'word,' Midian. I thought you swore that no harm would befall me." The Artificer's words were sarcastic, but his hand strayed to the weighty hammer at his belt.

"I promised that no harm would befall you over this game of chess," the Hunter said as his arm swept over the board to impress his point, "but, you've lost the other game."

"What other game?" snapped Ember.

"The one we've been playing. This little exchange of information and your heavy-handed attempts to gain my secrets. We weren't playing the same game, you and I. It was all a matter of perception. Besides, I know you aren't Lord Ember. Checkmate!"

A moment of quiet draped the room as Midian regarded the imposter. "Come out, Sandman!" the Hunter commanded. "I know who you are, and I know this is only a dream."

Behind eyes that looked like Ember's, the Sandman bard Thusimos quickly regained his composure. He might have been uncovered as an imposter, but the fact that Midian hadn't called him by name was encouraging. The details of his identity were still secure. "How?" he asked.

"Simple," stated Midian. "My dreams are the only facet of my consciousness that remains intact. And do you know something else? I would destroy you for reminding me of that."

Thusimos smiled through Ember's cracked visage, and then vanished with a flourish.

Midian remained seated, regarding the now-empty chair across from him with a bored stare. Minutes — or perhaps hours — later, he finally addressed the black queen. "Thank you for the warning. I doubt I could have learned as much as I did had I not been so excellently prepared."

At the center of the board, the black queen moved under her own power, and turned to regard Midian for the first time. He could hear the faint clinking of chains.

"And I thank you." The piece spoke with a faint lilt, Midian noticed. "Witnessing that was... informative."

"It certainly was." Midian sat and brooded as silence settled around him again. It was long minutes before the queen spoke again.

"As per my last message, I wish to establish stronger lines of communication with your Guild. There is much, I think, that we could do for one another."

"I agree. However, make sure your man is subtle. The others aren't fools, and the last thing either of us needs is our alliance becoming public knowledge. Is there anything else?"

The queen frowned. "I am... confused about one matter."

"That being?"

"Do you actually believe that Charon stepped through, back into the world of the Quick, or was that just another ruse?"

"I believe." Midian steepled his fingers, and his tired eyes stared down at the diminutive figure. "My suspicions were confirmed only now. The false Ember tipped his hand when he tried to gauge my reaction to his 'news.' I could see he was checking to see how much I knew, rather than trying to discern if I were telling the truth. But to answer your question, yes. I think that either Charon stepped through or..."

"Or what?" pressed the black queen.

"Or Gorool did." Both remained silent for a few moments, lost in their thoughts, before Midian spoke up again. "So, my lady, what will the Deathlords do now, since you have learned that your days of rule are numbered?"

"My dear Midian," she sighed, "that is not your concern."

"I agree, as long as you remember our deal. I want Charon or Gorool found and his body given to me for my board. I want it finished by the time I finally return to the land of the living."

"Do you still believe you can tear down the Shroud and cross over again?" the black queen asked with a bemused smile.

Midian's voice was grim, and terrifyingly lucid. "The Shroud *did* weaken when Charon fought Gorool. The Mandelbrots have shown me the proof. If Charon or Gorool's passing was capable of doing it once, imagine what might happen if either dies a second time. This opportunity will not escape us. When the moment of truth comes, we will be ready to travel through. We've been dead a very long time, and I for one have grown quite tired of it."

"And your dream visitor, the Sandman?"

"I think it may have been either Thusimos or Akhshephat. Either way, I claim him for my board."

"As what piece, if I may be so bold to ask?"

"Pawn."

The black queen surveyed the chess board with a troubled frown. "Pardon the question, Midian, but don't you already have a full complement of pawns?"

"My dear lady," Midian's translucent face and mask smiled in unison. "You can never have enough pawns."



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Chapter One: The Recruiting Process

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Close Your Eyes seYE ruoY htolC



Can you close your eyes and trust the shadows not to move? Ziad Bennori could not. He sat in a decrepit chair in the middle of his room, ignoring the sink filled with stagnant water. From the moment the moon had crept quietly above the horizon, Ziad had remained in his chair, fondling the silenced

.38 pistol in his hand. No matter how long or how tightly he held the gun, the grip was always cold. This nagged at him.

Ziad left this place only when hunger fogged his vision. Even then, he would scour the trashcans of the nearby alley as quickly as he could, and then race back to the sanctuary of his room with his rancid bounty. The place reeked from the decomposing morsels of food hidden beneath his bed and the clothing he had worn countless times without washing. Stains of unknown origin marked the walls and floor; mold crept along the ceiling.

Tonight, just like every night, Ziad listened for the sounds of skittering, of countless tiny light legs scrambling on wood. Every night he could hear them, scuttling behind the walls, daring one another to go out, creeping forth into the dim light of his apartment.

When the roaches did appear, their little black bodies formed words on his fading wallpaper. In this manner, they spoke to him. They told him things, dark things. Sometimes, however, they would go too far and try to approach him. They died when they did this, though. Every time a cockroach came too close, it died. It didn't matter whether it was 10 feet away from him, five, one or even perched on his knee. He killed them all with the butt of his gun, or the sole of his shoe, or with his hand. Occasionally, he would shoot them, but that wasn't much of an option anymore. He was down to his last three bullets, so he had to be careful. He had to make two of them count.

An infinitesimal sound alerted him, and Ziad saw a cockroach running along the edge of the wall. He raised his gun and fired. The sound barely rippled through the room. The roach died, splattered across a hole in the wall larger than its body. Ziad checked his gun — two bullets left — and waited some more while the cockroaches spoke to him.

In the shadows of neither here nor there, Roachbud the Haunter chuckled to himself. His teeth clicked together in excitement as he formed another sentence for mad Ziad to read. Roachbud was on a recruitment drive. This was how he inducted his candidates into the Haunters.



The Guild tliuG ehT

Peeling Back the Skin

niS eht kcaB ginleeP



We are the Haunters. We are a poem that dances to an invisible choreographer's whim, we are chaos by intention, we are madness in moderation. Of the Guilds, we are among the few that bear the distinction of being outlawed proudly. It suits our needs, as it will come to suit yours.

Now you may wonder why we are sharing this with you. It's simple. We are recruiters for our Guild, and it is our function to bring those of promise into our fold when they die. We know that you *think* that you are not yet dead, but really, you are. It's just a timing issue.


You will discover that time works to your advantage when you're a Haunter. It's all a matter of personal perception. Now, quit killing our goddamned roaches and listen.

Who We Are eW erA ohW

Many would have you believe that we ghosts are the Restless Dead, too embittered to let go of the real world. We don't like this definition. It makes victims of us too easily. A more accurate description would be to say that we are those who not only refuse to let go of the mortal coil, but who also strive to bring the Shroud down like a cheap Christmas tree on New Year's. We are not victims; we are wraiths who have decided on a grand and glorious goal. Unfortunately, we are too divided to reach it. Yet.

Reality was not always the harsh mistress it is now. Even Charon recognized this, back in the old days when the Shroud was just a mist. In time, however, the Shroud became bloated, mirroring the growing ignorance of the living and their precious Fog. The less the Quick wanted to learn about what frightened them, the stronger the Shroud grew.

We Haunters came from the ranks of those wraiths who not only saw the rift widen and the world of the living attempt leave us behind, but who were determined to rectify this situation. Our solution was to tear down the ubiquitous wall called the Shroud, and our target was humanity (for if mortals were the tailors who dictated the weave of the world, then they had to be shown that the fabric of their reality was not as well-crafted



as they had hoped). The struggle continues to this day, and when you die, you will join us and take up the same struggle we have fought through the centuries. Our aim is this: to unite the two worlds and take back what was once ours — the Skinlands. We do so by haunting the living and by reminding them that there is more to their lives than their petty little world. Mind by mind, we will show them the reality of terror, and thread by thread the Shroud will unravel. Then the worlds of the living and the dead will be one again, and we shall step from the Shadowlands into the sunlight, there to live once again.

Forever, perhaps. We shall see when it happens.

I will not delude you. The road has not been easy. We have always been a fractious bunch. As a Guild we have divided ourselves into various alliances that pursue the same goal, but do so by taking differing and, occasionally, opposing paths. From the maniacal Bedlameers to the practical Menagerians, from the cold-hearted Mandelbrots to the pious Dantes, we are all Haunters, but we march under the banners of unofficial alliances that keep us apart. In essence, we are often our own worst enemies.

Alliances sesaila

When the call came to form ourselves into a proper Guild, a variety of groups who practiced Pandemonium stepped forward and claimed the right to represent the general interests of all the Wylding's practitioners. In truth, we were never particular about who learned our Arcanos, so our membership was far-flung, diverse and unfortunately, disorganized. Slowly, due to the efforts of several influential wraiths (including Midian and Sweet Sorrow), some of the more glaring differences between one bunch of Haunters and another were ironed out. The factions ended up united by common goals and treaties, and transmogrified into a sanctioned Guild.

Despite our "official" unification, however, several alliances within the Guild retained their unique ideologies and maintained strong group identities. To this day, several factions exist within the Haunters, which we still call alliances. With exception to the Mandelbrots and Dantes, the ranks of these other groups are not rigid, and their continued existences are outgrowths of common interests or mutual views, as opposed to being the products of a directed agenda. In fact, many of these alliances have free-floating memberships ("Going to be a Menagerian this week, dear,"), and as such they are often derisively referred to as "clubs."

Although we are divided over the path we should travel in order to reach our goal, we are united in purpose. (One of the outcomes of the Conclave that first formed the Hunter's Guild was a statement of mutual purpose.) We all want to shred the Shroud, and once we do so, we wish our fellow Haunters to join us on the other side of its corpse. It's just that each of our alliances wishes to demonstrate conclusively

that its path was the correct one, and as such there's sometimes a bit of... sibling rivalry that springs up.

In any case, here are examples of some of the more powerful alliances within the Guild. We mention these in particular because they have managed, in some fashion or form, to advance our craft beyond its original state.

When dealing with alliances, there is one rule that always takes precedence above all other concerns: Even if you do not agree with another Hunter, you must still back him up against all aliens. If you are a Dante, you may argue with a Mandelbrot to your heart's content until the second a Spook walks into the room. Remember, we all come from the same roots, and we are all touched by the Wylding. None of the aliens will ever understand that.

The H.G. Dwellers

Other Aliases: The Puritans, Pandora Skia

This alliance is one of the oldest factions within the Haunters, and is the founding Circle of the Guild itself. This is the alliance we belong to, and it is the alliance that you will belong to as well.

What makes us all H.G. Dwellers is this: We subscribe to the notion that the hands of time can be forced back to a point before our deaths. We have seen other supernatural creatures manipulate time itself, and we believe we can do the same. And once we have wound back time to a point when we all live once again, then the sky will be the limit!

Initially, we were known as Pandora Skia, or Pandora's Shadow, an alliance dating back to the Golden Age of Athens (well before the birth of the Christian Messiah). We are best remembered for the haunting of Pandora, a tale that later came to serve as an allegory for the woes of the world. You will learn more about this when we teach you our history. For as long as we can remember, we have been among those who led the charge against the Shroud, and as the premier practitioners of the Wylding, we naturally took charge of the alliances when the Hunter's Guild became real. Much later, following the release of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, our name became what it is now, a reflection of the changing times and a tribute to one who understood somehow what we were about.

We are a small Circle. Our numbers have been shrinking as of late, that is true, but we are still recognized as the leaders of the Haunters by most of the Guilds. We regard many of our brethren to be fools for the paths they have chosen, but we do not hold that against them. We haunt ancient places, because people expect that sort of thing from ruined houses and old mansions. We find the Shroud in these areas is weaker, and thus the traces of our work cannot be erased so easily by the Fog. Otherwise, each of us strains against the clockwork of entropy as best we can, seeking to make the watch hands of the universe spin backward.



Our Organization

Like most of the other factions, we do not have a rigid hierarchy. Individual members are allowed to pursue their own endeavors, so long as they advance the group's goals. The H.G. Dwellers do rely on a council of five wraiths, however, to make major decisions for our alliance. The final vote lies in the hands of Midian, the leader of the H.G. Dwellers. It is Midian who chooses who will occupy the five council seats, and who decides what issues they will address.

Never accept an offer of a game of chess from Midian. I tell you this now, in hopes that the memory will survive your death.

Gallery Macabre

Every year, a Caligarian is elected to be host for a region or Necropolis. It then becomes his duty to provide entertainment, hold expositions and lead tours of various local Haunts. Invitations for Haunters' galas go out via word of mouth, and the events are open to all Haunters and Spooks. The festivities usually begin with a gathering at a local art gallery, most often one that displays the work of an individual influenced by a Dark Muse. The first part of the evening consists of the guests critiquing the work, not only that of the artist, but also that of the Haunter who inspired her. A favorite topic of discussion is how much any given haunting or effect has influenced a particular piece; these debates can go on for hours.

Following the exposition, the guests travel to a celebrated haunted site, where a troupe of Caligarians mounts a "performance haunting" for the benefit of their audience. These expositions are always improvised, since their targets are whatever unsuspecting mortals wander onstage. Emphasis is placed on the ability of the actors to create a beginning, middle, climax and resolution to a play involving panicked humans. Because Caligarians enjoy the company of other performers and artists, Sandmen have also been known to take part in these improvisations, or even to present dream plays of their own. Mostly, however, the attendance at these events is limited to Spooks and Haunters.

Following the show, older Haunters share their experience and wisdom in dealing with Pandemonium. It is at these events that new arts of the Wylding are unveiled. The evening then climaxes with a tour of famous local haunted establishments, where the guests are welcome to contribute to the legends of these places.

We have attended several such "Galleries Macabre," and we must admit that the Caligarians are at least innovative in their presentation of the Wylding.

The Mandelbrots

Other Aliases: Bay't el-Hikma, the Nihilists, Chaosticians

Some Haunters believe it was a mistake to ignore Outrage as a potential avenue for returning to the world of the Quick, and are still closely allied with the Spooks. This group works at combining Outrage and Pandemonium in order to manipulate the stuff of the Shroud itself. Reliable sources also indicate that they are researching the prospect of harnessing Nihilis in the hopes of using these tears in reality to shred the Shroud. These wraiths, when not terrifying the living, are the most analytical and research-oriented of our kind. Many former scientists find a home with the Mandelbrots; many new uses of the Wylding come from their labs.

The Nihilists are gaining more and more adherents to their ranks. They are also the most brutal of our kind, and they haunt with the intention of maiming and killing. That, they say, is the only way to make humanity truly remember the sting of Pandemonium. Of all the alliances, they are the only ones strong enough to challenge the H.G. Dwellers.

I didn't say defeat. I just said *challenge*.

Organization

The Mandelbrots are controlled by one wraith, Dr. Shudder. He rules the Nihilists with an iron hand, and his vision steers their actions. Dr. Shudder is attended by the Dead Cadre, a group of 13 assistants who delegate assignments to the various subgroups and research teams.

The members of the Cadre, all personally devoted to the good doctor, are merciless in their efficiency. Any dissension in the ranks is squashed without a second of remorse. Dr. Shudder is also rumored to be in league with dark fae, not to mention some of the more violent members of the Spooks' Guild.

The Caligarians

Other Aliases: The Artists, Dark Muses

Originally known as the Bacchaens, a hedonistic sect of wraiths who regarded Pandemonium as their drug of choice in the Shadowlands, these Restless have since evolved and now view reality as an antiquated medium whose time has ended. The Caligarians were renamed back in 1921, following the release of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Apparently the film so inflamed their sensibilities that they adopted a new precept: Since they were no longer limited by physical law, they no longer had any need to adhere to its tenets.

The Caligarians' prime concern is artistic expression, and while they are potent manipulators of Pandemonium, I doubt many of these hedonists are much concerned with bringing down the Shroud. Caligarians prefer to make a "statement" with whom-

ever they terrify, and their recruiting techniques are something to behold. They love haunting artists and revealing their “talents” to these hapless creators. These particular Haunters refer to themselves as Dark Muses, claiming that they give mortal creators the inspiration of insanity. From what we have seen, this faction is also closely allied with certain Renegade Masquers and well-versed with Moliate. The wraiths of the Caligarians love to use themselves as canvases for Corpus art, and their often freakish appearances reflect this preference.

Organization

Any attempt at describing their chain of command is laughable, as the Dark Muses have no organization. The Caligarians classify their craft as a solitary venture, a journey of personal vision. Therefore, a leadership structure is superfluous to their goals. They regard one another as equals and define their alliance as an assembly of common interest, not one of mutual goals.

I once heard a friend of mine describe these Haunters as a “mutual appreciation society for deceased narcissists.” She was not far from the truth.

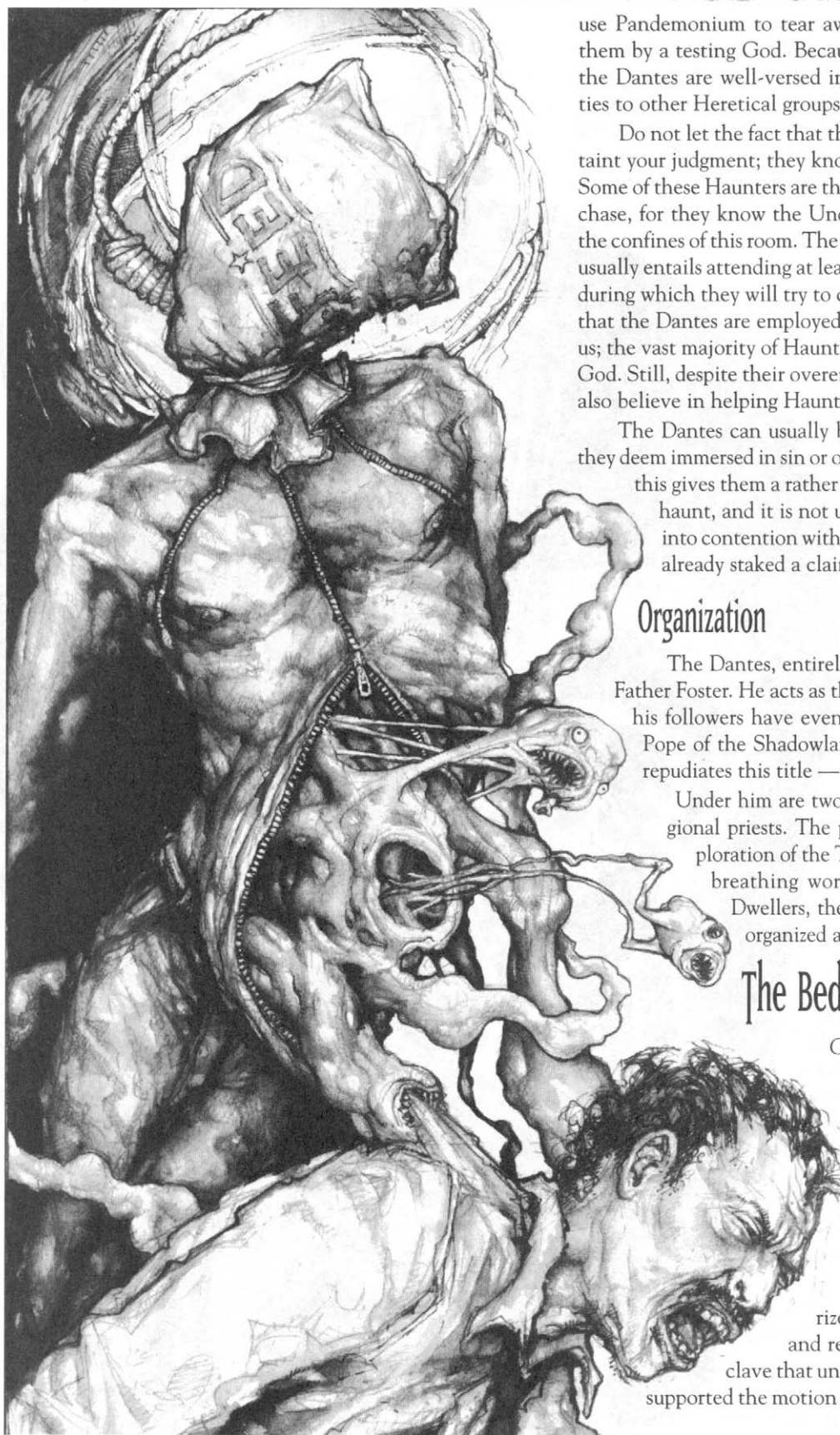
The Dantes

Other Aliases: Explorers, Zealots

Believing themselves to be in neither Heaven nor Hell, this group of Heretics is of the opinion that they have stumbled upon Purgatory. They were formed after the release of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*, working under the supposition that this realm was meant to test them. (The fact that Alighieri himself dwells in Stygia as a publicity flack for the Hierarchy dismays their ardor for his work not one bit.) Unsurprisingly, the Dantes have defined themselves as the surveyors and explorers of the Shadowlands (for how can one expect to affect one’s surroundings without fully exploring what one strives to change?).

The Dantes do not seek to upend reality with a vision of their own. Instead they





use Pandemonium to tear away the illusions placed before them by a testing God. Because of their exploratory nature, the Dantes are well-versed in Argos, and most have strong ties to other Heretical groups such as the Harbingers.

Do not let the fact that the Dantes are devoutly religious taint your judgment; they know exactly what they are doing. Some of these Haunters are the best tour guides oboli can purchase, for they know the Underworld as surely as you know the confines of this room. The cost of hiring a Dantist Haunter usually entails attending at least one church service, however, during which they will try to convert you. It is for this reason that the Dantes are employed only as a last resort by most of us; the vast majority of Haunters have no interest in anyone's God. Still, despite their overemphasis on religion, the Dantes also believe in helping Haunters before aliens.

The Dantes can usually be found haunting those places they deem immersed in sin or owned by sinners. Unfortunately, this gives them a rather long list of people and places to haunt, and it is not uncommon for a Dante to come into contention with another Haunter who may have already staked a claim for himself.

Organization


The Dantes, entirely Christian in belief, are led by Father Foster. He acts as their spiritual guide, and some of his followers have even gone so far as to call him the Pope of the Shadowlands. To his credit, however, he repudiates this title — thus far.

Under him are two “shepherds,” who supervise regional priests. The priests, in turn, oversee the exploration of the Tempest and the haunting of the breathing world. As compared to the H.G. Dwellers, these Heretics are extremely well-organized and structured.

The Bedlameers

Other Aliases: Alienists, Madmen

If you think we're putting you through hell, be glad the Bedlameers didn't find you. What the Nihilists possess in brutality, the Alienists own in insanity. The activities of these Haunters can be traced back to the Roman era, for it was their actions that categorized us then as *Lemuria*, or evil and restless spirits. During the Conclave that united us into a Guild, they barely supported the motion to unite the alliances, and they



were not even interested in the Guild until well after the Breaking. It is not their politics, though, that makes them objectionable.

It was not until the 17th century, under the guidance of Sweet Sorrow, the Grandmother of the Haunters, that they adopted their current name from “bedlam,” meaning chaos and confusion. Bedlam, in turn, was taken from London’s Bethlehem Hospital, a filthy asylum for the insane where the public could purchase tickets to watch the mad “perform.” The core group of today’s Bedlameers died from the barbaric conditions that plagued the 17th-19th century mental hospitals, and those experiences inform their actions to this day.

