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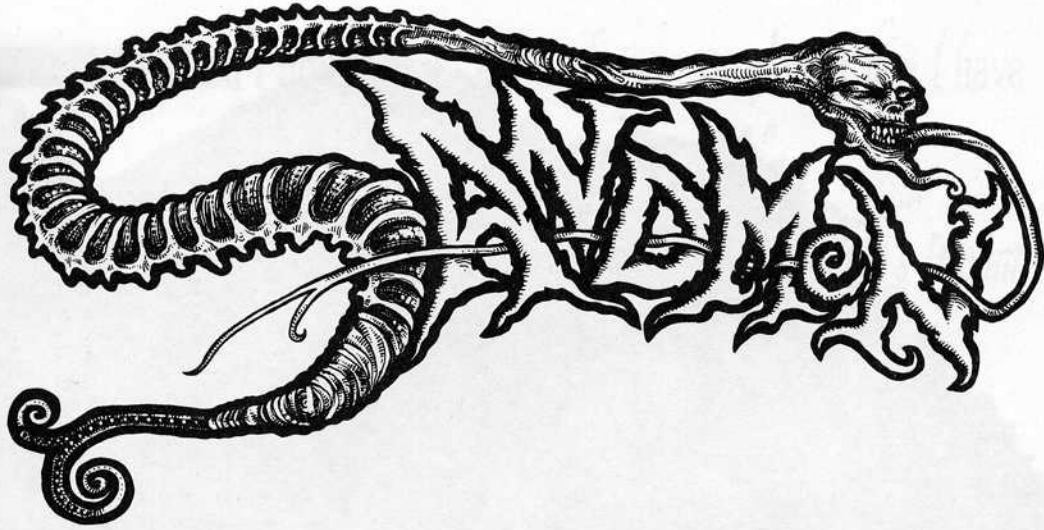


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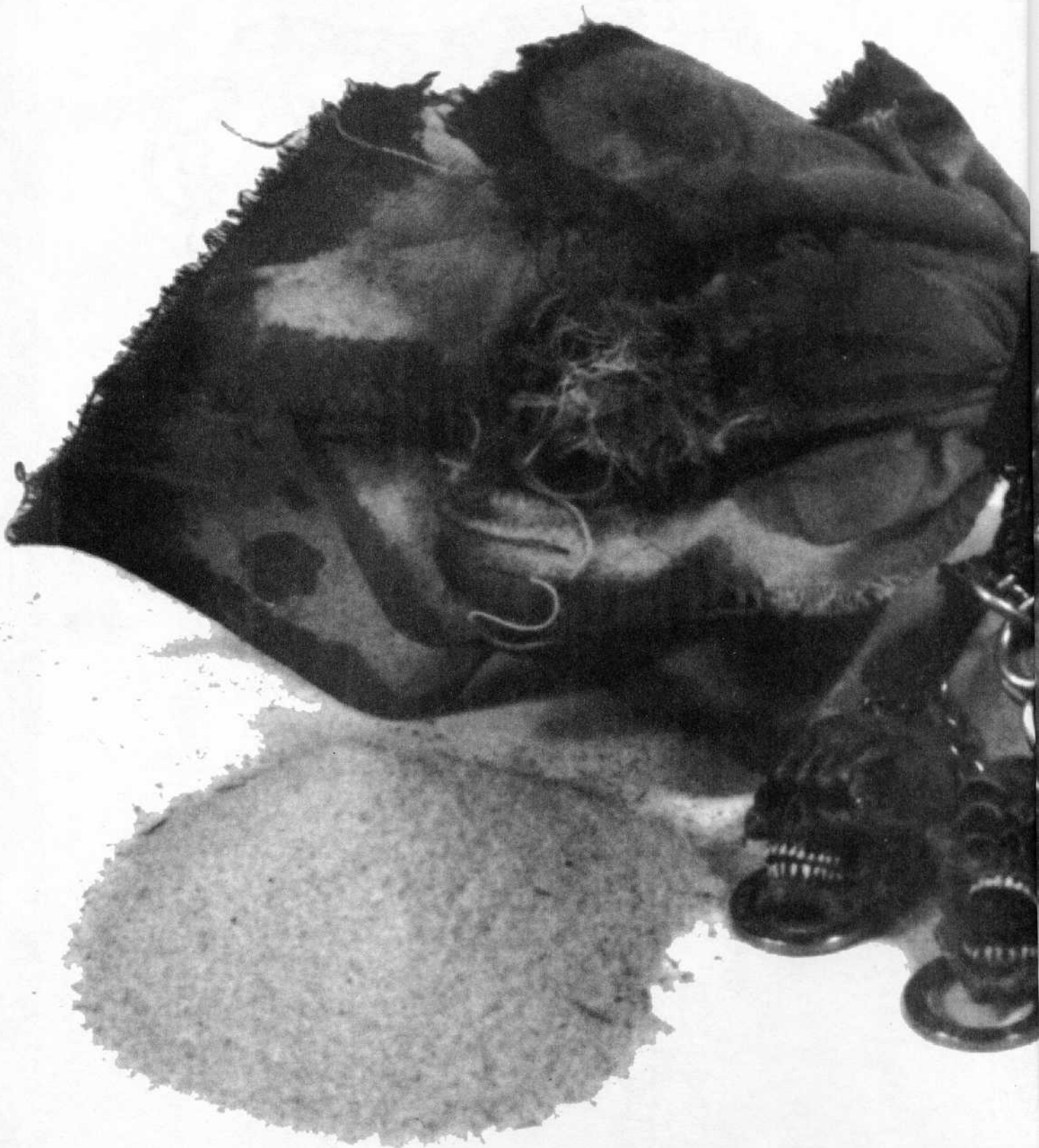


The Sandmen Sourcebook for Wraith: The Oblivion
Guildbook Two

Guildbook:



By Beth Fische



"And I pray you let none of your people stir me: I have
an exposition of sleep come upon me."

— William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



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Author's Dedication:

To you, from Grasshopper

A thousand apologies to Joshua Gabriel Timbrook for misspelling his name in the credits for **Dark Reflections: Spectres**.



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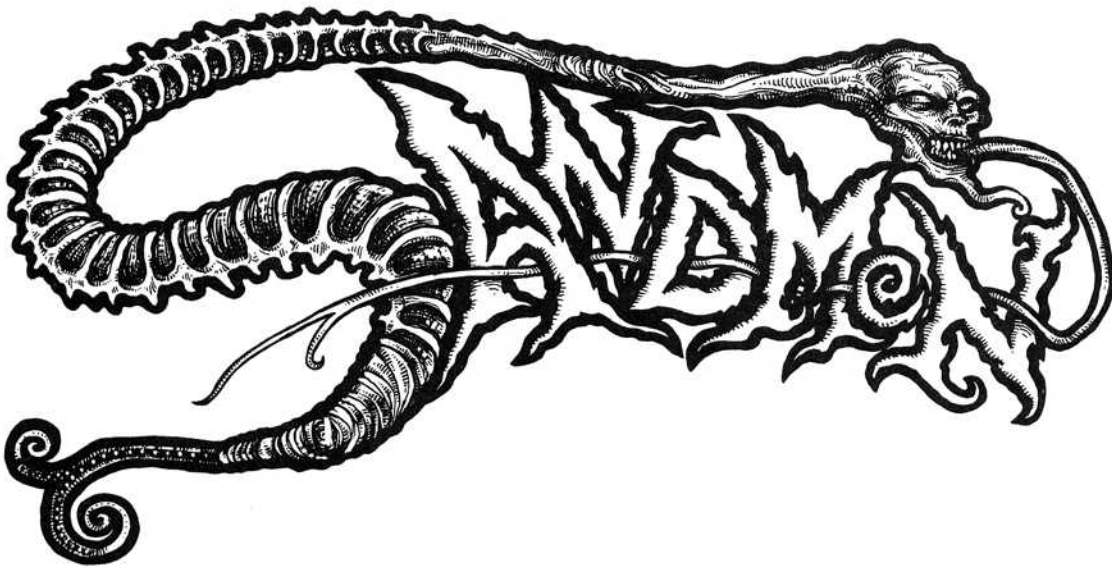


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Robert V



Ghost Story: A Road of Steel and Souls

Learn the power of life, that you may use it even in death.
— The Lady of Fate, to Charon

Part 2: Sacrifices




read Siklos, Charon's blade, cast a sinister glow across twelve masked faces as Thusimos held it aloft. "There is the might of Charon: cleft asunder!"

The ancient sickle, a curved blade forged from the souls of Stygia's worst traitors, gleamed wickedly in the crimson candlelight. A product of Nhudri's craftsmanship, the sickle smelled of salty blood and sea, a scent which pervaded the room until one could not escape the feeling that Siklos had tasted the centuries much more keenly than even the most venerable of Stygian wraiths. The heavy blade arched with the grace of an assassin into a long handle ending in a grip that, like Charon's former rule, was wide and strong. Siklos dominated the room; its shadow swallowed the mere figures of the wraiths there, as if Charon himself were present.

Behind the onlooking masks, Lord Ember's eyes widened the most, revealing a momentary recognition which heated quickly into the fiery furnace of an Artificer's anger. "Sandman, how dare you try to fool us with your cheap parlor tricks!"

Thusimos, the ancient bard, smiled behind his mask; Ember was not stupid. "Yet, my Lord Artificer, you of all of us best know Siklos' soul. You know her intricacies, her curves, her subtle inlays, and the fine luster of her steel. Would you not say that what you have before you is a curiously accurate representation?"

Ember thought a moment, reluctance to agree plainly evident in his hesitation. His craving for control of the meeting as rightful "Master of the Eldest Guild" was transparent to everyone present. "My dear Lord Thusimos — if that is *indeed* your name — to be frank, I have never seen a more



accurate fraud. Yet it is your turn to speak; why waste our time on spectacles?"

"Because spectacles, as you so inaccurately call this illusion, will ultimately *save* us time. My Lord Ember, how do you suppose I came by such an accurate representation of Siklos — guesswork? Witnesses? Facsimiles?"

Before the Artificer could retort, the portly Oracle interrupted, as Thusimos had prearranged for her to do. "Rubbish! Everyone knows how secretive Charon was with Siklos. Few even knew what the sickle looked like. They say that because Charon and Siklos were linked somehow, he kept the blade locked away in the armory under special guard until such time as he needed it." She put her hands on her ample hips. "I can't vouch for the accuracy of detail like our illustrious Artificer here, but if Ember says this Siklos is realistic, then there's something strange going on. Has the Sandman *seen* Siklos?" The portly Oracle cast a sidelong glance at Thusimos.

Behind his mask, Thusimos raised a quizzical eyebrow. What was that misbegotten Oracle up to? He'd paid her to hint at questions, not to pose them. Perhaps it had been a mistake to trust her subtlety.

"As a matter of fact, yes I have seen her, and lately, too." An expected gasp from the audience, his part duly redeemed.

The Chanteur, clearly an impostor with an undernourished sense of restraint, nearly rose to his feet. "Then Siklos has been found?" Thusimos glanced surreptitiously at Ember, reading keen interest and concern in those stern, coal-black eyes.

The Sandman, warming to his role, hefted the Siklos illusion and laid the blade flat across his palm. Nursing the pause, he pretended to examine Siklos carefully, then gave one sharp nod, as if deciding to disclose important information. As he slipped Siklos beneath his black robes, the illusion disappeared.

"Has Siklos been found? Perhaps, although it is more likely that Siklos has allowed herself to be found." Thusimos paused, allowing the so-called "Guildmasters" to ponder this information. "I caution you that what I am about to say must not be discussed beyond these walls except with the utmost caution. If the Deathlords hear that Siklos has emerged, the race to find Charon is lost."

The Guildmasters seemed to lean forward in their Stygian-steel chairs, their masks carmine under the flickering candlelight. The eyes of some, like Ember and the Pardoner, revealed both grave skepticism and dark concern, while others, the Masquer foremost among them, simply looked spooked. The way Thusimos wanted them.

"Lord Ember, when last we met, you spoke of nightmares that older mortals were experiencing — nightmares of Charon and Gorool, nightmares indicating that someone — or something — had promised Gorool a sacrifice. Yet you, Pardoner, and you, Oracle, do not remember Gorool calling for his sacrifice as he emerged from the waves. This discrepancy con-

cerned me, as dreams *are* the concern of Sandmen. Thus, I began to monitor the dreams of these Quick." Thusimos leaned with both hands on the hand-wrought table. "Night after night, I returned to them — and indeed in them Gorool demanded his sacrifice. One night, however, just a few weeks after our meeting, I sensed another entering these nightmares, quietly, methodically, patiently altering each dream. He erased Gorool's demand for his sacrifice, and thus the implication that a traitor had betrayed Charon."

Ember's eyes widened behind the cracked, blackened skin that let him cover his visage without a mask. "Then a Sandman has turned traitor!"

The other Guild representatives began to whisper animatedly amongst themselves, but Thusimos raised a quieting hand. "Not so hasty, my Lord! Shortly after my discovery, our Guild apprehended this wraith. Ember, I am sorry to say that he had the sooty hands of an Artificer, an Artificer who happened to know the Sandman's art. These same hands carried the blade of Charon, which our Guild wrested from him. Under brief questioning, he admitted to having betrayed Charon; in return, Gorool promised to give him Siklos. He told us that his presence was an embarrassment to my Lord Ember's Guild, for he, having heard from Gorool himself that Charon had entered the Labyrinth, had determined to follow Charon there and dispatch him with Siklos, Charon's own blade."

"Ridiculous!" Ember, who had been sitting stiffly with his gavel in hand, erupted. "Artificers are loyal to the Guild — everyone knows that. Enough of these wild fairy tales. Who else wishes to speak?"

"I do," whispered a dangerous-sounding voice from the shadows in the back of the room. The Harbinger stood with panther-like grace and quiet ease, her eyes black as midnight. "I do, and I say we hear out the Dreamcrafter. There is more to his tale than meets the ear."

She sat, everything but the lacquered shine from her black half-mask receding into the shadows. An uncomfortable silence fell. Then the Oracle rose with a determined stare at Ember, while addressing the Harbinger. "Very well then, Vagabond. Lord Thusimos, tell us, where is this traitor now?"

Thusimos nodded sagely, as if expecting such a question, secretly grateful to the Guild Elders for permitting him to buy off the Oracle; she had a certain staunch belligerence that bullied others into compliance.

"Regrettably, the traitor escaped with Siklos."

"Pah! What did I tell you about fairy tales?" Ember spat the words.

"We Sandmen are artists, Lord Ember, not warriors; the Artificer knew that when he overcame our guards. But if you want evidence, I must remind you that information about Siklos' appearance is hard to come by."

The Chanteur, feet now propped on the table, added in an instigative sing-song voice, "He's got a point there, Master Flame."



"If I may continue?" Thusimos paused. He had done it a thousand times before: give them just enough information to hang by, let them make fools of themselves, then explain why they're such fools. It was a standard dreamscripting formula, but one, as the "Guildmasters" aptly demonstrated, that still worked. "When this *Artificer*" — he lingered on the word — "escaped, we followed. And followed — right into the very mouth of the Labyrinth. Yet, we found ourselves afraid, for there on the dusky threshold of the Veinous Stair, Siklos — Siklos! the blade that couldn't be broken! — lay snapped in two, her moans chilling to the ear. Boulders the size of wagons had been cleft in half, and ten-foot gouges like claw marks marred the marbled face of rock near the Labyrinth's maw. The *Artificer* was nowhere to be seen, but we heard strange clanging echoes receding into the mazes of the Labyrinth far below. Needless to say, we quickly retrieved Siklos and left — and have kept her under our stewardship since."

"So, for the last two weeks you Sandmen have been withholding vital information from us." The Harbinger's voice cut into the conversation like an icy wind.

"Not withholding, no. We are proposing that you, as representatives of each of your Guilds, return and discuss this information with them. To be frank, because the *Artificers* have already played some as yet undetermined role in this escapade, we are unsure whether or not it is safe to re-

veal Siklos before discovering what that role was. One question we are asking ourselves — and we encourage you to ask the same of your Guilds — is whether or not to reforge Siklos. If this council considers it, we must also ask ourselves whether or not we want the *Artificers' Guild* to reforge her unassisted —"

"These insults are unwarranted," Ember's bass rumble echoed through the chamber, "the envious strikes of defanged vipers. Our Guild has long stood for ethical and honest conduct; to suggest otherwise is ludicrous." His gavel struck the table twice: "I move that the Sandmen's Guild produce Siklos for all of us to see."

"Oh, we have no quarrel with that," Thusimos smiled. "We simply do not want Siklos disappearing when it goes into the forges. I move that we adjourn this meeting until the Guilds have had a chance to discuss these issues amongst themselves."

The Oracle still stood, her hands resting on the table. She shook her head in disapproval. "We need to talk over a few more issues before we adjourn." Some of the other Guildmasters began to grumble.

"Such as?" Ember's growing impatience filled the room like a burning fuse.

"Following the traitor's trail before it grows cold. Finding more evidence against him."



“Choosing volunteers from each of the Guilds to enter the Labyrinth.” The Harbinger’s cold, silky voice cut in. Her tone teemed with suggestion: namely, the probability that none of these volunteers would return, that perhaps nothing would come of their sacrifices. It was as if she knew Thusimos’ most secret thoughts and yet, for some unfathomable and deeply disturbing reason, was trying to help him. If he were alive, he’d be sweating with fear.

“Aye, to enter the Labyrinth *with* the reformed Siklos,” added Ember.

The Chanteur winked. “Can’t wait to get your sooty hands on that blade, can you, Lord Forge?” Ember shot the singer a poisonous glance.

“I suggest ,” Thusimos interrupted before fighting broke out, “that we adjourn, discuss these issues, and, yes, find volunteers amongst each of our Guilds — as Dame Harbinger counsels — to enter the Labyrinth both in search of the traitor and of Charon. I would add, however, that it would be wise not to assure your volunteers that they will carry Siklos, for we have not yet collectively approved her reforming.”

As the room cleared, Thusimos withdrew into a shadowed niche and entered a trance. Every time he slipped into a Dreamscape, he dreamt of the glorious sunlight warming

his cold body and splashing the landscape with a dazzling array of colors — colors the dolorous gray Underworld lacked.

Before him, three half-masked Sandmen, the Elders, beckoned for him to enter their amphitheater. Thusimos bowed and passed between the stolid stone benches ringing the open stage.

Each of the Elders, as well as Thusimos, regularly met there in a collective dream. The three “owned” this amphitheater dreamscape, the stage where they performed their plays when the mood suited them. While Thusimos’ presence altered small portions of their dreamscape, such as the brilliance of the sun and the verdure of the grass, the amphitheater itself remained a constant, a prearranged meeting place for personal conclaves such as this.

Thusimos bowed again, this time with flourish. “The meeting went well; we adjourned still contemplating the issues of reforming Siklos and following the traitor into the Labyrinth.”

The Elders nodded graciously in unison, as was their habit. As if with one voice, they spoke. “Then they are convinced of the traitor?”

Thusimos nodded pensively and sat on a stone bench nearby, the seat of which gave, as if made of straw. “I’m sure that they discuss the question of the traitor even now, al-

though it was clear that many among them were skeptical — as they should be. Still, they seemed ready to entertain the idea of pursuit.”

The Elders’ dour faces cracked into smiles. “Good, good. We want to keep them occupied while we find Charon.”

Phaenos, a gray-bearded figure garbed in white linen and sandals and the tallest of the three Elders, seated himself next to Thusimos. “We’ve been receiving complaints of Charon’s dreams, similar to your own, while you were gone. Slumbering Dreamcrafters and other Shadowland sensitives have been dreaming of Gorool and Charon.” The Elder placed a gnarled hand on Thusimos’ knee. “We’ve even received reports that a few Stygian Sandmen are experiencing these nightmares. The Deathlords won’t long remain ignorant, though we’re trying our best to silence the reports.”

“Have you collected the dreams?”

“Indeed. Akhshephat keeps them.” Phaenos nodded toward Akhshephat, the thin Egyptian Elder, who graciously bowed his head. “Why, do you wish to review them?”

While Thusimos did not like leaving his corpus unguarded in the secret Guild council room as his mind flitted into the Dreamscape — especially after insulting Ember as he had — his curiosity would not be ignored. “A brief glimpse.”

The dreams were all similar: The reptilian horror named Gorool rising out of the murky depths to confront Charon on

his puny skiff. Siklos, glowing red with hunger, the might of her dreaming souls pitched against Gorool in high battle. The whirlpool into which Charon and Siklos, then Gorool, disappeared. And, of course, no dreams of Gorool demanding sacrifices, nor dreams of traitors exchanging Charon for Siklos. A fiction for the Guilds.

That moment of Charon’s disappearance concerned Thusimos, however. He recalled the last time he touched Siklos, after he found her washed ashore on the black sands north of the Weeping Bay. His touch must have awakened something in Siklos; not a conscious mind or a conglomerate of fractured thoughts from the forged souls Nhudri destroyed to create her, but the anguished dreams of someone, or something, intimately known to and knowing of Charon. To touch Siklos’ dreams was to touch Charon in the last moments of his sacrifice: in her dreams, his journey was not one into Oblivion, but a journey into the horrific depths of his own madness and out again into the peace of self-acceptance — and then out yet again into...nothingness. That was Charon’s real disappearance, not the moment when he and Gorool vanished into the gargantuan whirlpool.

Thusimos touched Siklos again in his mind, even as he returned to the Elders’ dreamscape. Despite having practiced the Sandman’s art for over two millennia, the Dreamcrafter still found Siklos’ dreams alien and not altogether trustwor-




thy. Viewed from afar, her dream images were disjointed, a cracked mirror, and as painful as if twisting a broken leg in two directions at once. Viewed close, the images coalesced into a strangely comprehensible dream about Charon's disappearance. As she balanced in Charon's ghostly palm before the final battle, Thusimos understood Siklos' hunger not to be a craving to rip into Gorool's corpus, but rather to taste of it and to delight. She was bound to Charon and his will, but her secret appetite was to betray him and Stygia. Gorool's flesh was sweet with that taste, for Gorool (the shock of her revelation still rattled Thusimos) was a manifestation of Charon's Shadow. The moment Siklos bit into Charon's demon, she tasted their similarity; she made Thusimos, touching her dreams, taste it. Gorool tasted of monstrosity, and filled Thusimos' imagination with horrors beyond the nightmares even the Sandman had known.

Siklos dreamed obsessively of Charon's battle with his Shadow as they descended, whipped around a frothing, savage whirlpool a mile wide, and sucked down into the sluggish oily currents at the bottom of the Sunless Sea. The blade's dream images filled Thusimos' mind: Charon, tossed like a doll in the whirlpool, yet clinging to Siklos and slashing at Gorool in desperation; Gorool thrashing wildly but still seeking to spear Charon on its razored claws. Charon's mind a whirlpool of emotion, desperation to save Stygia from his own

worst mistakes: wraiths blinded to pay passage into the Underworld for lack of coin; the hellish blaze of Kyklops and the forging of the first wailing souls; the slaughter of the malcontents to quiet unrest; the closing of his eyes to secret experiments on Renegades; the painful compromises with Stygian Senators and the slow erosion of long-held ideals. As the centuries progressed, the mistakes worsened: the banishment of the Ferryman; the abuse and binding of Thralls; the sacking of temples; the disbanding of the Guilds; the Great Evacuation; the enslavement of wastrels; the determined and habitual disregard of his own conscience about oboli production; the encouragement of the Underworld soul-trade.

Siklos showed the centuries depositing each crime or misdemeanor on top of the other in fossilized layers, until the archaeology of Charon's Shadow seemed a sentient force intent on consuming Stygia and all of Charon's other accomplishments. Thusimos remembered living through Charon's transgressions even as he had floundered within Siklos' dreams. Yet, though he disagreed with many of Charon's actions, he still recognized that the Reaper had accomplished much. As the Sandman dug into Siklos' fractured nightmares, he watched Charon wrestle with Gorool under the Sea of Sorrows, pierced by the Malfear's iron claws and tormented by its thoughts. Gorool pressed the weight of Charon's mistakes into him like a blade into the heart, and Siklos scarcely





parried. But from somewhere deep within him, Charon had dredged up memories of his accomplishments, which entered Siklos' dreams like venom: the inspiration of the Ferryman; the rescue of Nhudri from the Labyrinth; the stability of the Stygian Republic in its founding days; the genius of the road system; the doctrine of Lux Veritas; the saving of the City of the Dead; the building of the sea-wall around the Isle of Sorrows; the original intent behind the Dictum Mortuum; the stability of the Hierarchy during the chaos of the Black Death; the attempt to ease Stygia's overcrowding by founding Necropoli; and, most important of all, Charon's final decision to sacrifice himself to save Stygia. In that moment of realization, Siklos' dreams registered utter nothingness: Charon and Gorool disappeared, and Siklos, in her nightmares, fell ownerless to the floor of the Sea, her dreaming thoughts groping for Charon's mind.