Of all the Haunters, Charon considered them the most dangerous of our kind. He constantly tried to have them captured and turned over to the forges. The Hierarchy has carried on this tradition even after the Emperor’s disappearance; the form remains even when the function is not understood.

We must sorrowfully admit that we do not understand the Bedlameers either; they are beyond psychotic. They haunt asylums, prisons and hospitals, preying upon the weak-minded, the insane and the deviants. Oblivion has not merely touched these ones; it has sunk its fangs into their throats and replaced their blood with toxic madness.

Much like the Caligarians, the Bedlameers have no interest in returning to the Skinlands. They possess far too much power here to abandon the Underworld so casually. Fear has become their aphrodisiac, and this makes them dangerous and untrustworthy. Of all of our kind, it is the Bedlameers who veer the closest to the edge of what we are often accused of.

We have also heard of a rumored treaty between the Bedlameers and the Laughing Lady, the Deathlord who occupies the Seat of Succor. Sweet Sorrow is reputedly using the Bedlameers to spread madness in world of the Quick by driving the living insane. These unhinged mortals then kill and harm others because of what the “voices” tell them to do. This invariably fills the coffers of the Laughing Lady with more wraiths, and she, in turn, overlooks the transgressions of the Bedlameers (leaving them their hospital and prison Haunts). Although the truth of this rumor is dubious, we have heard that Sweet Sorrow covets the Seat of Succor for herself, and awaits anxiously the day when the Laughing Lady falls.

Organization

The Bedlameers are guided by Sweet Sorrow, their spiritual advisor. While she does not control them, they honor her advice and listen to her suggestions. Beyond that, each batch of Bedlameers is ruled by the strongest of their number, and they consider each asylum, hospital and prison to be a separate city-state ruled by different sets of laws, customs and traditions.

The Order of the Glass Menagerie

Other Aliases: The Remembered, Diplomats

A fairly new group, but one that is rapidly gaining strength, these Haunters have allied themselves with (supposedly) the Mnemoi and (definitely) the Sandmen. Their theory (and we have to admit it has merit) is that our haunting efforts are losing their impact because of the Fog — mortals’ ability to forget our presence or explain it away. Sandmen and Mnemoi can rekindle the memories of a haunting after the Fog has taken effect by exercising their Arcanoi. This way, skinbags are forced to confront what they have seen over and over again until the memory sticks.

These Haunters are less tied down to specific locations or individuals. For them, haunting is an equal opportunity endeavor, and they believe that it should be spread across racial, status, gender and age lines in order to have the best effect. Of the Haunters we know, they are the most practical, discreet and business-oriented about their day-to-day affairs. Members of the Order tend to be reserved, subtle, observant, patient, highly diplomatic and well-educated. They are the ones most likely to hire their talents out, and the ones, from what we hear, the Hierarchy secretly approaches for help in dealing with *their* problems.

The Order of the Glass Menagerie maintains close contacts with most of the other Haunter alliances, and its members have begun acting as intermediaries to reunify us as a Guild. The greatest problems of reconciliation, however, lie between the H.G. Dwellers and the Mandelbrots. The Nihilists have no interest in forming a unified Guild if it means deferring to the Puritans, and we will not acquiesce our right of leadership to them. To their credit, the Remembered are still trying.

Organization

The upper echelons of the Glass Menagerie remain a mystery. We believe that their leadership consists of a shadow council of five members who hold equal sway over the Menagerians. Because of their insistence on keeping secrets about this and other matters, however, quite a few of us distrust the Menagerie. Stories are circulating as to how the Order is a clever front for the Hierarchy; that it is under Ember’s control; that it is a trick of the Sandmen; that it is ruled by Doppelgangers; that the council members are none other than Midian, Dr. Shudder, Father Foster, Sweet Sorrow and Elvis.

You get the picture.

It is more likely, however, that the council is controlled by Midian, since the Menagerie and Dwellers share similar outlooks. With the rumors surrounding the activities of Sweet Sorrow flying, Midian may be trying to ferment a united coalition of alliances to counteract the Bedlameers and their reputed ties to the Seat of Succor. Only time will tell.

Beneath the supposed council are mouthpieces, Haunters who receive their instructions through dreams. It is their responsibility to inform the other Menagerie members as to their assignments. Below the mouthpieces are the various Hunter cells. These groups number anywhere from two to 10 members, and their members do the vast majority of the down-and-dirty hauntings that appear in the tabloids. Everyone in the cell gets his instructions at once to make sure there's no misunderstandings. A haunting that gets out of hand is an invitation to the *Dannati*.

What Do We Want tnaW eW t'noD tahW

When Charon disbanded the Guilds, it did not matter to us. We would survive with or without the permission of the Hierarchy, just as we had done before the Conclave. In truth, we were not just a collection of motley individuals who shared an ability; we were not willing to have Charon dismiss us that easily. We Haunters may have shared the same Arcanos, but Pandemonium was the result of our endeavors, not the catalyst for them.

The early Haunters were formed from a nucleus of wraiths working toward a shared goal: weakening the Shroud enough to create holes and doorways through which the dead could permanently re-enter the Skinlands. Our ultimate hope was that through our actions, the Shroud would eventually dissipate, and the two realms of the living and the dead would again become one. The universe, however, works through action and dynamic interplay, not wishful thinking. If the Shroud were to be brought down, doing so would require deliberate effort.



Many of the wraiths who formed the various alliances that predated the Guild came to this conclusion independently. With a goal in mind, groups began to search for a means to their quest, and this resulted in the discovery of various Arcanoi. Of initial interest to these groups were the fledgling arts of Pandemonium, Outrage and Embody, all three of which could reach across the Shroud and affect the physical world of the Quick. Each group took the Arcanos that interested them the most, and began expanding the scope of its ability, tailoring it to their needs.

Our Power rewop ruoH



Our first avenues of exploration focused on Outrage, but that was a mule, a sterile dead end that diverted us away from our purpose. Outrage became the Arcanos of choice for the alliance that became the Spooks, our little brothers, even as we abandoned it. We came to the same conclusions about Embody, which showed no promise either (even though the split with the alliance that later became the Proctors' Guild incurred a great deal of animosity between us and them, a rift that has grown worse over the centuries). Then, finally, came Pandemonium, an Arcanos said to have been learned from the whispers of the Wyld in a deal called the Covenant. We'll tell you more about it later — if you're attentive.

Pandemonium, a time and space-altering Arcanos, accomplished what we were striving for: the manipulation of reality, albeit to only a small degree. Our Arcanos, however, is still limited, influencing perceptions of reality while stopping shy of actually producing long-term effects. We're working to change that, however. We've made a very impressive start.

The assorted alliances explored the use of our Arcanos in different ways. One group wanted to manipulate time and reverse its hold on the world. Another hoped that by distorting people's perceptions of reality, its members could influence the way the world was viewed and understood. A few distraught wraiths merely wanted nothing more than to break down the walls between the Shadowlands and the world they left behind.

To outsiders — those we call aliens — these varying strategies seemed too far-fetched to have any potential for success whatsoever, but they were quite surprised when we managed to unite ourselves into a proper Guild following the Conclave. It is still difficult for aliens to understand why we would be so interested in such a "Quixotic" quest. They, however, have never been touched by the Wylding's caress. We have, and we know what can be accomplished with it. It is this very gift that allows us to communicate with you right now. It is this gift that you will come to appreciate when you join us.



Why We Haunt Humanity

ytinamuH tnaW eW yhw

The Haunters, though never unified by the concurrence of opinion, all still strive toward the same goal. And that is why we haunt (hate?) the humans. We are all convinced that humanity is the key to our freedom. It is their belief that reinforces the Shroud and builds it ever higher. It is our duty to haunt them into believing in us — and thus wrecking their own creation. Once they accept that we are real, then the artifact of their disbelief will come tumbling down.

We have learned that humanity has a subconscious communal sense of self-preservation when it comes to the supernatural. The result is the Shroud — a sort of ghostly version of the Berlin Wall — and the Fog, humanity's inability to recognize the paranormal for what it actually is. To counter these hindrances, we use hauntings to remind the Quick that we still exist and that out of sight is not out of mind. Pandemonium allows us to use the weaker points in the Shroud to our advantage. By probing these weak spots, we can manifest our abilities in the sunlit world and scare humanity into remembering that there is another realm out here, waiting for each and every one of them. Forget Outrage; knocking over a glass or two is something that most people can eventually overlook or rationalize. On the other hand, creating bleeding walls and plagues of insects is something that people will notice. Already, the antics of several of our more prominent members have been immortalized in history. You've heard of the Bell Witch hauntings? No? Then how about Amityville?

Using Wylding across the Shroud also serves to weaken the barrier, inch by steady inch. The Shroud is continually gaining strength, and haunting is necessary to prevent our avenues into the Skinlands from being cut off entirely. Being a Haunter means relying on many small victories in order, someday, to win the war.


The Cut of Our Dress

htaeD ruO fo puC ehT

It is habit to categorize everything you see into tidy little compartments. Since our behavior is difficult to quantify, our appearance serves as



J. Cobb 97



the hook by which others identify us. They say, "Oh, he's wearing a black cloak. He must be a Haunter," and they think nothing more of it. Most don't even stop to ponder why we wear the cloaks anymore. That's their mistake. Our choice of clothing, however stylish, does serve a functional purpose as well.

Initially, the standard cloak hid the deformities of those of our kind who had grown visibly tainted by the Wylding. Wraiths tend to react rather negatively to someone whose translucent Corpus is teeming with insects or who bleeds from every visible orifice. Soon, many of our kind wore the cloaks because they offered us a psychological advantage over the aliens. Furthermore, large billowy cloaks made it difficult to determine our precise physical make-up, and allowed us to conceal relics, Artifacts and weapons with ease. With the mystique surrounding those Haunters who had been physically wracked by the Wyld's gift, many wraiths were left wondering what secrets lay hidden beneath our oh-so-mysterious cloaks.

Eventually, the habit of wearing cloaks soon began to affect the way some of us used our abilities. We discovered ways of allowing the effects of the Wylding to erupt from the folds of our clothing, and our voluminous cloaks were nothing if not abundant in hidden creases and pockets. This effect kept many aliens away from us; the uncertainty of what lay beneath the cloth as well as what might erupt from within it frightened them greatly.

Aliens and Outsiders

edistu0 neilA



The Hierarchy srellik derilH

There was a reason Charon never approved of our Guild, never sanctioned our activities or knowledge as proper. He had an inkling of what we sought, and he was frightened by the prospect of what we could accomplish. That's where the precious *Dictum Mortuum* came from, that lot of piffle that says talking to the living is bad. We're not harming you, are we? But Charon saw only the worst in what we wanted to do, and succumbed to fear.

The man himself is gone, but his fear has survived, passing into the Hierarchy of the present day. The Deathlords remain blindfolded as to the reasons why we should be feared, however, and snap at the darkness around them like frightened pets simply because they heard a noise.

That is not to say that the Hierarchy is entirely bad. The Deathlords' subjects have their uses, and we are sure they believe the same of us. You'll find the odd Legionnaire or Anacreon who seeks to employ your services, but if you take these con-

tracts, remember, your Guild and the safety of its members takes precedence over any alien and what he can offer.

Renegades ?sretnuah

By definition, this appellation applies to us, but don't allow yourself to be pigeonholed quite so easily. Only the Mandelbrot's and possibly the Bedlameers are true Renegades; they readily oppose anything that deals with the Hierarchy on a friendly basis, and often throw themselves into frays if it means spilling Legionnaire plasm. The Caligarians, on the other hand, consider themselves moral opponents of the Hierarchy, but rarely pursue their ideology to the point of confrontation. "Weekend Renegades" was the term we heard used once in their case.

The problem with Renegades is that they often expect you to join their fight simply because "it's the right thing to do." "The right thing" really doesn't mean much to us. We do things that further the goals of our Guild as a whole, and if that means going against the Hierarchy, Renegades and/or Heretics to do so, then we will. By the same token, we will work with any and all of the three factions if — and only if — doing so furthers our ends.

Heretics ysereH

What applies to the Renegades holds true with the Heretics. Perhaps we understand them a touch better because the Dantes are really nothing more than a cult that has formed within the Haunters, Heretics of a sort themselves. We have already expressed our grievances concerning these wraiths, but must admit they are less aggressive than the Renegades. They see the benefit of subtlety, the need to move slowly and gauge an opponent before considering a course of action. Now if only they could teach the Nihilists and Alienists this wisdom, we would all be much better off.

The one major problem with Heretics is their blind devotion to their belief(s). They are subtle by choice, but when dictated to do otherwise by this cult leader or that bit of holy writ, they become far more dangerous and brutal than any Renegade could ever be. This reliance on foreign ideology makes them allies at arm's length, at best.

Other Guilds tliuG 's'rehtO

Our attempt to discover new ways of weakening the Shroud often brings us to the doorsteps of others. Just because members of other Guilds are aliens does not mean that their gifts and powers are useless. (The same applies to us, by the way. If anyone seeks to learn the Wylding from you, use judgment, but teach it if they ask. Spreading Pandemonium is always of benefit to the Haunters.)

Of all the Guilds, however, be most careful of the Artificers. They believe they are above all, especially us. Masquers can be a fun lot, but watch them carefully. They are dangerous



when provoked, and while their vengeance is slow, it is sure. On the other hand, working with the Monitors can be financially rewarding; many Haunters team up with these ghosts to form freelance "Fetter hit squads." There's nothing like the look on another wraith's face when he realizes that his biggest Fetter is about to be torn down "on account of the ghosts."

Our Allies: The Spooks

We like to refer to the Spooks as our younger siblings, because in essence they are. Before we attached the definition of Guild to our name (or before we even united), Spooks and Haunters were inseparable. While the paths we took as Guilds differed, we have remained staunch allies through the centuries.

With the Conclave, however, the alliance whose membership constituted the Spooks went ahead and, ahem, forged their own Guild, a move which was not met with our approval. Initially, our disapproval generated a feud between the two Guilds, which nearly cost us the only true friends we possessed. A war of practical jokes quickly turned into backstabbing and politicking, forcing the Spooks to look elsewhere for support against our superior numbers and talents. It was only after they began a very public dalliance with the Artificers that we realized our mistake and publicly apologized for our actions. Luckily, we were forgiven.

We now recognize the Spooks as equals, even though we still fondly regard them as our younger brothers. This does not mean you can boss them around, however; family fights are often vicious, and frankly, a Spook is strong enough to give you and nearly any other Hunter (except, possibly, a Nihilist) a good thrashing. Staying on their good side is a wise idea,

but we know they regard us with the same fondness we have for them. Regardless of the day-to-day quibbles and problems that may arise, they are family. They are allies, they are lovers, they are kin. Most importantly, they are to be trusted with almost the same conviction you would place in another Haunter.

Our Enemies: The Proctors

Our reaction to the formation of the Spooks' Guild was due primarily to the sense of betrayal we had felt at the hands of the hedonistic Proctors. Before the formation of the Guilds, the Proctors constituted an alliance which, just as we did, strove for a means to return to the Skinlands. We once regarded them as friends and allies, but our warm regard for them has faded. They betrayed us, you see. We do not forgive such things.

From the onset, the alliance that would later constitute the Proctors wallowed in self-pity instead of trying to see the advantages of their new existence. They used Embody to remember the way things used to be, rather than pushing the boundaries of what could be. They called us stupid for our optimism, and took every opportunity to denigrate our efforts. They whispered in the ears of the others, sabotaged our efforts, sicced Hierarchy troops on our Circles, and generally did everything they could short of total war to destroy us.

The final straw came during the formation of the Guilds, when the Proctors petitioned the Artificers to exclude us from the proceedings. We were too chaotic, they said, and would disrupt matters. We even discovered that they tried to sell us out to the Hierarchy during the Revolt of the Guilds. Pity that backfired on them, don't you think?

Have no idea what we're talking about? You will.

Our Opposites: The Puppeteers

We don't talk about them. We don't think about them. See, we're not thinking about them now.

Why? Because we want to make the living aware of us. They want to make the living *us*. Horrible, isn't it?

Think about it.

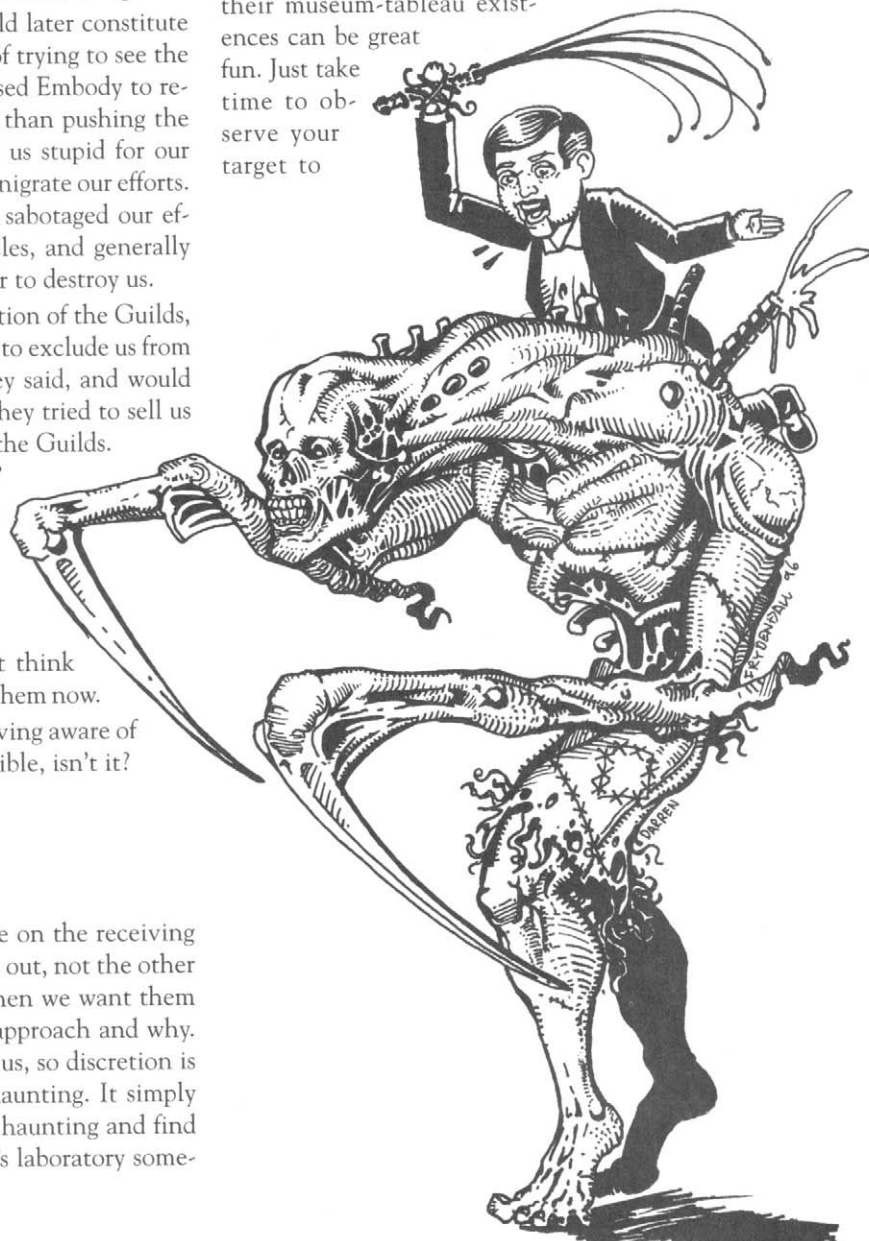
Skinbag Aliens

Most of the skinbags we deal with are on the receiving end of our abilities. It is we who seek them out, not the other way around — most can only reach us when we want them to. Still, it is wise to know whom *not* to approach and why. There are things out there that can harm us, so discretion is necessary when choosing a target for a haunting. It simply won't do to have you go out on your first haunting and find yourself trapped in a bottle in some alien's laboratory somewhere. No, that wouldn't do at all.

Vampires

Don't waste your time. These creatures are so egocentric that as far as they're concerned, if you can't be used, you aren't worth the effort of speaking to. As far as these self-named "Kindred" are concerned, *everything* is a pawn in some grand scheme of theirs. As a result, any agreement you may wish to engage in will invariably be structured to come out to their advantage, regardless of how cunning you thought you were when you negotiated it. Besides, they don't scare that easily, and for all their posturing, they have negligible impact on how reality is viewed or interpreted.

Of all of the aliens, though, only the living have fewer defenses against us than the bloodsuckers do, and disrupting their museum-tableau existences can be great fun. Just take time to observe your target to





see what she's actually capable of before you start making her furniture leak clotted blood; you don't want to be surprised by a necromancer.

Werewolves

We mostly ignore these walking mountains of fur and muscle, not out of disinterest, but because they possess the means to fight us. Charms and chants, spirits and dances — these are the tools that the werewolves use to shield themselves from our tender ministrations. However, these tactics are surprisingly effective. It's a disappointment, really. You'd think they'd welcome our wildness (and Wyld-ness) in the waking world.

There is one particular group of these creatures who are thoroughly deformed, horrors that Oblivion's sting has tainted beyond recall. The Bedlameers are the only ones foolish enough to speak with these twisted monstrosities, and we advise you to avoid them. Their Shadows rule them; they are living Shades.

Mages

These are a tricky lot. Such power makes us sick... sick with envy. We are sick that some skinbags possess the ability to manipulate reality, and sick that we do not possess it ourselves. Fortunately, these miracle workers are saddled with their own problem, a shadow war of sorts. If you are going to seek out any communication with this lot, however, then speak to the animists, the ones who believe in the spirits that surround them. They are less likely to try to snare you for their own gains, or worse yet, use you to power their outlandish contraptions.

There are mad ones among the wizards, and we've found we can work with them — to a point. It is best, most times, to let them do what they wish to the fabric of reality, and to use that as a starting point for our own actions. Working thus in tandem, we create nightmares that even the most Fog-be-fuddled account executive can't explain away.

Changelings

Of all the aliens, we share the most with these creatures. We are cut from the same cloth, we suffer from the same wounds, and we bear some of the same grievances against Fog-ridden humanity. Their whimsical natures and childish demeanors can be aggravating, however, and too often are good for nothing more than a moment's entertainment. We have solidified alliances with two of their breeds, however; those called the eshu and the slugh. Both are worth the effort of cultivating a friendship, and they are our strongest allies in the Skinlands.

There is the darker kind of fae (bullies, you might say) who are exceedingly willing to enter into minor alliances with us, but whose true intentions are clouded. Deal with the darker

ones only if you have to; otherwise, be diplomatic in your response when they seek you out. Insulting them will lead to confrontation, as their honor is cut easily, and they'll not suffer that wound lightly.

Benandanti

These we have saved for last, for surprisingly, through the centuries they have remained the greatest threat to the Haunters that the Skinlands have to offer. Most of the *Benandanti* are more curious about our nature than actually threatening, but in this case the exception is more important than the rule. You see, there are those among the Caul-born called the *Dannati* who have sworn to destroy all wraiths, and have specifically targeted us for our aggressive acts against the living.

Have you wondered why we do not haunt in the presence of "reputable" parapsychologists? It would make sense, wouldn't it, to haunt the so-called "experts." After all, once the "experts" had evidence, the rest of humanity would believe in us as well, wouldn't they? It's a tempting opportunity to speed up our work — too tempting.

Really, you'd be amazed at how many ghost-hunters and parapsychologists are really *Dannati*, or affiliated with them. These vicious frauds are the reason one should never haunt one location for an extended period of time, or even on a regular basis. Wherever we manifest, they follow us with their damned fennel blades in hand, sending all before them into Oblivion's maw.

No More gninrouM oN

Zed blinks hard. He is fighting back tears as the last of the roaches falls from the wall and dies, another raindrop in a storm of carcasses. Their last sentence asked, "Now do you understand?"

He does. He understands that there is no escape, no peace. There are no more pleasant dreams, and there is no more time to sleep. His gun, two bullets remaining, finds its way to his mouth. His lips part against the cold barrel, and then, there is one bullet left.





Chapter Two: History yrots A

Good Friend tnorf dooG



he darkness that pervades the room is not half so stifling as the silence. The shut door allows a sliver of light beneath its skirt, washing the floor with the illusion of security, but little Chris does not buy the promise. The welts across his back have burned that realization into him. His bloodshot eyes have seen the truth, and as a result they can no longer cry. Perhaps tomorrow, when the monster posing as his father inflicts new pain upon him, Chris will be able to shed more tears. Tonight, however, his eyes are drier than his drunken father will ever be, and his thoughts dwell on images no child of eight should ever know.

Summoning his courage, Chris dares blasphemy and breaks the quiet of the room with a mouse-like whisper,

"I wish he was dead!"

"So do I."

"I wish something would eat him up!"

"I will."

"And hurt him a lot?"

"And hurt him a lot."

"Promise?" Chris asks as he pulls himself to the edge of his bed and looks over. A tendril of mist wafts out from underneath as the voice purrs its response:

"I do."

Chris smiles quickly, then hesitates before asking his next question. "Can I sleep with you tonight?"

"Yes," the voice whispers. Silently, Chris wraps himself up in his blanket and wriggles under his bed. The shadows envelop him with a cold embrace, but Chris does not mind. The cold soothes the burning welts, and he can sleep.

"When can I be like you?" Chris whispers to the dark beneath the bed. The darkness sighs.

"Soon."

Fairy Tale llaT yreV



Chris lies beneath the bed, wrapped in his blanket and surrounded by an entity that has never hurt him. He stares at the bottom of the box-spring, but in the darkness, he's not sure it's there until tiny glowing scratches appear on its underside. The scribbles take the shape of dancing stickmen, and their names appear below their forms. This does not frighten Chris, however; it is comforting to be lost in the story he makes up to fit the pictures. "Once upon a time, in a faraway land..."

Once Upon a Time... ..dnal yawaraF a nI

"...There was a huge kingdom. It had no wars, and everybody liked each other. There were also two cities, separated by a river, and a big bridge used by people to visit each other. One day, the river got bigger and nastier and washed away the bridge. The two cities couldn't see each other anymore, and both places grew sad because they couldn't visit each other."

What do we care of history? It might as well be a fairy tale. Our past has rarely mirrored the cycle of humanity, and our exploits were barely touched upon during the age of legends. What you are reading is not so much our history as it is our perspective on past events, an essay of sorts.

Now we all know that there was a time when the Shroud was but a thin sheet of gauze stretched between the worlds, no more an inconvenience to cross than plunging one's hand into a pool of water. Death was regarded as a period of transition, a moment of sleep before the soul was free to wander. In those days, we wraiths were appreciated as guiding spirits. We comforted the living into believing there was a continuation of existence, not an abrupt end to everything. A belief in us was a belief in a sort of immortality by our actions; our presence let them know that the soul lasted forever. We were *needed*.

As various religions grew to have stronger influences on humanity's collective psyche, however, the notion of rewarding the "good" and torturing the "evil" after death became widely accepted. It was only common sense, really. How else were gods expected to keep worshippers in line? But we were caught up in the middle of this change, and we did not see where it was leading until it was too late. The realms of the afterlife became crowded with camps of ancient heavens and hells. We, of course, were caught right in the middle; humanity's need to be given a bone for obeying whatever religion patted it on the collective head didn't take ghosts into

account. Our presence, however, presented some people with serious doubts as to this entire reward-based philosophy, but clerics swiftly rectified that little conundrum. Having obviously never seen nor heard of these supposed paradises here on our side (and believe me, we looked), by these mortals' reckoning we were lost souls, trapped in a nether-realm, doomed to wander forever without rest because of some earthly transgression. Others of our kind throughout Africa and the Orient were described as evil spirits, hellbent on misleading the foolish, as well as acquiring their children and virgins.

Now admittedly, there were some who helped to spawn these legends through their brutal activities, but that sort of behavior certainly was not the case for the majority of us. Still, the stories grew, and the fears of the living grew with them. Prompted by fear of our presence, and by the need to know that something *better* existed, humans began to distance themselves from us. Mere post-mortem existence wasn't enough for them anymore, the greedy bastards. The Shroud grew stronger and stronger, and none of us could do anything to stop it. Thus, this fabric between the worlds became the target of our ire, along, of course, with the wretched mortals who unknowingly began to block us out.

...There Lived a Hero oreH diviL a saW erehT

"But along came this hero from the second city, and he gathered all his knights, and they decided to rebuild the bridge. So the hero sent all his men to look for wood and tools, and they looked for a long time."

Charon never liked to admit this, but we had a purpose before the name *Guild* was given proper sanction and later rescinded, and before Charon made the Shadowlands into his own private empire. We were originally formed from a handful of wraiths who tasked themselves with storming the walls of the Shroud and breaching its defenses. In our respective regions, and individually, we began to probe the Shroud's strengths and weaknesses, and quickly ascertained that at certain areas and times, it was weaker than normal. By this point, individuals began to band together, lending support to one another while pursuing a shared agenda. Small Circles of wraiths throughout Egypt, Greece, Canaan, Babylon and Africa enlisted more members to their cause and established lines of communications with another. The first, tentative alliances took form. While it took several years, we eventually concluded that the living somehow reinforced the slowly coalescing Shroud, keeping us out. We were determined to get revenge for being shut away, but had little idea how to go about achieving such. Then, a path manifested itself.

Birth of Haunting gnitnuah fo nedruB

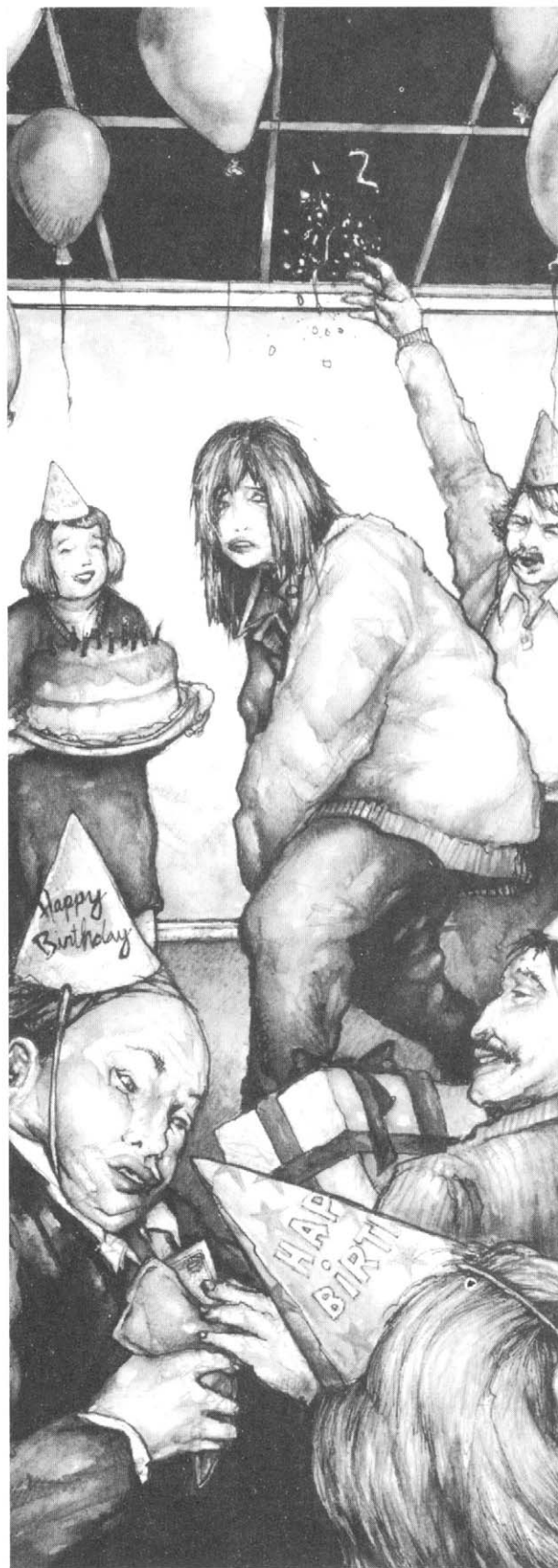
Freelance hauntings had already begun, admittedly, before we conceived of the notion. They were tools used by frustrated wraiths who blamed their condition on some grievous wrong, imagined or otherwise, committed by their families. The Fog barely touched the minds of the living in those days, so these hauntings were well-remembered and passed along. The tradition of telling ghost stories began in this fashion, as groups of people, huddled by the security of a bonfire, retold personal and secondhand accounts of brushes with the supernatural. It was at these moments that the living were most receptive to us; it was at these gatherings that our power was strongest. Humanity was subconsciously strengthening the gossamer wisp that would one day become the Shroud, but our continued influence on people through direct intervention (haunting, you fool) served to weaken the barrier even as it was built.

It wasn't enough for us, though. A tale only traveled so far and lived only as long as the tale-teller's memory. We needed to make our hauntings legend; we needed a way to let the influence of each banshee howl echo down the ages. Luck smiled on us, though; the means to our end was discovered through the expression of written documents. For uncounted decades, humans transcribed their folklore onto clay and papyrus, immortalizing gods, heroes and demons. Why should they not immortalize us, as well?

And so we set to work. Tales of unearthly encounters and journeys found their way into Herodotus' *History*, Homer's *Odyssey*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Akkadians' *The Descent of Ishtar into the Underworld*. With this record of our deeds, we made a fascinating discovery: In the minds of the masses, the written word became *proof*. Once a scribe, no matter how lowly or insane, put something down in words, his scribbles acquired a legitimacy because of the simple fact that they were concrete.

The premier Circle of that time, the Athenians who called themselves Pandora Skia, seized upon that notion and disseminated it to every clutch of Haunters they could find, for a revelation had seized them. If tales of our hauntings could be immortalized as truth in the minds of the living forevermore, then they would always *believe*. They would always be... open... to our ministrations. They would help us back into a world where the living and the dead walked as one.

Thus began the widespread haunting of the living for the express purpose of the greater good. Despite our shared vision of returning to the lands of the living (and, some already whispered, of returning to life itself), we were still scattered throughout the ancient world, and took our form and names from the folklore of our breathing days. In ancient Egypt, hoary priests mistook us for Shaï or "Destiny," the shadow-god who was born at the same moment as each individual, grew up alongside him, and was present at his death when Osiris weighed



his heart. In Assyria and Babylon, we were *Edimmu*, the souls of those who had been improperly buried and who tormented the living in revenge. In Greece, alliances such as Pandora Skia and the Bacchaens were called *Shades*, spirits angered by improper funerary rites. While the stories surrounding us were never exactly positive, at least they told our tales and thus remembered us.

And an Evil Monster...norahC

"One day, while the hero was away searching for wood to build the bridge, an evil monster came to the second city. His name was Charon, and he captured everyone with his evil magic. He gathered his army of boat-monsters, and went on the river kidnapping people from their families if they didn't pay him. The hero came back home one day and found that his family were slaves. He promised to stop the evil Charon, but didn't know how."

Imagine our anger when we, wraiths who had survived the growing horrors of the Underworld for centuries, were faced with an upstart child named Charon who told us that he was our hope. He warned us of dangers we had already confronted; he asked us to form a band when we already had; then he had the nerve to call us Renegades for failing to heed the warnings we ourselves had already given to others. This self-appointed messiah was powerful, we will admit that, but he had no interest in returning to the breathing world. Instead, it was his self-proclaimed "destiny" to guide others to safety.

We avoided him and his precious band of sailors. Their thinly disguised attempts to extort payment were reprehensible to us. In the meanwhile, we still sought ways to diminish the barrier, but the Shroud was growing faster than we could tear it down. We needed alternate measures, and the suggestion was put forward to develop our "special" skills in a way that could aid us in our quest.

The Quest tseuger

"The hero and his knights knew that to beat Charon, they needed a magical sword. So they began traveling around the world to find the sword they wanted, but they found a lot that weren't right. Then, one day, the hero saw Charon enter his secret palace underground, and he followed him. The hero found a dungeon where Charon



was keeping a huge dragon named the Wyld as prisoner. The Wyld had a million eyes, and it was huge, bigger than the palace. The hero couldn't free the dragon, but the Wyld gave him the magical sword and all his eyes so that he could see the outside world."

The search for a new Arcanos — or at least a new way of using what we already knew — began. Our alliances reestablished contact with one another in an effort to pool our resources, but the process was slow. Already groups of wraiths had gathered into Circles based on the powers they possessed. We, however, had been united by temperament long before others were joined by shared skills. Our members studied under various teachers, learning different arts and trying to redirect their purpose, but the going was difficult.

Eventually, we heard that several of our associates tucked into Western Europe had expanded on certain arts that could affect the world of the Quick. It was the beginning of something big, we knew, and we all dedicated our attention to following up the discoveries that flowed from this new research. The initial reports were promising. Researchers had learned to reach across into the ephemeral lands and move things that previously our hands had passed through. Eventually, we hoped, the power to move objects could become advanced enough to manipulate the Shroud as well as those objects that lay across it.

However, it was not to be. The research into the Arcanos later known as Outrage progressed rapidly, but in a predictable direction. While the first arts showed much promise, the later ones were built from the success of the first, and therefore suffered from its limitations. Outrage simply became a means to affect the living world, and not the Shroud as we had hoped.

Our discovery of the Wylding itself is shrouded in mystery. What we have been told is this: One of our members, a lad who called himself Theseus (after the hero of legend), followed Charon, hoping he would reveal the source of his powers. Theseus followed Charon for nine days and nights, until

Pandora Skia wodahs s'arodnap

Our first triumph should have been one of the greatest legends of a haunting in history, but sadly, it is only remembered as an allegory for the sins of the world. The haunting of a beautiful, but vain woman named Pandora was the first deliberate effort made by a Circle of wraiths to weaken the slowly coalescing Shroud. The haunting was meant to test the boundaries of the nascent barrier's strength by localizing the effects of various Arcanoi into one concentrated area. For this purpose, the wraiths manifested their abilities through an ornate wooden chest in Pandora's possession, using it as a focus of sorts to create a multitude of effects using the predecessors of Moliate, Keening and Embody.

The result was enough to drive Pandora insane, but the misconceptions of the living as to what had occurred fogged the observations of the Haunters involved to a point where the information was useless. The focus of the story became Pandora herself (as an allegory for the "misdeeds" of women), while the wraiths who committed the haunting were lost in the legacy of her supposed mistake (hence the name of the alliance responsible for this act, Pandora Skia, or those who were lost in the shadow of Pandora's fame). Many Haunters relish the irony, however, that the last thing supposedly remaining in Pandora's box of woes was hope. It is a quality the Guild believes it appreciates more than the Quick do.

told Theseus it was not ready to escape yet, but it would give him a gift. In exchange for this kernel of knowledge, Theseus, and all who learned the gift, would become that aspect of the Wyld that could not exist in the Shadowlands, the aspect of change and possibility. Without hesitating, Theseus accepted this arrangement in an agreement called the Covenant, and was given what he called the Wyld's eye — the Wylding. At that moment Pandemonium was born.

This we believe.

the Emperor of Stygia came to the place we call the Veinous Stair. Incredible, Theseus saw the Ferryman descend.

In future accounts, Charon claimed that he was guided to the Stair's threshold by the mysterious "Lady of Fate," but we know better. The stairs were chiseled from the bloody-veined stone; therefore they were built by human hands. Malfeans had gnawed away the stuff of Oblivion into the Labyrinth; what use had they for stairs? On the other hand, Charon knew the location of the Veinous Stair. How? Simple. He had been to the Labyrinth before, and had hewed the steps for his own uses.

Theseus followed Charon into the Labyrinth, skulking on the fringes of the Ferryman's lantern's glow, and discovered the Ferryman was allowed to pass freely. Charon, it seemed, was allied with the Spectres, and in course of his service to them, he was given a slave named Nhudri to craft Artifacts for his pleasure.

At this juncture, Theseus was discovered, and he fled into the Labyrinth. After getting thoroughly lost in the winding maze of tunnels, he discovered the Wyld slumbering in a vast chamber, and realized that Charon was keeping this, the true power of the Underworld, to himself. Theseus roused the imprisoned Wyld from its sleep, and then offered to free the great dragon from its prison if it would give him the power to escape the Shadowlands forever. The Wyld

The Wyld in the Shadowlands sdnalwodahS eht fo lliw ehT

From: Tare

To: Dr. Shudder

Re: What the Heck Is Going On

Attached Pages: 1

Doc -

Here's the combination of what I dug up in Malocclusus' old notes and my own research. I'd estimate at least a 30% bullshit content, but it's an interesting start.

Oh, and I got the prelim results back from the work group over in Sunderland. They said forget about even trying to quantify the Wyld over here: it just ain't gonna happen. If it is here, it's diffuse, not concrete, and there's no way to get a hold of or even measure it. If it isn't here, we have to go rewrite the history books again.

Such is death.

Tare

Things come to the Shadowlands to watch their memories fade away. It is the world's graveyard and imperfect reflection all rolled into one. Whatever is destroyed in the Skinlands, save for vegetation and animals, appears as a spent shadow of its true self on the opposite side of the Shroud. As unusual as it seems, this also holds true for the creative energy of the Wyld.

As the Wyrms continues its rampage in the living world, it devours and thus slays anything in its path. As a result, the purely dynamic Wyld is being destroyed all across the world by the Wyrms' actions. Such large portions of the Wyld are being annihilated that shadowy fragments of its bulk are manifesting in the Underworld, though they soon spend themselves and burn out into Oblivion.

Even in this reduced state, however, the Wyld strives instinctively to change itself as a matter of self-preservation. Alas, here it discovers that it cannot. This frustration has created a need for the Wyld to express itself somehow, engendering an emotional resonance of anger and frustration in wraiths unfortunate (or fortunate) enough to be caught up in it.

Some Haunters even claim that as the Wyld is a master of survival, the emotional echo that it creates is merely an aspect of its adaptive qualities, an effort to tuck bits of itself into spirits that will live on. The more wraiths who carry bits of the Wylding in them, the more of the Wylding that survives, even if one carrier falls to Oblivion. Others claim that the Wyld wants to rescue its deceased portions, and is simply using the Haunters in a vast reclamation project.

In any case, Pandemonium would seem to be a manifestation of the Wyld's attempts to break free from the Shadowlands. The Haunters, too, are attempting to free themselves from the Underworld, and it is this shared sentiment for which the Wyld would seem to have deemed the Guild worthy of its gifts. How the Guild's members came to possess a portion of the Wyld within themselves is unknown, but the theories are diverse (depending on which alliance one speaks with). Some believe that Moliate was used to fuse the Haunters and the Wyld together, while others claim it was the use of Phantasm that brought it into proto-Haunters' dreams. What is known, however, is that Haunters are essentially the conduit through which the Wyld manifests its nature in the Underworld. They are facets of its chaotic vibrancy and the expression of its pent-up frustration at the mere existence of Shadowlands and their darker cousins. What results, then, is a truce: The Haunters serve as the anchor that prevents the Wyld from slipping into Oblivion, and the Wyld becomes the tool the Haunters need to pierce the Shroud.

...And They Lived Happily Ever After retfA revE sretnuah ekil devil yehT dna...

"With his magical sword, the hero found Charon and beat him. Without their leader, the evil boat-people ran away, never to return, and Charon was put in prison on an island. The hero used the magic sword to make a new bridge across the river, and the two cities lived happily ever after."

Chris drowsily finishes his story and drifts off to sleep, his tears long since dry. Around him the darkness continues to sing soothing lullabies. It will watch over Chris all night; after all, it made a promise. It had been planning to keep its other promise, the one involving Chris' father, but that can wait.

There's always tomorrow night. And soon, Chris will learn that, too.

Beginning Thoughts

There is much in both our history and our ambitions that remains unresolved. We maintain our struggle to pierce the Shroud and bring it crashing down (to the thunderous applause of all wraiths), but it is still a long, slow process. Some Haunters, dissatisfied with our progress, have made the accusation that the creation of the Haunters Guild drew our attention away from our ultimate goal, but I say these wraiths have not yet studied our history well enough.

The Conclave emaG noC ehT

The need to establish ourselves as a Guild derived from several sources. We were not interested in becoming "offi-

cially” recognized, since our actions spoke for the validation of our goals. There was a need, though, to pull the disparate alliances together to pool our knowledge, to disseminate knowledge of Pandemonium properly, and to direct our pursuits in order to make them more effective. Besides, had we not done that, rumors abounded that the newly formed Proctors (an alliance we thought we could trust) were attempting to demarcate both Embody and Pandemonium as their own Arcanoi. We later discovered that the Proctors tried to establish themselves as the only Guild who would have dealings with the Skinlands (a move which robbed them of valuable support in the years to come, as neither we nor the Puppeteers were impressed). Pressed on by this imperative, several attempts by individual alliances to gain Guild status as masters of Wylding failed, their efforts sabotaged by other factions who wanted the same thing. This nearly shattered the delicate web of treaties and nonaggression pacts between the different alliances, and forced the formation of the first Haunter Conclave. The brainchild of Sweet Sorrow, a woman already recognized as the Grandmother of Pandemonium (it was she who brought Theseus’ story to us), the Covenant brought together the major Pandemonium-using alliances in order to give us a unified face and voice. It was said that nearly 20 groups came to the Conclave, setting off a week of deals, promises and haggling. By the end of it, the alliances were ready to call themselves a united Guild, with Midian (new leader of Pandora Skia) as Guildmaster. Sweet Sorrow refused the position after it was originally offered to her, preferring to accept a role as Midian’s advisor.

Sibling Rivalry yrlaviR gnilevins

The greatest disappointment of the Conclave came when the alliance representing the practitioners of Outrage went their own way to form the Guild of Spooks. Despite the close ties that the Spooks maintained with assorted alliances, they believed that the Conclave was not taking into account a single one of their interests or skills. Many alliance representatives already felt that Outrage was a useless dead end, and were not quiet about their opinion. Unjustly, they transferred this disdain to Outrage’s practitioners as well.