At the time, Thusimos had not the faintest hint of what had become of Charon, but now, as he returned to the Elders, he had been given a working theory. All the evidence suggested that Charon had incarnated himself in the world of the Quick, sacrificing his rule to save his people — or perhaps to save part of himself. Elder Dreamcrafters quietly speculated that somehow, in a blaze of self-acceptance, Charon had consumed his Eidolon and his Shadow to save Stygia and to save himself: He insinuated his soul into that of a newborn, retaining no memories, no plans — only his dreams (and these, it seemed, only by accident). There, in the Sunlit Lands, he grew up, fell in love, and began to die without any knowledge of the Empire of Death that awaited him. Even now, Thusimos

believed, Charon could be out there, an aging man among the Quick, the native power of his spirit broadcasting the last nightmarish moments of its sacrifice to all those who were dying around him. Even now, the Dreammasters theorized, Charon's second death could mean the lowering of the Shroud and the beginning of a new age.

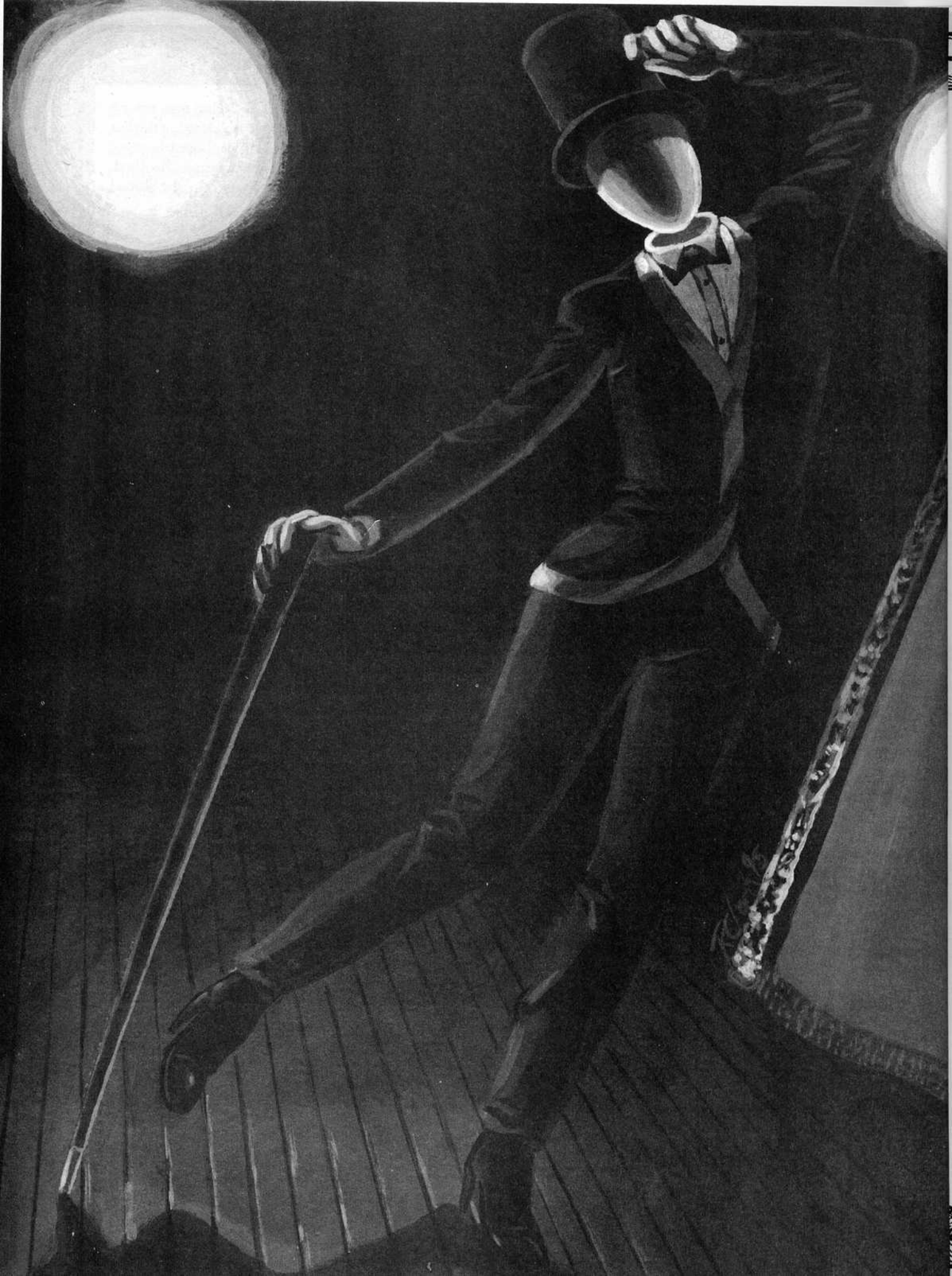
Thusimos and his Guild believed they had to find Charon before the Grim Reaper died again, before the Deathlords discovered what had become of him, before the Reapers harvested him. It was well that the other Guilds were occupied with the vain search for Charon in the Labyrinth and were distracted by talk of traitors, and the more thoroughly the Artificers were implicated in the whole complex charade, the better for the rest of the Guilds. Still, Thusimos was taking a risk in misleading the others, and he knew it even in the name he had chosen, "Fit for sacrifice." If the Sandmen failed to find Charon or the Guilds became desperate, Thusimos became the scapegoat. It was his risk — his alone.

Thinking of Charon and Siklos, Thusimos returned to the Elders and the amphitheater. The Elders were sculpting dream-birds as the vision of the amphitheater gelled around him. Thusimos stepped into the dream and coughed politely to draw their attention to him. "Thank you, Akhshephat, but the dreams contained little of interest."

Akhshephat turned and smiled, a toothless, watery-eyed, white-stubbed grin, like that of so many old men Thusimos had seen. "So, will you continue your search for Charon, Thusimos?"

With the dark glimmer of humor in his eye, the old bard winked. "Akhshephat, I would do *anything* for a good story."







Lever de Rideau

Every artist dips his brush into his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.

— Henry Ward Beecher, *Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit*

Welcome, Dreamers



Enter The Narrator, an actor garbed as a masked mime whose body appears the same in the front as it does in the back. He carries an obsidian cane, tipped with a metal moon that provides the only illumination on stage. In his right hand, he carries a small pouch.

The Narrator: My good audience, as you have gathered together to hear me weave a tale of dreams and terrors, phantasms and phantoms, indulge this old actor by permitting a brief soliloquy concerning the nature of the Sandmen who spin such webs of illusion and reality.

First, know that I consider myself a Sandman, and believe that you novices who come to hear my tales have within you the stuff of Sandmen. We are, above all, artists — dancers of the mind, painters of the soul, sculptors of the imagination. Nothing attracts us so much as a player in search of a play, or a dreamer in search of a dream. They are very much the same thing. You will learn this, for you are dreamers and actors.

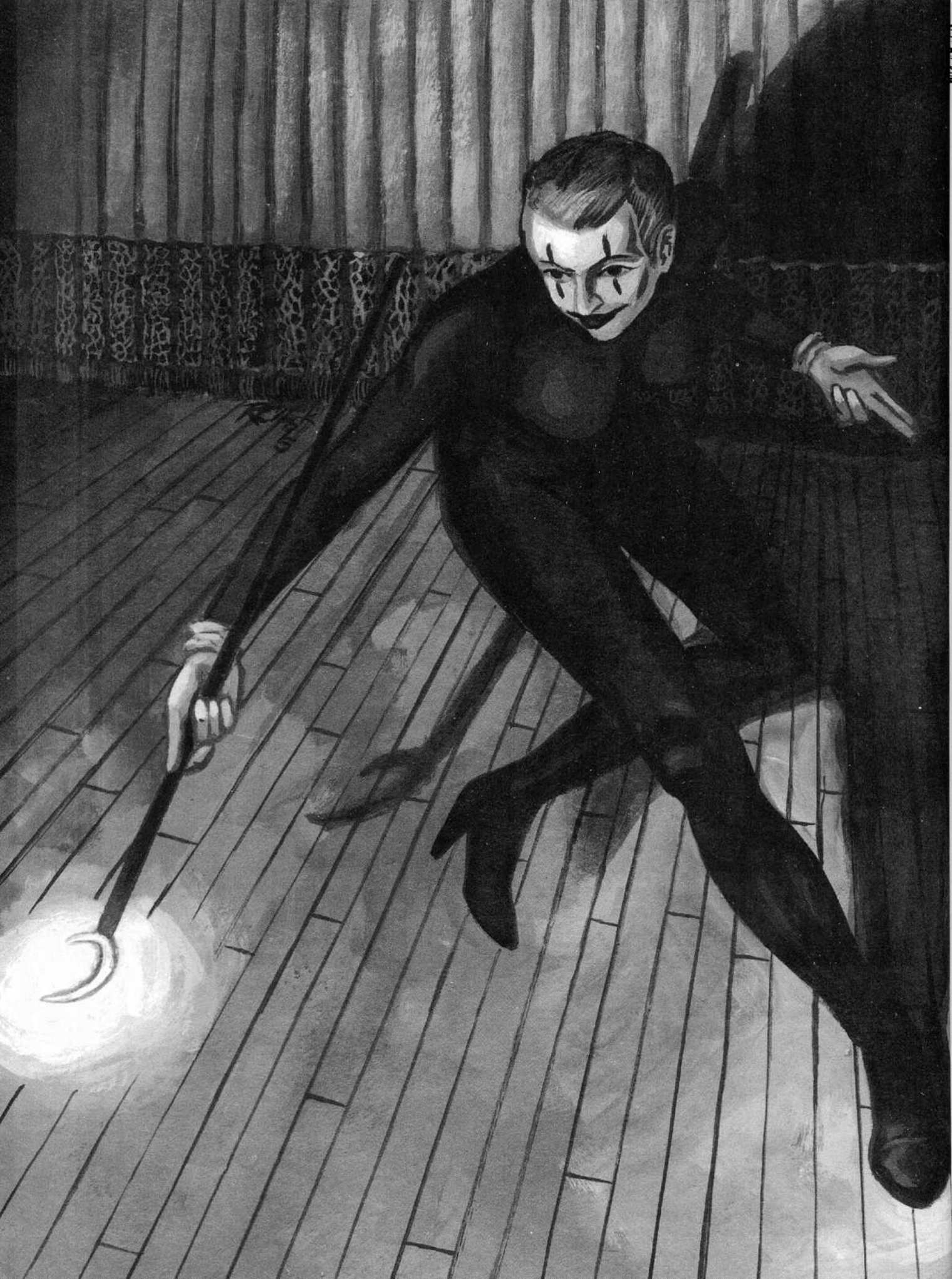
And tonight you have entered our play....

Beguilers, Dreamcrafters, or Sandmen — whichever name you choose for us, we share an uncanny talent for plumbing

the secrets of the soul, dusting them off, and setting them out for display. But before you condemn us for making of the heart an artist's toy, consider that by showcasing the heart's treasures, we may heal the soul. We may also set the spirit atwinge, but those are the dangers of touching raw truth: mundane practicality and blind morality do not bind our hands. Illusion and reality, however the dreamer produces them, are clay to be sculpted. Our dreams dance freely between the two, like a pure valley maiden who, dancing between two slopes, plucks flowers of great beauty from both.

Sandmen, then, are those who create and travel between the two worlds of reality and illusion, of life and death, never defining either, never allowing either to be defined. We seek tribute, but only an actor's tribute; we desire to be remembered, but only passionately. We are, in short, playwrights of consciousness, we seek remembrance in the stuff of dreams and the fleeting wisps of memory that haunt mortals' minds.

The Narrator unties and reaches into the small pouch as he speaks. With his last line, he casts the contents, a handful of glittering Sand, into the eyes of the audience.





Act I: Somnus Uncloaked

Prologue



Enter The Narrator, Moliated into The Dreamer, dressed black on black, against a black velvet curtain. Her face, bloodless white, plays against ebony eyes like holes. She carries an obsidian cane, its tip a metal-sculpted moon. Incandescent stage lights shine up from below the proscenium, elongating her features.

The Dreamer: The dream always begins with Lord Somnus' sad, infinite eyes. His body crystallizes into an ebon prism as names, words, fly past me — The Sculptor, God of Essence, The Eldest Sandman, Grace and Beauty Incarnate, Darkness, Madness, Passion, Muse and Terror — all the names we mortals have given him since our ancestors first learned to dream. To me, he is Somnus, Creator of Dreams, Dweller in Nightmares.

A black flash, and he walks with me again through the landscape of legend, where everything rings truer than in our waking reality. He whispers to me then the secrets of the unawakened world:

Long ago, before even Mysteries were created, Somnus walked the Beyond alone. His was pristine potency, energy and void bound up in one another, perfectly incomprehensible to our matter-bound minds and scattered spirits. But his dreaming grew brittle, even as Somnus came to feel alone, and thus

he dreamed up the Gods: Bios (Life), Thanatos (Death), Hedone (Lust), Filia (Love), Mania (Madness), and a host of lesser gods. Struck with longing, he invested the Gods with the power to dream, to create. And dream they did, shaping a world of lesser immortals for whom dreaming was existence. Such was the collective power of their dreaming that, in the time that followed, it became reality and consciousness as we now know them. Somnus loved the sublimity of his creation, and all was well.

Unbeknownst to Somnus, however, Bios had gradually begun to unbalance the symmetry inherent in the vast dream. Wanting to create a Waking World, he gathered his power and roused the immortals one by one.

Immortals made mortal, cut off from the Dream Lord: that is what we now are. Yet, although the world is awakening, Somnus' power remains the keystone of existence: Without dreams, all the Gods and all the immortals become nothing, mere memories of figments of Somnus' dreams. And thus, to continue to exist, we mortals must return nightly to his Realm, for that is the source of our strength, our being. We are the Entranced.

When Somnus learned that Bios had allied with Hedone to create a race of wakened immortals, he summoned Thanatos, Filia, and Mania to his side. They were to contain Bios and



Hedone, and, indeed, even with Somnus' ebbing but significant power, this was all they could manage, such was Bios' potency. In the meantime, Bios had created a formidable servant, Stasis, who begot innumerable lesser evils in his image.

Somnus dreams to me how much Stasis has grown, gnawing away like a cancer at the immortality of our dreaming spirits as each year passes. He awakens me to the wrenching pain of Stasis' claws tearing at my own spirit.

A few hundred years ago — by our measurements, for the Gods do not know Time — Stasis had grown so powerful that it threatened to become Bios' master. It has twisted and flattened the dreams of the Gods, and now threatens to undo all that Lord Dream has created.

Somnus whispers that, in life, certain mortals touch their dreams with such pure passion that they return to their immortal essence upon death. Among these immortal mortals, there is a group beloved by Somnus known as Sandmen. With a distant fondness in his dark voice, he calls them his little dreaming ghosts. And yet, it is clear that they are more to him than mere pets. They are soldiers in his army of dreams, soldiers with a will to restore the sanctity of the Dream, to loosen Stasis' chokehold on the living, to renew the role of creativity through ritual, and, ultimately, to rescue and restore the Gods to balance. There are others in this army of dreams, he says with a mysterious glint in his eye, but everyone must work alone. The irony is that these Sandmen obey their dreams simply because they enjoy it, and not out of any sense of moral necessity.

Regrettably, Stasis grips the Sandmen, too. Like the Gods, these dream wraiths have become twisted; their dreams, at worst, dark and sinister but devoid of content. Their most twisted representatives cause the Entranced to fear their dreams, not to find inspiration in them, while all the while, Stasis feeds off these aberrations.

In the meantime, the Gods are ailing. We immortals have fallen. Inspiration is dying. And Somnus' eyes are downcast.

Dream and illusion mystify mortals. Few are the beings who comprehend their depths enough to shape them into art. Among these beings, we Sandmen cultivate such mysteries, create beauty for the Restless in a land devoid of it, and stir dark wonder in the hearts of men. We touch the longing for death, Thanatos, in all souls and transform it into peace or madness.

Still, while we are blessed with power over the soul's eye, our art is condemned to carry with it the taint of death. Twisted fancy curses our art, and the vitality of the living mind, unfettered with obsessions, evades us, though the worst of us dare not admit it. It is said among the Restless that the transition into death has skewed our perception of the mind. Thus, while we understand the living soul and its dreams, we cannot recreate its elusive essence. We Sandmen have witnessed the transformation of our world of light into a world of deep darkness, and our souls will never be quite the same.

Scene I: History of the Sandmen



Enter *The Narrator*, his face a mask of amused mystery. He has changed his clothes — his scarf, wisps of opal-covered silk; his shirt, an African print that shifts and changes in the light; his black tights revealing a fencer's well-muscled legs. A yellow light shines in a pool about his shoulders, as he leans on an obsidian cane tipped with a cast-metal moon.

The Narrator: My beloved audience, an excerpt from the diary of one dying, given to his loved one. He has culled years of dreams into these observations and, while their factuality is always questionable, their truth is eternal....

The Sandmen of Stygia and the West

My love, as you know, over the past ten years I've taken notes of my dreams, which seem to be more vivid and real than those of anyone else I've talked to. The most common dream-thread I experience is that of ghosts — not just any ghosts, but ones who appear in dreams to teach and guide you, and sometimes just to scare you with nightmares about the afterlife. In my dreams, these ghosts sometimes call themselves Sandmen, sometimes Dreamcrafters or Beguilers. They can alter your dreams to suit their whims, or they can slip your soul from your body and carry it back with them to the lands of the dead. They have been around as long as man has been mortal, for they are the spirits of dead men.

The following essay is the result of a decade of painstaking work piecing together the fragments of jotted-down dreams. Many references in it come from the other diary I gave you, outlining my understanding of the afterlife as a whole. You have been patient with me throughout these ten years, my love, and for that I thank you. I hope this meager essay and the diary fragments that follow constitute in some strange way a repayment for your belief in me. — C.G.R.

Although contemporary Sandmen find their most apt metaphor in the theatrical tradition, the roots of the Oneiric culture stretch deep into the origins of mysticism. In the early centuries of Western humanity, those who practiced the dreaming arts after death consisted of the few and insightful elite: oracles, tribal leaders, priests, priestesses, seers, and prophets. Their modern connection to the theater can be seen even in the classical Greek words for "oracle" (*thespisma*) and "inspired by God" (*thespis*) — the roots of the word *thespian*, or actor.

With the spread of agriculturalism, a mystical connection with the seasons evolved, and became the basis for thousands





of different expressions of art and ritual. Among the most well-represented in the Underworld were the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Hebrew mystics. Sandmen from these went by a variety of names and emphasized different aspects of dreaming and reality than do their contemporary colleagues, but they understood the importance of dreams and reality in much the same manner. Ancient Egyptian Beguilers saw their control of dreaming less as a means of plumbing the private depths of an individual's psyche for dramatic inspiration than as a means of guiding mortals to certain goals via prophecy and visions of the gods. Nonetheless, like today's Sandmen, the ancient ones viewed dreaming as a means to touch humanity's inner being. Dreamcrafters would send prophetic dreams of floods and plagues to the priests and other mystics who had taken up their mantle. Through dreams, they hoped to shepherd their former followers along the paths of righteousness — or, in any case, along paths of their choosing.

Until the advent of Christianity, Sandmen remained largely nomadic. Not always welcomed or trusted, yet often well-respected, they were the gadflies and the visionaries, the eccentrics and the mystics, the sages and the doomsayers to those who inhabited the western, Middle Eastern and north African Underworlds.

The Sandmen of the ancient cultures had no Guilds, and few could rely on other organizing bodies to attract practitio-

ners of similar faith or outlook. Thus, these early Dreamshapers largely operated alone, according to their own dogmas. These Sandmen engaged in numerous activities: groups of wraiths would often employ, force or cajole Sandmen to send messages to the living world in the form of dreams and illusion. Sandmen of older civilizations tended to serve as prophetic or religious inspiration to mortal dreamers, or as bards honoring the memory of a dead king. Those Sandmen of newer civilizations, such as the Greeks and Romans, frequently provided artistic inspiration for many an Apollonian or Dionysian artist. Although the existence of a Sandman was difficult during these times, at least it afforded some measure of confidence that the Sandmen's secrets were used honorably.

That confidence would not endure. The first Maelstrom, the Underworld's first great catastrophe, alerted Stygian Sandmen to the fact that somehow Spectres had learned the secrets of Phantasm. Until the Onyx Tower fell, the Dreamshapers had assumed that Oblivion siphoned off Spectres' ability to dream. Before the Maelstrom, Oblivion rarely touched the dreams of wraiths; however, during the savage attack on Charon's palace, many Stygian wraiths witnessed their peers drifting into Slumber and vanishing into the heart of the Tempest on the whipping winds. As a result, after the Maelstrom, groups of Sandmen gradually began to band together to monitor the teaching of Phantasm to fledglings and

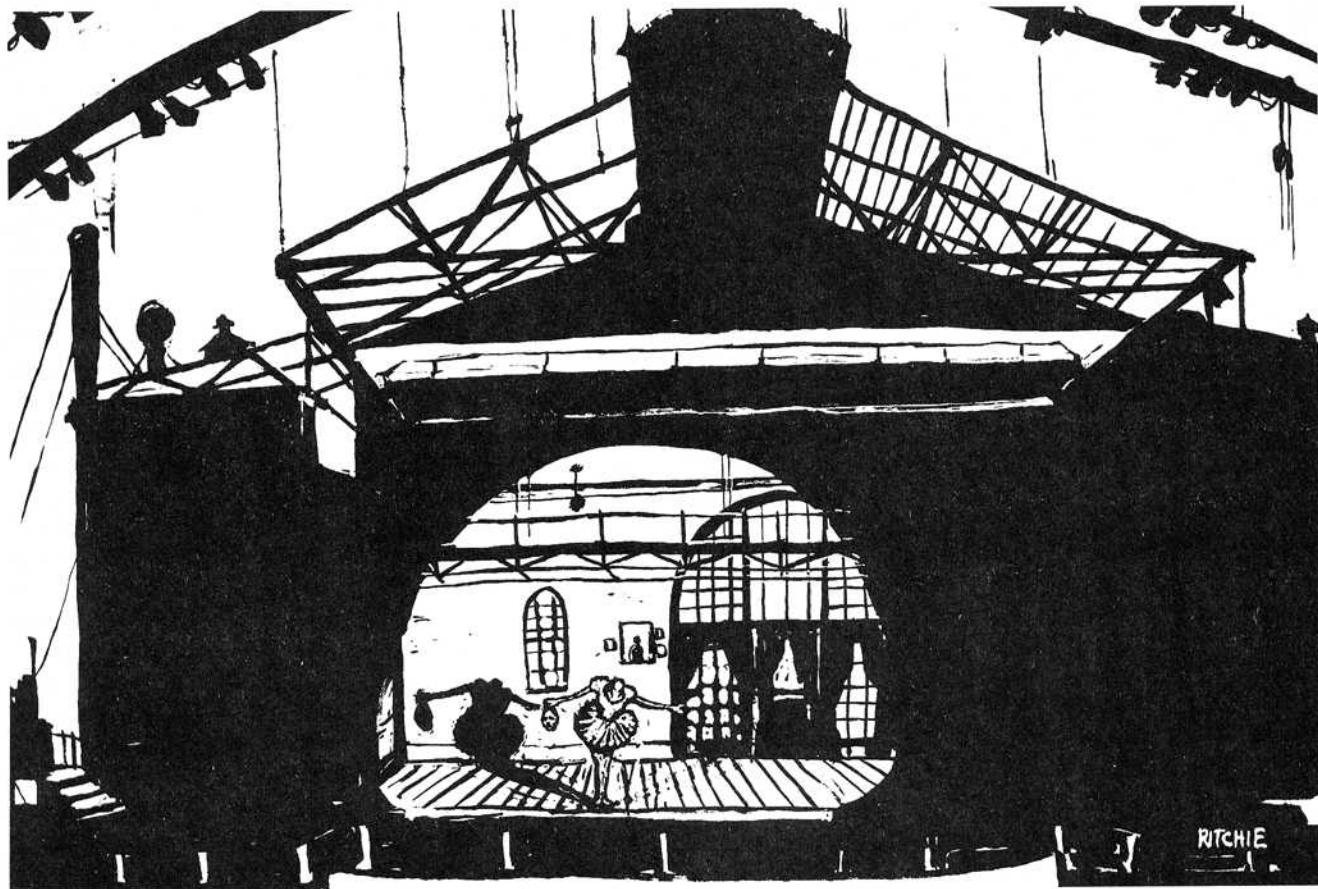
to ensure that the greatest secrets were not carried into Oblivion by Shadow-wracked Dreamcrafters. These concerns provided the common ground necessary for the formation of the Guild later on.