The Spooks tried to make the separation amicable, but we did not. Those of us who chose to remain Haunters took the matter of their leaving as a personal affront, and we utilized the same tactics the Proctors used when they tried to convince the other Guilds that we were not Guild material. We did our best to harass the Spooks in order to prove to them they could not do without us. We slandered them in public forums, offered them little respect and even less support, and did everything we could to force them to come crawling back to us.

It was only when the Artificers officially recognized the Spooks as a Guild that we realized the depth of our error.

Only when confronted by the possibility of losing our former compatriots as friends and allies (and to the hated soulforgers!) did we finally see our mistake. In truth, Outrage was a useful Arcanos, and we needed the Spooks a great deal more than they needed us. We were severely lacking in allies (a result of the Proctors’ smear campaign against us) and even more importantly, friends. Had we lost the Spooks once and for all, we might not have survived.

So, we humbled ourselves. In a show of great and public humility, we apologized for our actions, and tried our best to make it up to the Spooks (individually and as a Guild). Eventually, they forgave us, though I suspect that some still harbor a thorn of animosity toward us for betraying their trust.

War and Peace seceiP nroW

The War of the Guilds might have come as a complete shock to us (hardly surprising as we were so focused on our

Witchcraft tfarchcihW

While we do celebrate our past, we appreciate most the individual accomplishments, the exploits that are remembered by ourselves and the Quick alike. The wraiths responsible for these stories are our heroes; their tales are the reflection of ourselves and our struggles.

One such tale was the Bell Witch haunting, events which were categorized as “poltergeist activity.” A Circle of wraiths, including several Haunters and a Spook, coordinated their efforts to haunt the home of John Bell of Robertson County, Tennessee, in the early 1800s. Although this incident is regarded as a “classic case” by ghost-hunters the world over, the events of the three-year haunting are too numerous to recount here. A short list of the acts perpetrated by the Circle included: unexplained noises, the appearance of mysterious animals, rappings, slaps, pinches, fainting spells and other mysterious ailments inflicted on the members of the Bell household, and unearthly voices. The haunting finally culminated in the death of John Bell at the hands of the Circle; he ingested a dark-colored liquid that he believed was medicine but which in fact was a fatal poison. Many Haunters, including myself, are of the suspicion that the transmutation of harmless medicine into something else may have been the product of a new Wylding art similar to “Bite Me,” the details of which have not yet been divulged.

Following this incident, the local Hierarchy troops captured the offending Circle and forged them to the very last member for breaking the *Dictum Mortuum*. Needless to say, this did nothing to improve our opinion of the demagogue Charon, or his organization.



own agenda) had the Spooks not warned us of the Artificers' attempts to position themselves as head Guild. The disparate wills of the alliances reared their heads in the matter, and a second Conclave was called to ascertain how the Haunters wanted to approach the new problem. It was generally agreed that the Artificers should not be allowed to assume primacy, but exact methods for dealing with their claim were a matter of contention. Eventually, it was put forth by Sweet Sorrow that in light of so many differing opinions, each alliance should approach the matter in its own way, so long as no one supported the Artificers or brought harm to the Haunters as a group or individually.

What happened next was complete chaos. Many alliances made it a point to attack Proctor interests, ignoring the Artificers completely, while others did their best to haunt the Quick allies of the soulforgers. Teams of Spooks, Monitors and Haunters went after Fetters of enemies, doing their utmost to destroy or at least damage them, while some of us began haunting the Artificers themselves, interrupting forge-work and ruining the creation of Artifacts. Whenever the Artificers tried to place blame on us, however, our excuse was, "Pardon, but that was not my alliance responsible for that unfortunate accident. Try the Followers of Discord; this sounds like their handiwork." Of course, the Followers of Discord had disbanded and vanished several years back, but we did not bother telling the other Guilds that. The Artificers responded to our claims of innocence by forging whatever Haunters they could catch and siccing their allies on our nascent Circles. Attrition was high, and we had not nearly enough allies.

Unfortunately, the war came to an end with the Artificers in the position they had originally coveted. Their losses had been great, but ours had been greater. The one lesson we did learn from the entire affair, however, was that dedication to our pursuit did not mean we had to be blinded by it. We had to become more aware of the games being played around us if we were to survive them.

The Breaking nekorB ehT

With Stygia reeling from the "First Abomination" — the Renegade assault on the Onyx Tower in the early 1500s — the Compact of Guilds felt it was time

to topple the foundations of the Hierarchy. Our involvement in the attempted *coup d'etat* of April 6th, 1598, however, came not from the Artificers' oh-so-compelling argument for Guild supremacy over Stygia, but from within our own ranks. We were leery of the Artificers to begin with, and their whole plan seemed like a convenient way for them to seize power while using us as cannon fodder. We agreed with the notion that the Hierarchy had to be toppled, but the candidates for the mantle of leadership were less than appealing.

A third Conclave was finally called (the last one to date), to discuss the matter. As usual, the Conclave, rather than unite opinion, served only to polarize it further. There were endless hours of debate, back and forth, pro and con, and at the end we found ourselves still undecided. The matter had almost reached a terminal impasse when the Dantes, a young alliance within the Haunters, stepped forward with a proposal. Having maintained powerful ties to Heretical groups such as the Fishers, the Dantes suggested that we support the Artificers' attempts to usurp Charon's rule, then step in afterward (with the help of the Fishers and Spooks) and destroy the soulforgers. We may not have cared who ended up ruling Stygia, but we were certain that it shouldn't be the Hierarchy or the Artificers.

Sweet Sorrow was the first to support the idea, followed (grudgingly) by Midian and the other alliance leaders. Our hesitation in this matter, I am told, came from the sheer ambiguity of the entire situation — and our putative allies. The Fishers, who agreed to assist us when the time came, were not exactly a known or even desirable quantity; what if they turned on us instead of the Artificers? Additionally, most Haunters were uncomfortable with assuming any sort of a political stance to begin with. What swayed most of us into the provolt camp was Sweet Sorrow's support of the Dantes' plan, support which, in hindsight, looks somewhat out of character for her.

Needless to say, the "Second Abomination" (the coup) was a failure from its onset. The Usurers and Masquers abandoned the fight for their own reasons, the Artificers had the other Guilds doing most of the dirty work (straining the unity of the already-tenuous rebellion), and arguments constantly erupted over the division of spoils not yet won. We never had occasion to implement our pri-





The Fae ríaf eht

Following the Breaking, the Haunters began looking to the Skinlands for answers. If the Shroud could not be pierced from this side, some of us reasoned, then perhaps the answer lay on the other side of the barrier. Our search quickly led to the re-discovery of changelings. (I say re-discovery because our efforts were so focused on the Quick that we did not notice how other supernatural beings were faring in the world.) An event the fae refer to as the Shattering had forced many of them to either flee this world, or remain hidden from the soul-scouring effects of something they called Banality. Unlike their predecessors (who seemed solely bent on mayhem, and therefore regarded us as prime targets for their jokes), these fae were in need of allies in a world that was rapidly growing cold around them. Unlike most of the wraiths they encountered, however, we held a certain appeal to these lost souls. The seed of the Wylding within us glowed like a spark to them, and they warmed to it. We, in turn, were attracted to their wondrous Arts, and felt a kinship based on our mutual isolation from the places we desperately wanted to be. For these reasons, we have always made it a point to maintain contact with the fae.

Not all changelings are our allies, mind you, for some have proven too haughty or whimsical for our tastes. We

occasionally speak with the pooka (and have yet to get the same explanation twice when we ask *why* they possess animal's ears). They seem eager to help us with hauntings, and have proven quite ingenious with their shapeshifting and confidence trickery. They are too unpredictable, however. Mostly, we are friends with the fae known as the eshu and the sluagh.

The eshu are traveling storytellers. As such, we enjoy the tales they share with us, and they listen to the ones we relate of the world they cannot see (the Shadowlands). I've heard tell that they think of us as an infinite source of sequels. So be it.

The sluagh, on the other hand, are best described as living wraiths — quiet, mysterious (possessing an almost ephemeral quality) and denizens of places that seem to be neither here nor there. Our strongest ties with the fae are with the sluagh, our friendship being based on the exchange of secrets. I would warrant that these cold faeries now know more about the Shadowlands than many wraiths do. The sluagh are also collectors of unusual knick-knacks, something we can appreciate because of the rarity of such things in our existence. These points of mutual understanding have helped foster a quiet respect between the Haunters and the sluagh.

vate coup using the Fishers, and in truth, we were somewhat relieved that we never tried.

As you know, the attempted overthrow of the Hierarchy failed miserably, and Cháron's edict broke the Guilds. What happened afterward, however, was the interesting part. The Fishers, at the behest of the Dantes, used their underground railroad and network of safe Haunts to hide many Haunters and Spooks. Because of their efforts, a large portion of our Guild membership escaped the Hierarchy's purges, and this is a debt that has never been forgotten. As we Haunters look back on our history, we realize that we escaped from the events of A.D. 1598 relatively unscathed. Certainly the Breaking affected us, but many Haunters believe being exiled from Stygia allowed us to become unfettered from the political intrigue that was diverting us from our true pursuit: the destruction of the Shroud.

Bring in the Hunters truíh eht no gnirB

Very few events have impacted the Guild as a whole, save for momentous occasions such as the Covenant with Wylding, the Conclave and the Breaking. However, our efforts were completely undermined by a half-millennium of witchcraft scares, and as such, we were little more than a hazy construct in the minds of mortals. Despite the fact that we were a part of the Compact of the Guilds, our standing within it was always

dubious due to mistrust, or because all our efforts involved a rather blatant disregard for the *Dictum Mortuum*. To make matters worse, our activities began to attract the attention of ghost-hunters like the *Dannati* of the Benandanti. As soon as the witch-hunters came calling, the other Guilds distanced themselves from us because we made "dangerous allies." The potential threat from some ragtag mortals was all the excuse they needed to throw us to the wolves.

One of the prime examples of this was the case known as the Drummer of Tedworth. In 1662, a traveling performer — still living, mind you — named William Drury was arrested for forgery in the English town of Tedworth, and his drum was confiscated. Upon his release, he began "haunting" the residence of John Mompesson, the presiding judge at his trial, by making loud noises and generally being anti-social. This activity gained Drury some notoriety, and attracted the attention of a Circle of Haunters who approved of his actions. The Circle devoted its efforts to "assisting" him by doing the things he could not: tossing furniture around, upending bedclothes and chamber pots, etc. Drury panicked and fled when he realized that he was no longer responsible for the events taking place around him, and the Mompessons destroyed his drum, believing it to be the source of their problems. The destruction of the drum merely made it into a relic for the Haunters, and aggravated the situation. For a while, all was well.

Unfortunately, the events in Tedworth attracted the attention of Chaplain Joseph Glanville, a witchcraft investigator. Unlike others of his ilk, however, Joseph was intelligent, not given to hysteria, patient in his observations and a member of the *Dannati*. During the course of his investigation, he quietly and methodically eliminated the offending Haunters. This became the first of many incidents that has set us and the *Dannati* at war across the Shroud.

Golden Age *egA elbilluG*

Without a doubt, the 19th century was our heyday. The paranoia of the witch-hunts (and the fear of all things occult) finally died down, and our exploits were ours (not the Devil's) once again. The British Empire choked in the grip of Victorianism, and our existence brought about the religious movement known as spiritualism. Penny novels and Christmas tales recounted our brand of terror, and finally, the Society for Psychical Research in Britain (and its American counterpart) emerged to study our kind. It appeared as though our efforts to change the perceptions of the Quick had finally succeeded.

The Victorian era was also a time of charlatans and fakes who purported the ability to speak with spirits, and profited

nically from this "ability." Many Haunters looked upon these deceivers as "cushions." We haunted and manifested around them frequently, or amplified their pitiful effects to enhance their claims. This may have seemed odd, considering we normally liked having the credit of paranormal activities attributed to us. The issue here, however, was not credit, but safety. The *Dannati* had acquired a frightening proficiency at hunting down and destroying incautious or ostentatious Haunters. Admittedly, Pandemonium is one of the most flamboyant of the Arcanoi, but we suspect that someone led the hunters to us (the Proctors, most likely, though we have yet been able to prove such a connection). We therefore used skinbag tricksters and fakes as dupes. We found mediums and sensitives, helped them authenticate their claims by providing industrial-strength light and magic, and then left the moment someone appeared to challenge our dupes' "powers." *Dannati* posing as "investigators of the supernatural" and "psychic detectives" thus uncovered countless frauds, but nary a single Hunter. Mediums were debunked as fakes and charlatans, and the *Dannati* lost our scent.

Unfortunately, this tactic proved to be a short-sighted mistake with long-reaching consequences. As a result of our little deception, people decided to treat all supernatural events as trickery of some sort. We learned this, to our sorrow, at the



Hydesville haunting of 1848 and its attendant “rapping ghosts.”

I can assure you, by the way, that the adjective is not used in the context of modern music. The phenomenon known as rapping is defined as when hovering spirits supposedly communicate by making rapping sounds. While the Hydesville haunting was not the first time that this form of dialogue was used (the so-called “Bell Witch incident” also involved communication through knocking), it garnered unprecedented exposure when Maggie and Kate Fox exhibited the ability to communicate with the ghosts. Of course, we heard about the supposed supernatural activities taking place at the Fox home, and in turn, began enhancing the “haunting” of the sisters with Wylding. Only when the Fox siblings became public celebrities did we withdraw our presence. The girls’ notoriety was sure to draw the attention of the *Dannati*.

The events at Hydesville were later declared to be a hoax (surprise, surprise) perpetrated by the Fox sisters, originally intended to scare their mother, and then as a money-making scheme under the direction of their older sister, Leah. Despite this, the Fox sisters’ reputed ability to communicate with spirits became the catalyst for the movement called spiritualism, a quasi-religious belief in the spirit world and ghosts.

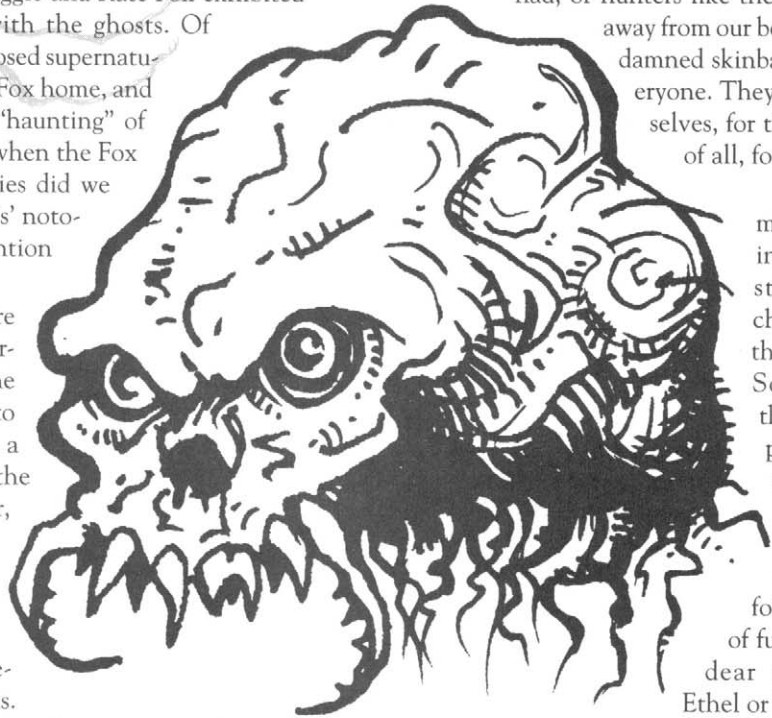
Spiritualism unlocked all sorts of doors for wraiths in general, but for us (and those ridiculous Proctors) in particular. Humans were out-and-out inviting us into some of the best parlors and company of the day, granting us amazing opportunities. (Of course, the flip side was that we ended up patronizing Masquers extensively as a result. After all, it wouldn’t do for us to materialize underdressed now, would it?)

It became fashionable for mortals to believe in ghosts, have seances, and so on. Leading artists, socialites and even occasional political figures gave the movement further credence, which drove the Hierarchy batty. And despite those staid bastards’ best attempts to shut the whole thing down, study of the “other world” enjoyed something like true legitimacy among the living. It was a golden time, and it produced some wonderful talents and stories. Some of the mediums of that time are even studied today, by whatever would-be “spirit guides” that are still running around out there. From the 1850s right up through the 1930s, it was a remarkable time to be dead. Things were going our way at last. The Shroud was weakening, the Quick had enlisted in the fight to bring it down, and then?

Phooey.

Have you ever been to a party where the food was wonderful, the conversation was enthralling, and everyone was having a ball, up until the point when some jerk crashes the gate and pisses in the punchbowl? That was how spiritualism ended — skinbag stupidity and greed ruined a wonderful party. Whether it was the bored housewives and gigolos claiming that the “spirits” were telling them to get drunk and sleep around, frauds who bilked grieving families for everything they had, or hunters like the *Dannati* driving us away from our best mortal allies, the damned skinbags ruined it for everyone. They ruined it for themselves, for the aliens, and most of all, for us. Bastards.

Spiritualism mostly wound down in the 1930s, but it is still practiced in churches throughout the United States and South America to this day. It is in these places of congregation that the Shroud is often at its lowest, and where many of our folk have a great deal of fun pretending to be dear departed Auntie Ethel or Uncle Murray.



Modern Wraiths htarW nredom

V.P.

Today, we have become nothing more than a product of other people’s perceptions. As the Quick become more sophisticated, our hauntings have become more visceral and brutal. We have lost that fine touch, and the disaster at Amityville is a prime example of that lack of subtlety. While our influence over the Long Island home is generally regarded as a hoax, the similarities between our arts and the occurrences within its walls are too many for any informed observer to discount. The techniques practiced within that innocent-looking home were far too brutal for the tastes of many Haunters, however, save perhaps the Bedlameers or Mandelbrots. However, the question is academic, as the true identity of whatever wraith or wraiths were responsible for this incident is unknown. The house is barred to us, and so is the resolution of the mystery.

The fault, of course, lies at the feet of the *Dannati*. No sooner had the Amityville story premiered on a New York television program than the Benandanti stormed the place and

destroyed the Circle that made Amityville (the town, not the house) their Haunt. We have not been able to get close to the legendary house since; even venturing inside the city's limits is dangerous now. The *Dannati* keep it under careful surveillance, and many Haunters, desperate to get inside in order to learn the truth, have been cut down with fennel swords or worse.

The absence of solid fact, however, doesn't discourage the rumor mill from churning. If one believes all that one hears, one knows that black light can be seen in the Shadowlands cast from the sinister house's dark windows, and that hideous shapes creep across the well-trimmed lawns at night. Rumors persist that the occupying *Dannati* have fallen prey to a hive of Spectres who have claimed Amityville as their home, and that even now a Nihil yawns beneath the house.

It's all pure speculation, of course — but we of all people know that every ghost story has some truth at its heart.

Final Word krow lanif

These aforementioned events are tiny morsels compared to grand smorgasbord of all of the hauntings that we have successfully completed. Borley Rectory and the Tower of London were our meccas, but these places have lost much of their power over the mundanes. Humanity is becoming less imaginative and thus less fearful. It takes bio-engineered plagues and cybernetic horrors to frighten the living these days; they've made their world such a hell that they're inured to blood and mist. So as we approach the millennium, and the Shroud continues to grow in strength, we find ourselves forced to rely on more brutal and direct methods to haunt the living effectively. In some ways the Mandelbrots have it right: "Pain is an excellent reminder."





HOOP 99

Chapter Three: Dearly Departed detrapeD yldaeD

Training gniniarD



lose your eyes, and let the sounds wash over you."

"Wh-wh-why?"

"Don't talk, either. Your st-st-stutter makes me nervous. Now, do as I say, and close your eyes." Inside the darkness of his head, Uri heard rolling wheels,

footfalls in a quiet room, fabric being whisked away, the click and subdued whir of electronics, and a voice that proclaimed: "The subject is a 42-year-old Caucasian woman, 160 pounds in weight..."

Uri kept listening as the autopsy continued, trying to discern the origins of the various noises. The coroner's voice droned on at a pedantic pace. A metal object being picked up; a wet sound like a zipper being undone. The coroner, audibly bored, identified the zipper sound as an incision down along the midriff; just another night's work for him. Uri heard more wet sounds as the entrails were examined, then suddenly, a scream. His eyes flew open as he looked at the scene around him. The doctor was scrambling away from the cadaver on the metal autopsy table. Within seconds he was out the door.

"You had to look, didn't you?" sighed Mordecai. Unable to look away, Uri could only nod mutely in response. The sight of the corpse held him, fascinated and horrified all at once. He could see that the incision along the woman's abdomen smiled, with ribs for its teeth. Crawling inside, squirming among her graying organs were hundreds of black roaches; her innards slickened their ebony shells.

"I'm gonna be ill!"

"I warned you not to look," Mordecai replied distractedly. Uri turned to his teacher.

"I can't d-d-d-do this to people! It's wrong!"

"Not anymore. The rules we followed when we were alive and the ones we're forced to follow now are different."

"That doesn't mean I'll abandon my c-com-compassion for doing..."

"For doing what, Uri?" Mordecai interrupted. "What're you going to do? Watch your daughter grow up, and grieve because you can't do shit? Watch as your wife falls in love with someone else and takes him into your bed? Now as for me, I couldn't care less about what happens to you, but Dr. Shudder likes you. He wants me to train you, and I will. It's better than nothing, and at least with us you have a chance at returning home some day."

Uri said nothing, but remained still. Mordecai nodded, half-satisfied. "All right. Now let's get back to lessons."

Our Guts stuG deworraH

It's All About the Wyld elihW a tuobA lIA s'ti



Here's something to be said about history, but, as you can tell, we aren't as much interested in the official as we are in the unofficial. The Wyld is a big factor in the case of our arts, our sanity, our past and our future. It has more to do with molding who we are than the history of some

skinbag and what he meant to us once upon a time. This part of the lesson plan is to acquaint you with our powers and the drawbacks that come with them. Now don't squint at me all funny like that. Yeah, I already told you about what you can do with Pandemonium, but there's a lot more to the Wylding than any alien knows. If you become a Haunter (and Christ, I hope you don't), then you're going have to learn to stretch your imagination and quit pulling the conventional crap all the time. There's a lot more to the Wyld's power, both good and bad, than just the "Casper's evil twin" shtick.

Pandemonium Perks skreP noivilbo

The Covenant between the Wyld and us Haunters provides us with an immediate asset — the ability to unleash some true nastiness with Pandemonium. Well, actually, aliens refer to it as that; we like calling it the gift or Wylding. Ever had *ouzo*? It's a Greek drink, clear as water, but it kicks like a horny mule. That's what the Wylding is, a kick of power that explodes in your forebrain like good sex. The advantage we hold over other plebs is that our gift is born from pure chaos, so the results can be almost anything. What people normally assume is Pandemonium is the Brand-X junk we show to the aliens. We kept the good stuff for ourselves.

Now how do we use the gift? Near as I can explain it, every Haunter has a tiny seed of Wylding inside them. It's kinda like we're pregnant. Now as long as that seed is in you (and I don't know how you'd ever get it out), you'll have the Wylding leaking out of you like you got a bad plumbing job. The difference between Haunters and some old shlep who uses the gift is that we embrace the changes around us when the Wylding really cuts loose. Aliens simply freak when the weird visuals start happening, and abandon their powers like some bad acid trip. If a wraith can go beyond the scare phase and actually

start using what the Wyld gives him, then he becomes a Haunter whether he wants to or not. He just hasn't been inducted yet.

Now, the more we use this seed, the bigger it gets. It begins infusing our Corpora with the Wyld, making us less "normal," but allowing us to squeeze more effects from it. The reason? All the effects you create invariably come from *you*. You become the physical expression of the Wyld. Your Corpus is the molder's clay used to create all the physical effects (bugs, blood, frogs — all that good stuff), while your Pathos is spent on stuff like temperature fluxes and weather anomalies. Cool thought, hunh? Your power is basically eating you alive. Think about that too much, and you might end up as a Bedlameer.

The flip-side advantage to it all, in case you haven't picked up on it, is that we can create Wylding-related arts with a lot more ease than most people know. It's just a matter of experimenting. Here are some of the fruits of our labor that the different groups have taken the time to share with each other. I can tell you, though, there's a lot more out there. Some Haunters are just being greedy with their secrets.

Basic Abilities

Mouth of Madness: This talent enables a Haunter to use himself as the manifestation point for other Wylding arts. This is especially useful in conjunction with the visible effects of Pandemonium, such as Dark Ether or Foul Humour. When Mouth of Madness is in play, smoke can appear from the folds of a cloak; insects can fly out of a Haunter's mouth or from his hair; blood can pour from his eyes or open wounds, and so on. The possibilities are endless, but unless a Haunter has the Embody Arcanos, this visual chicanery is visible only to those in the Shadowlands.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Pandemonium (difficulty 6).

• Scripture erutcirtS

Created by the Dantes, this particular art enables a Haunter to communicate beyond the Shroud through the written word or with basic images. The letters and symbols are created from the Corpus of the wraith utilizing this craft, and can appear on any surface. As a Haunter's knowledge of Pandemonium can vary, however, the script can take the form of whatever tier of Wylding she chooses to use. Arcs of electricity can emblazon the words of a message on a wall if a Haunter understands Dark Ether; statements written in blood or even with insects can be formed in conjunction with Foul Humour. Each line of script or image created lasts either five minutes or until the next line of script is added.

The major drawback to this particular art is that the words expressed are hard to dictate properly. Because they are formed directly from the mind of a Haunter, they can express hidden sentiments, emotions and even secrets if the wraith is not

careful. Many Haunters' Shadows have been known to speak through slippages in control while Scripture was in effect.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Pandemonium (difficulty of the local Shroud rating) to begin writing. The moment a sentence is finished, the words vanish, but the wraith may continue writing until he is finished or is interrupted. In either case, a new roll must be made to allow the writing to begin once again.

This ability costs both a Pathos and a Corpus to use. Should the Hunter wish to use Scripture in conjunction with another Pandemonium art, the cost for the second art is not paid, but an additional point of Corpus is.

If a wraith using Scripture has only this level of Pandemonium, the words she creates through this art appear as ashes in the Skinlands.

• Wild Bloom mossolB dlyW

A simpler version of Foul Humour, Wild Bloom allows a Hunter to "grow" a patch of dull flowers and faded grass upon any surface instantly. This small garden can be made to wilt and wither away in a matter of seconds, or bloom into grotesque shapes (flowers with insect eyes, petals fringed with teeth, etc.). Obviously the plants are not real, having been created from the wraith's Corpus. They do, however, scent the air with a mild hint of decay, forcing animals to shun these dead blooms and everything around them.

System: The player must declare beforehand what effect he wishes to elicit with Wild Bloom. He then rolls Intelligence + Pandemonium (difficulty is the local Shroud). Each success translates as one square foot of area infested with the Wild Bloom, and also indicates how many minutes the Wild Bloom remains.

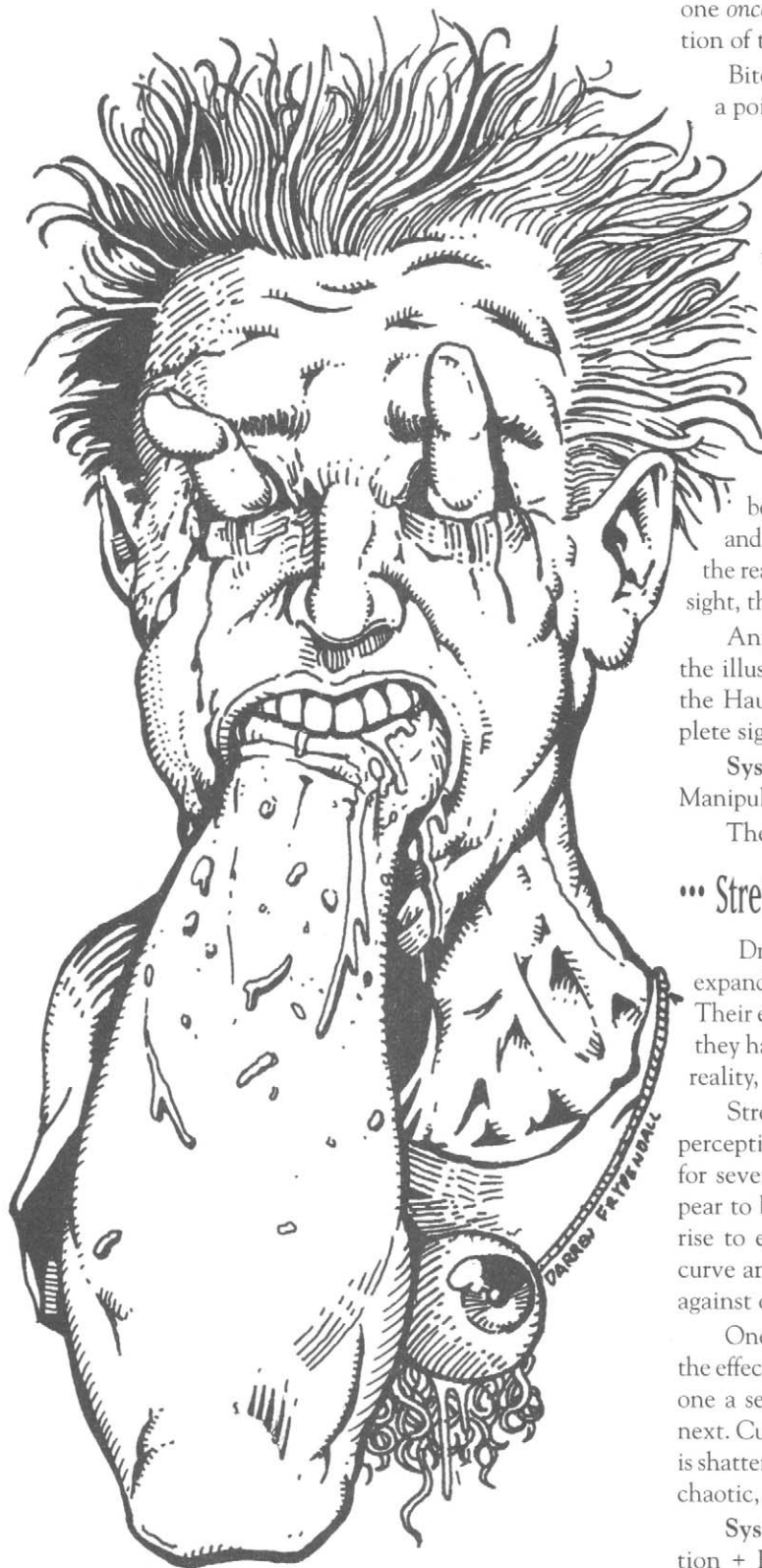
This art costs 1 Pathos and 1 Corpus to use.

•• Bite Me emiT giB

Through the use of this art, a Hunter can create realistic-looking food from stuff of his own Corpus. Naturally, should any mortal decide to eat this meal, the would-be gourmet discovers that his meal has a revolting taste. Furthermore, the second the ghostly morsels are put to a mortal's lips, the food suddenly appears to be moldy, rotted and maggot-ridden.

System: To use this art, the player rolls Intelligence + Pandemonium (difficulty is the local Shroud). *J. Cobb 97*





The number of successes indicates the length of the effect, and for every two successes, the target's Stamina is lowered by one *once the food is ingested*. This weakness lasts for the duration of the scene.

Bite Me costs a Pathos and 2 Corpus, and gives the user a point of temporary Angst.

•• Fooled You loof uoY

Formed from the union of Outrage and Pandemonium, this art is available to both Haunters and Spooks.

The first Wylding talent created by the Mandelbrots, it allows a wraith to distort an observer's perception of the location of an object (video cassette size or smaller) by two feet in any direction. This does not mean, for example, that a wraith can hide objects completely (by displacing the object's image on the other side of a wall less than two feet away). The real object must be normally in view to both the practitioner of this art and his targets for the displaced image to be seen. If either the real object or distorted figure is hidden or not within plain sight, the art fails, and the item appears in its normal location.

Any attempt that is made to grab the item will disrupt the illusion, revealing its location, while botches will cause the Haunter to believe in the displacement and lose complete sight of the item in question.

System: In order to employ this power, the player rolls Manipulation + Pandemonium (difficulty of the local Shroud).

The cost of using this art is 1 Pathos.

••• Stretching Reality ytlær gnihtertS

Driven by the discovery of Fooled You, many Nihilists expanded their arts toward the altering of spatial awareness. Their eventual hope was to manipulate space itself, and while they have not yet succeeded in actually warping the fabric of reality, this art would seem to be a step in the right direction.

Stretching Reality enables a Haunter to alter his target's perception of distance. Short corridors can seemingly stretch for several hundred yards, while someone far away can appear to be only inches from the victim. Walls can appear to rise to enormous heights, while level surfaces will seem to curve and warp. Unlike Fooled You, however, this art works against one target only.

One drawback to this particular aspect of Wylding is that the effect is never truly controlled. Objects that were near someone a second ago can appear to be beyond arm's length the next. Curves and arcs fluctuate, and the solidity of the illusion is shattered by its fluidity. On the other hand, the results, while chaotic, are spectacularly disorienting to the unprepared mind.

System: Using Stretching Reality requires a Manipulation + Pandemonium roll (difficulty is the local Shroud).

Furthermore, the art takes 1 Pathos to initiate, and another to maintain every three turns.

1 Success — The target's spatial perception changes, but only to a minor degree. Any small item within arm's reach will suddenly appear to move out of range by no more than five feet in any direction, and the effect is limited to objects within arm's reach of the target.

2 Successes — Larger objects such as doors and people can now be affected by the spatial distortion. The difficulty to all rolls involving sight-based Abilities (Brawl, Dodge, Drive, etc.) is increased by one.

3 Successes — Hallways and entire walls now appear to recede, come rushing forward or even loom to gargantuan proportions — at least as far as the victim is concerned.

4 Successes — With this many successes, the art can affect up to an entire building (so long as the victim is within the offending Haunter's sight). Corridors can mutate into an inescapable maze, walls might seem to melt, and so on. Furthermore, the difficulty for all sight-based rolls is increased by two as long as this art is in effect.

5 Successes — The victim's reality has just been placed in a taffy puller. Not only the victim's environment appears to change, but her very body seems to be stretching, melting and otherwise behaving oddly. There is a +3 difficulty on all rolls involving sight-based Abilities (Brawl, Dodge, Drive, etc.) for victims of this art.

◆◆◆ Stigmata rehtoM kcis

Another prized ability of the Dantes, it is used on sinners as either a last resort or as the climax of an involved and drawn-out haunting. This art enables the Haunter to create bleeding wounds on her target. The injuries are not real, with the "blood" actually being an ectoplasmic manifestation of the Haunter's Corpus. To the target, however, the stigmata this art creates appear real in every way, even down to the smell of the blood. Some victims even claim to feel the pain of their "wounds," though most Haunters attribute this phenomenon to "ghost pains," a hypochondriacal reaction.

The wounds that manifest through this art appear as exactly that — wounds that might have been made by a knife or some similar sharp object. Creating the illusion of severed limbs or a foreign object impaling the victim's body is beyond the scope of this art, no matter how talented the Haunter. However, once that limitation is surmounted, the injuries created are up to the imagination of the Haunter. The Dantes prefer to use religious motifs with this art (such as wounded palms and thorny tears in the scalp), while more traditional Haunters like to study their victims, uncover old afflictions, and create the illusion that old wounds have reopened.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Pandemonium (difficulty is the local Shroud) in order to create a single





wound on a victim. Each wound must be rolled for separately, though a Haunter may try to create multiple wounds in the same round by splitting his Dice Pool.

Every three successes on the initial roll indicates a Health Level of psychosomatic damage inflicted on the victim. This damage cannot be soaked, but is not aggravated.

Stigmata costs 1 Pathos per wound created, plus 1 Pathos for every level of actual damage inflicted. The art also gives the user's Shadow 2 temporary Angst points.

Form of Chaos tekcuB eci na fo epahS

This ability proves the theory that if the effects of Foul Humour are generated from a wraith's own Corpus, then a

Haunter should actually be able to shape his own manifestation.

From this analysis, the Order of the Glass Menagerie developed Form of Chaos. A more refined version of Foul Humour, this art not only enables the user to create noxious substances and plagues of various sorts, but also gives him the opportunity to take the art a step further and shape his creation into hideous parodies of the human form. Examples of this include faces congealing out of a pool of blood, arms made of locusts or a tongue formed from maggots. The shape this art creates is physically independent of the Haunter, and possesses no fine motor control. On the other hand, the manifestations created are as strong as the Haunter who made them, and would respond to simple orders such as flail, bite, spasm and so on.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Pandemonium (difficulty is the local Shroud). The number of successes indicates the maximum size and duration of the manifestation; spectacular successes may grant some special effect (such as venom or caustic slime).

The cost for this art is 3 Corpus and 2 Pathos, and its use inflicts 1 Angst upon the practitioner. There is no need to use Foul Humor before using Shape of Chaos.

Death's Caul llaC s'htaeD

This particularly nasty art was created by the Followers of Discord, a Haunter alliance that predated the Middle Ages. The Followers' philosophy advocated murder as a means of conveying terror, and because of this, they were more often hired by wraiths as assassins instead of Haunters.

Death's Caul was the Followers of Discord's crowning achievement, an art that enabled wraiths to hurt the living.

It was also known as a Dark Art, one of those powers completely outlawed by the *Dictum Mortuum*. When the Followers of Discord disbanded

DARREN W. FRYDENPALL

(and were systematically hunted down by the Order of the Unlidded Eye), many refused to divulge the secret of Death's Caul, even when tortured or soulforged. After the last of the Followers disappeared, most elder Hunters agreed that the art was lost. All this changed a scant two decades ago, however, when the Bedlameers came forward with the knowledge of its workings. How they came to possess this power is unknown, but it is surmised that Sweet Sorrow may have shared it with the Alienists.

By sending a portion of his Corpus through the Shroud, the Hunter can cover a victim's face with a Caul similar to the one that covers each wraith at his rebirth. This mask obstructs all breathing passages, causing the target to suffocate unless he manages to tear the mask off. This feat is difficult, since the suffocating mass of plasm finds its way down the victim's throat and up his nasal passages. For obvious reasons, this Dark Art does not affect wraiths and vampires.

System: In order to use Death's Caul, the player must roll Manipulation + Pandemonium (difficulty is the local Shroud). The number of successes indicates the physical strength of the Caul (i.e., the number of successes on an extended Strength roll, difficulty 6, without a failure. With every failure, the process starts all over again.)

If he fails to break free of the Caul, the victim remains conscious for a number of turns equal to his Stamina. After that, he blacks out. Once unconscious, he takes one level of damage every 30 seconds until death.

The cost of using this art is 2 Pathos and 2 Corpus. Murdering someone in this manner grants the Shadow 4 points of temporary Angst.

Ways of the Wyld esiW ehT oT drow

Johnny Onefly

Hey, there. The name's Johnny Onefly. People ask me all the time why they can see a bug buzzing inside me. I simply tell them I was minding my own business one day when this damn wraith swallowed me whole, and I've been stuck in here ever since.

Wyld, the dying spark of change, is the source of our Arcanos. The big kahunas, the original Hunters, formed a pact with it, a little treaty that allowed them access to its power while it got a window to the world through them. Because of this Covenant, we're *seriously* affected by our own abilities of chaos. We tell the aliens that this deal was our choice, but that's a lie. None of us can really control what's happening to us. It's like trying to steer a cow with your arm up its ass. You can control its direction, but forget finesse. Even worse, the Wyld's madness (and it's crazy, make no mistake about that) worms its way into our thoughts when we aren't paying attention.

Bad Things (can you hear those capital letters?) happen when we burn too much of our Pathos feeding the Wylding. Reality warps





and wafts around you like smoke in an eggbeater. Oh, you hardly notice it at first. It starts small, by affecting your senses. It doesn't take long, though, before your perceptions become a kaleidoscope of flashbacks and "commercial breaks." Later, the power bleeds through you constantly and affects the way you look.

Your Corpus becomes grotesque, a parody of who you are and who you thought you were. If you become like me, who knows, you could be filled with insects, snakes and other creepy crap. Your form could shift slowly from one ugly extreme to the next, or you could become unintelligible as your speech becomes slow and dra-a-a-a-a-a-w-n out (sorta like late-period Marlon Brando).

Some Haunters have been forced to rely on Masquers to lock their forms down, at least temporarily. This isn't so much of a cure as it is a treatment, though, and sooner or later using Pandemonium will catch up with you. No matter what you try, chaos *will* nail your ass in the end, so you might as well deal with it.

Haunter Quirks *skcik retnuah*

A player is free to decide upon which Haunter-specific quirks might affect his character, as long as it meets with the Storyteller's approval. The following quirks, however, are suggestions as to what might result from a wraith's continued exposure to the altering affects of the Wylding, and may be used as justification for why a Haunter does what he does.

Spatial Distortion, Chronal Fatigue and Hallucination quirks do not manifest all the time. If they did, then they would completely debilitate a Haunter and make him useless. Most members of the Guild play up their supposed insanity to frighten the aliens, but for the most part, these drawbacks flit in and out of existence with no rhyme or reason. A Haunter's quirks are controlled by the Storyteller, who dictates when and for how long a particular disability arises, and under what circumstances.

These quirks are for storytelling purposes only, and should only have any impact on dice rolls or difficulties under extreme circumstances.

Spatial Distortion

Those wraiths who dabble in the arts that influence spatial awareness often succumb to this form of madness. Strangely enough, Haunters who have maintained the strongest ties with the Spooks are more often influenced by this

brand of the Wyld's chaos. Even Spooks versed in Pandemonium have exhibited tendencies toward spatially related perception problems.

Quirks of this nature mostly reflect an inability to judge distances. The wraith's actual senses of sight and hearing work fine, for part of the time. Everything appears just a bit off from where it actually is; sounds echo hollowly, or seem to emanate from a dozen different places.

Chronal Fatigue

Haunters who practice time-altering arts have become influenced by what some wraiths call Chronal Fatigue. Due to the limited number of temporal abilities in Wylding, those wraiths exhibiting this form of insanity are somewhat rare among Haunters. Even then, the Chronally Fatigued primarily make up the ranks of the H.G. Dwellers.

The drawback of Chronal Fatigue is that it twists the perceptions of the user when it comes to time. There might seem to be extended gaps in the interval between one word and the next. Conversations and movement can seem drawn-out or extremely rapid, moving objects might flare with visible after-shadows, residual echoes of conversations can linger for hours, people seem to move slowly or inhumanly fast, voices can be heard after the speaker has stopped talking, and so on. Again, the actual manifestation of a Haunter's madness is up to the imagination of the player, and is strictly the providence of the Storyteller.

Hallucinations

Continued use of those arts that require a Haunter to channel his Corpus or Pathos into physical manifestations (such as Bite Me, Dark Ether and Foul Humour) subjects him to various hallucinatory effects inspired by his own memories and imagination. More Haunters have drawbacks from this category alone than temporal- or spatial-related quirks combined.

These hallucinations can fabricate objects, people and locales drawn from the wraith's own imagination. While they are illusions, these fabrications are completely realistic to the Haunter. In essence, Hallucinations are the wraithly equivalent of a



The Sphinx

The most unusual Chronal Fatigue symptom generated to date belongs to a Las Vegas Haunter known as the Sphinx. A known mouthpiece for the Order of the Glass Menagerie, his passage leaves behind after-shadows. More irregular still is the fact that each image that follows is younger than the last by about a year, leaving a five-year-old child to trail behind last.

bad acid trip, though some particularly twisted Haunters come to endure and even enjoy their little "trips." The one connecting element that runs from episode to episode is the fact that the Hallucinations always revolve around a single Passion, Fetter or the effect of a specific art.

Inherent Merits and Flaws

The following Merits and Flaws are also available for Spooks who use Pandemonium extensively (level three arts and up).

Wyld Intolerance *tnarelotni yldlyW*: (1 point Flaw)

You don't get along well with the bit of Wyld inside you, and this unease is apparent to other Haunters. The discomfort you feel having a bit of primal chaos in your ghostly guts makes your peers uneasy as well, and you are at a +1 difficulty on all Social rolls involving other Haunters.

Anxiety Slip *?noitalucajE erutamerP*: (2 point Flaw)

You are a wreck in social situations. You stammer, stutter, and have trouble making eye contact; even the ghost of your mother thinks you're a bit of a spaz. Even worse, though, is the way this manifests through your Arcanos. Each time you fail a Social-based roll, a Wylding effect (Storyteller discretion as to which one) manifests and wreaks some sort of randomized local havoc. This effect can be countered by the expenditure of a Willpower point, but odds are that you'll run out of Willpower before you straighten out your little self-confidence problem.

Aggravated Quirk *kriiuQ gnitavarggA*: (3 point Flaw)

If you've got this Flaw, the perception-altering affects of your quirk aren't limited to yourself anymore. Now everyone can see what the Wylding is doing to you, and it isn't pretty.

If you're cursed with Spatial Distortion, things such as masks, cloaks and relics may appear to rest within your Corpus instead

of on it. You might find yourself speaking in a booming shout when you try to whisper, or discover that your facial features are now doll-sized even while the rest of you retains your normal dimensions. If you suffer from Chronal Fatigue, you leave after-shadows when you move, images of you fading slowly behind you like a comtrail. Your voice seems to echo, and past wounds suddenly manifest and vanish. In the case of Hallucinations, your Corpus might be filled with insects and worms, bruised-purple storm clouds may rumble and turn inside your stomach, or the face of your Shadow might push itself against the thin Corpus surface of your chest and scream for release.

No matter what sensory-related malformation you suffer from, this affliction draws attention to you and hinders all your attempts to make Social rolls (+2 difficulty).