Christianity brought with it widespread changes in the Underworld. While to a certain extent, Sandmen of ancient cultures had maneuvered themselves into religious leadership roles, they tended to be more concerned with the affairs of the Sunlit Lands, where the vast majority of humanity still believed that hoary spirits and the elder gods truly existed. With the advent of Christianity, many newer Sandmen began to concentrate more intently upon their roles in the Underworld rather than upon affecting the living, whom they believed were under God's direct protection and guidance. Unlike mortals of earlier centuries who displayed a deep acceptance of the unknown and a reverence for the tales of the dead, the ears of their Christian peers in the Sunlit Lands — the saints, the priests, the local prophets, the faithful artists — now were closing. They did not want to hear the blasphemies about the Underworld that these "angels" had to offer; indeed many Sandmen attempting to contact the living during the Dark and Middle Ages found themselves cast in the role of demons and incubi come to rob sleepers of their faith and test their purity.

As western Sandmen began to turn away from the conversion of their living fellows, they turned instead to the ban-

ner of Underworld proselytizing. Innovative Sandmen formed Guild Circles dedicated to adapting the art of Phantasm to communicate dreams, practice soul-healing, and instill religious fervor in their Underworld comrades, rather than in the living. This inward turn was largely responsible for the more psychological and dramatic bent of later western Sandmen. Of course, not all Sandmen joined these mystically oriented Circles, but chose rather to remain outside the Guild and to set their own courses.

During this time, the other Guilds came into their own. The Artificer's Guild had long dominated the Stygian scene, while others — the Mnemoi, the Proctors, the Pardoners, and the Solicitors — were just beginning to find useful niches for themselves in Stygian society. Sandmen had little contact with most of these Guilds, generally regarding them as necessary to the smooth functioning of Stygian society. This attitude changed in 1207, when the Mnemoi drew the Sandmen into the War of the Guilds, a conflict between the Artificers and the other Guilds which had begun in 1096 and was not to end until the waning months of 1354. The conflict was due primarily to the fact that the Artificers, as one of the original Guilds, wielded undue power in the halls of Stygia. Seeking equality, and their envy exacerbated by the Artificers' patronizing attitudes, the other Guilds found war the only solution.





The Sandmen's Guild became involved when the Mnemioi revealed that Charon had approved a plan to replace many of Stygia's stages with Artificers' forges. When the Sandmen joined the War, the Artificers damaged most of the inroads into Stygian politics that the Guild had been laying down. By the end of the War, the Sandmen had neither reliable contacts within the Stygian political front nor any more favors to call, its political bankruptcy becoming one of the factors that paved the way for its turn to Renegade philosophy in the next few centuries.

The War continued until the end of the Middle Ages, when a change in the tenor of the Guild began to occur. Although Renegade Sandmen had existed from the moment Charon assumed the title of Emperor, they were not particularly numerous. Until the beginning of the Renaissance, the Sandmen's Guild consisted primarily of Hierarchy and Heretic wraiths. The advent of the Renaissance in the Sunlit Lands corresponded with an increase in Renegade Sandmen, those who valued individual freedom and personal expression over religious dogma and political anonymity. Renegades began to dominate the Guild. Hierarchy- and Heretic-affiliated Sandmen lost their influence within their Circles as younger Sandmen began to value dreams less as a religious and political tool than as an artistic one. Primarily Lemures, these Renegades found the War of the Guilds irrelevant, having only entered it in its last days. The climate had become one of tired resignation, and many of the Guilds had already secretly decided to sign a compact calling for an end to the conflict. The Sandmen, whose reputation the Artificers had damaged most seriously within the secret chambers of Charon's top aides, were among the first to sign the Compact of Guilds in 1354.

Meanwhile, the younger Sandmen had returned to the business of dreams. While practicing their art exclusively in the Underworld, as did their forebears, these younger wraiths simultaneously began to return to the artistic experimentation of their Greek and Roman predecessors. They began by crafting morality plays to satisfy their dour elders, eventually creating idealized love scenarios akin to the poetic *dolce stil nuovo* of the Italian Middle Ages. This new practice evolved naturally into theatrical performance.

By the end of the fourteenth century, Oneiric Theatre, as it was called, had become a valued art form, and by the mid-fifteenth century, it was so fashionable as to induce Underworld nobility to pay kings' ransoms to attend its better performances. Indeed, when the dreaded Lord Croesus obtained a performance from the Dreamcrafter Fabius Ossus for only 10,000 oboli and the release of the notorious Chanteur Lady Philomela, the other lords complimented him on the bargain.

Dream actors would rub shoulders with the lords of Stygia, entangling themselves and ensnaring others in courtly games of intrigue. With their power to grant fantasies, Sandmen found easy patrons among the wealthy, the lusty and the status-conscious. One or two Sandmen in a lord's entourage became the ultimate display of rank and money. Such was their power that to offend one was to damage one's own court:

For instance, it is said that, in a fit of rage, the Emerald Lord had his most trusted advisor, the Anacreon of the London Necropolis, smelted down into a replica of a pomegranate (a dreadful insult) and given to the Succubus Isidra for his failure to pay her in a timely fashion. Respected more for their artistic prowess than for any military or political potential, Sandmen became such a staple of the Underworld court that by the close of the century, the kidnapping of one talented Sandman could cause battles between Necropoli.



Giddy with their new prestige, Sandmen began to make unreasonable demands on the noble beneficence: In return for titles or ridiculous amounts of oboli, many talented dream actors, managers, and theatre-owners would agree to remain in a given Necropolis rather than grace another city with their presence. At first, desperate to maintain appearances, their patrons acquiesced to the bribes, but gradually their patience wore thin. At the close of the sixteenth century, the Breaking of the Guilds provided nobles and other Hierarchs with the perfect state-sponsored excuse to rid their cities of these expensive prima donnas. In 1598, led by the Artificers, the Sandmen participated with the other Guilds in an *coup d'etat*, the purpose of which was to unseat Charon and take control of Stygia. Weakened though he was, Charon easily defeated the Guilds and quickly drafted the Decree of the Breaking. The Decree stated that membership in the Guilds was a criminal offense, that the Guilds themselves were to be dissolved and that their place in Stygian society was henceforth to be filled by Legionnaires.

Although the Decree itself mattered not one iota to Sandmen with any love for their art, it did pave the way for major restructuring within the Guild. Many Dreamcrafters formerly made wealthy by the hands of the court found themselves acting for a pittance on the streets. Others who had never even been associated with the courtly prima donnas were treated with judgmental disgust. For a time, patrons who felt they had been wronged by the Guild refused to sponsor the Spectacles of even their most favorite actors, and many common wraiths, imitating courtly fashion, stopped attending performances. The Sandmen's Guild, heretofore so dependent upon patronage, had suddenly discovered that it needed to return to its visionary and self-sufficient roots.

During the following two centuries, many Sandmen relinquished their identities as Guild members and joined the Hierarchy in order to obtain work. Such work was rarely as fulfilling as it had been before the Breaking, for Sandmen — whether Guild members or not — were often snubbed, having earned the general reputation of being both boorish and self-important. Other Sandmen took to the road, cultivating interest in the arts amongst wayfarers and Renegades. While these centuries were difficult ones for those who chose to continue to be identified with the now-illegal Guild, they also strengthened the ranks of the Sandmen who opted for a different path. More Sandmen than in any previous centuries joined the Renegades during these difficult times.

While the degree of persecution waned as the decades passed, the oppression did not cease. It was almost as if Stygian





nobility had decided to get its money's worth after all. Indeed, at the time, some Sandmen speculated that one of the other Guilds was responsible for the continuing persecution, or perhaps that Stygia had become aware of the Dreamcrafters' bent toward the Renegade philosophy. Whatever the case, the dawn of the nineteenth century saw the meanly named Denouement (noblemen had a sense of irony at that time). The first Sandmen to be smelted down into objets d'art were the foppish popinjays who masqueraded as artists; then the sullen geniuses were targeted, and finally the poorly socialized talents. In the French Shadowlands, embittered nobility found vengeance by turning a ghostly Mme. Guillotine on the rabble-rousing actors.

In response, the Guild rallied against these representatives of the Hierarchy, waging the famed War of the Proscenium. Renegade Sandmen scripted many a masterful Pageant, creating stinging satires of important Stygian and Shadowland lords and ladies. Angry Hierarchy aristocracy replied by sending out their Legionnaires to shut down productions and arrest the impudent troupes on trumped-up charges. Those who were arrested found their way to the forges in droves. Many theatres went underground, staging dreamplays noted for their politically subversive content. Worse, they blatantly violated the Code of Charon by broadcasting dreams to mortals which denigrated the characters of many Hierarchy bureaucrats, attacked their sources of Memoriam, frightened sleeping mortals with the sights of the ugly Underworld Necropoli (made possible courtesy of the Hierarchy), and stirred rebellious thoughts in the souls of commoners. The character of the Sandmen's Guild came even more overwhelmingly into conjunction with that of the Renegades during this time. As a result, Sandmen with Hierarchy affiliations found employment difficult among their peers, while those caught spying on troupes were often imprisoned in Slumber and plagued with horrendous nightmares until they confessed their allegiances and named names.

This persecution of dream artists continued for half a century, spilling over into many Necropoli of the European and North American Shadowlands. By the mid-1800s, the Guild had established the Dream Ring, a small Necropolis in northern New York state which harbored both Guild-affiliated and freelance Renegade artists. Many Masquers, Chanteurs, and Oracles — some of them Heretics — found safe haven here as well, through the channels of the Artists' Underground that the Sandmen's Guild had established.

During these fifty years of persecution, Dreamcrafters became notorious for violating Charon's Code of noninterference with the living. They began to send dreams of immortality, beauty, and utter freedom — all Renegade ideals at the time — to the Quick, reinforcing artistic natures and depriving the Hierarchy of its future followers. Even the evasive Anton de Varzonzuela, playwright and Dreamcrafter, began to script dreams in which the souls of the Entranced were given Shadowland tours questioning the deadening banality of Hierarchy principles. Nineteenth century poets and

artists were inspired in dreams and drug-induced visions. The Romantic era was in full swing.

During this time, the Hierarchy busied itself with, among other endeavors, setting up a "state-controlled" consortium of artists. Artistic wraiths were set to work to use their various crafts to promote the Hierarchy and clear the blackened names of many of the nobility. Many Sandmen even today insult artists whose work they do not like by referring to them as Propagandists. Such were the resources available to these Hierarchy artists, and so great was their power over the souls of the living, that they ushered in many of the artistic schools of the twentieth century.

By the early 1900s, the Hierarchy had grown confident enough in its standing with the Sandmen's Guild that it ceased its persecution. Sandmen and other artists soon forgot the forges, as Guild members began to adopt the pervasive artistic styles earlier conceived by Hierarchy artists. A great intermixture of styles and schools began, ultimately effecting a reparation between the two camps. Nevertheless, many of those Sandmen who affiliated themselves with the Guild still retained their Renegade identities and continued, almost reflexively, to undermine the Hierarchy's authority.

During the two World Wars, and particularly the Second, many concerned Sandmen of all beliefs became actively involved in protecting their arts from the corrupt uses invented by Spectres. Circles of Sandmen would interrupt Spectral message-dreams that were broadcast into mortal minds. These dreams encouraged high-ranking officers — particularly those of the Nazi party — to plan bloody campaigns, set up concentration camps, and invent weapons of mass destruction. While not necessarily successful (for many of these ideas had already been conceived by mortal minds unaided), these dreams worried the Sandmen, and not only for humanitarian reasons. Many Dreamcrafters feared that the Stygian lords and Shadowland Anacreons might place the blame for these atrocities on their now-illegal Guild and begin to persecute them anew. One minor Anacreon had already set a precedent, sending five Renegade Sandmen to the forges as traitors to Stygia and scattering their Circles throughout the Shadowlands. Their much-promoted involvement in the Stygian effort during the Fifth Maelstrom won the Dreamcrafters some peace for the next few decades.

Contemporary Sandmen

The 1960s marked a Sandman Renaissance in the United States Shadowlands. Guild Sandmen began to propagate folk tales of heroic Renegades, much to the Hierarchy's dismay. Vagabond and Renegade Sandmen perfected their ability to send visions and dreams to mortals under the influence of drugs and alcohol, while promoting the same ideals of freedom, equality, love and peace that many mortal artists emphasized in their own work. Tripping mortals were often carried on the wings of dream to the Shadowlands and through psychedelic Spectacles.



Incubi conceived love-children, while Dopplers under the influence of their Shadows switched souls on drugged mortals, later causing nightmarish flashbacks and insanity.

During this time, many Sandmen joined Heretical Mystery and Sensualist cults. While historically a number of Sandmen have belonged to such cults, never were there so many specialists among them as at this time. The Succubus Randi Trate is perhaps the most famous of these specialists, having once brought four dead dream-infants conceived by the same mortal into the Shadowlands at once.

Currently, the Hierarchy counts among its members fewer Sandmen than do the Heretics, Renegades and Vagabonds. Many who practice the Phantasm Arcanos hold a more mystical view of their existence than is natural to the thinking of most Hierarchy wraiths. To many Sandmen, Transcendence is closely related to dreaming, and this belief alone is sufficient to put them at odds with official Hierarchy propaganda. Sandmen in Hierarchy Circles often serve as state-supported artists in the Shadowlands, or as spies and infiltrators for the Legions — Phantasm giving them an edge in understanding and outmaneuvering the enemy.

Many older Sandmen belong to Circles of Heretics, using Phantasm as a spiritual tool in the manner of their ancestors. Additionally, the Mystery Cults and Sensualists continue to attract many of the younger practitioners of Phantasm. Despite the numbers of Sandmen that count themselves

among the Heretics, however, Renegade Sandmen still outnumber their Heretic counterparts at least two to one. Currently, there are two movements of note within the Renegades: a movement of loyalists to Charon's throne (rumored to be involved with the resurgence of interest in finding Charon), and a group of those who simply want to overthrow the Deathlords. Both movements continue to support the existence of the small citadel known as the Dream Ring, and they encourage artistic wraiths who are opposed to the Hierarchy's materialistic prosaism to dwell there and hone their arts.

Sandmen Elsewhere

Just as the West produces ghosts who control our dreams, so too do the East and all places in between. While few Western wraiths seem to know of the locales that follow, my dreams speak of these exotic places and peoples, and thus I feel it necessary to record this information for you.

Indian Ghandarvas

A city exists in the Indian death-realm about which I dream occasionally, the City of Delights. All manner of ghostly artists, musicians, and artisans dwell there, performing otherworldly songs, poetry, dance and other delights for the city's majestic Regent and the blessed populace. Dreamcrafters,

known as *ghandarvas*, are common. They are considered slaves, but if they are sufficiently talented and lucky, they often manage to rise out of servitude to positions of importance.

The Regent owns many *ghandarvas*, the luckiest of whom are those who join his entourage when visitors of importance enter the city. Their responsibility is to make the guests' stay as pleasurable as possible by crafting dreams for them and by erasing any signs of ugliness within the City as they tour. If they fail in their duties, they are smelted down into something beautiful to adorn the city; if they please the Regent, they are given slaves of their own. Those few who try to escape are usually destroyed, though the rare few who make it outside the city's walls find an artistic wasteland filled with moaning, desperate souls who seek the culmination of their existence by entering the City's gates.

Australian Dreamcrafters

Sandmen inhabit the other death-realms as well: the Isle of Karta, the Jade Kingdom, the Kingdom of Ivory, and the Kingdom of Obsidian, to name but a few. In Karta, the Australian aborigine death-realm, Sandmen are extremely common, and their power, known to the West as Phantasm, is considered a sacred thread that connects them with the Dreamtime. There, wraiths may find skilled mentors of Phantasm, if they wish to use their power to meditate upon the Dreamtime. On

the other hand, if they profess a wish to use Phantasm to contact the Quick, they are unlikely to obtain a mentor, for the wisest aboriginal spirits on Karta believe that they must dissolve their Fetters in order to Transcend. It is said that many of the Isle's inhabitants practice the creation of the Great Dream, a communal dream that if properly performed can translate the participants directly into the Dreamtime.

Jade Sandmen

The Chinese death-realm has a long tradition of Dreamcrafters working to reinforce their Emperor's authority by altering the dreams of both mortals and wraiths. Outside the Emperor's court, Phantasm is both relatively rare and strictly regulated by the Imperial Bureaucracy: Only licensed practitioners may use it to assist wraiths interested in helping their living family members. Rebel groups, however, use Phantasm quite freely to hide their camps, cover secret activity and communicate covertly. Unlike their western counterparts, rebels in the Jade Kingdom rarely make group distinctions based on which Arcanos an individual practices. Thus, there is no "Sandman" tradition within the rebel camp per se, although there are individuals who specialize in the use of Phantasm. There are rumors that the Emperor has sent his Dreamcrafters to infiltrate these camps, but as yet, no spies have been discovered.





The Dream Ring

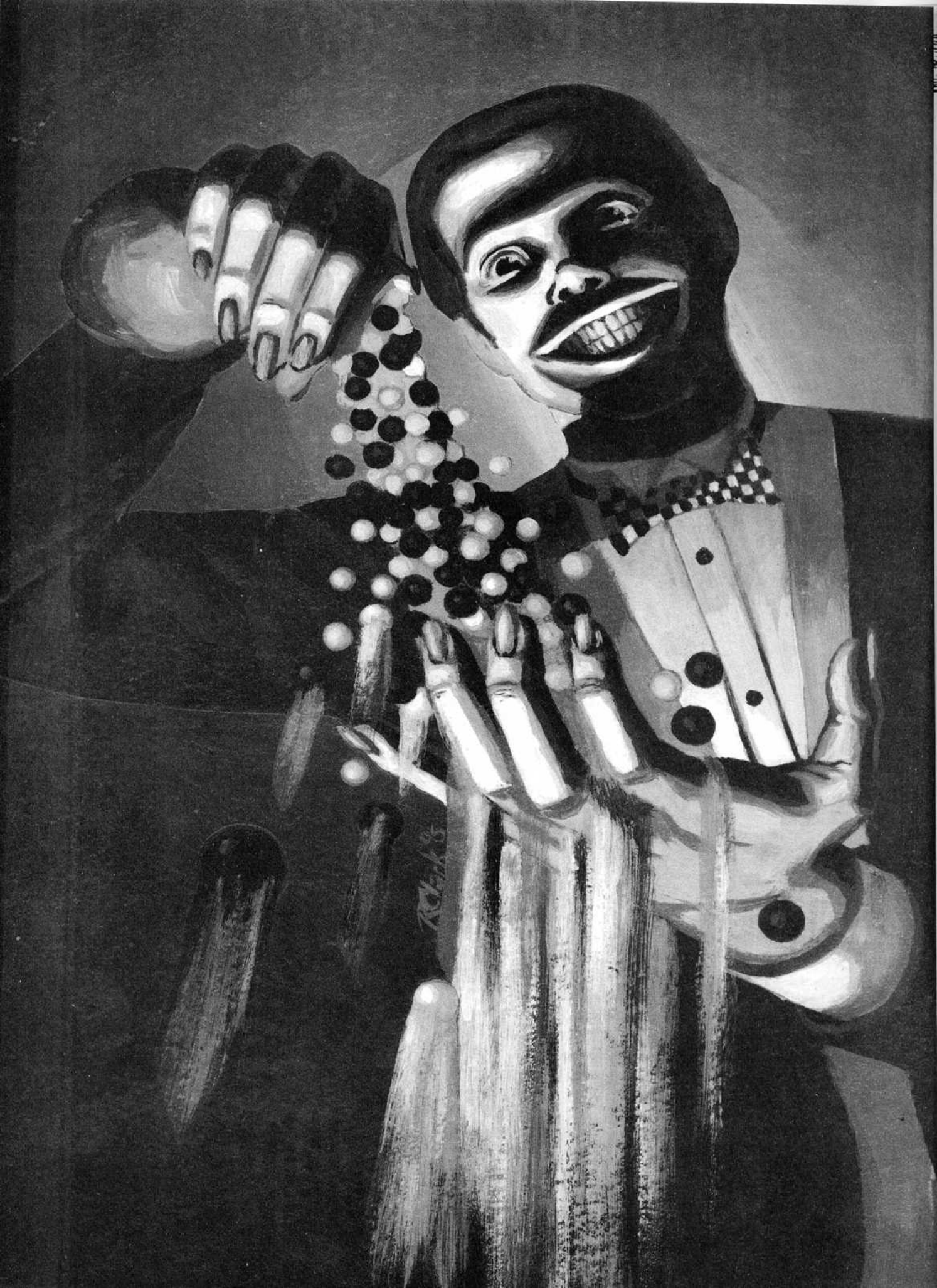
My love, when you visited London on business last year, I took the opportunity to search for this "Dream Ring" I had dreamt about. As it turns out, it does exist; it is located in upper New York, nestled in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. The physical locale shows signs of former inhabitation — mysterious brick buildings gone to ruin, termite-infested hitching posts, the remains of a dusty, rutted road now choked with weeds; and a massive rotting waterwheel located on its outskirts. When you come upon it, it does not look like much, but spend a night there and you'll learn that it is more than it appears. At midnight, the place becomes a spirit's Woodstock. If you look hard, you can spy the faint shimmering outlines of ghostly cabins and tents just beyond the waterwheel, and flickering wraiths moving between them. Ghosts, dressed in tattered velvet robes and stage actors' garb, emerge from the ruins of the brick buildings, and from behind trees and under rocks, to form a large circle in what must once have been the town square.

The night I stayed, instead of flying about and trying to terrify me, these wraiths performed a play before me. It was no ordinary play; it drew me into a strange, dark land where the moon was gray and the stars wept rain across barren fields. Strange moans, weeping, and a pitiful keening that infused me with a deep, longing sadness arose, all as if from a great distance. The keening grew into a beautiful, eerie song and all the wraiths gathered together to perform an intricate, flowing dance, molding their bodies into otherworldly shapes and graceful figures. As the dance ended, I discovered that they had entwined themselves about me like snakes. I awoke in a panic in the middle of a clearing, about sixty yards from my tent, surrounded by a circle of tin cups filled with water and flickering candles thrust into the dirt. To this day, I have no explanation for how this occurred, but one thing is certain: the Dream Ring exists, and ghosts dwell there.

African Okomfo

Many traditions throughout the African death-realm use Phantasm, the primary one involving those *abambo* (wraiths) who serve the Orishas, or leaders of the African Underworld nations. Orishas have traditionally maintained a few wandering Sandmen, known as *okomfo*, to communicate with the leaders of the Animal Kingdoms using dreams. Of late, they have found it necessary to send *okomfo* out on dangerous journeys into the Underworld brush to make peace with the animals that humans have hunted to extinction. Many *okomfo* have undergone Harrowings after being mauled by these angry ghost-animals. Other *okomfo* remain at home studying the dreamself, learning how to control the amount of Passion it, and thus its *abambo*, receives. Orishas find these *okomfo* priests of the dreamself valuable, as they can be used to starve enemies of Pathos. Yet they also find that *okomfo*

are not simply servants to be used and abused; maltreat one and you'll find yourself at his mercy every time you try to Slumber. For this reason, Orisha set great store by the tradition of *ukwangala*, a term taken from the Nyakyusa people of Tanzania bearing the meaning "fireside fellowship." Orishas encourage a personal friendship with their *okomfo* by gathering frequently to sit, talk and enjoy each others' company as equals. *Ukwangala* also doubles as a means of sharing information between *okomfo* working in the service of an Orisha, and many serve as clearinghouses for secrets. Unfortunately, some *okomfo* have found it expedient to violate the *ukwangala* by using it to learn and sell secret information given to them in confidence. It is rumored that recent and persistent uprisings in the Underworld's Lesotho and Mozambique regions are due to such espionage, as *okomfo* out for personal gain have sold their Orisha's secrets to would-be rebels for use in planning uprisings.