Phobia Insight *edisni aibohP*: (1 point Merit)

You possess the knack for sensing what frightens the Quick, and you seem to be able to pick the right arts in order to obtain the emotional response you want. Maybe you're just more perceptive than most, maybe it's something supernatural, but it's always easier for you to get the effect that you want than it is for any of your peers.

When frightening mortals, the player can adjust a person's reaction by increasing or decreasing his Willpower rating by one, but only when using this Merit in conjunction with Pandemonium arts. For more information on how this Merit functions, see the Fog Ratings chart on page 241 of *Wraith: The Oblivion*.

Wyld Summons *gninommuS delliW*: (2 point Merit)

It is said that all Haunters are linked together by the seeds of the Wyld that germinate within you all. You are proof positive for this theory. Whenever you are in danger, the Wyld reaches out to other Haunters in the vicinity, giving them the unspoken urge to find and aid you. The other Haunters affected in this way sense that someone is in peril (you) and know which direction to take in order to reach you. This does not mean that they must help, however; they are not obliged to risk their own existence to assist you. They merely hear the cry, and may or may not answer it.

Wyld Summons has an effective range of up to half a mile away. The Haunters in range of the Summons must make a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 7), or the Wyld's cry gets drowned out by the background noise of the Underworld.

Beneficial Quirk: (3 point Merit)

Occasionally you can turn your quirk into an asset by using its nature to your advantage. Spatial Distortion can become Spatial Acuity, allowing you to notice small details with greater ease. Chronal Fatigue might transform into a sort of Time Sense, enabling you to remember past events

with greater clarity. Hallucinations can become Insight, empowering you with empathic reasoning or an intuitive comprehension of a specific situation.

This Merit should reflect the nature of your quirk. While the advantage this Merit offers must be agreed upon by both Storyteller and player, the end result should be a -2 difficulty on all rolls involving something that might be affected negatively by your quirk. Beneficial Quirk will not manifest itself every time, and it cannot be relied upon. However, just at the moment when you're least expecting it, something good might happen....

Wyld Allies sailA redlyW: (4 point Merit)

When you learned Pandemonium, the Wyld took root inside you and blossomed. You are now vibrant with this aspect of nature, and this marks you as a kindred spirit to the Garou. They sense your kinship of spirit, and recognize you as a fellow agent of the Wyld. Werewolves treat you with respect, and may even come to regard you as a beneficial spirit. This Merit lowers the difficulty of any Social interactions with Garou by two.

Leech hsael: (5 point Merit)

The Wyld is becoming more and more emotionally active as it spends time in the Shadowlands. Whether this is a matter of survival (nothing lasts within the Shadowlands without Passion) or frustration is unknown, but you have discovered a way to tap into its emotional reservoirs and turn it into Pathos for your own use. It is limited, however, in that the Pathos gained can only be used to empower the effects of the Wylding.

Once per session, the player may roll Empathy + Manipulation (difficulty 7) to determine how many Pathos she has gained for use with Pandemonium. The Pathos will fade away at a rate of one point every hour, so choosing the right time to use this Merit is highly important.

Artifacts tcafitrA

The Void Gauntlet (Level 5 soulsteel weapon)

The drive to uncover the "Universal Solvent," that one special formula that will erode the Shroud and allow the Haunters

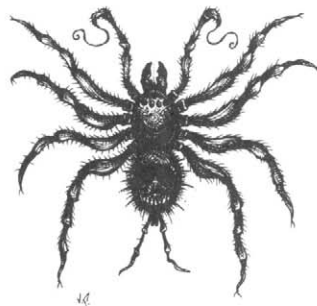
to return home, has made the Guild somewhat focused (too focused, some believe) in their researches into the creation of Artifacts and relics. The creation of Haunter-specific Artifacts was never truly considered an avenue to accomplishing the Guild's goal until rumors surrounding one item began appearing. It has become the equivalent of the Holy Grail to some, sparking a race between several wraith Circles including a group of Artificers, Alchemists, Spooks and a large contingent of Haunters. It is known as the Void Gauntlet, and its history is found in the annals of the alliances.

The Void Gauntlet has been seen only on rare occasions, and always on the hand of one of the silent *Caput Mortuum* Haunters (who, legend has it, are the wraiths of the Knights Templar executed for supposed blasphemy). The last reputed sighting of one of these Templars was a little over seven years ago, when several wraiths witnessed the gauntlet being used in the assassination of a New York priest.

Made of soulsteel, the black gauntlet reflects a starscape on its surface and sports a soulfire shard containing 10 Pathos on its palm. The Artifact works in one of two ways; either it allows the wielder to grab other wraiths and decay their Corpora, or it enables the user to reach through the Shroud and attack the living. In either case, the gauntlet's grasp can deliver two levels of aggravated damage per Pathos expended from the soulfire shard. The manner in which it does this seems to be a variation on the Flux art of Decay. Corpus and living tissue, in this case, are stricken by rapid degeneration in their structure.

Any attack made within the Shadowlands requires a roll of Dexterity + Brawl (difficulty 6). Any wraith trying to use the gauntlet to reach through the barrier must first roll Dexterity + Awareness (difficulty is the local Shroud), at a cost of 4 Pathos (which is automatically expended by the gauntlet). The Artifact can be seen hovering in the Skinlands once it penetrates the Shroud. Rather than affecting the skin-casing of the Quick, however, the Void Gauntlet's touch decays human organs.

The Void Gauntlet is also capable of harming Garou, changelings and mages with the same effects, but Kindred are another matter. Rather than atrophying internal organs, the Artifact attacks the vampire's blood and causes it to toxify. The vitae is lost (two Blood Points per Pathos expended), and the target must purge the taint from his system immediately by sweating or vomiting. For every turn the vampire retains toxic vitae in his system, he suffers a level of aggravated damage for every two affected Blood Points.





Chapter Four: So You Want to be a Hunter...

...detnuah eb ot tnaW uoY oS

Sacrifices decificas Driving nugthS



He liked his name — Michael. It made him sound like the archangel — beautiful, graceful and full of fiery retribution. His name was probably the only part of himself that he did like, though. He wore sunglasses because he couldn't stand looking at his soupy green eyes. He didn't shave because the scraggly beard he grew hid his pockmarked face. He wore baggy clothing so he wouldn't have to see the contours of his pudgy body. He also wore a trenchcoat, but that was to hide the shotgun.

His name, though — Michael liked his name a bit.

The inside of Michael's two-door hatchback was littered with food containers, soda bottles and scraps of paper. If it looked like Michael lived in his car, it was because he did. He had been thrown out of his apartment a few weeks back, and now roamed the streets, simply driving around and sleeping in the back seat. At this point, his major expenses were food and gas, and that was that. No address, no bills, no worries.

If anyone had bothered talking to Michael (no one did), they would have discovered he was shopping. That would have sounded innocent enough, until they discovered on whose behalf he was shopping. He was shopping for the ghost who haunted his sleep. Michael was looking for the proper sacrifice, and until the right person came along, he forced himself to learn to ignore the blood that dripped out from the vent and onto the floor mats. He ignored the instructions to drive over people that appeared as savage slashes in the upholstery. He even ignored the maggots he had found in his suitcase once. He

couldn't ignore the snakes that crawled up his pants legs when he slept, though; that was the bit he hadn't conquered yet.

Michael did, however, pay attention to the stigmata that riddled his palms on occasion, and to the crown of wounds that lacerated his forehead. These were signs that meant something. He was sure of it.

Today, like every day, Michael was out looking for the right gift to appease his dark companion, something that would let him sleep in peace. Fortunately, today Michael thought that perhaps he might have found it. A young lady, a student type, cut him off to grab a parking space he wasn't even interested in. He honked, and she gregariously returned his complaint with a suitable hand gesture. She then exited her car to enter the diner on the corner. Michael knew that he had to follow her inside. She was the one.

He waited patiently for a parking spot, and then walked into the diner after her. His shotgun comfortably jammed under his trenchcoat, he found her sitting alone sipping coffee in the middle of the breakfast crowd.

Suddenly, something snapped. She wasn't good enough, not anymore, not by herself. What the hell Michael decided. Everyone looks like they're eligible. Smiling softly, he rose.

"Good morning, everybody," Michael said as he pulled the shotgun from beneath his coat. "My name's Michael, just like the archangel, and I'm here for a bit of retribution."

The following Guild members comprise a tiny fraction of the available selection. These Templates exemplify the varying beliefs of the prime factions of Haunters, and can serve to guide the uninitiated toward a concept more comfortable for them.

The Bedlameer:

Quote: *I lost my innocence when I was five! Why shouldn't I haunt that nursery? Why shouldn't I haunt you for that matter? Afraid you'll like it?*

Prelude: Mother wasn't a kind woman, and she handled your *special* problems with a burning cigarette. You didn't get better, you just got quieter at what you were doing, and learned how to be a monster in human clothing. The disguise worked for a while, but eventually you attracted wraiths like flies and became the target of a haunting. Already living on the edge, you snapped when you heard the ghostly voices and felt the ghostly fingers every moment of every day. You walked into a restaurant and let the thunder of your shotgun rip through four innocent bodies.

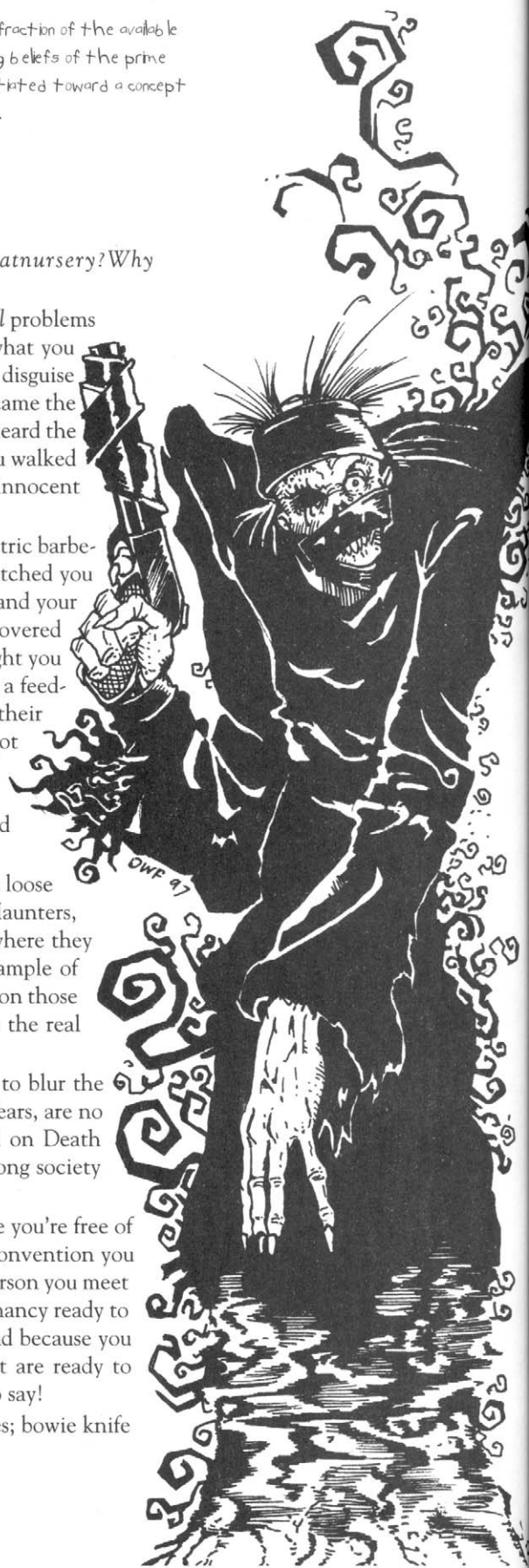
It didn't take long for the state to make you the main guest at an electric barbecue, and the Haunters couldn't wait to get their hands on you. They watched you fry, and laughed while you wailed through your Caul. Then it came off, and your sanity abandoned reality completely. Bereft of your flesh armor, you discovered you still looked the same. Without it, you weren't the monster you thought you were, not like the monsters who surrounded and mauled you. It was like a feeding frenzy as these dark, twisted things tore into your after-flesh. It was their game; the one who could come away with the biggest chunk in one bite got to be your master. You didn't like this, though. You started biting back, and when the leader of the group of Bedlameers saw this, he stepped in to claim you as his own. Papa Pain took you under his brutal wing, and showed you how to become a monster beyond all reckoning.

You eventually proved your worth to him, and he started letting you loose at night to haunt the town red. It didn't take long for you to find other Haunters, and you've been making friends ever since. You still live at the prison where they executed you, preparing Death Row inmates for the hereafter with a sample of your powers. You still venture out once in a while to wreak a bit of havoc on those Quick who believe themselves to be free. You can't wait to show them the real meaning of liberation.

Concept: You're the fiend set free of your flesh chains. Your urges to blur the lines between acceptance and shame, to dance naked in other people's fears, are no longer something you hide. As a Haunter living with the condemned on Death Row, you can't wait for them to die so that you can show them how wrong society was (and how right they were after all).

Roleplaying Notes: Liberated that's what you are that's who you are you're free of the flesh that hid you free of the rules of society free to run riot every convention you encounter is just another rule to hammer to the shattering point every person you meet is ready to be as liberated as you every haunting you pursue is like a pregnancy ready to break water talk incessantly because you can and you're excited talk loud because you have something to say talk fast because you have too many ideas that are ready to explode and talk just because everyone is listening to what you've got to say!

Relics: Straightjacket; tattered issue of *Playboy*; needles and syringes; bowie knife





Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Critic
Demeanor: Rebel
Shadow: Rationalist

Life: Unemployed
Death: Electric Chair
Regret: Never off'd Mom

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●○○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●●●●○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●●○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Bureaucracy	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Awareness	●●○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●○○○○	Firearms	●●●●○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Melee	●●○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●●○○	Performance	○○○○○	Occult	●●●○○
Streetwise	●●●○○	Repair	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Stealth	●●●○○	Science	●○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Passions		Arcanoi	
Allies	●●○○○	Torture Prison Officials (Revenge)	●●○○○	Keening	●○○○○
Haunt	●○○○○	Destroy all Laws (Fanaticism)	●●●●○	Outrage	●●○○○
Mentor	●●●○○	Be recognized as a visionary	●●●○○	Pandemonium	●●●○○
Notoriety	●○○○○	(Narcissism)	○○○○○	Puppetry	●○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters

Corpus

Angst

-Jail Cell	●●○○○
-Mother's Ashes	●●●○○
-Shotgun	●●○○○
-Straight Razor	●○○○○
-Photo of Father	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

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Willpower

Thorns

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Infamy (1) Aura of Corruption (2)
Pact of Doom (3)

Pathos

Dark Passions

Guild Marks

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Kill Everybody (Rage)	●●○○○
Seed Chaos (Despair)	●●●●○
Sacrifice Self for Attention (Martyr)	●○○○○
Prove People Wrong (Envy)	●●○○○

Hallucinations



The Dante

Quote: Yes, I can help you force them out of your Haunt, but it will cost you. The price is negotiable, however — what do you know of the Savior?

Prelude: You were “born again” so many times you almost believed in reincarnation. Society never provided you with an anchor when you were growing up, so you fell in with one group after another with astonishing ease. The skinhead movement attracted you for a while, but you discovered you weren’t really a racist and atoned by turning to Christianity. Then drugs distracted your faith before you sought salvation in the Cross once more. Women proved to be another pleasure, but you eventually repented, and finally the joys of alcohol revealed themselves to you. That was the last step on the path, however. A shotgun-toting maniac opened fire in a crowded restaurant and claimed you, along with three others.

Waking up in the Shadowlands, you realized that you most certainly weren’t in Heaven. You instantly came to the conclusion that you had died a sinner and the Lord was so upset with your performance that he stuck you in the equivalent of Heaven’s attic.

While you were philosophizing, a Hierarchy Reaper picked you up and brought you in. You bemoaned your fate so much, however, that your fellow Legionnaires decided to have you forged before you could desert and become a Heretic. That was when a follower of Father Foster saved you. The soldier assigned to escort you to the forges was a Christian brother who smuggled you out and turned you over to the Dantes. They offered you a way to liberate your soul and prove your worth to God all in the same action.

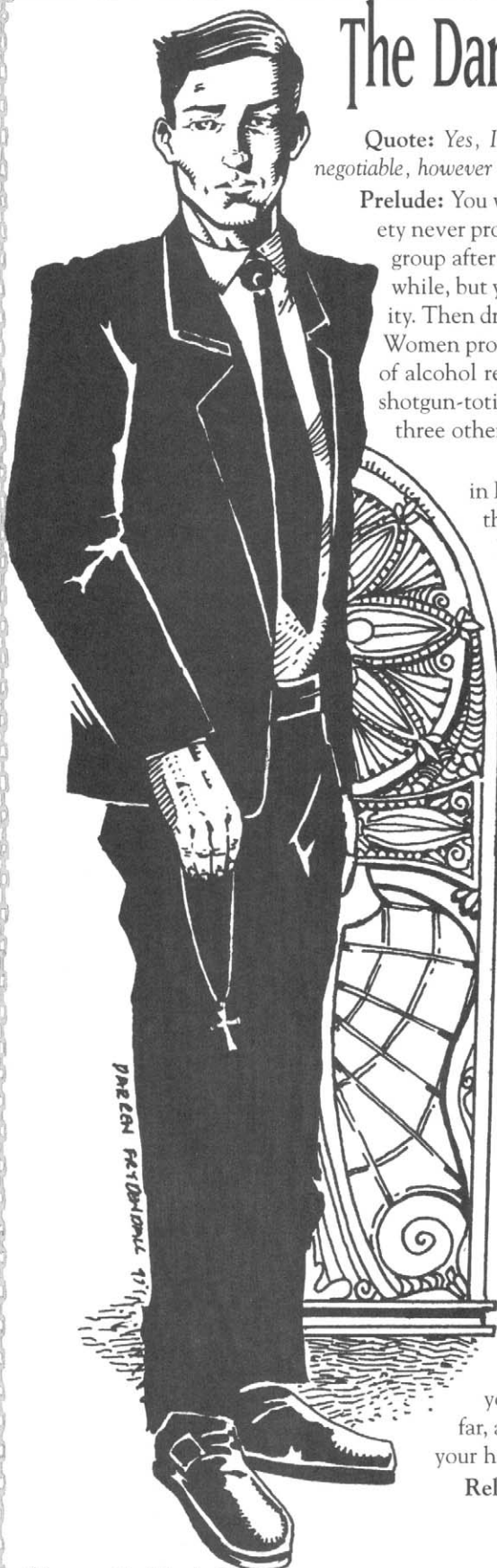
You became a Hunter, a duty you regard with great reverence. Your work with the Dantes enables you to haunt other sinners, thereby warning them that their immortal souls are in peril. *You* may have failed in the eyes of God, but you hope your work to save others will bring you eventual redemption and grace.

Concept: You are a radical Christian Hunter for hire. It doesn’t matter whether you get paid or not; the act of haunting is God’s work as far as you’re concerned. Other wraiths seem reticent to employ your services, however; your stance on religion and redemption has a way of frightening them.

Recently, you’ve learned to remain low-key about your pursuits until others feel more comfortable around you. Then you broach the subject of salvation. When it comes to haunting, you have a special interest in those locations and souls tainted by sin. You hound and torment the guilty until they are driven to insanity or the Gospels. Once you’re finished, you pack up and travel on until another area captures your attention. It’s your job — no, your calling.

Roleplaying Notes: You believe in God, and it is your faith in Him that enables you to overcome your doubts, hesitations and failings. When you serve Him directly, you can do no wrong, so you continue to pursue your actions in His name. Loving the sinner instead of the sin can only go so far, and sometimes you have to force people to see the light. Better they suffer at your hands than the ministrations of the Fallen One and all his creatures.

Relics: Gideon Bible; cross on a chain; worry beads





Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Follower
Demeanor: Visionary
Shadow: The Martyr

Life: Tax Consultant
Death: Shotgun Blast
Regret: Failed in his faith

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●
Stamina	●●●●●	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Bureaucracy	●●●●●
Athletics	●○○○○	Drive	●●○○○	Computer	●●○○○
Awareness	●●●○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	●●●○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Law	●○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Meditation	●●○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Repair	○○○○○	Politics	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Passions		Arcanoi	
Allies	●○○○○	ObeY the laws of God (Desire)	●●●○○	Argos	●●●○○
Eldobn	●●●○○	Prove your faith (Anger)	●●●○○	Castigate	●○○○○
Mentor	●●●○○	Punish sinners (Love)	●●○○○	Outrage	●○○○○
	○○○○○	Ascend (Hope)	●○○○○	Pandemonium	●●●○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters

Communion Cross	●●●○○
Parish Church	●●○○○
Videotape of "The Ten Commandments"	●●○○○
Willow Tree in backyard	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Guild Marks

sPaTIAL DiG+ORTbN

Corpus

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Pathos

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □

Angst

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
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Thorns

Death's Sigil (Brimstone Stench) (2)
Trick of light (3) Shadow Play (5)

Dark Passions

-Revel in sin (Lust)	●●○○○
-Lead the faithful astray (Hate)	●●●○○
-Rape the innocent (Envy)	●●○○○

Mandelbrot Chaostician

Quote: *Bide your time. Never allow the thrill of the fright to overtake your judgment. You still have a function to fulfill.*

Prelude: You were always regarded as a cold fish. You never considered anyone to be your equal, so you treated everyone around you as if they were stupid. This attitude left you both friendless and bitter. It was no surprise that your funeral was devoid of mourners after that shotgun blast mixed your gray matter in with your eggs.

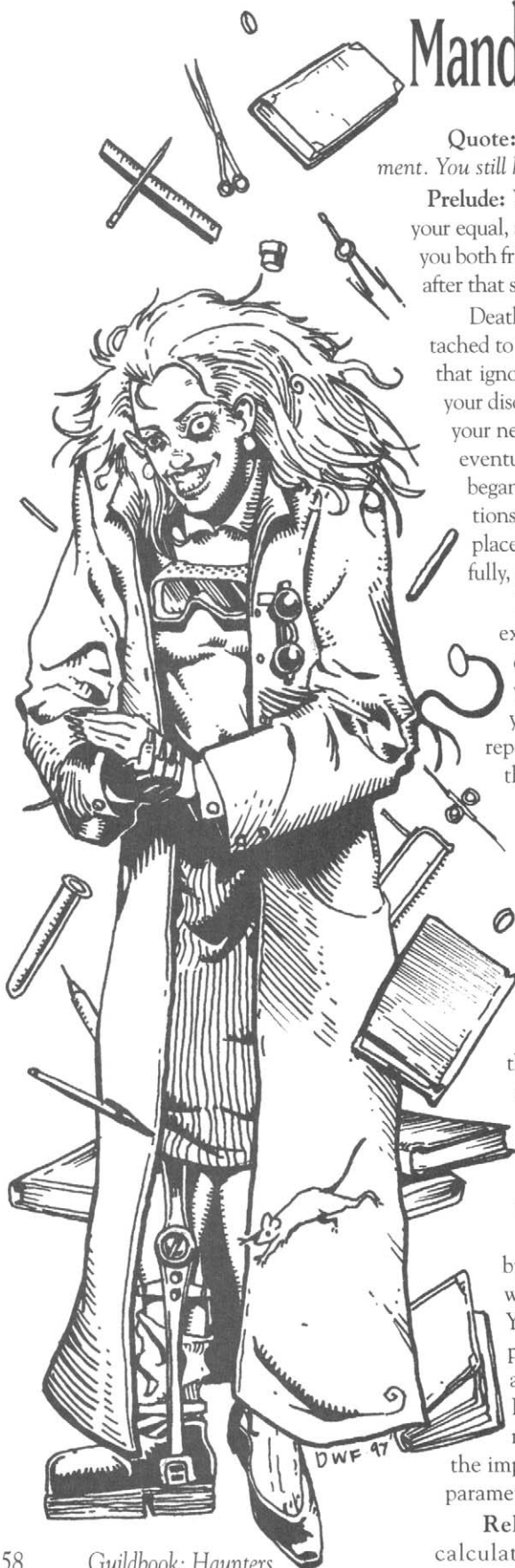
Death proved to be an interesting experiment for you. While you were still attached to your scientific precepts and the laws of reality, you found yourself in a place that ignored most of these conventions. Once you adjusted, you were ecstatic with your discovery of a new playground, and began applying your skills of observation to your new home. Somehow, your questions landed in the right (or wrong) ears, and eventually you were brought before the Seat of Succor and the Laughing Lady. She began to interrogate you, to which you replied by trying to ask her your own questions. She replied with a query, "You wish to learn everything you can of this place? Serve me, and I will give you all of the answers you could wish for." Glee-fully, you accepted.

Before turning you loose, the Laughing Lady instructed you about the existence of a group of wraiths generally known as Haunters, and specifically called Mandelbrots. Many of these "Mandelbrots" were scientists like yourself, who would welcome you as a colleague. Your mission was to get yourself accepted into the Mandelbrots, assist them in their research, and report any and all pertinent findings back to the home office in Stygia, giving the Laughing Lady access to some of the most interesting theoretical work going on in the Shadowlands. In exchange, she has agreed to bankroll your research, as well as offering you complete freedom, once your work is done. That's good enough for you, and in the meantime you're making everybody happy.

Concept: As a mole for the Seat of Succor, you have used your skills from your lifelong pursuit of science to ferret out the secrets of the dead for your Lady. The Mandelbrots take an analytical approach to uncovering the weaknesses of the Shroud, and you are part of one of several teams applying the laws of fractal mathematics to the study of the Wylding. Although most of what you've seen belongs in the realm of speculative fiction, not science, the work of others provides you with a flood of data. The only matter that distresses you is the fact that the Wylding's madness is beginning to affect your observations, making it difficult for you to trust your own experimental results. Still, as long as you can continue to do your work and make your *sub rosa* reports, everything should be all right.

Roleplaying Notes: While you are detached, your fear of being seized by the surrounding madness has made you brutally callous. Regardless of what you'd like to admit, the rush of power over others is intoxicating. You've always seen people as foolish and slow, and your hauntings have proved your assumptions conclusively. You still try to hide your pleasure at frightening others behind a wall of technobabble and scientific jargon. Part of this is an effort to conceal your growing Shadow from others, but mostly you are trying to hide the truth from yourself. You are no longer the impartial observer. You have tainted the experiment by interfering with its parameters, and all your work is for naught.

Relics: Research notebook; pens; a pair of spectacles without lenses; calculator





Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Scientist
Demeanor: Critic
Shadow: The Rationalist

Life: Scientist
Death: Shotgun Blast
Regret: You should have gotten further

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●●○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●●●●●
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●●●○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Bureaucracy	●●○○○
Athletics	●○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Computer	●●●○○
Awareness	●●○○○	Etiquette	●○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	●●●○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Leadership	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Melee	●●●○○	Medicine	●●●○○
Intimidation	●●○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Repair	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Science	●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds		Passions		Arcanoi	
Contacts	●●○○○	Quantify everything into scientific theories (Curious)	●●○○○	Inhabit	●○○○○
Mentor	●●○○○	Belittle others (Contempt)	○○○○○	Lifeweb	●○○○○
Notoriety	●●●○○	Prove your superiority to everyone (Desire)	●●○○○	Outrage	●○○○○
	○○○○○	Use people as tools (Wrath)	○○○○○	Pandemodum	●●●○○
	○○○○○	Make your EX miserable (Revenge)	●○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○				○○○○○

Fetters

Corpus

Angst

Private library	●●●●○	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Divorce papers	●●●○○	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
Laboratory	●●○○○		
UCLA classroom	●○○○○	Willpower	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
	○○○○○	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	Thorns
	○○○○○		Devil's Dare (7)
	○○○○○		Shadowed Face (3)

Guild Marks

Pathos

Dark Passions

Spatial Distortion	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □	-Kill other scientists (Envy)	●●○○○
		-Embarrass Psyche (Self-Hatred)	●●○○○
		-Embrace Oblivion (Fear)	●●●○○

Mouthpiece for the Order of the Glass Menagerie

Quote: *I don't care if you've been prepping this haunting for three months; the Council says the site's off-limits. If you don't like it, you take it up with them.*

Heh. Didn't think so....

Prelude: Young, handsome and clean-cut, people said that you were going places. The world was your oyster, they told you, and like a naive fool, you believed them. The problem was, no one told you how to deal with life if things didn't work out. Reality smacked you hard right after you graduated as the golden boy of your class. You weren't ready for the stresses of college and, facing expulsion, gracefully dropped out instead. Forced to work at restaurants while waiting for something better to come along, you lost the respect of your family, friends and eventually yourself. Your youth faded, your promise turned into wasted potential, and you were no longer the center of anyone's attention — even your own. Eventually, you caught the wrong end of a shotgun blast and died when somebody else had a bad day and took it out on your breakfast shift.

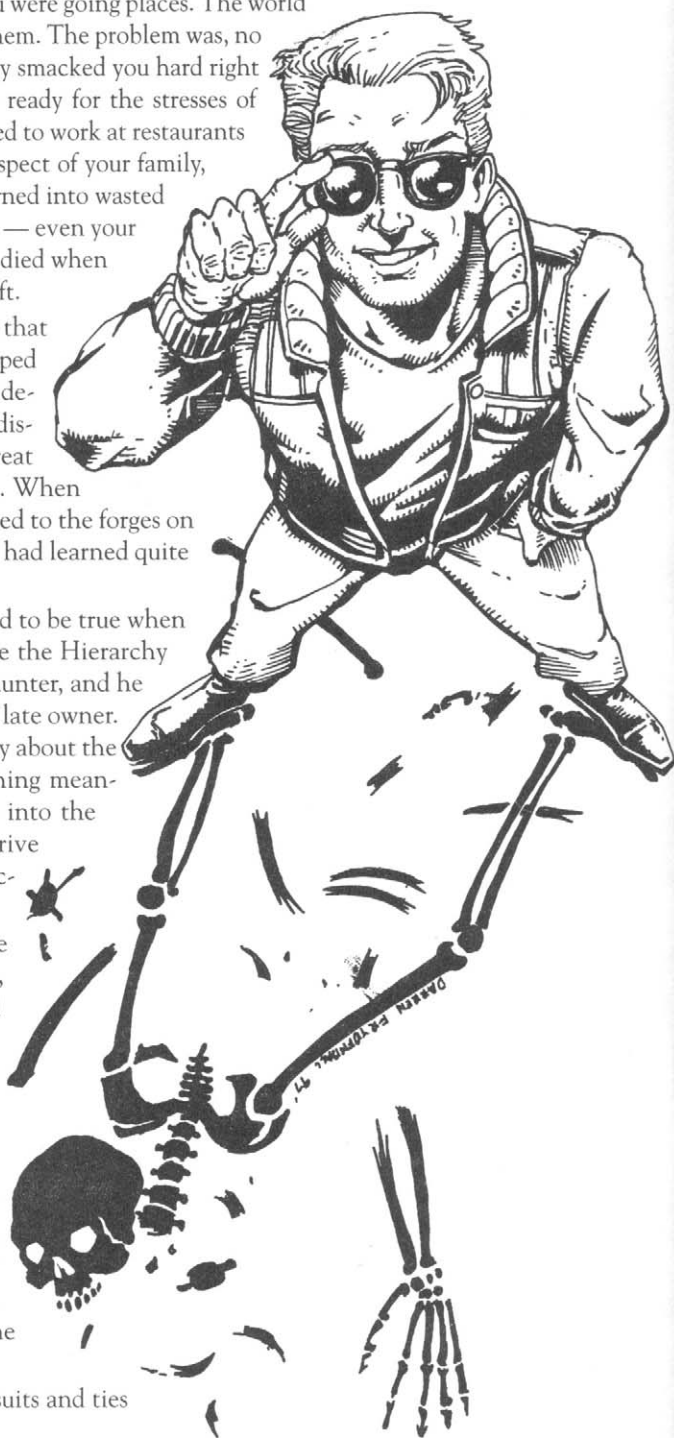
The hereafter was no better than what you left behind (not that you expected much of anything at all, but even so...). You were reaped and sold to a Stygian Domem as his personal valet. At first you despised your position and your master, but soon, you began to discover the benefits of living in Stygia. You became privy to a great deal of information, and learned how to use what you'd learned. When your master's time ran out (his political enemies got him sentenced to the forges on trumped-up charges — curious how it happened so quickly), you had learned quite a bit about how the wheels of power grind.

The rumors that your owner was a member of a Guild proved to be true when an ally of his named Nicholas smuggled you out of Stygia before the Hierarchy could confiscate you as property. Nicholas turned out to be a Haunter, and he explained that he was saving you as a favor to his colleague, your late owner. He taught you about the Guilds, about Pandemonium, and finally about the Glass Menagerie. Presented with the opportunity to do something meaningful for the first time in your life, you accepted membership into the Order and became an indispensable Haunter. Your newfound drive has enabled you to attain the position of mouthpiece, the sanctioned messenger for the secret Council of your faction.

Concept: You serve the Council's wishes for the Order of the Glass Menagerie. The Councilors relay their wishes through you, and you are loyal to them for the opportunity they have provided you. When you aren't acting as the contact for your faction, you help other members haunt Council-approved locations. You aren't very comfortable with terrifying people, but you do as the Council asks. It is the least you can do to repay them for all of the opportunities they have given you.

Roleplaying Notes: You prefer to impress others through your skills and accomplishments. You are driven to excel at everything you do, because as far as you're concerned, there is no such thing as a partial effort. This dedicated attitude makes it hard for you to find friends, but that's a price you're glad to pay in order to be the best at everything you set your mind to.

Relics: Walther PPK; tattered yearbook picture of yourself; suits and ties



Name:
 Player:
 Chronicle:

Nature: Architect
 Demeanor: Mediator
 Shadow: Perfectionist

Life: Fry Cook
 Death: Shotgun Blast
 Regret: Never fulfilled potential

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Bureaucracy	●●○○○
Athletics	●○○○○	Drive	●○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Awareness	●●●○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Firearms	●●○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Leadership	●●●○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	●○○○○	Repair	●●●○○	Politics	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Passions		Arcanoi	
Status (Guild)	●●●○○	Prove my worth (Pride)	●●●○○	Outrage	●●○○○
Eidolon	●●○○○	Return to my Whg as a success (Hope)	●●●○○	Pandemonium	●●○○○
	○○○○○	Watch Enemies fall (Spite)	●●○○○	Phantasm	●●○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

fetters

-High School Photo	●●○○○
-State Champion's	●●●○○
-Football Ring	○○○○○
-Parents	●●●○○
-Locker in High School	●○○○○
	○○○○○

Corpus

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Angst

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Thorns

Bad Luck (3)
Tainted Touch (4)

Guild Marks

Chronal Fatigue

Pathos

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □ □ □

Dark Passions

-Surrend to oblivion (Despair)	●●●○○
-Dominate Manageric Card (Greed)	●●●○○
-Bring out failures of others (Spite)	●●○○○
	○○○○○

The Recruiter

Quote: *Hi, there! I couldn't help noticing that you're dying. I have a proposition for you....*

Prelude: You were the girl everybody liked, but it had nothing to do with sex. Instead, it had to do with your gregarious nature, sharp wit and daredevil demeanor. You were the type of person who made friends with everyone, not because you tried, but because you were genuine. All of your friends, teachers and coworkers agreed: You were a good friend, a good listener, a good student....

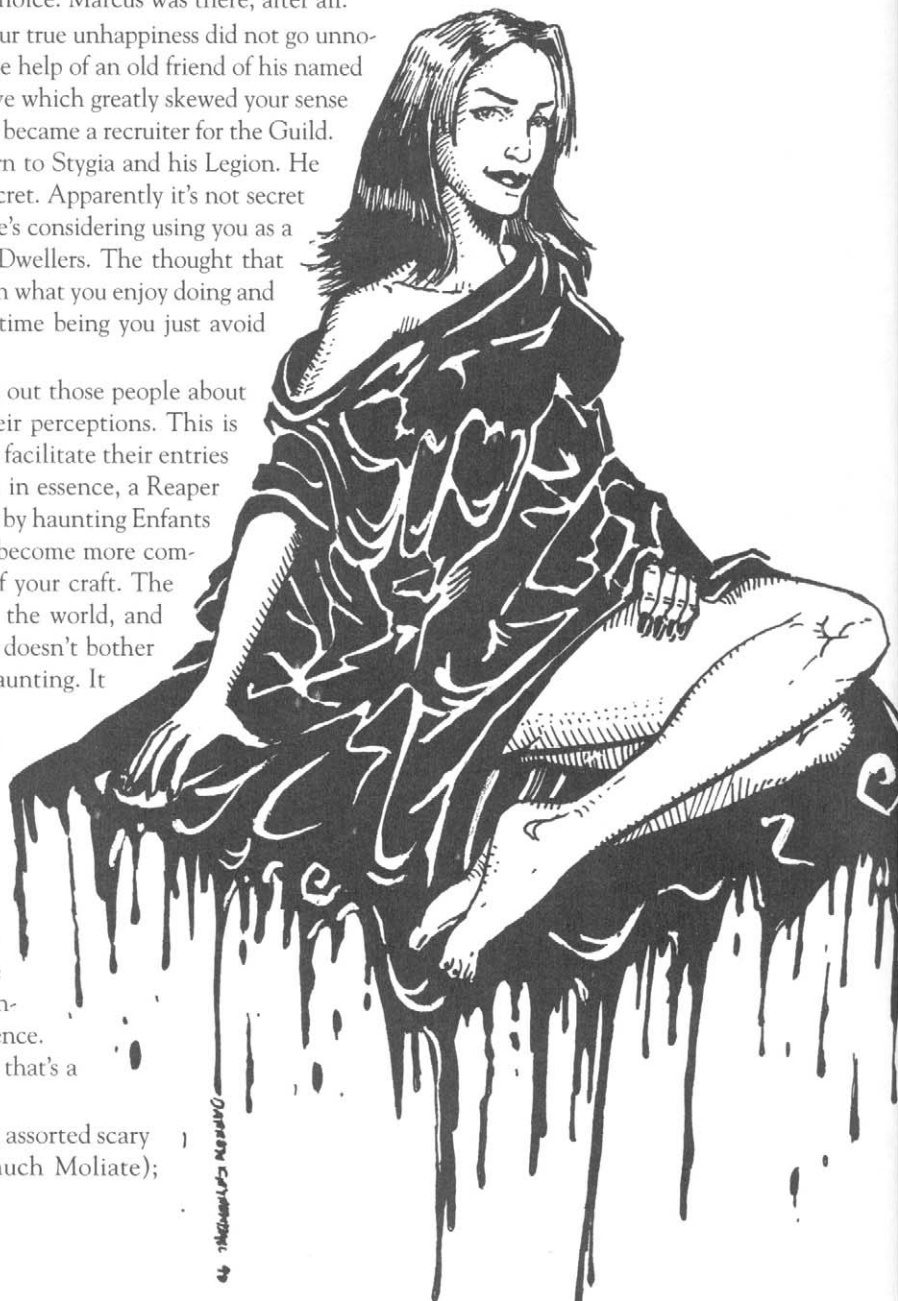
Well, you know what they say — only the good die young. The last thing you felt was hot coffee exploding all over you as the hail of shotgun pellets lacerated your bottomless cup and your body. Upon arriving in the Shadowlands, you immediately ingratiated yourself with the Centurion who claimed your Caul. He informed you that you had died, and your first response was, "I guess that explains where you've been all my life." The four victims of the shooting were split up, leaving you with Marcus, a Centurion of the Penitent Legion. He received permission to care for you, and was responsible for your training. Stygia was not where you wanted to be, though. The *Dictum Mortuum* went against everything you were brought up to believe, but you had no other choice. Marcus was there, after all.

Despite your best efforts to be cheerful, your true unhappiness did not go unnoticed by Marcus. He helped you escape with the help of an old friend of his named Midian. You were taught Pandemonium, a move which greatly skewed your sense of reality, but not your sense of humor, and you became a recruiter for the Guild. Marcus couldn't stay with you; he had to return to Stygia and his Legion. He still finds time to slip away and meet you in secret. Apparently it's not secret enough, since Midian has informed you that he's considering using you as a liaison between the Hierarchy and the H.G. Dwellers. The thought that eventually you may be forced to choose between what you enjoy doing and the wraith you love frightens you, so for the time being you just avoid thinking about it.

Concept: You are responsible for seeking out those people about to die, and, using Pandemonium, altering their perceptions. This is done to usurp their notions of reality and help facilitate their entries into the Haunters once they pass on. You are, in essence, a Reaper for the Guild, even though you get a head start by haunting Enfants *before* they die. As time progresses, you have become more comfortable with using some of the nastier arts of your craft. The Shadowlands have altered the way you view the world, and your humor has grown a few shades darker. It doesn't bother you, though; you actually enjoy the rush of haunting. It brings out your sense of the macabre.

Roleplaying Notes: You can't help but smile. The Wylding's influence on you is like everything you imagined laughing gas would be, and you still haven't stopped giggling from your first hit. You take nothing seriously, except for your love for Marcus, and have a hard time not making light of every situation. You know you were never this bad when you were alive, but exposure to the Shadowlands has increased your sense of adventure and your irreverence. You feel as though nothing can stop you, and that's a feeling you don't want to lose.

Relics: Small collection of costumes and assorted scary Halloween masks (since you don't have much Moliate); watch on a chain





Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Bon Vivant
Demeanor: Jester
Shadow: The Freak

Life: Psychology Major
Death: Shotgun Blast
Regret: Never got to experience life.

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Crafts	●●○○○	Bureaucracy	○○○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Awareness	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Firearms	●○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Leadership	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Linguistics	●●○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Melee	●●○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○	Performance	●●○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Repair	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Science	●●○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Passions		Arcanoi	
Allies	●●○○○	Watch over Father (Love)	●●○○○	Embodry	●●○○○
Contacts	●●○○○	Return to the Living (Hope)	●●○○○	Molate	●○○○○
Mentor	●●○○○	Haunt Murderers (Anger)	●●○○○	Outrage	●○○○○
Memoriam	●●○○○	Serve Midian (Gratitude)	●●○○○	Pandemonium	●●○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters		Corpus		Angst	
Soccer Trophy	●●○○○		● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Mother's Wedding	●●○○○		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □		■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ring	○○○○○				
Widowed Father	●●○○○		● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		Thorns
	○○○○○		□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □		Dark Allies (3)
	○○○○○				Freudian Slip (5)

Guild Marks		Pathos		Dark Passions		
			■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ □ □		Be center of attention (Envy)	●●○○○
					Make Father into Wrath (Greed)	●●○○○
					Debase other people (Spite)	●●○○○
						○○○○○

Chronal Fatigue

Appendix

Conviction detcivnoC



rother Pallin cried out against the storm that raged beneath the roof of his cell. "This is not real!" he howled, but his voice sounded pitifully thin and was swallowed by the thunder.

"This is not right!" he screamed. The storm answered him with a mist of blood that painted the room's bare walls red. Blood washed down Pallin's face in streams of blinding crimson and splattered in puddles on his tiny window ledge.

"The very words," a voice whispered from inside the clouds, "that a young boy told you in the darkness of your chambers."

"I swear to you, it was a moment of weakness," Pallin sobbed as he fell to his knees. "I promise it will not happen again!"

"Even so, others will come to know of your weakness."

"No! I beg you, please, no!"

"Then you know what must be done," the voice purred. The storm grew weaker, rolling in on its center till it vanished. The stone and wood of the room thirstily drank in every trace of blood, leaving everything normal and dry once again. The storm was gone, but somehow Brother Pallin knew that his tormentor was not.

The monk raised himself up on weak knees and left his cell. He mounted the stairs leading to the trapdoor to the monastery's roof. The echoes of the storm returned to dance along the corridor before him, obscuring his passage and leaving droplets of blood on his bare feet. The walls whispered Pallin's sins to him, taunting him with his own deeds. Heroically, he pressed on.

Pallin made his way to the roof, each step leaving a new bloody footprint. In the morning, the other brothers would find the traces of his passage, and probably blame his actions on the Devil. Then again, they might well be right.

As Pallin stepped out onto the roof, the night air greeted him, and its chill breeze quickly dried his tears. Below him, the city of Alexandria slumbered uneasily in the darkness, and he felt relieved. At least nobody would watch as he fell for his sins. At least he would die alone.

Our Soul sevlesruO



It is never about history, but rather about accomplishment. It is never about remembering, but instead, about anticipation. The victory of one Haunter is celebrated by the whole Guild, even as the individual who succeeded is recognized in the Haunters' own inimitable way. The names of

those who have furthered the legacy of the Haunters are too numerous to mention, but they are immortalized in ghost stories and tales of hauntings, and their memories are still honored by the Restless Dead.

The four Haunters mentioned here still exist, unclaimed by Oblivion. They represent the best that the Guild has to offer — at this moment. Return in a week, and the Haunters may have changed their minds as to who belongs here. The past is where the dead live, after all, so these are the ghosts of today.

Midian

Death was a cathartic experience for Midian. His first recollections stretch back 1300 years, to the moment his mentor claimed his Caul; his breathing days are all but lost to him. Midian does remember the moment of his death, when he took his own life leaping from a monastery roof. He has never determined the reason for this action, but avoids reflecting on the lingering remorse that seems to surround his suicide. His Shadow has offered to share the truth with

him, but a combination of fear and distrust keeps Midian from accepting that offer.

Midian has been a Haunter since the time of his death, first within the alliance of Pandora Skia and later as Guildmaster following the first Conclave. This existence is all he knows, and it has become all that he is. The Guild's identity and his persona are now synonymous. It is for this reason he has come to represent the disparate factions as Guildmaster; no other wraith so embodies all of what the Guild is. Despite the sometimes vicious differences among the various factions of Haunters, Midian has proven to be an effective leader, particularly with Sweet Sorrow acting as his advisor. Both wraiths' attempts to unite the Guild, however, have met with failure, and these repeated efforts have created distrust between the Guildmaster and those he represents.