Act II: Somnus' People



Enter *The Narrator*, dressed as before. In his right hand, he carries a small pouch which he unties as he speaks. As he upends it, thousands of gleaming white and black pearls pour forth onto the proscenium about his feet, far more than the pouch seems capable of holding.

The Narrator: Who is this mortal who dreams so deeply of us? Who indeed but Charon, the Grim Reaper! A century ago, not a wraith in Stygia would have failed to recognize his name. But you are new, as are we all, to this mystery. Sometimes the Shroud beguiles more than just the perceptions of the Quick.

Content yourselves now with learning more about us, because in this play you must act our parts.

Sandmen as a whole are cut from similar cloth: independent, highly creative, mysterious, intuitive, passionate and often regrettably self-exalting. Modern Sandmen differ little from their predecessors in their tendency to take on the mantle of the Muse, the soul-gazer, the prophet or the artistic conscience of a culture. Because we immerse ourselves in our roles, many say that it is difficult to get to know us personally; thus, while we seem extraordinarily open about our thoughts and

feelings, we guard our true sentiments jealously and dole out factual information about ourselves as if it were more precious than gold. The best of us are master psychologists, knowing just what the heart wants to hear, master philosophers, feeling around the edges of illusion and reality, and master illusionists, creating what the eye wants to see.

Often, we find ourselves working together on one project or another, practicing our art simply because we love to. Others — typically more experienced or desperate Sandmen — practice the Arcanos because they hunger to touch the mortal world again. They find that Phantasm enables them to affect the Sunlit Lands in ways that border on an unprovable violation of Charon's Code. With an art that proves so fleeting even under scrutiny, these Sandmen know that they can employ Phantasm to stir mortals to madness, peace, passion, and artistic aspiration in ways that would instantly inculcate other wraiths. Ours, my dear audience, is an Arcanos of subtlety, the treatment of fragile souls with the delicacy of figurines in a glass menagerie. While we have the power to quite literally break spirits, we consider such acts as Philistine as the burning of books or a clumsy archaeologist's razing of the remains of an ancient temple.



Our Appearance and Mannerisms



You'll find that you can usually identify us by our clothing: As we pass through mortals' dreams, we choose wisps of their fantasies to wrap about us. Some Sandmen prefer to cloak themselves in daydreams, others in nightmares — a necklace hung with a demon's fangs here, the soiled tatters of a plague victim's death robe there. Dream clothing, or *gossamer*, possesses an extraordinary quality: it tends to project onto its folds barely discernible images of the dream from which it was harvested. If you stare at it hard enough, you can watch the dream progress.

Gossamer also glows faintly with the energy from the mortal's dream. Nightmare gossamer glimmers darkly, as if constructed from film negatives, while that from pleasant fantasies may shimmer with muted pastels. The darkness of the Underworld smothers most of the light that emanates from gossamer; for instance, gossamer's glow never provides light sufficient to read a book by. Moreover, as the dream energy in this attire ebbs, the glow fades and the dream images become still. Traditionally, troupes wore brightly colored gossamer costumes in order to draw audiences into their performances. Nowadays, we select much of our gossamer from the symbology of dreams, and most of us delight in expressing ourselves artistically through these choices.

It is said that the oldest Sandmen can be identified by a peculiar flaw: wherever an ancient Sandman walks, those nearest him are thrown into vivid reveries until he passes. Aside from this rumor and our tendency to wear dream-clothing, which can be cast aside, nothing can definitively prove that a wraith is a Sandman (that is, that he practices Phantasm). As with any group of diverse individuals, we do not doggedly follow any specific code of mannerisms.

Nonetheless, many of us are similar enough that you might correctly identify us as Sandmen...without being able to prove it. Our actors tend to be flamboyant, extroverted, and — no, I do not flatter myself — erudite. Most actors possess a natural balance and poise. A sizable percentage have the Masquers in their troupes Moliate them into a shape from a favorite mortal's dream. Many directors, dramaturgists, theatre owners, brokers and others who practice Phantasm tend to be more reserved, though not necessarily more conservative, than their acting colleagues. In the Underworld, actors can generally expect to move into directing or scripting after about a century. Because they have been around longer than most actors, most dream-directors and playwrights are thus more experienced in both Dream Theatre and in the ways of the Underworld.

Our Politics



If you have spent any amount of time with Sandmen, you know that we split ourselves into two camps: the Dream Union and the freelancers. The Dream Union is so named because its members belong to the now-forbidden and supposedly defunct Sandmen's Guild, a secret union of actors, directors, dramatists, and other artists. The freelancers are wraiths who practice Phantasm, but who do not belong to the Guild.

While Unionists and freelancers differ in other respects, they are similar in that they both consider themselves Sandmen. The majority of Dream Unionists also consider themselves members of the Renegades, while many freelancers instead affiliate themselves with the Hierarchy and Heretics — or, more frequently, avoid contact with all of these groups if possible.

Because of their reputation for lack of official involvement with the Renegades, many freelancers, willing or not, find themselves peripherally accepted by the Hierarchy establishment. Sometimes this acceptance grows into something more substantial, such as a court appointment or a commission to act as a double agent investigating Union activities. Indeed, Anton de Varzonzuella started his career as a freelancer in the court of the Laughing Lady — a post he soon abandoned. Now, no one can tell with which of the many Underworld factions the noted Dreamcrafter sides.

When a freelancer begins to involve herself in Hierarchy politics, she becomes a desirable candidate for Union recruitment. Sometimes, the Dream Union asks such freelancers to act as informants in return for employment — and sometimes they accept, for freelancers often have a difficult time procuring engagements in the Shadowlands without agents or theaters willing to take them under wing.

Making non-Union employment even harder to come by, few Shadowland audiences willingly participate in performances unless they receive assurances that their pockets won't be picked — or worse — while they Slumber during the performance. Because of problems during recent engagements, a whole Underworld insurance industry has grown up around "brokering" shows, in which groups of Sandmen offer insurance against items nicked while wraiths "slumber the Spectacle," as attending performances is known. These insurance groups never insure freelance performances, resulting in decreased attendance at non-Union engagements. Of course, audiences generally don't understand the distinction between Unionists and freelancers, and thus simply attend only those performances insured by Spectacle brokers.

Most wraiths don't question the fiction that the Sandmen's Guild has been defunct for close to four hundred

years. However, certain elements within the Hierarchy realize that this is a convenient myth propagated by the Dream Union and other Guilds. Few of these accurately estimate the Guild's ability to undermine the system, and only one official — and fanatical — arm of the Hierarchy proposes to do anything about it: the Office of Security. Security Officers are characterized by an almost pathological fear of dreams, and are among the most unimaginative, though by far the craftiest, of those on the Sandman disapproval plan. Security Officers often have a field background with the Legions, "retiring" to bureaucratic work only after becoming Domems. Because Domems locate themselves primarily in Stygia, Stygia is considered hostile territory for Dream Unionists. All our information shows that every Deathlord except the Beggar Lord maintains an Office of Security, although these offices are not always financially well-supported.

With the danger of being enchained and dragged down to the forges at the hands of these Officers, why do so many of us belong to the Dream Union? For a number of reasons. First, artistic stimulation — the Union enables Sandmen to easily find and communicate with other Sandmen, as well as with artists specializing in other Arcanos who share similar interests. Second, it provides a forum in which to create Pageants. Without theatres (which, unbeknownst to most Hierarchy goons, are predominantly owned by Dream Unionists), Sandmen have little hope of finding paying audiences. Sandmen have similar difficulty finding audiences without the assistance of agents and Pageant brokers available only to Unionists. Third, the Dream Union offers acting and scripting classes at a small school near Necropolis New York. This school, the Sacandaga School of the Arts, claims that it is unaffiliated with Heretics and Renegades, but it is strange how only members of these factions seem to matriculate. Fourth, the Union operates the Dream Ring, where Sandmen (and others) may go to escape the sterility of the Hierarchy imagination. The Dream Ring also harbors Hierarchy escapees and law-busting Renegades, adding a bit of spice to the conversation there. Finally, Dream Unionists often exchange skills, or even gift each other with the fruits of their talents because of their Union affiliation.

Freelancers, on the other hand, do not risk the Hierarchy's reprisal. However, unless they dwell in Stygia, where artistic employment is easily obtained, they are forced by necessity into a hand-to-mouth existence. Many Shadowland freelancers own traveling wagons which fold out into instant stages, where, if they are lucky, they perform to intimate audiences of passers-by. These performances are rarely as good as full-blown Pageants, but they have a unique, "small-theatre" charm of their own. In rare instances, freelancers form clubs which approximate the grander exchanges of the Union's, but lack the resources. Most of the Union clubs, salons, and galas attract big Underworld names, whereas freelancers' gatherings rarely have the oboli or the influence to attract the stars.



Among the Quick

So far I have characterized Sandmen and how they interact with this world. Now, before broaching the always controversial subject of the supernatural, I would like to introduce you to some of the ways in which Sandmen interact with the world of the Quick, for they are our primary audience and players.

It has been said that a dream itself is but a shadow. Truer words were never spoken. Sandmen know, better than most, that dreams reflect their dreamer; they are a shadowy likeness of a vivid, constantly changing personal dynamic. They give form to shapeless desires and fears and incorporate daytime experiences into the psyche. As Dreamcrafters, we have a great deal of control over how those experiences are incorporated and what form those desires and fears take. We can come to know the dreamer from the inside out. Sometimes we even get to know the dreamer better than she knows herself.

So why do it? The reasons differ from Dreamcrafter to Dreamcrafter. One young Unionist Sandman I know from Necropolis Los Angeles says, "It pays way more than under-

ground Pageants." Another, a Heretic Scrooger, claims, "It's my duty to lead the Sleeping to salvation." Still another, an extremely sensitive soul, tells me, "I only interfere when I feel a dreamer's pain. I soothe their fears and release the horrors trapped within." Some Sandmen I know simply love to perform, while others work out of curiosity or only with obscure groups of Quick, such as the fanciers of the arcane (the Arcanum and the Daughters of Creusa are famous for their dealings with Sandmen). Some Sandmen get their thrills by surfing dreaming minds, while others play with the souls of the so-called "oneironauts," mortal volunteers at laboratories devoted to the study of dream. Sandmen dedicated to high-minded artistic ideals like to inspire mortal artists to produce great works; others, obsessed with the preparation of the soul for death, act as harbingers of peace to the infirm and dying. Still others believe that they are trapped here because the sleeping minds of mortals dream the Underworld, and thus Sandmen, into existence. By entering these mortals' dreams, these Sandmen try to work against this deep inner dreaming in order to effect their own release.

It is the wielder who must ultimately take responsibility for the uses he makes of his tools. Regrettably, Sandmen also exist who use Phantasm for twisted purposes. A century ago, a wraith known as the Vendor made a habit of kidnapping dreaming souls, promising to return them only when the mortal's





soul agreed to pay a ransom — usually a Relic or something dedicated to the Vendor's memory. When he started playing some of his sadistic games with wraiths, the Dream Union dispensed with him. He now lies enchained near the great Nihil of Oroschaza, doomed to live out his own nightmares, without respite, for a century more. Other Sandmen have found darker uses for our Arcanos, uses which I will mention later.

Many Sandmen work with mortals for the benefits they reap. Memoriam, Fetters, and Relics all constitute common forms of "payment" for their dreamwork. Sometimes mortals promise these payments directly: I just worked with a channeler who offered to find me an artist to inspire if I sent her a series of dreams about Elvis. Odd, but the artist she found painted a wonderful portrait of me that is now hanging in the Bellevue Art Museum, tucked away in the state of Washington.

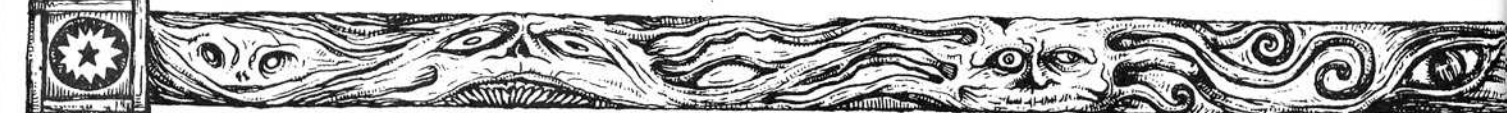
Sandmen also extract "payments" from sleeping mortals either subtly or by using the carrot-before-the-nose treatment. I know a freelancer in the Southwest who became so invested in the creative progression of one mortal's dreams that she became his Fetter. Another Sandman enticed a mortal to destroy his new Lamborghini (thereby creating a relic) by sending a series of dreams convincing him that his car payments contributed to the unwanted materialism he'd been feeling of late. Maybe you've seen this wraith tearing around the rutted dirt roads outside the San Diego Necropolis?

Ways of Death

My listeners may wonder how Sandmen who lack expensive sports cars manage to fill their time. Oh, we manage, we manage.

We have, for instance, our haunts. Think back on your lives, you who can remember them. How often did you hear tales of haunted theatres? Each had its ghost stories, and no doubt Sandmen were responsible for most. In the shadowed wings, or high up in the rafters among the counterweights that raise and lower scenery, there the Dreamcrafters linger. In the evening and at matinees, we watch the communal dream that is theatre. When the stage is dark, we may pass hours rehearsing, or host a Spectacle troupe on tour.

To paraphrase Dr. Johnson, the Sandman who has grown tired of Dreamscapes has grown tired of — well, of existence. Travel among mortal dreams occupies us endlessly, and the pursuit is seldom frivolous. We seek images to barter, motifs to echo in our entertainments and the gifted dreamers who furnish our Sand. Then, too, Sandmen meet in dreams. The Guild convokes its meetings, called Venues, away from prying busybodies, amid the lurid, cloudy fantasies of some sleeping ingenue or the vague, drifting colors of infant dreams. Perhaps you yourself, in life, played unwitting host to a Venue!



The Venues let us exchange news, report dangerous routes through the Shadowlands, and discuss our most shadowy trade secrets. For example, we teach novices the hand signals we have developed. Though they arose first during stage performances, to pass along advice such as "You're playing too broadly," the hand signals have evolved into an elaborate code. With a few unobtrusive gestures, a Sandman can silently tell his companions, "Danger from the third Hierarch on the right," "Beware of thieves," or "This individual is lying." Do believe me, the need for such messages arises all too often in a Dreamweaver's travels.

At the Venues, novices are also gradually initiated into our secrets. I will not reveal more than hints at this time, but you may expect to learn of a faction that believes Charon, after his battle with Gorool, reincarnated himself as a mortal. Another secretive group pursues the crafting of nightmares with perhaps too much intensity. A third group develops new uses for our chosen Arcanos. And so on — eventually, all becomes clear at a Venue.

Works Among the Living

Just as we create and perform for the Restless, we create for the Quick as well — though in a captivating inversion of roles, they become the performers for us. Sandmen engineer performances in living societies that energize us, educate us, or simply keep up our interest.

The first example that always springs to my mind is the Dreamtime. No, not the Dreamtime of living Australian aborigines, but a convention attended by mortals. Some of our Guild's most illustrious members inspired this "Dream Ball" in dreams of the organizers, and each year many of us attend side by side with the living.

I can hardly do better in describing a Dreamtime gathering than did a writer among the Quick, who described the convention of a few years back in no less authoritative a source than *Time* magazine:

"On the last night of the Study of Dreams conference, hundreds of dream lovers gather for the Dreamtime, dressed up as characters from their own dreams. They are all here, the lab rats and the dream workers, the physiologists and the New Agers. Jeremy Taylor, the association's outgoing president, wearing a skeleton mask and dressed in dark clothes, is Death. Texas psychologist Roseanne Armitage wears a big yellow R while a British psychologist wears an E and an Austrian lucid-dreaming expert wears an M; together, of course, they spell REM. Scientists and New Agers are dancing together. It is a dreamscape, a cross between Mardi Gras and Easter. If Freud were here, what might his quivering unconscious make of this phantasmagoria? What would he dream tonight?"

The September issue in 1995, if memory serves. Page 49, if you must know.

Yet among mortals we also pursue less showy works. Some among us, of a later generation than my own, have developed what they call the Dream Database. I understand this to be some kind of encyclopedia of dream images stored on a computer, or a network, or whatever such things are stored on. These bright young Sandmen influenced living computer experts to create the... ah... Database, and now Dreamcrafters skilled in the Inhabit Arcanos enter information themselves. The Dream Database serves them as a kind of grimoire, a practice ground, an ongoing Venue for study of whatever resonates in the human psyche. It is accessible to all, and so by all means I suggest you look into it. Don't be put off by an old ghost like me!

The Dreamscape


More a perception than an actual place, the Dreamscape is what the dreamer sees, hears, feels, smells and tastes when in the midst of a dream. The Dreamscape is the total illusion that the dreamer experiences. It may refer to the slumberer's own Dreamscape, which is the dream that she produces naturally, without a Sandman's interference. At the same time, it also refers to changes in atmosphere, setting, and individual elements that we can produce using Lucidity, or to the complete change of atmosphere, setting and elements that constitutes a Pageant. Pageants require much more work than does a simple use of Lucidity, as multiple Sandmen collaborate to become part of the Dreamscape (the characters, monsters, and so forth) and to "sculpt" the physical elements of the Dreamscape (such as how the earth, sun and sky appear, which symbols appear in the dream and when, and so on). We "sculpt" the Dreamscape by using our imaginations as chisels, just as we "paint" the landscape with our minds. The dreamer appears in our play, but it becomes her dream.

Spectacles

By far the most well-known, collective manner of influencing mortal dreams is the Pageant. Pageants, or dreamscripts, are almost always performed as services to paying patrons, for they involve a good understanding on the director's and the principals' parts of one of the more complex uses of Phantasm. When mortals become involved in

The Dream Database

This is an actual site on the World Wide Web. The URL is <http://www.iag.net:80/~hutchib/.dream/input.html>



Spectacles, as they often do, they become the protagonists in stories carefully crafted by the playwright to express the message intended by the patron. This message must be transmitted despite the vagaries of the protagonist's decisions and the spontaneity of "extras" — the dream actors — involved in ushering the story along. The Sandmen involved typically gather together near the sleeping mortal and hold hands. When all are ready, one Sandman sprinkles Sand on the sleeping mortal's soul, while the others lift it delicately from its mortal shell. From her bed, these Sandmen carry the soul to their stage, which may be anywhere and consist of almost anything (although the best tend to be located in Unionist theatres). There, they act out the dream, the only one not acting being the mortal whose soul has been carried into the Beguilers' camp.

You will all certainly learn more about Pageants than you thought it was possible to know. This communal dream theatre provides you with a livelihood, a means of travel and an entry into new Necropoli. You novices will find no better way of learning all about our ways than apprenticing yourselves to a Pageant troupe. I might add that the more talented among you may find in Pageants a means of rapid advancement in our Guild. Skilled creators and performers attract as much notice in the Underworld as any movie star among the Quick.

Note, though, that a Pageant troupe calls for rigorous commitment, discipline and courage. You will often confront the audience directly, involving them in your performances; now and then a few cranks dislike this attention. Researching a topical piece on the Hierarchy, you may learn more than you bargained for. Responding to a patron's invitation, you may enter parts of the Shadowlands no sane wraith would think about. And yet — the smell of the Masquer, the moan of the crowd! What actor could resist it?

Interplay



Because Sandmen can "tune into" Dreamscapes, many of us know that there are more than just mortal minds out there. Sometimes as we dreamsurf, we pick up odd reverberations — dreams that resonate with qualities different than those produced by most mortal minds, sometimes darker, sometimes lighter, sometimes completely alien. This realization has led to certain Sandmen dabbling not just with the souls of humans and wraiths, but with those (or their equivalents) of changelings, mages, werewolves, vampires, and





Storyteller Hints: Pageants

Pageants resemble stage plays, but they are darker, more fluid and more experimental. They serve several useful functions in Chronicles.

A Pageant troupe provides an excellent pretext to gather a group of diverse wraiths. Troupes need a wide variety of skills or often just extra hands; some vital members of the troupe never perform at all. Also, troupes often travel between Necropoli. They routinely gain and lose members. All this may suit the needs of a Circle whose members prefer to wander.

In a single story, a Pageant's storyline may provoke a fight between audience members, drawing characters into the story's central conflict. Or the entertainment may satirize Hierarchy officials, bringing their wrath upon the troupe.

other mystical beings. Don't act so surprised! These creatures, exceedingly difficult as they are to find, do exist — just as you and I exist. But, before you slip off to contact them with your newly learned Arcanos, I warn those of you whose curiosity I've just tweaked that nonhumans are dangerous folk with whom to consort, and only the rare Sandman with a mastery of herself equal to her mastery of Phantasm should attempt it.

The Mage Connection

Here are a group of mortals gifted with the ability to shape reality to their wills. On the whole, Sandmen have little to do with them, but I have heard an occasional account of their involvement with Dreamcrafters. About a decade ago, a certain unscrupulous Circle of Sandmen became involved with a group of mages calling themselves Progenitors. As incred-


ible as it sounds, these mages had the ability to create soulless physical bodies with a slavish obedience to the wills of their Progenitor masters. The Sandmen involved struck a pact with the Progenitors in which they would steal souls from sleeping mortals (leaving comatose bodies in their wake) and insert them into the Progenitors' soulless corpses. In exchange, the mages permitted these Sandmen to study their own dreaming souls. When rumors of this practice began to leak beyond their Circle, both the Hierarchy and the Dream Union took an interest, resulting in quick activity to break the Circle and incorporate its leaders for inhumane activities. (The Dream Union had a nice smirk at the expense of the Hierarchy: considering their self-sanctioned use of soul-forged oboli, the accusation of "inhumane activities" seemed ironic). The Circle was soon broken, but one of its leaders escaped. To discourage a reprise of such crimes, the Stygian Hierarchy offers a reward of 100 oboli to anyone capturing the leader, one Lili Charriere, and a reward of 20 oboli for information leading to her arrest.

Another group of mages calling themselves Dreamspeakers have on occasion held gatherings honoring death's role in the cycle of Gaia, or the Earth Mother. Sandmen enjoy appearing at these festivities to share tales of Somnus with the Dreamspeakers, who seem interested in his connection with the Earth Mother.

In the past, Sandmen — as well as many other wraiths — have also attended the Great Festival, held annually by the arcane and mystical group known as the Orphic Circle. Usually invited by the Circle's secretive death mages, these Sandmen perform as *boukoloi* (dancers) during the orgiastic rites dedicated to the Orphic god Eubouleus. Sometimes Master Actors use Phantasmagoria to appear before celebrants as the god Eubouleus himself.

The Werewolf Connection

Sandmen rarely have truck with werewolves, considering them generally rustic and unappreciative of the sophisticated art of theatre. However, a small minority of Sandmen exists which finds spontaneous visions every bit as valuable as exquisitely crafted dreams. When they can, these Sandmen ("Quixotics") seek out certain tribes of werewolves known as Fianna, Silent Striders, and Stargazers. The Celtic Fianna and the Quixotics sometimes meet in dreams to share tales, craft dream stories together, compose ballads, and pose riddles. The mysterious Silent Striders share much the same interest in Quixotics, although their storytelling and listening has a much more educational bent: they hearken to Sandmen's tales to learn more about the Dark Umbra, as they call the Underworld. Quixotics, and Sandmen in general, interest the tribe known as Stargazers, for their tribal totem is Chimera, the mysterious caretaker of dreams. Because they excel at inter-



preting dreams, Stargazers enjoy the dream puzzles Sandmen create for them. Of late, Quixotics have embarked on a quest to discover who or what Chimera is. Certain members of the Stargazers have joined this quest, for to solve such an enigma would earn them great glory within their tribe.

The Vampire Connection

Vampires share one thing with wraiths: their undead status. Other than that, we differ completely, for their society walks among the Quick, while we — officially, anyway — walk only among the Dead. Our Elders wisely advise us to shun the walking Dead, for they are cunning and wicked. But, as it is human nature to do, some of us ignore tradition and seek out the vampire.

I have heard tales of mad vampires who touch the Dreamscape in their slumber, and of Sandmen who unwisely invaded their dreams. These insane vampires are said to reach through the Shroud and pull Sandmen into their cold embrace, draining them of imagination and passion. Few Sandmen return to tell the tale of such Harrowings.