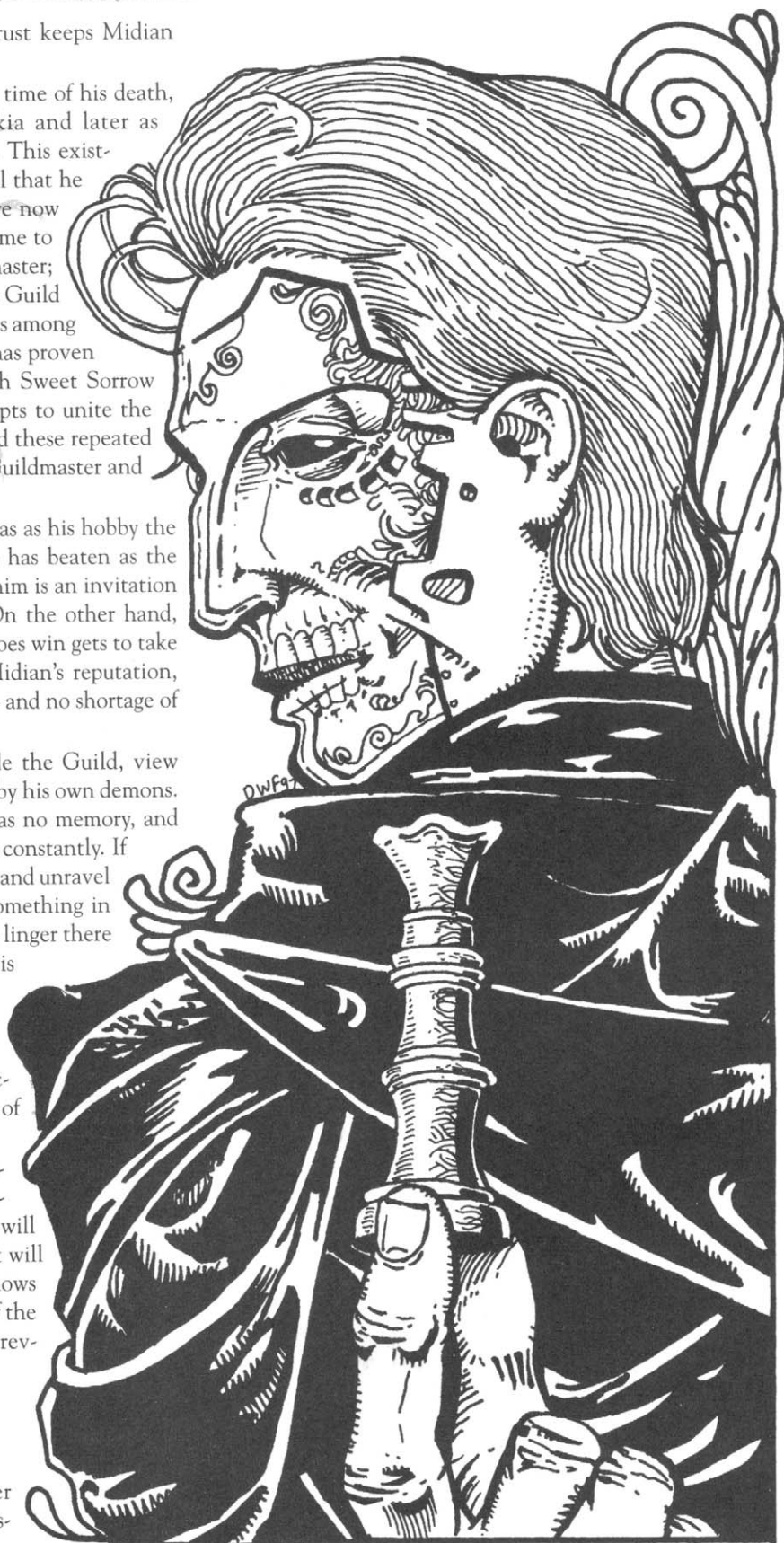
A consummate chess player, Midian has as his hobby the construction a board, using opponents he has beaten as the pieces. An invitation to play a game with him is an invitation to the forges, as Midian has never lost. On the other hand, legend has it that any fortunate soul who does win gets to take Midian's place as Guildmaster. Despite Midian's reputation, then, there is no shortage of challengers — and no shortage of new pieces or tiles, either.

While many, both inside and outside the Guild, view Midian as a monster of sorts, he is plagued by his own demons. Fetters draw him to places of which he has no memory, and Passions that he cannot justify tug at him constantly. If Midian chose, he could investigate his past and unravel the mysteries of his breathing days, but something in the back of his mind frightens him. Desires linger there that his Shadow alone understands, and it is for this reason that Midian remains hidden behind a well-crafted but emotionless mask. He is too afraid to gaze into his own eyes, and he is frightened somebody will recognize him and remind him of the truth of what he was.

When the time comes for the Haunters to step back across the Shroud and reclaim their places in the Skinlands, Midian will stay behind. He will help others cross, but will never partake of that gift himself. He knows (or fears) that with living again, the sins of the past will return as well, and he fears what revelations a new life might bring.

Dr. Shudder

Amil ibn-Shoudri, the wraith later known as Dr. Shudder, was originally a Mus-



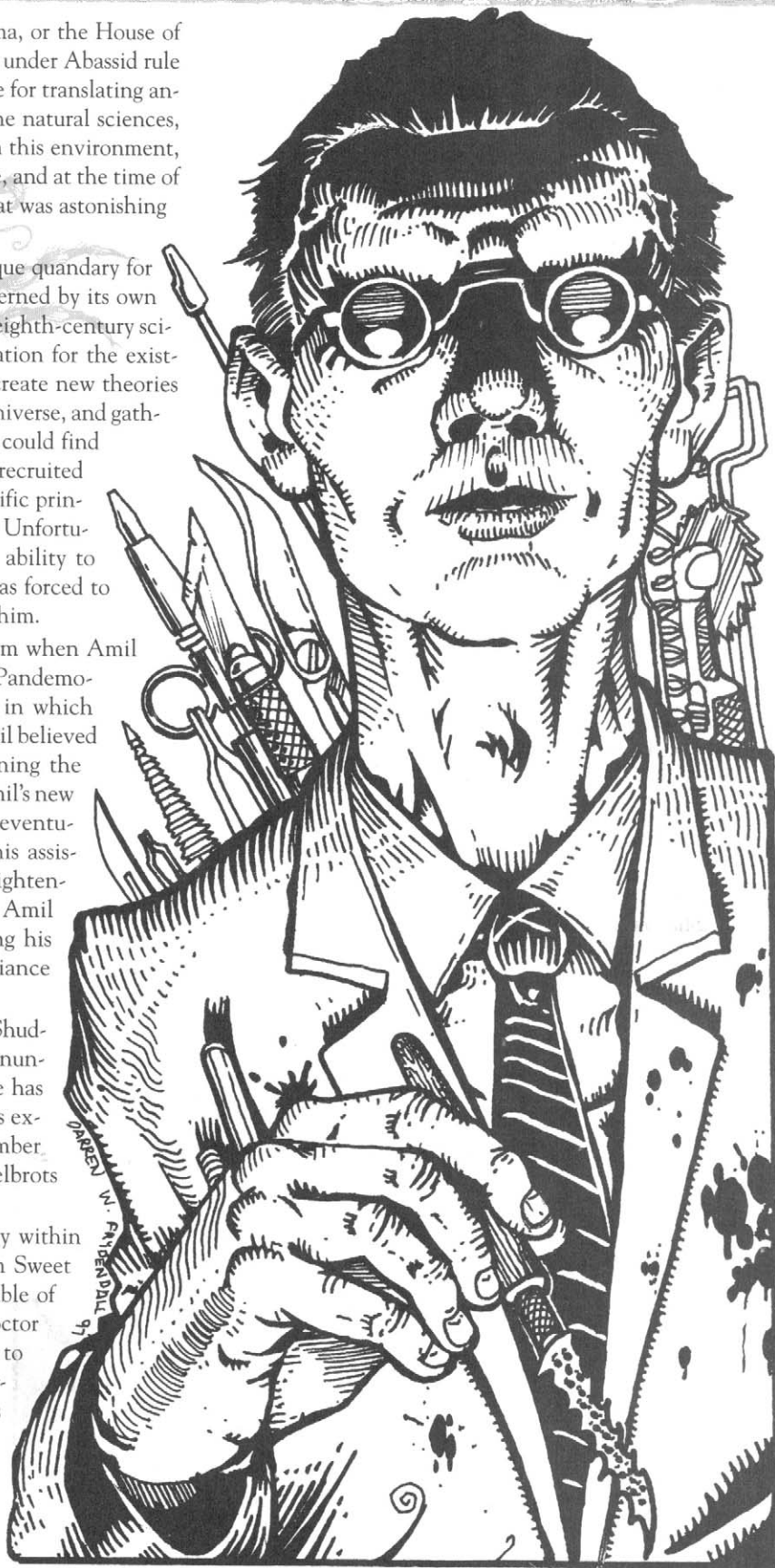
lim scholar in the employ of Bay't al-Hikma, or the House of Wisdom. Established in the eighth century under Abassid rule in Baghdad, Bay't al-Hikma was responsible for translating ancient Greek texts (works on philosophy, the natural sciences, dramas and more) into Arabic. Working in this environment, Amil was exposed to a wealth of knowledge, and at the time of his death he had achieved an education that was astonishing in its scope and depth.

The Shadowlands proved to be a unique quandary for Amil. The Underworld was obviously governed by its own rules and natural laws, but the workings of eighth-century science and Islamic doctrine had no explanation for the existence of such a place. Amil was forced to create new theories just to quantify the parameters of his new universe, and gathered all the scientists and philosophers he could find to his side. As the centuries passed, Amil recruited those who could teach him the new scientific principles that were emerging in the Skinlands. Unfortunately, science rapidly outstripped Amil's ability to comprehend the newer theories, and he was forced to rely on others to carry out his research for him.

It was after the turn of the millennium when Amil met Midian, and was persuaded to learn Pandemonium. The Wylding seemed to be a way in which one might manipulate reality itself, and Amil believed that it might hold the answers to explaining the logic of the Shadowlands. Spearheading Amil's new drive were a core group of researchers that eventually came to be called the Dead Cadre, his assistants in the struggle to bring scientific enlightenment to the Shadowlands. Midian invited Amil to join the Haunters, and he did, bringing his disciples with him as the newly formed alliance of Bay't al-Hikma.

Amil eventually became known as Dr. Shudder (based on the all-too-common mispronunciation of his last name). His Dead Cadre has remained with him, but Bay't al-Hikma has expanded to accommodate the increasing number of Haunters under the banner of the Mandelbrot's as well.

Dr. Shudder has risen to power quickly within the Guild's fractured hierarchy. Apart from Sweet Sorrow, he is possibly the only wraith capable of challenging Midian's authority. The good doctor has even done so on occasion, but primarily to maintain the façade of a divided front in order to fool Sweet Sorrow (whom he distrusts greatly). Shudder may not always agree with Midian, but at least respects his position and his accomplishments as a Haunter.

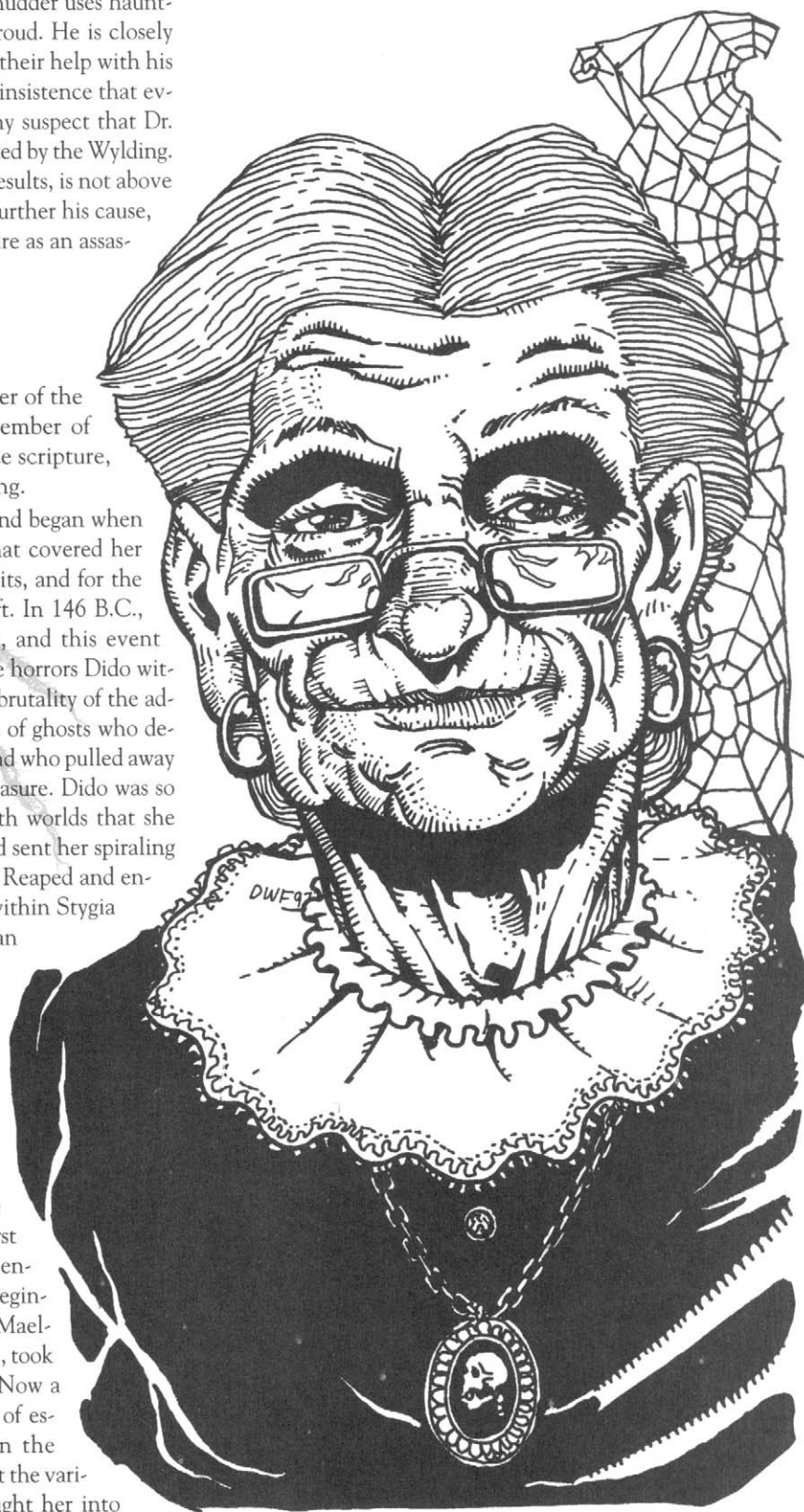



Still pursuing an agenda made up of equal parts scientific exploration and political opportunism, Dr. Shudder uses haunting to experiment on the strength of the Shroud. He is closely affiliated with the Spooks, and usually enlists their help with his research. Despite his clinical manner and his insistence that everything be done by the proper method, many suspect that Dr. Shudder has been greatly (and adversely) affected by the Wylding. He justifies the use of often brutal arts to get results, is not above torturing other wraiths (aliens, of course) to further his cause, and has been known to employ the Dead Cadre as an assassination squad.

Sweet Sorrow

The woman known as the Grandmother of the Haunters is perhaps the oldest existing member of the Guild. Her opinion is dogma, her advice scripture, and her support is nothing short of a blessing.

Sweet Sorrow's legacy is a private one, and began when a child named Dido was born with a caul that covered her face. She grew up with the ability to see spirits, and for the remainder of her life was haunted by this gift. In 146 B.C., Roman forces razed Carthage, Dido's home, and this event sounded the end of the Third Punic War. The horrors Dido witnessed, however, involved far more than the brutality of the advancing Roman army. She also saw hundreds of ghosts who descended upon the dying with wild abandon, and who pulled away the souls of the newly slain for their own pleasure. Dido was so paralyzed by the terrors she witnessed in both worlds that she never saw the blade that bit into her back and sent her spiraling into the Shadowlands. Once there, Dido was Reaped and enslaved by the Empire. She became a Thrall within Stygia itself, a place built on the legacy of the Roman Republic. She spent her existence growing to hate all wraiths for the atrocities she had seen them commit at Carthage, and the Empire (later the Hierarchy) for its support of Roman ideology. She began plotting her revenge, but knowing that patience was her best chance for freedom, endured her time in chains stoically. It took several centuries, but the wait was worth it. Rome fell to the barbarian hordes in A.D. 476, heralding the First Maelstrom. It was a fitting end for Carthage's enemies, and the perfect point for Dido's new beginning. Her master was destroyed during the Maelstrom, and she (having barely survived herself), took the opportunity to escape in the confusion. Now a freewraith, Dido allied herself with a Circle of escaped Thralls, and managed to survive in the Shadowlands while learning all she could about the various Arcanoi. This quest for knowledge brought her into contact with Pandora Skia and other proto-Haunter alliances, who had a certain something that encouraged her to look at them





more closely. Although she liked these wraiths no better than any of the others she had encountered, their interests did capture her attention. The efforts of Pandora Skia and other such alliances to diversify and study the nature of their powers rather than simply reveling in them set them apart from groups like the mercenary masters of Moliate or the calculating lords of Usury. As groups began to polarize around various Arcanoi, Dido remained with the Haunters and became known as Sweet Sorrow (for the sadness that wraiths saw reflected in her eyes).

Over the centuries, Sweet Sorrow has emerged as a powerful figure within the Guild while remaining a virtual enigma to anyone outside it. She was instrumental in helping form the Haunters (not due to any interest in their well-being, but because she saw them as her instrument for spreading chaos), and acts as a trusted *consigliere* for the members of the Guild. She keeps the Haunters divided by playing the alliances against one another, but does this merely to keep them in line until the time it is necessary to unite them for her own use. She tried something similar back in 1598 in the wake of the failed coup, but has long since come to the conclusion that she acted prematurely, a mistake she does not intend to repeat.

Sweet Sorrow is currently trying to foster better relations with the Laughing Lady through the Bedlameers. She believes she can further her dreams of toppling the Hierarchy if she finds a way of usurping the Laughing Lady and assuming her position. Sweet Sorrow also holds the secret of Midian's identity, having spoken to the wraith responsible for driving the man once known as Brother Pallin to suicide all those years ago. Of course, Pallin's murderer isn't around to share his knowledge any further; Sweet Sorrow destroyed him in order to monopolize his information. She plans on using Midian's secret to win his support for her bid for the Seat of Succor; failing that, she may reveal his humiliation in an attempt to unseat him as Guildmaster.

The one matter that troubles Sweet Sorrow is the presence of the Order of the Glass Menagerie, which steadfastly resists her followers' attempts to infiltrate it. She suspects, however, that the Menagerie has links to the mysterious Council. While she has not yet been able to determine who occupies the Council

seats, she knows that these Haunters distrust her intensely. She has tried instigating rumors concerning the Council's "membership," but moves carefully in this matter lest she alienate those Haunters who are firmly in the Council's camp.

Corrina

Corrina constitutes the fourth major player within the Haunters, and most of them don't even know it. Corrina was Reaped by Midian himself, who, it seems, went to great lengths to locate someone of her mental capacity and sharp intellect.

She later discovered that she was one of six people whom Midian had followed, all of whom fit the criteria of what he needed. She had simply been unfortunate enough to die first, having broken her neck in a fall down the stairs. Corrina's Shadow constantly tries to convince her that Midian had a Spook push her down the stairs in order to Reap her soul. She cannot, however, believe that of the man for whom she has developed such a deep and abiding respect.

Regardless of how she died, Corrina was inducted into the Guild, and was trained by Midian and Dr. Shudder in secrecy on how to be a Haunter. It took close to a century of tutelage before Corrina was considered ready for her task, and before the Order of the Glass Menagerie (complete with a roster stocked with Haunters loyal to Midian and Dr. Shudder)

was created as a front for her sudden emergence. The alliance's stated goal was to bring the Haunters together as a unified Guild, but their secret agenda was, and still is, to create a group of wraiths free of Sweet Sorrow's influence.

As far as most Haunters are concerned, Corrina is just another wraith working for the enigmatic Council that she herself has never met. In truth, she is actually part of the Council, working with Midian and Dr. Shudder. This little deception allows her to keep an eye on Sweet Sorrow, fully aware of the suspicions her patrons harbor against the Grandmother of the Haunters. However, Corrina is being watched by Sweet Sorrow as well, who has a sneaking feeling that the young wraith is not sharing everything she knows with her dear old Grandmother....

Recent Events

Midian has suspected for some centuries now that Sweet Sorrow, the woman regarded as the Grandmother of the Haunters, may be the reason behind the Guild's failure to unite. When Sweet Sorrow endorsed the Dantes' plan to usurp the Artificers following the coup of 1598, Midian began to suspect something was amiss. The idea ran contrary to everything the Haunters believed in, and she, of all wraiths, should have realized it was doomed to failure. Since that time, Midian has watched Sweet Sorrow play the various alliances against one another, and suspects she has kept the Guild unbalanced strictly to advance her own agenda. He knows he cannot confront her directly, since she maintains a good portion of the Haunters' support. Instead, he has been forced to rely on a handful of powerful allies, including Dr. Shudder.

As such, Midian has moved slowly in the centuries following the Breaking. He has privately trained a student named Corrina, who now acts as the "secret" leader of the Order of the Glass Menagerie. She, Dr. Shudder and Midian form the Guild's Council itself, though the involvement of the latter two is minimized. The Order's mandate is to create Haunters who are free of Sweet Sorrow's influence. While this has proven difficult, the plan has worked thus far, giving Dr. Shudder and Midian the loyal Haunters they may need in the time to come.



Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Shadow:

Life:
Death:
Regret:

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●○○○○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●○○○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Bureaucracy	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Awareness	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Repair	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	Passions
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Corpus

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Specialty

Willpower

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Favorite Victims

Guild Marks

Pathos

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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History Life

Death

Pertinent Details

Age _____ Apparent Age _____ Date of Birth _____ R.I.P. _____ Gender _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Hair _____ Eyes _____ Race _____

Nationality _____ Garb _____

Other Distinguishing Features _____

S H A D O W

Psyche:
Shadowguide Player:

Archetype:

Thorns

Angst

Dark Passions

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Psyche Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



Expanded Background

Allies

Hierarchy/Renegade/Heretic Status

Eidolon

Guild Status

Contacts

Alliance

Memoriam

Mentor

Notoriety

Wealth

Artifacts

Relics

Favorite Haunting Techniques

Guild Secrets Known

GUILDBOOK:



do YOU Want to play with MadNESS?

Hi, there. I know you're not dead yet, but we're working on it. Anyway, I was wondering if you'd thought about your career prospects once I finally get around to killing you. I was hoping you'd consider coming to work for us. No? You won't even consider it? Oh, well.

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Some wraiths see messing with the living as a hobby, others see it as a crime. Then there are the Haunters, to whom it's a calling. They're the ones who make the stories you read in the tabloid rags, the ones who make the walls bleed and the the sky rain vermin. They're the ones who like to terrorize the innocent, to hound the wicked, and generally to make life hell for anyone they can find.

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