Other legends tell of a vampire clan devoted to beauty in all its forms. Many a Sandman has fallen in love with the otherworldly grace of these predators, doomed never to touch them or be a part of their dreams. Still other tales speak of such vampires seeking the aid of Sandmen to help renew a beloved artist's inspiration or to spark her imagination anew; or, with raging jealousy, to seek vengeance against Sandmen who steal inspired mortals' hearts.

The Changeling Connection

Though seeming so similar in origin, vampires and wraiths share few characteristics. The opposite question arises among those who know of changelings (fae inhabiting the Earth): What do Sandmen *not* have in common with changelings? Both exist in a world spun from the gossamer silk of dreams. Both live for their imaginations and dread the mundane. And both enjoy sharing their inspiration and artistic appreciation with others of like mind. However, most changelings whom we encounter fear us immensely — to them we are the terrifying stuff of legends, creeping out of the afterlife from our so-called Dream Pits to haunt changelings and their kind. A silly, but understandable myth.

With those changelings with whom we have actually made rational contact, the general rule has been that similarity, like familiarity, breeds contempt. Competition over the mortal imagination has stirred great feuds between us and changelings, who need it to survive as fae. Ordinarily, our imaginative play poses no significant grounds for conflict. In fact, when we are careful with the imaginations of the mor-

tals we entertain, there is even a chance that changelings might participate in our creations.

Some changelings go too far, however, greedily consuming mortal creativity and ripping imagination from its native vessel. On the other hand, sometimes we step over the line, blithely discarding the used imagination in favor of newly inspired souls. Because it is so precious to them, changelings carefully stir the flames of the imagination and tend them even when they begin to burn low. For this reason, many changelings view Sandmen as sycophants, leeching off the inspiration they have so delicately cultivated.

Changelings and Sandmen are often drawn to one another by their shared interest in the imaginative capacity of

Sand

— Your most faithful traveling companion. Your shimmering mark of professionalism. Your ticket out of the troubled lands. Sand is the glittering dust for which we Sandmen are named and renowned. Harvested from the dreams of Sandmakers (sometimes changelings, but usually repressed but highly creative people), Sand is prized for its usefulness in practicing our art. It eases the dreamer's soul from its sleeping body, it helps us shape the dreamscape, it tranquilizes the troubled wraith enough to cause slumber and it beguiles the eye into believing in phantasms. Sand enchants the mind, just as a daydream erases all thoughts of reality.

If you join the Dream Union, you can buy Sand at a discount, as Harvesters sell in bulk. You will find, however, that as you progress, other Sandmen will begin to consider buying such amenities *bourgeois*. Buying Sand is considered acceptable among apprentices, but the greatest directors and actors *always* harvest their own. Regardless of rank, though, no real Sandman is without a pouch or two of Sand.



dreams. Amusingly, some Seelie fae speculate that we are but a by-product of their Unseelie kin; that we are but chimera created by twisted fae imaginations. They believe that, like ours, the Unseelie power over dreams is a dark one, often twisting mortal imagination toward change and madness, away from tradition and inhibition.

For our part, we tend to regard changelings as immature talents who, like children, do not yet understand the artistic layering of reality and illusion in dreams. Dreaming, to them, is a way of life — reality a toy — while we, on the whole, believe that dreams represent more than just the solipsistic stage of illusion. Reality plays a large part in the creation of fantasy, a lesson these fae have yet to — and probably will never — learn.

I mention all this to give my warning context: Beware the fae, so seductive to such as we! By nature we are drawn to illusion, dynamism, unspeakable beauty and mysterious allure — all the things that changelings represent. So potent is their dreaming that we, who are more susceptible than most, become lost in their fae “reality.” Sandmen slipping into their dreams (an easier process than entering those of mortals, but far more dangerous) have reported sighting their chimera (their term for mythical monsters) following them long after the changeling awakened. Horror stories of this sort abound: Regis Finbane, the well-known Sandman actor, is said to have entered a changeling’s dream one night twenty years ago and never returned. Others who have tried to steal changelings’ souls have disappeared as well. Some say that our lost Guild brothers have become monsters in these changelings’ dreams, but no one knows for sure.

On the other hand, dangerous as they are, these fae exude almost impossible amounts of imagination and can be valuable allies in the quest for drama. Changelings are said to produce Sand far richer and more various than any mortal can — and on a nightly basis. Sand taken from sleeping changelings also resonates with the atmosphere — and sometimes even the subject — of their dreams long after its harvesting. A changeling experiencing a nightmare, for instance, will produce Sand that gives mortals horrific nightmares. A dream about slaying dragons might bestow a sense of bravery and heroism on a dreaming mortal. But you are well-advised to harvest changeling Sand carefully: just as harvesting leaves mortal dreamers listless the next day, harvesting Sand from changelings leaves them strangely weakened come morning. Prolonged harvesting can kill them — but, be sure, once they find out you’re harvesting them, you won’t continue for long.

The Actor's Roles



o matter how we choose to live, we all play roles on the stage of society. Here in the Underworld, we Sandmen have chosen for ourselves the roles of the actors, the visionaries, the holy seers of the creative imagination. Beyond mere dramatics, we need these roles in order to survive. As a result, Sandmen have adopted the following specializations, one of which, I suspect, will be a proper fit for each of you.

Dream Menders (Soma Shamans)

"So ye would learn to Mend mortals? First learn to Mend thyself."

— Shayna Blackfeather, Dreamcircle of the Eagle, Sioux Camp

Currently, the most famous group of Sandmen in the Underworld is the Dream Menders. Word of their newly discovered use of Phantasm has spread from the most remote villages of the Serengeti to the marbled halls of Stygia. Our bards report that the Ladies of Fate have quietly whisked away the mother of this sleep healing movement, Shayna Blackfeather, to their strongholds, there to teach other Sandmen these techniques.

Briefly, dreamhealing repairs the bodies of mortals while they sleep by tricking the brain into accelerating the body's release of growth hormones naturally released during sleep. Those who have studied it report that it requires a strong emotional investment in the mortal to be healed.

As it obviously violates the Dictum Mortuum, the Hierarchy's official stance on Mending is that use of it constitutes a breach of Charon's law. However, the Hierarchy says nothing about teaching the art of Mending. It is a tribute to the adage "you can't keep a good idea down" that even the staunchest defenders of the Dictum Mortuum secretly seek Mending mentors.

In the five years since its inception, the art has attracted many members of other Guilds. It has proven particularly popular with wraiths who in life practiced medicine, particularly alternative techniques such as holistic healing, acupuncture and psychology. A recent trend among many of the wraiths who know (and presumably practice) Mending is to carry with them aspected Sand that makes mortals dream of death or unending sleep. They say that such Sand "symbolizes the ability" to trick mortals into believing they've been asleep longer than they actually have. Who is fooled by this? The Sand *enables* them to practice Mending. Period.





Dream Lords

"Where goeth a spent dream? To the Realm of Somnus. Shall I take thee there?"

— The Dream Lord Pytheas

Legends speak of Ferrymen who have so mastered our art that their Spectacles melt away Oblivion and transport the Tempest-weary traveler to her destination in the blink of an eye. Called Dream Lords, they are Ferrymen who once numbered themselves among Sandmen, and now continue to specialize in the art of Phantasm. It is said that their powers border on the miraculous: They can send Spectres into eternal Slumber, perform massive Spectacles without extras, disguise themselves as Malfeans, and walk for days among the living as flesh-and-blood illusions.

Colleagues who have had the rare opportunity to meet a Dream Lord find them alien. Their eyes shine with the dark, mysterious light of creation and illusion, and they smile wryly at the depth of our misunderstanding. Moreover, Dream Lords never speak; they communicate through waking dreams. It is speculated that Dream Lords spin webs of interconnected dreams, so that they are in constant communication with each other, but even this is not known for certain.

Paphians (Primadonnas, Dream Whores)

"Hypocrites, all hypocrites! How can the Unionists call us whores when they beg like dogs for the chance to perform for wealthy patrons?"

— Sandeep Joy, Circle of Aphrodite, Stygian Paphic Tattoo #2708

Those of you who have never been to Stygia may not know that the Hierarchy there permits the practice of a form of legalized prostitution known as Cyprianism. Practitioners of Cyprianism, Paphians (also known to Unionists as Dream Whores and Primadonnas) hire themselves out to bestow fantasies on paying customers. Paphians typically Moliate themselves into a huge variety of beautiful forms, but can all be identified by the Cyprian tattoo they bear. By law, customers should only conduct business with tattooed Paphians, since they are legally regulated by the state, but in reality sometimes unregulated freelancers find themselves playing the Paphian to pay the rent. Because many Guild Sandmen look down their noses at such practices, much hostility has arisen between Unionists and freelancers over Cyprianism.

Fortifiers (Psychoneirists)

"Most of us do not realize the value of practice when it comes to resisting our Shadows. What better way to practice than in dreams?"

— Ingrid Hotchkiss, Apprentice Fortifier, Boston Necropolis

Some freelancers and even some Unionists have found that acting alone does not suffice — for them, it is merely entertainment, mental engagement without lasting substance. Searching for enlightenment, they see the art of Phantasm as a means of overcoming their own Shadows and fortifying the Eidolon. Their motto is "Through illusion, reality," and a number of these searchers have banded together to form a pseudo-Guild known as the Fortifiers. Together, they attempt to drain Shadows of their power via dream roleplay. Apprentices and Journeymen are taught to discern the psychology of a wraith's Shadow, often spending time studying under Pardoners. As Apprentices, they undergo numerous tests of strength against their Shadows staged by other Fortifier Sandmen in their dreams. When they become Journeymen they are permitted to use Phantasm to test another wraith's strength against his Shadow. As Masters, they refine the art, aiming to achieve Transcendence by purging themselves of their Shadows altogether.

Lately, Fortifiers have come under much criticism for the danger their own Shadows pose to others. If their own Shadows emerge during a Fortification (as they call a dream in which a wraith must fight his Shadow), they have the potential to do tremendous damage to the wraith under their ministrations. Because such occurrences are not unheard of, many Necropoli have outlawed the presence of Fortifier Circles.

Nightriders

"Brainsurfing is beyond a kick, dude. It's extreme. Wanna try it?"

— Rich Gantrell, freelancer, Necropolis San Francisco

I've had several apprentices whose hobby is "brainsurfing" — riding from one mortal's dreams to another in rapid progression. They belong to a more general group of younger Sandmen known as Nightriders. Some of you may even belong to this class of wraiths.

Nightriders have a number of other irresponsible hobbies as well: "soulsipping," for instance, and "horrorizing." Soulsipping involves slipping a mortal's dreaming soul in and out of the body as fast as possible, usually causing the mortal to wake up confused and groggy. Nightriders usually only practice Soulsipping as a prank or an adolescent test of their dexterity with Phantasm.

Horrorizing compares unfavorably with real nightmares, which all Sandmen create at some point in their careers, in that it shows an almost Philistine lack of artistic creativity — like reading limericks at a poets' convention. When Nightriders horrify a mortal, they drag the mortal's soul, kicking and screaming, to the nearest Nihil and dump it unceremoniously in. There is no subtlety or personal horror involved, nothing to be gained by such a display of the impersonal horrors of Oblivion. In short, many Nightriders horrify mortals because they enjoy the power trip. As far as I'm concerned, while Nightriding may be a necessary stage in one's career as a Sandman, it is, hopefully, one which passes with the wisdom of experience.

Night Terrors/Night Angels

"The face of exquisite beauty can be had for hire, but the soul of it is not for sale. That is a favour only devotion can win."

— Ia Vanpée, Masterclass Night Angel, Paris Necropolis

Just as sometimes mortals (and even wraiths) have need of assassins, wraiths sometimes need Night Terrors. Night Terrors are Sandmen who work with Proctors to create nightmares of such magnitude that mortals awaken howling in terror in the middle of the night — but it doesn't stop there. The Proctors involved appear just as the mortal awakens, carrying the moment of terror into waking life. Other wraiths usually hire Night Terrors to assassinate a mortal who has done them grave wrong — often to resolve a Fetter. Typically the mortal has a condition, such as a weak heart, that makes him susceptible to terror attacks. Wraiths also hire Night Terrors as a scare tactic to command mortal compliance. Needless to say, if the Dream Union ever catches a Sandman working as a Night Terror, it marks him with a sigil of banishment which prevents him from ever receiving the benefits of the Guild again.

Night Angels are an entirely different story. Extremely rare because of poor employment opportunities, they are nevertheless much sought-after by the Guild for their mastery of beauty's portrayal. Those who hire Night Angels (they always work in pairs) generally intend to inspire or reward mortals with visions of extreme heavenly splendor and otherworldly grace. I once knew an Anacreon in the Legion of the Laughing Lady (who shall remain nameless, as I do not wish a permanent holiday in the forges) who'd fallen desperately in love with a living woman who had no idea he existed. So desperate did he become that he hired a pair of Night Angels to compose and perform an exquisite dream sequence about him, at the end of which the woman awakened to find an Embodied Angel, radiating delicate light like a seraph, floating above her. In the years that followed, the mortal woman's longing to recapture the moment of that dream led her to obsession, insanity and finally death. Tragically, the Anacreon would have been united with his love under the Seat of Succor the very day of her death had he not fallen during an assault by Spectres on his Necropolis the evening before.

Plotters

"Hamlet's mousetrap, Sleuth — these are child's play compared to the most mundane schemes constructed by the Hierarchy's finest Plotters."

— Bethany Ladimer/Shomon Morahg Construct, House of Melded Souls, Stygia

I have heard that some freelancers have such charisma, cunning and strategy-sense that the Stygian lords adopt them as their personal "Plotters." Sandmen who secretly use their talents to help create Machiavellian schemes for their lord against other lords, Plotters usually rise from the ranks of the most talented Stygian freelancers. They are master storytellers and psychologists, somehow managing to keep the frenzied layers of court intrigue straight





Dreaming States

Sleep is a complex state, as those of you who have not studied oneirology will soon learn. Here is some terminology you should know if you are going to move with ease among groups of diverse Sandmen:

REM Sleep: A stage of sleep characterized by rapid eye movement and voluntary muscle paralysis. Dreams occur most frequently during this stage of sleep, and mortals awakened during REM sleep are most likely to remember their dreams. You will find it easiest to slip souls from sleeping bodies when they are in REM.

NREM Sleep: The stage of sleep, sometimes known as deep sleep, during which eye movement is slow or absent and muscle paralysis and movement are not important factors. Dreams do occur during NREM, although less frequently than in REM sleep. When asleep, normal Skinlanders spend equal amounts of time in REM and NREM. As they age, mortals spend less time in the deeper forms of NREM.

Hypnagogic Sleep: The stage of sleep between wakefulness and REM, characterized more by groggy thinking and worrying than by dreaming with all its attendant plots and colorful fantasies. Hypnagogic states are said to be similar to experiences in sensory deprivation, psychedelic drug use and meditation.

Hypnopompic Sleep: The stage of sleep just before waking, opposite hypnagogic sleep.

Lucid Dreaming: A sleep state in which the dreamer becomes aware of and can con-


trol her dreams. Currently, lucid dreaming is a popular research topic among the Quick, with studies done of dreamers who learn to lucid dream and communicate their state with researchers through eye and other nonverbal signals. It is impossible to control a lucid dream using Phantasm, and thus many Sandmen protect their favorite dreamers from nightmares by inducing this state.

Narcolepsy: A disorder characterized by the inability to remain awake longer than a few hours. Narcolepsy is thought to be related to epilepsy, and tends to make sufferers REM-prone, as they enter REM immediately upon falling asleep.

Nightmares/Night Terrors: Nightmares differ from night terrors in that they occur during REM sleep and usually have a plot accompanied by vivid images. Night terrors occur during deep NREM sleep during the first two hours of the night, and are characterized by single images rather than complex plots.

Sleep Apnea: A breathing disorder that occurs during sleep in which breathing shallows or stops, and the sleeper awakens to restore the flow of air. Severe cases of sleep apnea (in which the sleeper awakens hundreds of times a night) disrupt the sleep cycle and make it virtually impossible for Sandmen to control the sleeper's dreams.

Somnambulism: Sleepwalking. This usually occurs during deep NREM sleep, during which the sleeper's brain sends out signals typical of a relaxed, waking state.



in their minds. The best Plotters usually also manage to work their signature Arcanos into their plots as a central strategy.

Some say that the Dream Union uses Plotters to great effect, creating counterespionage within counterespionage. Others believe that, thanks to the cunning efforts of their Plotters, the Hierarchy has placed spies within the highest ranks of the Dream Union. Still others think that Plotters remain loyal only to themselves and are secretly betraying both Sandmen and Stygian lords. The truth, though difficult to discern, would seem to lie somewhere in the middle.

Playwrights (Dreamaturgists)

"A topical treatment of Charon's battle with Gorool? I may be an Apprentice and a fool, but I'm not an idiot."

—Francine Ringold, Union Playwright, Boulder Necropolis

One of the two most popular avocations for Sandmen (the other being acting), Playwrights (also jokingly known as Dreamaturgists) consist of those Sandmen who craft dreams into stories to be performed by acting troupes. The Dream Union and many freelancers consider a good Playwright more valuable than a whole troupe of mediocre actors; if any of you are budding Playwrights, keep practicing. Of course, as in the Skinlands, becoming an Underworld-class Playwright takes courage, devotion, talent and not a little luck. But if you're good, your future among your chosen group will be secure.

In the Union, acting troupes employ lesser-known Playwrights to compose dream sequences tailored for their particular talents. Less often, Playwrights seek work from troupes on a contract basis. Unionist troupes rarely take work from freelancers.

Freelancers without permanent engagements in Stygia (also known as Bards) travel between Necropoli with their freelancing troupes. Often, they serve double duty as actors, or Ringmasters, themselves. A familiar and welcome sight for weary intercity travelers is the brightly painted wooden wagon, clinking with intermingled props and cookware and bedecked with translucent gossamer pennants, the sign of the Sandman. Such wagons serve as transportation, shelter, ticket booth, stage and scenery; the Sandmen who maintain them show amazing creativity in their use of space.

Specialists

Most troupes, which generally form affiliations with theaters, do not consist entirely of Actors and Playwrights; the stagehands, the artists, the musicians — these are a necessary and important part of a dream production, as well. As a consequence, many troupes hire Masquers and Chanteurs to provide scenery, costume and song. Indeed, a Bard's most frequent traveling companions are Masquers and Chanteurs, as well as Oracles, as they provide some necessary variety and complement a traveling Sandman's ability well.

On occasion, you will hear of troupes who hire specialists to serve a specific niche within their theatre community. I will mention only a few of these because the list is long.

Oneiric Pacers

One of the most difficult specialties to master is oneiric pacing, the ability to pace staged dreams to match the imaginative capacities of the dreamer. In theatres known for performing particularly complex or horrific venues, Directors hire Oneiric Pacers to help actors avoid damaging mortals' dreaming souls. Theatres hiring them typically avoid advertising the fact, since the presence of an Oneiric Pacer essentially constitutes an admission that the theatre is violating Charon's Code. Fifty-two years ago to this day, Hierarchy Minister Justin McCann ordered Dream's Eye Theatre in the Dallas Necropolis burned to the ground when he heard that Oneiric Pacer Dixan Chenilly worked there on commission. When an Artificer's forge was erected in its place, both Unionist and freelance Sandmen criticized McCann's actions as unnecessary, as they resonated of the inflammatory actions taken during the War of the Guilds. Hierarchy officials didn't comment.

Symbolists

Most popular in the French Underworld but now making inroads elsewhere, Sandmen in this profession study dream symbolism — its uses, how best to incorporate it in dreams, how it differs among cultures, and so forth. Now, most of you have been initiated to some extent into the uses of symbolism, but Symbolists make it the purpose of their existence. Some even go so far as to study a particular subject's personal symbolism for months before visiting her with a dream that features one particularly important symbol.

You can generally pick Symbolists out of a crowd by looking for Sandmen dressed in abstract gossamer and berets. They talk a lot about their triumphs, sometimes even naming them as if they were works of art — how, for instance, they managed to convey a sense of profound materialism and regret in "Abstract Study in Green, #46." Usually, the other Symbolists listening solemnly nod their heads, careful to convey their profound understanding, then, like clockwork, go on to lionize their own works. Younger actors enjoy, as they say, "razzing" Symbolists at parties because they often take themselves too seriously.

Wordsmiths

It is truly said that no one has as great a sense of fun as a Wordsmith. Wordsmiths are the ultimate punsters, witlings, wisecrackers, reparteeists and quippers, with specializations in anagrams, logograms, logogriffs, metagrams, acrostics, amphiboles, palindromes, portmantologisms, double-entendres and ripostes. Any mortal who's dreamt of clever wordplay or uncovered a pun in a series of symbols has hosted a Wordsmith for a night.


Because of the degree of specialization required, Sandmen usually only moonlight as Wordsmiths. Patrons' requests for wordplay are rare but lucrative when they occur (some Sandmen joke that Wordsmiths also specialize in a form of persuasion called Pay Raise).



Dream Trivia

Other interesting trivia that is useful to know at Venues and salons:

- Tryptophan, an amino acid found in protein-rich foods, can trigger nightmares.
- Balladeers of the Tibetan “Gesar,” the longest ballad in the world (it has over a million lines with thousands of characters), claim to “inherit” the song in a dream.
- Depressed mortals dream less vividly, have fewer characters in their dreams, and recall less of them.
- Men tend to dream of other men more than of women, while women dream of both sexes equally.
- Seventy percent of all dreams are in color.
- The only mammals that do not dream every night are the spiny anteater and the duckbilled platypus.
- The Quick experience approximately 136,000 dreams in a lifetime, spending the equivalent of six years in REM.
- Before age seven, children are generally not the protagonists in their own dreams.
- Sleeping newborns are in REM sleep 50% of the time. Adolescents are in REM 20-25% of the time, and the elderly experience REM only 18% of the time.
- LSD and nicotine withdrawal increases the amount of time the Quick spend dreaming, while tranquilizers decrease time spent in dreams and distort dreaming.
- Adults find it easiest to sleep and dream in midafternoon.
- Artists and creative people, as well as those who are more open and sensitive, tend to be more prone to recurring nightmares.
- Most people are effectively paralyzed during REM sleep; there are, however, a few rare people who act out their dreams. Doctors usually prescribe the drug Clonazepam to treat this condition.
- Three neurotransmitters in the mortal brain turn dreaming on and off: acetylcholine turns it on, and norepinephrine and serotonin turn it off.
- In ancient Greece, dreams were thought to be messages from the gods.



Many Wordsmiths open venues at which they practice their art. Some of these clubs throw parties open to other Sandmen. If you ever have the chance, especially you future Playwrights, attend one. You’ll find inspiration in your hosts’ dexterous minds, and because of the popularity of these parties, you may have a chance to meet the stars among Sandmen.


State Artisans

Not all Sandmen specialize in artistic pursuits; some enjoy the more scientific aspects of our art. State Artisans specialize in inducing specific dream states: hypnagogic, hypnopompic, NREM, REM and lucid dreaming. They also experiment with dream incubation during bouts of narcolepsy and somnambulism. A few have tried to induce similar states in wraiths during Slumber, but largely unsuccessfully; they have

found that plasm does not undergo the same physiological responses that flesh experiences during sleep.

State Artisans are popular among troupes of actors who work with them to produce certain effects. For instance, they can create hypnagogic dream states which occur at the onset of sleep and are primarily verbal and straightforward, accompanied by a feeling of strangeness and sensations of floating or falling. Lucid dreaming, on the other hand, is characterized by a complex “double awareness,” the dreamer’s awareness that she is dreaming. NREM dreams tend to be more logical and deal directly with current events in the dreamer’s life, while REM dreams are vivid, complex, and bizarre.

If a troupe wants a dreamer to remember a dream in vivid detail, State Artisans can awaken the dreamer during REM sleep. If a troupe is enacting a patron’s vengeance or is feeling particularly malicious, they can request the State Artisan to



withhold REM sleep from a dreamer. Many mortal studies have shown that reduced REM sleep leaves the Quick anxious, fatigued, unable to concentrate or even to remember recently learned information. Prolonged REM deprivation (six months or more) suppresses the release of growth hormones and can even kill brain cells. Some Master State Artisans can awaken a part of the mortal brain while it is in NREM sleep, tricking it into causing the living to sleepwalk. It is also said that certain Master State Artisans can induce narcolepsy in the Quick by sending them into REM sleep while they are wide awake.

Spirit Guides

Among the Heretic freelancers of the Southwest, an ancient visionquest tradition exists. During these ceremonies, Sandmen known as Spirit Guides visit relatives or tribe members undergoing a visionquest and lead them to a better understanding of their own natures. To do so, they send dreams of an animal guide or totem which best represents the dreamer's nature. Spirit Guides often work with shamanistic Oracles to peer into the dreamer's future and craft the dream so that it helps the dreamer understand herself well enough to choose wisely among her future paths.

Once a Spirit Guide has chosen a dreamer, he appears before her in totemic form on occasion throughout the rest of her life. Spirit Guides generally appear only when a crucial life decision or an event that will have wide repercussions is before the dreamer.

Succubi / Incubi

Legends abound of exquisitely sexy fiends who assume female or male form to have sex with mortals in their sleep. Well, the legends are true — at least, everything but the fiend part. Certain Sandmen enjoy seducing the Quick in dreams, and almost all mortals enjoy being so seduced. Troupes regularly employ Succubi and Incubi, since there is no substitute for someone who *really* knows how to seduce the living. Many Sandmen forget the feel of flesh on flesh when they pass through the Shroud. Succubi and Incubi do not. They know just where to touch.

Masters of this art can seduce the Dead during Slumber, enchant a Heretic with a thread of gossamer, or make a Hierarch sigh with longing for the touch of a warm hand on her thigh. Legends speak of Arch-Succubi who, after seducing a mortal, can conceive wraithly infants by possessing the souls of ones who have recently died; similar legends tell of Arch-Incubi who make mortal women conceive children who are later stillborn. Some Sandmen speculate that Benandanti are the result of a successful union of Incubus and mortal.

Wandering Troupes

Not all Sandmen work with dreams as part of their regular employment. Some simply stage dramatic performances similar in most respects to those staged by mortal actors, ballerinas, jugglers, magicians, clowns and so forth. Many

Sandmen work with Chanteurs, Masquers and Oracles to vary the entertainment and draw in more diverse crowds.

Such troupes wander from locale to locale offering performances to passers-by and arranging brief engagements on the outskirts of many Necropoli. Some troupes specialize in certain forms of entertainment: traveling circuses, juggling and even fortune-telling are popular. Other, more ambitious troupes attempt ballet and other forms of dance, as well as so-called "wagon plays" (plays performed on and around troupes' wagons) and outdoor theatre.

The Pariahs

Few realize it, but Phantasm is a powerful Arcanos when used with imagination and creativity, two characteristics which Sandmen possess in abundance. Unfortunately, because it is powerful, it has the potential to be powerfully misused. Sandmen generally believe that the following two specializations in Phantasm constitute abuse, and label those who engage in such activities "pariahs."

Collectors

Collectors are Oblivion-tainted Sandmen who collect and imprison sleeping souls. Skinlanders explain away many of these lost souls with references to comas, sleeping sickness, and neurological disorders, but a significant percentage of those who fall asleep never to awaken comprise Collectors' victims.

I cannot claim to understand the psychology of a Collector. Perhaps he believes that these collected souls constitute personal power, or he hopes that they will somehow bestow on him fame and glory. Whatever the case may be, Collectors sicken the majority of Sandmen because they imprison what was meant to be free. If you ever run across or even hear rumors of a Collector, by all means, let others know. Sometimes it is possible to find their haunts and release their victims.

Dopplers

Dopplers make a habit out of using the art of Supplant, an offshoot of Phantasm. By stuffing souls into the wrong sleeping bodies, Dopplers can drive the Quick mad. Some say that the Laughing Lady keeps a retinue of Dopplers at her beck and call. It is further rumored among Renegades that she often commands these Dopplers to switch the souls of two sleeping mortals who have insulted or angered her in some way, thereby eventually driving them insane.

Again, if you hear of Dopplers among us, report them. Returning the souls of their victims to the proper bodies is relatively easy (as long as both bodies still live), and many freelancers and Unionist Dreamcrafters offer rewards for such aid. I have even heard of cases in which exorcisms performed by the faithful Quick returned the souls to their proper bodies, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these reports.



Robert
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Act III: Systems

*A sweet thing, for whatever time,
to revisit in dreams the dear dead we have lost.*
— Euripides, *Alcestis*, 355



Phantasm: an Arcanos, a profession, a calling and what sardonic Sandmen call “a way of life.” Every Necropolis desires Pageants, so the Sandmen’s art of illusion gives them a means and a reason to journey through the Shadowlands. Risking the dangers of Underworld travel,

Sandmen pursue their own dreams by crafting and performing dreams for others.

The itinerant Dreamweavers tend to be cosmopolitan, moving easily through all levels of society. Because they carry news between Necropoli, troupes of Sandmen have occasionally escaped disaster at the hands of Legionnaires, marauding slavers and sometimes even Spectres. The price of escape may be as small as a piece of news or a free performance.


On the other hand, for the same reasons that some attackers spare Sandmen, others assault troupes with special ferocity. An actor’s life, even after it ends, is seldom easy.

Training

An education in Phantasm involves learning to understand the mind. In the realm where one’s Shadow roams freely, psychology is better developed, but the learning is esoteric and requires a teacher.

Guild Members

Sandmen who belong to a Guild Circle find teachers more easily and pay them less than do those outside the Guild. Teachers of Phantasm are not usually mysterious — most are authentic celebrities, the Underworld’s finest actors and Dreamcrafters — but they are often inaccessible. They travel everywhere on tight schedules; worse, untalented would-be students besiege them with requests for tutoring. If nothing



else, Guild membership (or the Mentor background) opens the door. After that, the hopeful applicant is on her own.

Roleplay the bargaining over the price for training. In general, lesser uses of Phantasm (one or two dots) are cheap; for each dot in the ability the student desires, a teacher requires one year of service and a token price of one obolus. For higher abilities, the price per dot and the training time may double or triple. The service includes help in staging the teacher's Spectacles, running errands, bodyguard duty, or anything else the teacher wants. Many a Sandman-hopeful has spent years laboring as an understudy to the understudy, supporting himself by hawking his elusive mentor's cheap gossamer to a worshipful public and promising himself that his big break will come any day now. If McDonald's existed in the Underworld, he'd have a day job flipping burgers and day-dreaming.

Outside the Guild

Without the Mentor background or membership in the Dreamcrafters' Guild, a student seeking a teacher faces still greater difficulty. In addition to ordinary compensation, the teacher demands that the student show proof of ability. By custom this proof involves image-bartering.

The teacher asks the student to bring in "a vivid image" of something the teacher hasn't seen before. She might make a general request ("I want to see a really morbid example of Oblivion") or set a specific task ("Show me the face of the Laughing Lady").

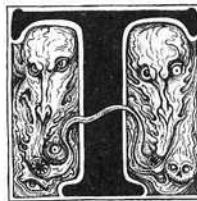
The student journeys to the specified scene, studies and memorizes it, then returns to the teacher. Using Dreams of Sleep (Phantasm 3), the teacher causes the student to Slumber, then studies the image in dream. If she finds the student's eye discriminating and his imagination sharp, she may accept him as a student.

Note that students who ask to learn powerful and malevolent abilities, such as Agon, face even more demanding proofs. Teachers are reluctant to disseminate this knowledge to any but the most responsible Sandmen.

The Learning Curve

Training time is up to the Storyteller. Generally, the specified length of service easily provides enough time. The Storyteller may find it convenient to allot a character's training to the time between stories.

New Uses of Phantasm



The Storyteller may wish to enhance the basic Phantasm ability Sleepsense to let the Sandman observe not only the dreams of sleeping mortals, but also the dreams other Sandmen create, modify or recall. This lets fellow Sandmen exchange information and demonstrate techniques more easily.

Some of the new arts listed below do not work against wraiths. In these cases, the Storyteller may allow a Sandman with the Dreams of Sleep art (Phantasm 3) to make a Perception + Phantasm roll, difficulty 8. Success lets the Sandman target a wraith with a Phantasmal art that ordinarily works only on mortals. The other art's successes cannot exceed the number of successes on the Dreams of Sleep roll.

• Cognizance

This ancient art lets a Slumbering wraith defend against a Sandman's dream manipulations or other Phantasmal effects. The wraith becomes aware that he is dreaming, asserts his will over the dream, and either directs it or awakens from it.

Many Sandmen train themselves to achieve Cognizance automatically upon entering Slumber. They also use this art to induce lucid dreams in favored dreamers, thereby protecting the mortals from hostile Sandmen.

System: The player rolls Wits + Phantasm. In the absence of another's interference, the difficulty is 7; otherwise, the difficulty equals the interfering Dreamcrafter's Willpower. Each success rolled subtracts one success from attempts to change the dream. If the successes rolled exceed the number of successes rolled using Dreams of Sleep to make the wraith fall asleep, the Cognizant wraith may either awaken instantly or pretend to be asleep. A botch means that the difficulty of any roll to interfere with the wraith's dream is reduced by 1.

The wraith may use Cognizance while awake to protect another dreamer (the target) from the effects of a third party (the manipulator). If the wraith rolls at least one success, the target dreamer immediately receives an opposed Intelligence + Subterfuge roll to resist the manipulator; the difficulty of the target's roll is reduced by 1 for each success on the Cognizance roll.

This art costs no Pathos when used to defend oneself. It costs 1 Pathos to defend another.

• Conclave

For most of this century the Guild has escaped the Hierarchy's attention by conducting meetings in Dreamscapes. This art lets the wraith meet with fellow Sandmen at a prear-



ranged dream location. Reaching this communal dream is not a matter of travel, but rather of selecting elements of the ever-changing dreamscape: a setting, a tone, a cast of performers. Like a set designer arranging a stage, the Sandman arrives at the proper vision — and finds that other members of the Guild have shown up, too. The meeting commences with little ceremony, but, more often than not, much showmanship.

System: To attend, the wraith must know the location of the Conclave. The player rolls Perception + Phantasm (difficulty 7). The successes rolled determine how long the wraith may remain at the Conclave: one success allows a few minutes; two successes, an hour; three, a scene; and so on. The wraith may attend the Conclave either while awake or while Slumbering, but in both cases, the Corpus is incapable of action while the wraith is “out.” Any Corpus damage inflicted upon a wraith in Conclave will instantly pull the Sandman’s spirit back into its Corpus.

This art costs no Pathos.

• Lingua

Through symbolism and imagery, the Sandman communicates ideas across language barriers. Its range resembles that of the parlor game Charades, but creative Dreamcrafters can convey messages of unexpected complexity.

Lingua is quite old and was independently developed in many Underworld cultures. Eduard Hanslick, a German music critic in the 19th century and now a Domem in Stygia, traces Lingua’s origin to Orpheus, whose beautiful singing was supposed to conjure visions in the air. But Dream-Painter Ngaio Atakpame of the Dark Kingdom of Ivory points to the still more ancient myths of the Bantu god Bumba, creator and lawgiver, who made his will known to worshippers through dreams and visions.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Phantasm. The message’s complexity determines the roll’s difficulty. “Beware, there is danger” is difficulty 5, whereas “The Hierarchy has tricked a Spectre into attacking your city’s Guild Sandmen during the next eclipse” is difficulty 8. Communication of abstract ideas (“The nature of dream clearly displays the vitality of Jungian archetypes”) is usually impossible.

The number of successes determines how quickly the target grasps the idea. One success means the target must ponder the message for a scene, rolling Intelligence + Enigmas (difficulty 6) to get the message. More successes will reduce the time spent in interpretation and reduce the difficulty of the target’s Intelligence + Enigmas roll.

This art costs 1 Pathos.



•• Inspire

This ancient art inclines a mortal to express herself artistically, or causes an established artist to conceive a great work in a dream or vision. (Unlike Muse [Keening 3], Inspire exercises the target's own creativity.) The Inspired work reflects the Fetters, Passions or even the Shadow of the inspiring Sandman. The act of inspiration should be unique for each use of the art; the player should devise an appropriate dream and suggest to the Storyteller a work that might come from this.

System: The player rolls Expression + Phantasm (difficulty 7). To inspire an unwilling or untalented mortal, the difficulty is 8. The more successes the player rolls, the more fervent and creative the artist's inspiration. Five or more successes may inspire an entirely new school of artistic pursuit.

A large or revolutionary work may require an extended roll, as the Sandman must inspire the artist several times during its creation. A botch results in a work that is an embarrassment in the artist's career, while the artist himself remains blind to its failings. A botch experienced during an extended roll irreparably mars the creation.

This art costs 1 Pathos.

••• Mending

This recent development in Phantasm has excited interest among even the most blasé Sandmen. By tricking the mortal brain into accelerating its release of the tissue repair hormones naturally released during sleep, the Sandman uses a dreamer's body to heal itself. This art heals only normal (nonaggravated) damage, and the target must be unconscious.

System: The player rolls Phantasm + Empathy (difficulty equals current injury level + Health Levels the Sandman wishes to heal). Every success rolled heals one Health Level of damage and costs the wraith 2 Pathos. The roll cannot heal more Health Levels than the chosen difficulty level allows. If the mortal is the Sandman's Fetter, the difficulty is reduced by 2.

For example, a Sandman's former lover is cruelly beaten by a thug (Health Level: Incapacitated). Losing blood quickly, she passes out. The Sandman wants to heal her at least enough to stop the blood flow, bring her to consciousness, and let her crawl to safety. He rolls his Phantasm + Empathy versus difficulty 9 (Incapacitated = 7, and the Sandman wishes to heal two Health Levels). He rolls three successes, but only two apply because of the chosen difficulty level. Healing two Health Levels, he brings his lover back up to Mauled, so that she can wake up and hobble to find help.

The Sandman may try to heal a given target only once per scene. A botch means the Sandman loses the Pathos without healing any damage, and acquired a point of temporary Angst.

•••• Incubus

Mortal psychologists call it an "incubus nightmare." The sleeper feels an oppressive weight on his chest, sometimes visualized as a horrible catlike creature, and senses his vitality draining away. He wakes in a cold sweat.

This nightmare art, the Phantasmal equivalent of the Usury ability Transfer, lets a Sandman drain energy from the mortal victim as Pathos. The nightmare itself lasts only a minute or so, but the preparation requires three hours, because the mortal must be deeply asleep.

Only certain rare mortals are susceptible to incubus nightmares. The susceptibility develops in adulthood, often in creative people. A wraith can sense a mortal's susceptibility using the basic Fatalism ability Kismet or the basic Usury ability Assessment. Sandmen sometimes discover susceptible mortals by happening upon an incubus nightmare in progress.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Phantasm (difficulty 7). The number of successes is the amount of Pathos the wraith drains from the victim. The Sandman cannot drain a victim more than once per week.


This art costs no Pathos, but the wraith's Shadow gains temporary Angst equal to the Pathos collected.

••••• Oneirataxia

This art, very old and now fallen into disrepute, does not keep the target mortal from sleeping, but rather from dreaming. Because dreams are critical to the mental health of mortals, dreamlessness brings mental upset and eventual madness. Ultimately the target lives a waking dream, unable to distinguish fantasy from reality. This art does not work on Slumbering wraiths under any circumstances.

Oneirataxia became unpopular after the Sandman Herve de Maupassant (died 1889) had it used against his still-living brother, the French short story writer Guy de Maupassant. Herve, psychotic and immature in life, took posthumous vengeance on Guy, who had confined Herve in an asylum, by selling his own Corpus to a Night Terror in exchange for the elder Sandman's agreement to use Oneirataxia on Guy. Plagued by grief, dreamlessness, and daytime visions of awful supernatural creatures (depicted in his last story, "The Wolf"), Guy attempted suicide in 1892. He failed in this attempt, but only survived another year as a lunatic; apparently he never arrived in the Shadowlands.

System: In an extended roll, the player rolls Manipulation + Phantasm (difficulty 8 or the target's Willpower, whichever is higher). The target may resist by using Wits + Meditation (difficulty 8). Each success indicates a night of dreamless sleep. For each three consecutive dreamless nights, the target's Mental and Social Attributes are reduced by one dot each (minimum one). The target recovers one dot per reduced Attribute if the wraith botches any roll. After con-



secutive dreamless nights equal to three times the number of dots in the target's highest Mental Attribute (minimum of six nights), the target goes insane.

The wraith may continue the extended roll, accumulating more successes. When the total successes reach 20, the target has suffered permanent, incurable brain damage. If the chain of consecutive dreamless nights is broken before this point, the target recovers one dot in each reduced Attribute for each night of peaceful, dreaming sleep. A wraith who wants to induce brain damage must start over again from zero.

This art costs 2 Pathos per use, and the wraith's Shadow gains 1 point of Permanent Angst when the mortal goes mad.

..... Supplant

Just as a ruthless Sandman can tear a mortal soul from its body, so can she cram the same soul into a different sleeping body. Upon waking, the original soul snaps back to its proper shell, but the effect of the separation is powerful. In the following weeks, the victim of a Supplanting feels inexplicable turmoil, sleeps restlessly, and experiences powerful visions of death and change. These visions grow more frequent the more times the soul is Supplanted, eventually driving the Supplanted mortal insane.

Twisted Sandmen have used this art to punish two offending mortals by switching their souls, a fate much approved of by the Laughing Lady. The effects of Supplant are never predictable, although close study of each person victimized might shed some light on the matter.

System: Before a soul can be Supplanted into a new body, the art of Elysia (though some Dopplers prefer to use Agon) must first be used to separate it from its original body. If this original separation is not effected, then Supplant cannot be used.

To insert the soul into the target shell, the player rolls Dexterity + Phantasm in an opposed roll against the disembodied soul's Intelligence + Awareness. If the wraith's successes exceed the soul's, the Supplanting works. Failure means the soul returns to its native body, driving out any other soul placed there. If another soul inhabits the target body, the Supplanting fails automatically while still incurring the costs associated with the art.

If a living person has her soul Supplanted into another body and then dies before it is returned to its proper place, she automatically becomes a wraith with a permanent Angst equivalent to her Willpower, and the body containing her soul at the time of her death becomes a Fetter.

Dopplering, the practice of slipping a soul in and out of a body as rapidly as possible, requires only one roll each for the





uses of Elysia and Supplant involved. However, the difficulty of each of these rolls is at +1, and any botch destroys the soul the Doppler is playing with.

This art costs 3 Pathos, and the Sandman's Shadow gains 2 temporary Angst per use. Botching earns 3 points of temporary Angst while still costing 3 Pathos.

Artifacts of Dream



As theatrical folk, Sandmen keenly appreciate the value of props. They work with Artificers to Empower artifacts, seek devices from other Guilds that incorporate convincing Arcanos effects into their illusions, and keep both (or however many) eyes open for desirable relics. However, the Dreamcrafter attitude toward these items is pragmatic. If an artifact supports an illusion or expedites a novel dream, well and good; otherwise, the Sandman generally sells or barbers it for something that does.

Sand (Common, Level 1)

This shimmering material reduces the difficulty of Phantasm. Harvesting Sand from the minds of a few gifted dreamers, the Sandmen scatter it by handfuls as they weave their illusions. The rare people whose dreams produce Sand ("Sandmakers") are highly creative but have little outlet for their talents: quadriplegics, autistic children, abused housewives and others. Their repressed creativity manifests as Sand. A Sandman covets and protects a Sandmaker, often keeping a lethal silence about the dreamer's identity and whereabouts. Experienced Sandmen may know of three to five such dreamers. Infra-Guild battles of legendary proportions have been waged over the rights to a given Sandmaker.

System: The actual harvesting of Sand requires a Dexterity + Phantasm roll (difficulty 7), assuming of course that the setting of the dream is appropriate for a harvest. Sand is always granular, but may take the form of sea sand, cemetery dust, ground bone or any other substance that is plausible in the dream's setting. The acquisition of Sand is hardly an automatic process, especially the Sandman's entry into the

Sandmaker's dream and the changes the Sandman works there that let the scene plausibly produce granular material that can be harvested. Altering the dream to produce a workable setting often requires creativity; trying to transplant a factory-floor anxiety nightmare to the beach simply won't work.

Each point of Sand spent on any Phantasm roll reduces the roll's difficulty by 1 (minimum difficulty 2). Once spent, the Sand is exhausted. A given Sandmaker produces one point of Sand per story. After being harvested for Sand, a dreamer feels drained and listless the next day. Changelings harvested acquire one temporary point of Banality in addition to the physiological effects.

Dreamspider (Luxury, Level 2)

By placing this crystalline spider-sculpture in a mortal's dream, the Sandman may monitor the mortal's movements, general feelings and physical condition during waking hours. Not a creature but an automaton crafted by gifted Artificers, the Dreamspider relays its reports to the Sandman upon request in a dull monotone, without capacity to judge or make inferences.

The Dreamspider transforms to fit the host's dreamscape, and in waking hours becomes a sequence of persistent, annoying thoughts. To power this transformation, a spider draws energy from its host's imagination. The longer it is left in a host, the greater the amount of creative energy it consumes, and the less there is left to the host. Should a Dreamspider be left in place too long, it drives the host into a torpid, dull-witted state. (This outcome grants the Sandman's Shadow 1 point of temporary Angst.) More than one case of writer's block has ensued when a negligent Sandman accidentally left a Dreamspider in a host author for just one day too long.

Mirror of Memory (Luxury, Level 3)

Sandmen constructed these valuable mirrors in consultation with the Mnemoi (for more information on this Guild, see the **Wraith Player's Guide**). A Mirror of Memory is a shallow bowl of Stygian iron engraved with evocative symbols. When the Sandman spends 1 Pathos and concentrates on the bowl, it apparently fills with a dark liquid, the stuff of dream itself. In the still liquid the Sandman can see reflections of any dream the Mirror's owner has created, inspired, or encountered in the past. The effect lasts long enough to display a number of dreams equal to the Sandman's Perception; then the liquid vanishes. The Mirror works once per day.

A Mirror of Memory can serve as an interesting clue or a Storyteller device for conveying information to the characters.

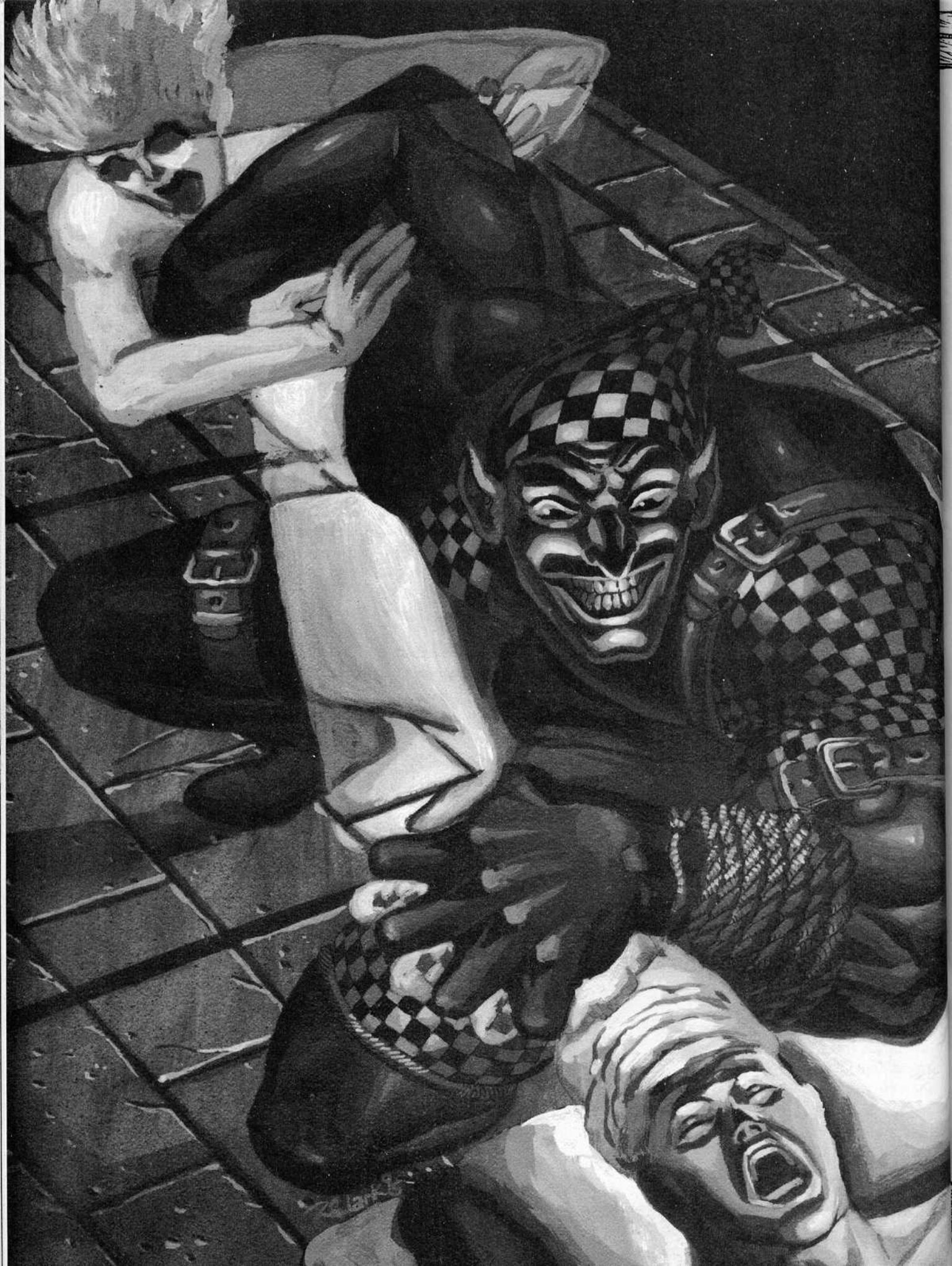
Dreamcatcher (Luxury, Level 3)

Native Americans traditionally constructed dreamcatchers to prevent bad dreams from reaching their children. Nightmares would be trapped in the webbing, where they would remain until evaporated by the sun's rays, while good dreams "knew" their way through the hole in the web's center and into the mind of the sleeping child.

Among wraiths, Sandmen construct Dreamcatchers to protect favored mortals from bad dreams. Like the Native American dreamcatchers, their webs, elaborately woven from spun Sand, filter out nightmares and allow only good dreams in.

By spending one Pathos and placing a Dreamcatcher in a mortal's dream, a Sandman prevents nightmares. The Dreamcatcher may appear as something entirely different within the context of the dream — a dam, a huge net, a magical garden gate — but it always serves to keep something bad out of the dream.







Act IV: ...And We Are Merely Players

*I can hear the roar of a distant crowd
They are waiting for me
Calling my name
Shouting out loud
— Alan Parsons Project, “Limelight”*

All Sandmen have two things in common: They know the Arcanos Phantasm to one degree or another, and they love drama, whether of their own creation or someone else's. The following templates assume these two characteristics, and

are intended to serve as character possibilities. You can use them as is, modify them, or take these ideas and create your own Sandmen.

Troubled Genius

Quote: "Monsieur Henri Amiel once said, 'To do what is impossible for talent is the mark of genius.' Guess I've that mark."

Prelude: A starving playwright, you lived in a disordered apartment that might pass for a closet even in the worst part of town. Day and night, you toiled over your masterpieces, while your relationships with family and friends fell to pieces. When you finally realized what your obsession with your art had cost you, it was too late. Alone and in ill health, and a hopeless alcoholic, you died late one night while sitting at your desk.

Your entrée into the playwrights' Valhalla was ignominious. Reaped by some Renegade Union actors in search of a playwright, you spent the next decade scribbling melodramas and slapstick comedies, spending your meager salary on a Sandman who'd teach you the Phantasm Arcanos. When you'd finally convinced yourself that you could script

cultivated Pageants, you snubbed your theatre friends and ventured off to find work in another Necropolis.

There, an older Sandman who functioned as an agent found your work exciting and decided to promote it. With habitual bravado, you try to discourage her charity, but despite your grumpy, obsessive-compulsive personality, you have become quite an Underworld star. What bothers you about this turn of events is the vacuousness you associate with popularity; you're certain that your renown means you've lost your literary genius. The question now is how to get it back.

Concept: A closet Romantic, you don't buy into the Guild's patron/artist structure: You would rather eke out an existence in the Shadowlands' rattiest Necropolis writing meaningful pieces than bow and scrape to a paying patron, potboiling to fit his unrefined preferences. On the other hand, you want a stage upon which to produce your plays, so you reluctantly belong to the Dream Union. All in all, you've got the talent to support your independence; now you just have to prove to yourself that you're on par with the greatest inklingers of the Underworld, Guild or not.

Roleplaying Tips: Absorb everything going on around you and catalogue it as a potential subject for new Pageants — whether at your desk or not, you're always at work, constructing dramas from ideas gleaned from your surroundings. Those who don't understand this mentality are clearly Philistines; those who do are probably playwrights and possibly rivals.

Relics: Pen, paper, and portable writing desk; gossamer beret featuring dreams that resemble Cocteau's *Orphée*; book of quotations



Name: *Troubled Genius*
 Player:
 Chronicle:

Nature: *Visionary*
 Demeanor: *Loner*
 Shadow: *The Perfectionist*

Life: *Struggling Playwright*
 Death: *Alcoholism*
 Regret: *Never having written
 your masterpiece*

Attributes

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

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
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		Arcani	
<i>Guild Status</i>	●●○○○	<i>Create great art</i>	●●●●●	<i>Phantasm</i>	●●●○○
<i>Mentor</i>	●○○○○	<i>(Ego)</i>	○○○○○	<i>Keening</i>	●○○○○
<i>Status</i>	●○○○○	<i>Reconcile with your family</i>	●●●●●	<i>Mnemosynis</i>	●○○○○
<i>Eidolon</i>	●○○○○	<i>(Regret)</i>	○○○○○	<i>Castigate</i>	●○○○○
<i>Haunt</i>	●●●●●	<i>Punish those who didn't</i>	●○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○	<i>recognize your genius</i>	○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○	<i>(Revenge)</i>	○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters

<i>Old manuscript</i>	●●●●○
<i>Typewriter</i>	●●●○○
<i>Acceptance letter from a Publisher</i>	○○○○○
<i>Shot glass</i>	●○○○○
	○○○○○

Experience

Corpus



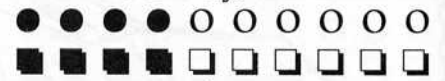
Willpower



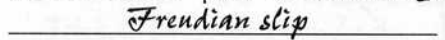
Pathos



Angst



Thorns



Frendian slip

Dark Passions

<i>Kick the Psyche for failing (Self-hatred)</i>	●●●●○
<i>Destroy yourself</i>	●●●○○
<i>(Self-pity)</i>	○○○○○

Scheming Ingénue



Quote: "Why, what do you mean? I love her acting... it's so wonderfully formal."

Prelude: You excelled in theatre school, and when you got out, you had high expectations. You tried out for role after role in commercial theatre, but never managed to clinch the big opportunity. Finally, the directors asked you to play understudy to the leading lady one too many times. Worse, the leads rubbed your nose in it.

So you invented your own drama. You adopted the role of the sweet, sympathetic ingénue, while secretly scheming to bump the lead actress and take her place. Your plans reached their zenith when you thought you'd managed to convince the director, via naïve hints and allegations (and not a few late-night dinners), that your rival's lines played poorly off the other actors', her presentation was stiff, and, worst of all, the critics hated her. Unfortunately, when you realized that the director's opinion of the lead was not quite so low as yours, you choked on your dinner and gracefully died of asphyxiation.

Humiliated, you couldn't let go. Reaped by a small, unsuccessful troupe of Stygian freelancers, you joined the Hierarchy and played your games there.

Eventually, an impresario peered beyond your seeming innocence, understanding the depth of — and talent inherent in — your cunning. Thanks to him, a Hierarchy bureaucrat has convinced you to finesse your way into the Machiavellian world of Stygian intrigue. While you enjoy this work for its dramatic tensions, you still obsess over unfulfilled stardom and your humiliating demise.

Concept: You excel at portraying naïveté in all its myriad forms, while simultaneously working on your goal to become the Underworld's most famous actress. Since you left the breathing world, simplicity has gone out of fashion, but there are still enough older wraiths who believe in innocence — especially within the Hierarchy — left to fool. You're so valuable to your employer precisely because he has targeted that very audience: disillusioned and powerful older wraiths who are easily charmed by your veneer of sympathetic innocence and youth.

Roleplaying Tips: While you radiate sincerity and artlessness, underneath, your humiliation has become an obsession. You try to keep the nature of your death a secret. You envy success, especially the success of prospering actors, and do your best to sabotage their careers. At the same time, your envy is somewhat justified: You are a genuinely talented actress with a regrettable tendency to find bad luck even in the most providential places.

Relic: Lace fan

Name: *Scheming Ingenue*
 Player:
 Chronicle:

Nature: *Conniver*
 Demeanor: *Child*
 Shadow: *The Leech*

Life: *Professional Understudy*
 Death: *Choking in Disbelief*
 Regret: *Never having been a star*

Attributes

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

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
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		Arcani	
<i>Contacts</i>	●●○○○	<i>Ruin the careers of those</i>	●●●●○	<i>Embodiment</i>	●●○○○
<i>Mentor</i>	●●○○○	<i>you understudied for</i>	○○○○○	<i>Phantasm</i>	●●○○○
<i>Memoriam</i>	●○○○○	<i>(Revenge)</i>	○○○○○	<i>Usury</i>	●○○○○
<i>Wealth</i>	●○○○○	<i>Become a star</i>	●●●●○	<i>Moliate</i>	●○○○○
	○○○○○	<i>(Ego)</i>	○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters

<i>Stage where you first</i>	●●●●○
<i>starred</i>	○○○○○
<i>Playbill magazine</i>	●●●○○
<i>Equity union card</i>	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

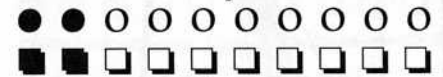
Corpus



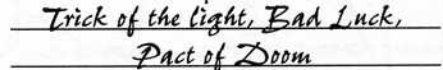
Willpower



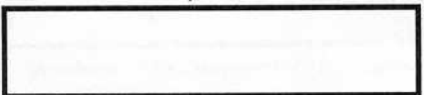
Angst



Thorns



Experience



Pathos



Dark Passions

<i>Bring down your patron (Jealousy)</i>	●●●●○
<i>Ruin the Lives of all you meet</i>	●●●●○
<i>(Contempt)</i>	○○○○○
<i>Seducer the Powerful (Contempt)</i>	●○○○○

Drama Critic

Quote: "In the past, DeGioulle's tendency to play up the duality of death's beautiful and macabre nature resulted in a genuinely unsettling effect; in his most recent Pageant, *Death's Door*, this theme falls flat on its face."

Prelude: Early on, you discovered that your interest in theatre would never amount to an acting career. And, while you had a feel for the elements of good scripting and directing, you didn't have the patience to engage in either. Theatre and film reviews showcased your talents, though, and soon enough the big-name newspaper editors were scrambling over themselves to buy your pieces.

Your career took a nose-dive, however, when compromising pictures of you and a Hollywood star whose film you'd lionized appeared in the papers. Your credibility lost, you took a series of hack jobs. Finally, embittered, old and never having quite reconciled yourself to your mistake, you angrily committed suicide.

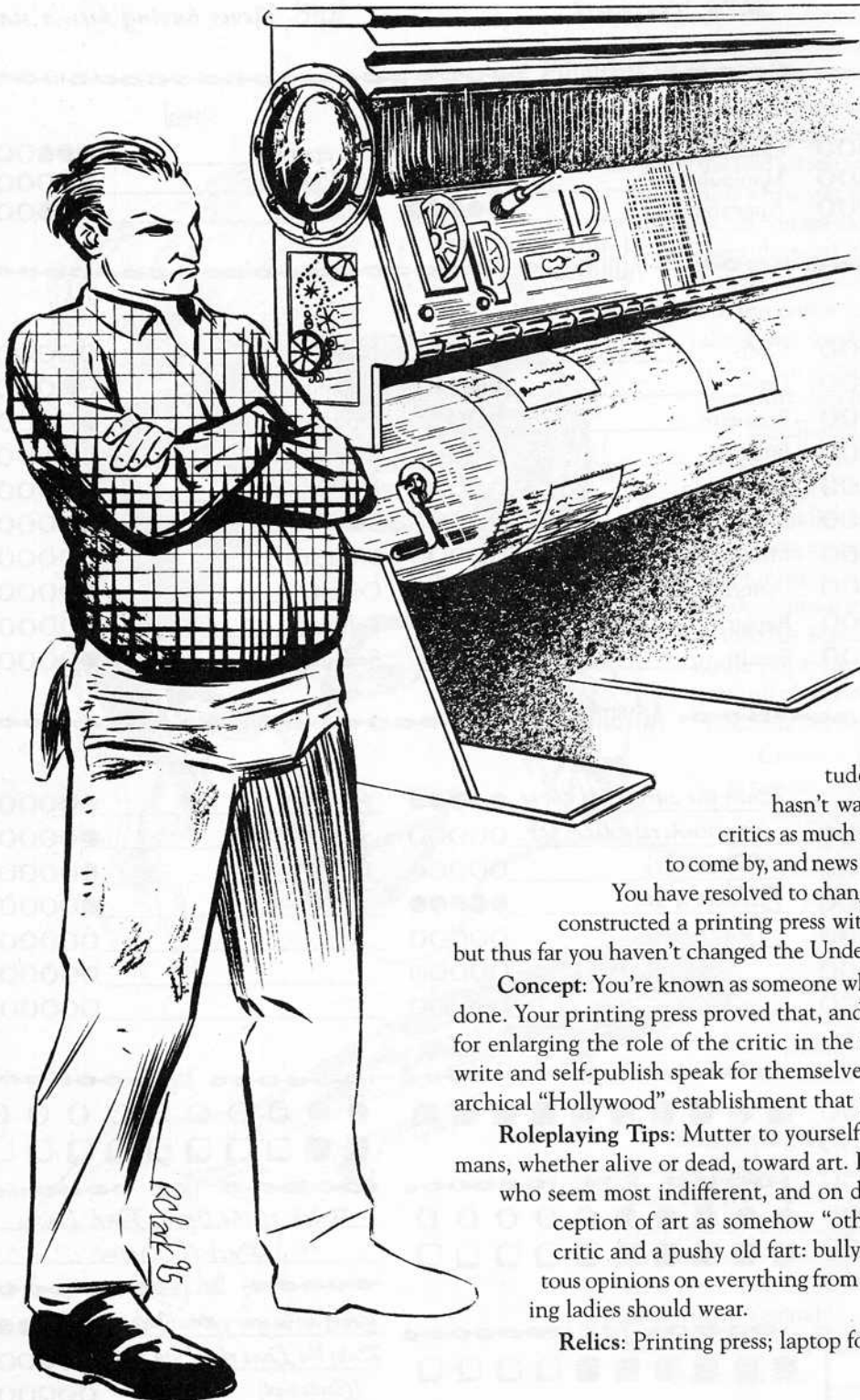
If your life proved a disappointment, your death has been even more so. Perhaps because of the persistently backward attitudes about theatre, the Underworld hasn't warmed to the idea of modern amoral critics as much as it might have. Newspapers are hard to come by, and news is often slanted to favor Stygian views.

You have resolved to change this indifference — you have even constructed a printing press with the assistance of the Unionists — but thus far you haven't changed the Underworld.

Concept: You're known as someone who makes up his mind and gets things done. Your printing press proved that, and soon you'll have even greater plans for enlarging the role of the critic in the Shadowlands. The reviews that you write and self-publish speak for themselves, often undermining the same hierarchical "Hollywood" establishment that put you under while alive.

Roleplaying Tips: Mutter to yourself about the tragic indifference of humans, whether alive or dead, toward art. Indulge your critical nature on those who seem most indifferent, and on dramatic works which foster the perception of art as somehow "other" and incomprehensible. You're a critic and a pushy old fart: bully others into listening to your ubiquitous opinions on everything from dramatic style to which lipstick leading ladies should wear.

Relics: Printing press; laptop for writing reviews



Name: *Drama Critic*

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: *Critic*

Demeanor: *Curmudgeon*

Shadow: *The Monster*

Life: *Big-time syndicated critic*

Death: *Suicide*

Regret: *Having thrown all the success away*

Attributes

Physical

Strength
Dexterity
Stamina

Social

Charisma
Manipulation
Appearance

Mental

Perception
Intelligence
Wits

Abilities

Talents

Alertness
Athletics
Awareness
Brawl
Dodge
Empathy
Expression
Intimidation
Streetwise
Subterfuge

Skills

Crafts
Drive
Etiquette
Firearms
Leadership
Meditation
Melee
Performance
Repair
Stealth

Knowledge

Bureaucracy
Computer
Enigmas
Investigation
Law
Linguistics
Medicine
Occult
Politics
Science

Advantages

Backgrounds

Memoriam
Guild status
Notoriety
Relic
Allies

Passions

Reward great art
(Love)
Advance the cause of
the theater
(Pride)
Triumph over those who
dismissed you (Vengeance)

Arcani

Fatalism
Lifeline
Phantasm
Puppetry
Usury

Fetters

Copy of first published
article
First check for writing
Incriminating photo
Autographed picture of
you and Woody Allen

Corpus

Willpower

Angst

Thorns

Shadow Trait (Strength)

Experience

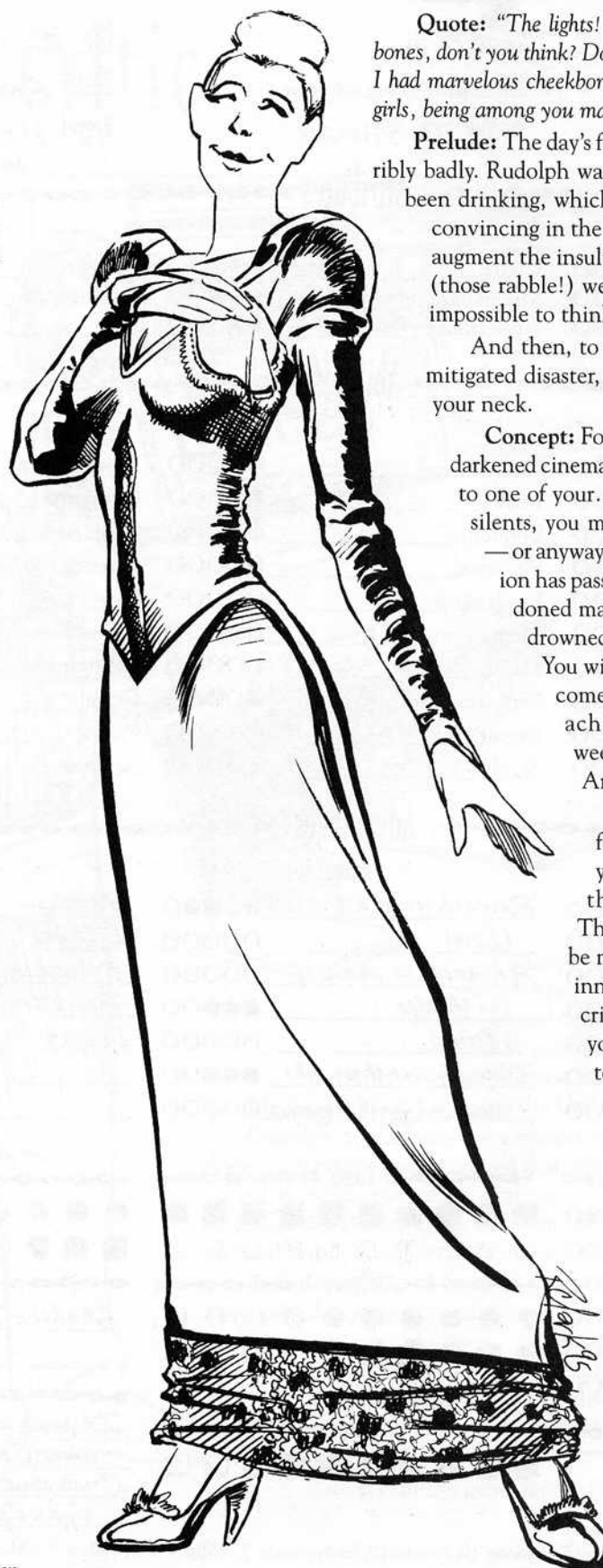
Pathos

Dark Passions

Dismiss the work of all
others (Contempt)
Create something better than
anyone else, ever (Envy)

Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 13/9/5, Arcanos: 5, Passions: 10, Fetters: 10, Backgrounds: 7, Willpower: 5, Pathos: 5 + Memoriam, Freebies: 15 (5,2,1)

Film Queen



Quote: "The lights! The lights! They bring out my cheekbones, don't you think? Do you know, D. W. Griffith always said I had marvelous cheekbones. Do you like them? Dear boys and girls, being among you makes me feel so young."

Prelude: The day's filming had already gone terribly, terribly badly. Rudolph was in a foul mood and had obviously been drinking, which made his David stupendously unconvincing in the love scene with your Bathsheba. To augment the insult, on the next set the Keystone Kops (those rabble!) were setting up a clatter that made it impossible to think, simply impossible.

And then, to make the entire experience an unmitigated disaster, a klieg light fell on you and broke your neck.

Concept: For a time the Underworld (how like a darkened cinema!) treated you with the respect suited to one of your...your *stature*. In Pageants as in the silents, you made the watcher's heart beat faster — or anyway, they adored you. Yet now cruel fashion has passed you by, much as the talkies abandoned many in your profession like so many drowned kittens. But true talent must tell!

You will ally yourself with promising newcomers and dazzle observers with your achievements. In months, perhaps weeks, your name will be on every lip. And then — comeback!

Roleplaying Tips: Guide your fellow wraiths with the wisdom of your long experience. Encourage them to appreciate your beauty. Though you are high-strung and can be mortified by any insult, you have an inner strength that guides you through crises. Develop a situation to highlight your central role, and to a lesser extent the roles of your companions. And don't forget your Arcanos: illusion makes you lovely (although sometimes the illusion lies in your own mind, not in Phantasm).

Relics: A treasured collection of reviews; the handkerchief, once scented, that you received as a token of affection from Rudolph Valentino

Name: *Film Queen*

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: *Bon Vivant*

Demeanor: *Bon Vivant*

Shadow: *The Parent*

Life: *Actress*

Death: *Crushed by Kleig Light*

Regret: *Not having that one big hit*

Attributes

Physical

Social

Mental

Strength ●●○○○

Charisma ●●●○○

Perception ●●●○○

Dexterity ●●○○○

Manipulation ●●○○○

Intelligence ●●○○○

Stamina ●●○○○

Appearance ●●●○○

Wits ●●●○○

Abilities

Talents

Skills

Knowledge

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

Arcani

Artifact ●●○○○

Receive your old films ●●●○○

Embody ●○○○○

Wealth ●●○○○

(Ego) ○○○○○

Intimiation ●●○○○

Guild Status ●●○○○

Bring back glamour to ●●●○○

Moliate ●○○○○

Memoriam ●●●○○

Hollywood ○○○○○

Phantasm ●●○○○

○○○○○

(Nostalgia) ○○○○○

Puppetry ●○○○○

○○○○○

Revel in Adulation ●●●○○

○○○○○

○○○○○

(Ego) ○○○○○

○○○○○

Fetters

Corpus

Angst

Old movie poster ●●●○○

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Klieg light ●●○○○

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Favorite costume gown ●●○○○

Willpower

Thorns

Film of first screen test ●●○○○

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Devil's Dare, Shadow Call,

Handprints in front of Grun-

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Tainted Relic

man's Chinese Theater ○○○○○

Pathos

Dark Passions

○○○○○

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Destroy all your rivals (envy) ●●●●●

○○○○○

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Kill Actresses who have ●●●●○

○○○○○

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

eclipsed your legend. (Hate) ○○○○○

○○○○○

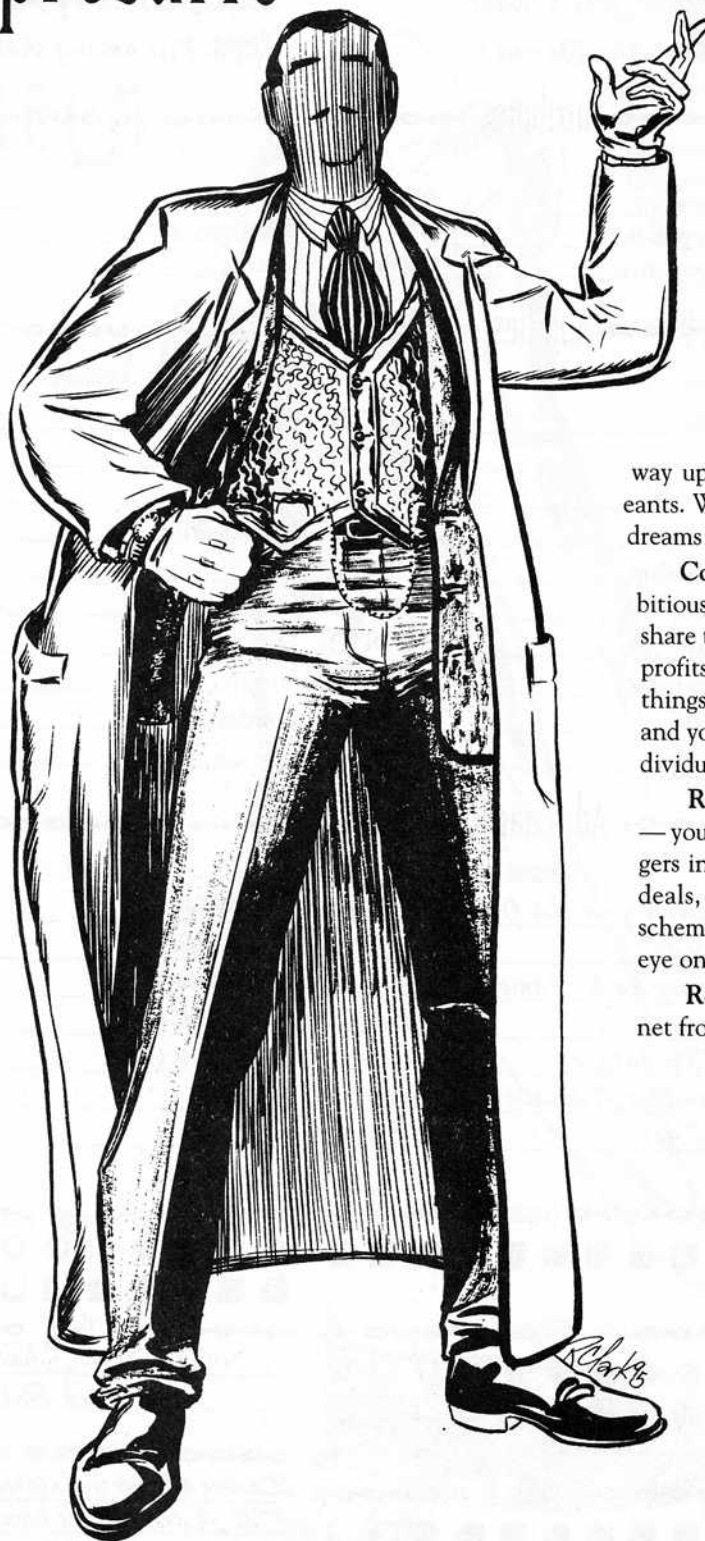
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○○○○○

Experience

○○○○○

Impresario



Quote: "I've got a script — great script! — by a new fellow in Atlanta, and I've got a firm commitment from — guess — Richard Burbage! Yes! Believe me, Dickie's a wonderful man. For director, I'm talking with Lawrence Mannering. You don't know him? How could you not know him? Trust me: **tremendous** stuff. Tremendous. Now, here's where I see you fitting in...."

Prelude: Death has a haunted, desperate quality for you, but then again, so did life. After exciting combat service in the Pacific, postwar life was a letdown: You worked as an insurance executive, retired with a gold watch after 40 years of service, then died of a heart attack shoveling snow. Blehh. But you nurtured your dreams, and in the Underworld you've started to make them come true. Rescued from slavers by a passing troupe of Sandmen, you fell in with them, worked your way up to management, and started producing Pageants. With this lucky second start, you won't let your dreams slip away again.

Concept: Florid, confident, and unshakably ambitious, you strive for big goals and convince others to share them. Let others get all the glory; you want the profits and the influence. Your reputation for getting things done has brought some big projects your way, and you intend to carry them out with authentic, individual vision.

Roleplaying Tips: You don't order people around — you maneuver them. Do what you can to turn dangers into the stuff of great productions. Envision big deals, work every promising newcomer into your scheme, take disaster in stride, and always keep your eye on the big, big picture.

Relics: Gold retirement watch; souvenir bayonet from the Battle of Iwo Jima, little black book

Name: *Impresario*
 Player:
 Chronicle:

Nature: *Director*
 Demeanor: *Bon Vivant*
 Shadow: *The Pusher*

Life: *Insurance Executive*
 Death: *Cardiac Arrest*
 Regret: *The Utter lack of excitement in your life*

Attributes

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

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
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		Arcani	
<i>Allies</i>	●○○○○	<i>Protect your widow (Love)</i>	●●●○○	<i>Argos</i>	●○○○○
<i>Contacts</i>	●●○○○	<i>Have some Fun! (Hedonism)</i>	●●●○○	<i>Inhabit</i>	●○○○○
<i>Guild Status</i>	●●○○○	<i>Make deals happen (Pride)</i>	●●○○○	<i>Intimation</i>	●○○○○
<i>Haunt</i>	●○○○○	<i>Bring your dreams to life onstage (Joy)</i>	●●○○○	<i>Phantasm</i>	●○○○○
<i>Wealth</i>	●○○○○		○○○○○	<i>Usury</i>	●○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○
	○○○○○		○○○○○		○○○○○

Fetters

<i>Gold watch</i>	●●●○○
<i>Snow shovel</i>	●●●○○
<i>Purple Heart</i>	●●●○○
<i>Old home</i>	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Corpus

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Willpower
● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Angst

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Thorns

<i>Shadow Life</i>

Experience

--

Pathos


■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Dark Passions

<i>Orchestral disasters (Hate)</i>	●●●○○
<i>Drain magic from the lives of others (Spice)</i>	●●●○○
<i>Bring the host's wife to the</i>	●●●○○
<i>Shadow lands (Twisted Love)</i>	○○○○○



Epilogue: The Big Players



Enter *The Narrator*, in a black evening gown and black elbow-length silk gloves. She carries a slender, metal-tipped wand, less than a foot in length, which traces fluid figures in the air as she speaks — spartan character portraits, line-drawings that shimmer against the maroon velvet stage curtain then drift to the floor like faded flower petals.

The Narrator: By now, I expect that many of you have at least been entertained at the parties and salons thrown by our lesser talents. For your sakes, however, I hope that you have the opportunity someday to meet the individuals I am about to describe. Truly, their talent burns so brightly as to chase away even the darkest shadows of the Sunless Lands.

Hikaru Matsuki

Like a world-famous conductor, Western-born Hikaru Matsuki carries with him throughout Stygia and the Shadowlands the renown of a Sandman Guildmaster. Ordinarily, such fame would pose significant danger, particularly from the worst of the Hierarchy bureaucrats. However, no one really knows who wears Matsuki's mask. Many an assassin has fed an impostor to the Spectres, only to find Matsuki

reappearing to direct yet another Spectacle for the Dream Lords of the Tempest.

In life, Matsuki is said to have mastered the difficult art of avant-garde theatre direction by insisting upon audience participation and by employing elaborate sets which touched all the senses. He has carried this artistic genius through the gates of death, reforging and refining it in the cold fires of the Underworld until now he truly can be said to shape reality within the minds of both mortal dreamers and wraiths who participate in his Spectacles. In fact, many of his dreams evolve into elaborate plots in which mortals and wraiths find themselves the major players, almost as if he had transported them to a state between death and life where dreams and dream-logic constitute the unrelenting norm.

Because I do not know Matsuki personally, I cannot vouch that "he" is a single wraith. His work shows consistency, and I have heard many politicians and artists throughout the Shadowlands refer to him as a friend, but then, Matsuki belongs to an actors' guild, a pool of individuals talented in, among other things, impersonation. Of late, rumors about Matsuki's involvement in a Guild Renaissance have begun to circulate throughout the Sunless artistic communities, drawing the curiosity of Hierarchy ladder-climbers intent on quashing the seemingly resurgent Guilds. If Matsuki involves himself in this resurgence, these Underworld powermongers may force him to call in certain favors sooner than he'd like...or perhaps he is counting on their involvement.

On a day to day basis, Matsuki directs a troupe known as Fanfare which produces Pageants for its audiences as it travels

throughout the Shadowlands. Urbane and elite, Fanfare accepts very few new Dreamcrafters each year, although occasionally it employs Sandmen when a play or dream requires a large cast of "professionals" (as opposed to general audiences who cannot act their way out of a Nihil) or simply some supernumeraries. On occasion, Fanfare hosts a Dreamtime in which the Sandmen involved create a costly and elaborately composed dream for a sleeping mortal. I once participated in one composed by the controversial genius Anton de Varzonzuella and directed by Matsuki, and patronized by a masked and powerful Dream Lord whom none of us knew. It became apparent, as the dream progressed, that this Dream Lord was using Fanfare to shape the imagination of a certain mortal artist whose revolutionary work was highly regarded among Renegades. While I thoroughly enjoyed working with the talented members of Fanfare, I fear the political consequences of being associated with the group.

Dixan Chenilly



Dixan came to us relatively recently, an impassioned ingénue gifted with a sensual command of spoken and body language and a flair for improvisation. If ever you meet her, you will discover that she is quite a tomboy, although she claims to have been an escapee of the well-mannered Georgian high-society tea socials of the mid-1800s. She also claims to possess the reincarnated soul of Thespis, the ancient Greek poet and father of drama, although I suspect the claim is just another example of her cunning efforts at self-fashioning. Image-crafting aside, even if she were mystically connected with Thespis, her art draws primarily upon metrical irregularities and a blatant disregard for the Aristotelian unities of the romantic stage, characteristics most surely avoided by one such as Thespis even in a reincarnated state.

Dixan is famed for her command of oneiric pacing, the ability to pace staged dreams to match the imaginative capacities of the dreamer. Many Sandmen directors find this ability useful in performers, for a strong command of it helps actors to avoid damaging dreaming souls.

Dixan straightforwardly admits her involvement with the illegal Sandmen's Guild. She has been known to mentor novices and those wishing to involve themselves in the Unionists. Although the Hierarchy has called her on her involvement in the Guild a number of times, somehow Dixan always manages to avoid the forges.

As novice Sandmen, I would recommend that, should you ever have the fortune to meet Dixan, you take advantage of the opportunity. She can connect you with a good many talented Sandmen, and she can teach you quite a bit about the profession. Speaking from personal experience, she can also be a great friend.



Anton de Varzonzuela



In my years as a Sandman, I have traveled far and wide throughout the Shadowlands and Stygia and met many a wraith; but never have I met anyone, even among the dread Dream Lords, quite like Anton. An outsider among Sandmen, he glides from locale to locale with the randomness of dream-logic, yet disciplines himself and his craft with the precision of a Usurer. With the internal artistry of a Pirandello and the genius of a Shakespeare, he bends the mind's will to his own. He is a master Dreamcrafter, and many a time our troupe has found inspiration in his Pageants.

Lost are the days when the lords of Stygia regaled favored freelance Dreamcrafters with gifts and honors. Among the darlings of the Dream Lords and yet ever the controversial figure, Anton earned a wealth of Stygian coins and goods, graciously bowed his head to accept his laurels, but unrelentingly spurned the titles and commissions the Deathlords offered him, particularly the gifts of the Laughing Lady.

He refused one too many times. The Dreamcrafter learned of the Laughing Lady's twisted plot to dispose of him, yet I am still not clear as to why she would want such a thing. Perhaps because he spurned her, but perhaps also, as he hinted to me, because he knew too much.

Vagabond he might be, but once he could often be found making the rounds of the Stygian courts. No longer, for court has proven too perilous. Anton now travels the byways of the Tempest, cloaked in dreams and peddling fantasies to philistines. When last I saw him, he claimed to have just returned from the City of Delights. At first, I did not believe him, since little is known of such faraway lands and rumor claims that only the Heavenly Regent can grant foreigners entrance to the City (and that only rarely). But Anton showed me a pomegranate — a living fruit in the land of the dead! — given him by the Regent from his gardens, and I had to believe.

Everywhere Anton travels, fate has followed him like a leashed dog. He has played artisan to emperors and queens who cannot guess at his games or at his importance in the politics of Stygia and its enemies. He thinks in layers, plays within plays, but his art is such that it appears as madness, north-north-west. If ever you meet him, beware his easy manner and his easier questions, or you too will find yourself among his devoted followers and caught in the intrigues that inevitably swirl around him.



Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Shadow:

Life:
Death:
Regret:

Attributes

Physical

Social

Mental

Strength ●○○○○
Dexterity ●○○○○
Stamina ●○○○○

Charisma ●○○○○
Manipulation ●○○○○
Appearance ●○○○○

Perception ●○○○○
Intelligence ●○○○○
Wits ●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Skills

Knowledge

Alertness ○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○
Awareness ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Dodge ○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○

Crafts ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○
Meditation ○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○
Performance ○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○
Stealth ○○○○○

Bureaucracy ○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○
Enigmas ○○○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Passions

____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
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____ ○○○○○

Arcanoi

Corpus

Specialty

____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○

Willpower

Hierarchy Attachment

____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

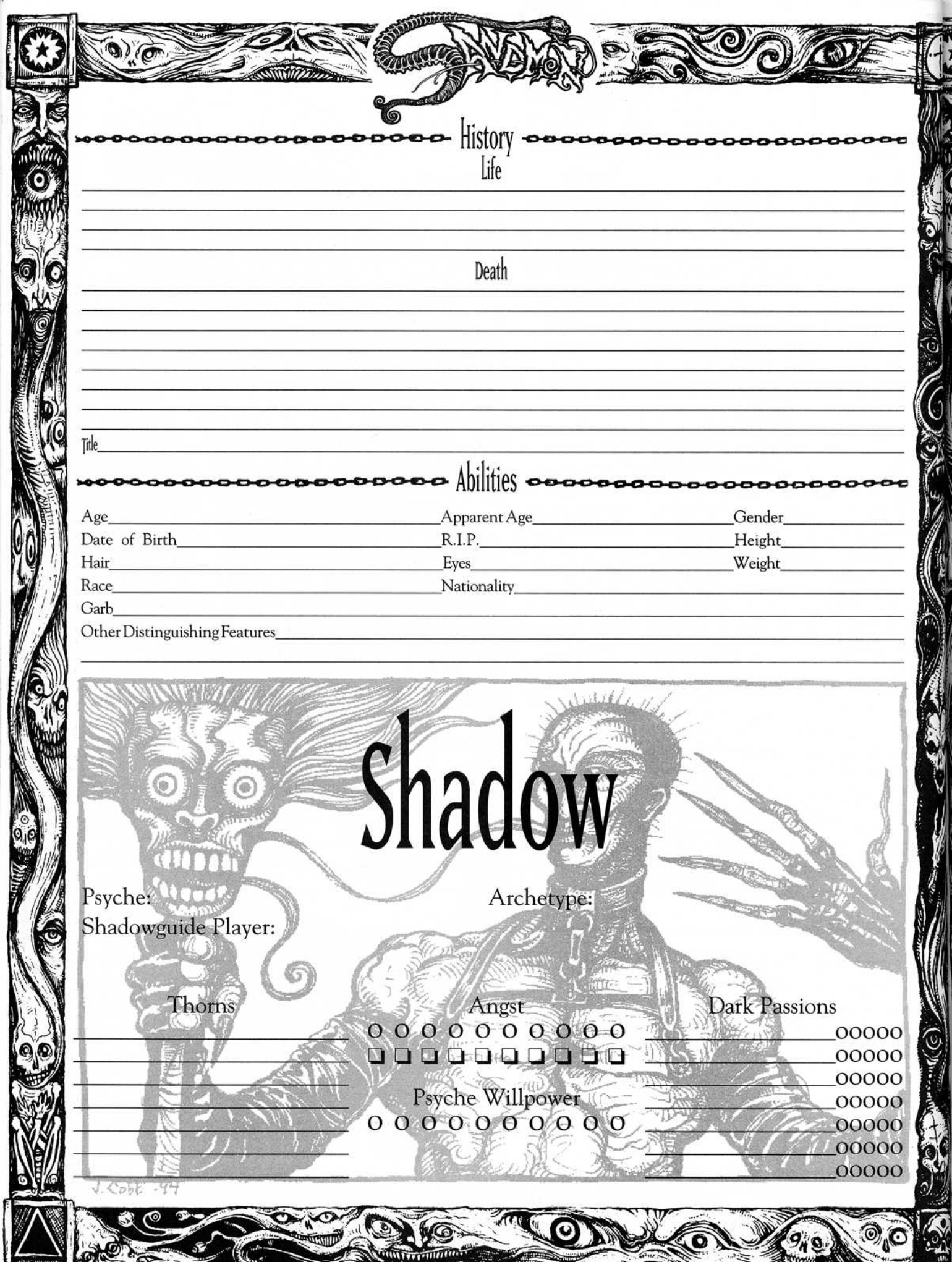
Guild Marks

Pathos

Union Attachment

Gossamer

Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 13/9/5, Arcanos: 5, Passions: 10, Fetters: 10, Backgrounds: 7, Willpower: 5, Pathos: 5 + Memoriam, Freebies: 15 (5,2,1)



History
Life

Death

Title

Abilities

Age	Apparent Age	Gender
Date of Birth	R.I.P.	Height
Hair	Eyes	Weight
Race	Nationality	
Garb		
Other Distinguishing Features		

Shadow

Psyche:
Shadowguide Player:

Archetype:

Thorns

Angst

Dark Passions

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

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Psyche Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



Expanded Background

Allies

Contacts

Eidolon

Guild Status

Contacts

Status

Memoriam

Mentor

Notoriety

Wealth

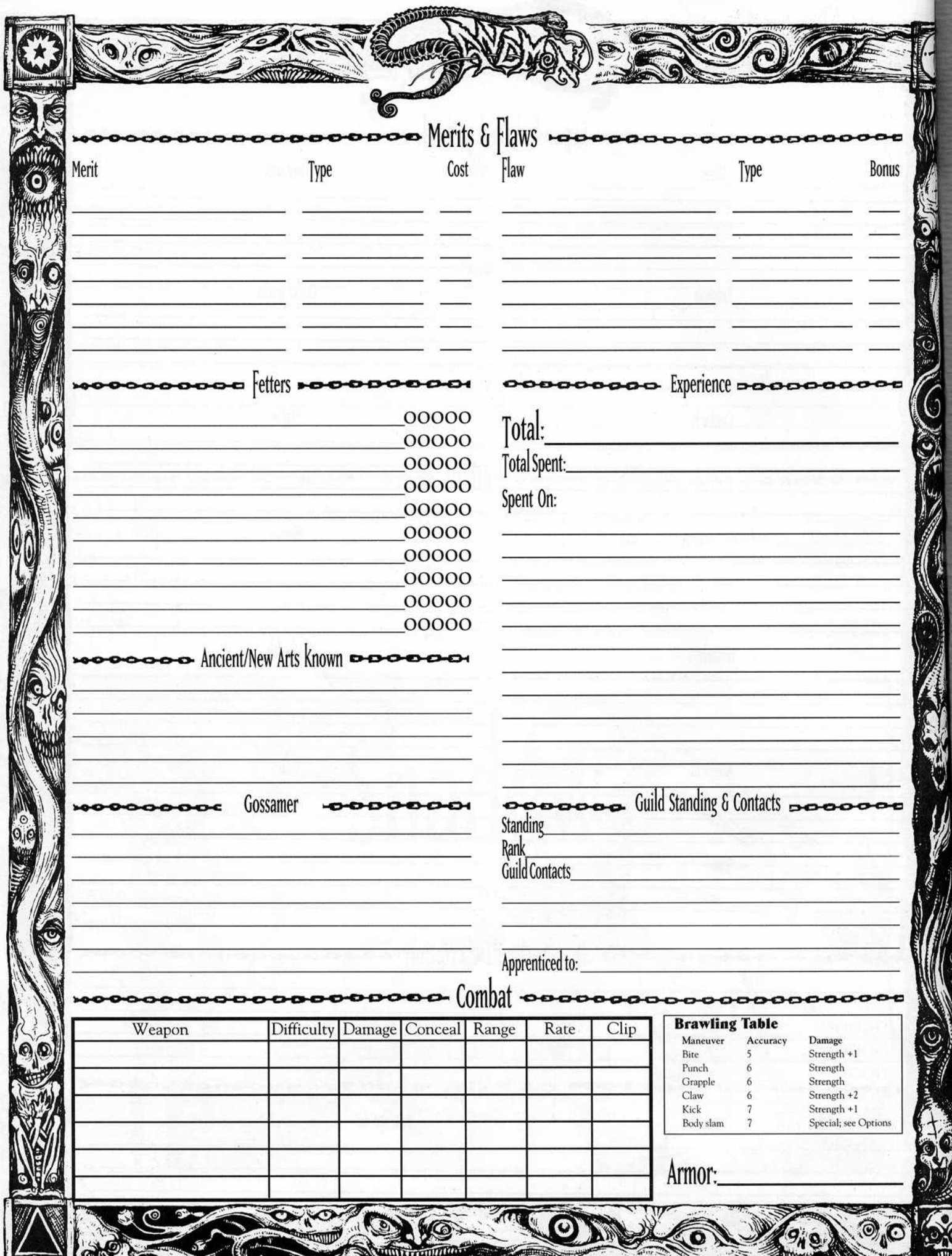
Artifacts

Relics

Dreamscape Description

Favorite Stages

Description



Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Flaw	Bonus

Fetters

OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO
 OOOOO

Experience

Total: _____

Total Spent: _____

Spent On: _____

Ancient/New Arts Known

Gossamer

Guild Standing & Contacts

Standing _____

Rank _____

Guild Contacts _____

Apprenticed to: _____

Combat

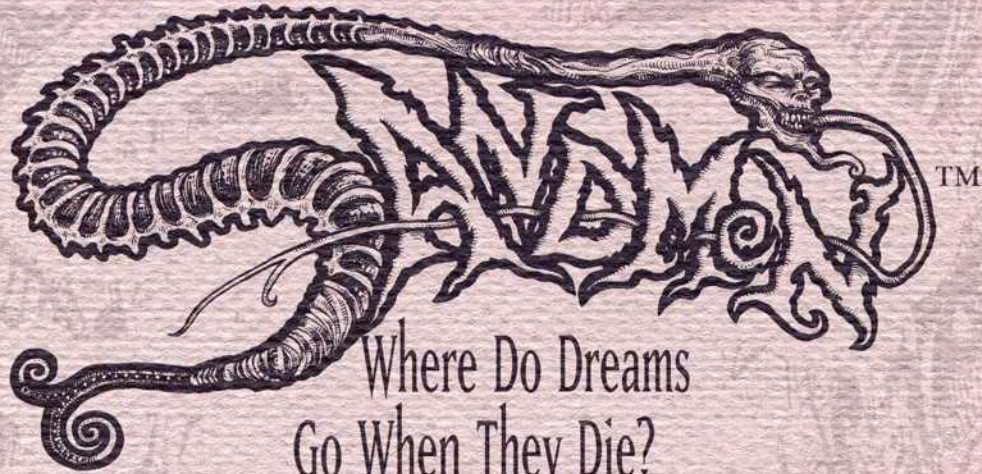
Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Conceal	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Table

Maneuver	Accuracy	Damage
Bite	5	Strength +1
Punch	6	Strength
Grapple	6	Strength
Claw	6	Strength +2
Kick	7	Strength +1
Body slam	7	Special; see Options

Armor: _____

GUILDBOOK:



Where Do Dreams Go When They Die?

*So, little dead man, have you come join our masque?
Welcome to the play that never ends, the dream that
dreams itself through eternity. Once upon a time,
I thought that Life was Art and Art was Life.
Now I know better. Soon, you will too.*

— Malaika Singleton, Night Angel of Philadelphia

Only the Living Can Awaken From This Dream!

When you close your eyes, they're waiting for you. As soon as you start to dream, you belong to them. Patiently they wait to take your soul on gossamer wings, to show it splendors you can scarcely imagine and terrors you can barely comprehend. And when your entertainment is over, theirs begins.

Sweet dreams...

Guildbook: Sandmen is the second in the series of Guildbooks for **Wraith:**

The Oblivion. Journey with the wraiths of dream as they mine the phantasmagorias of mortals for inspiration. See with them the splendors of the Theater of the Dead. Tremble as they rip screaming souls from sleeping bodies.

All of the secrets of the Sandmen are here,
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