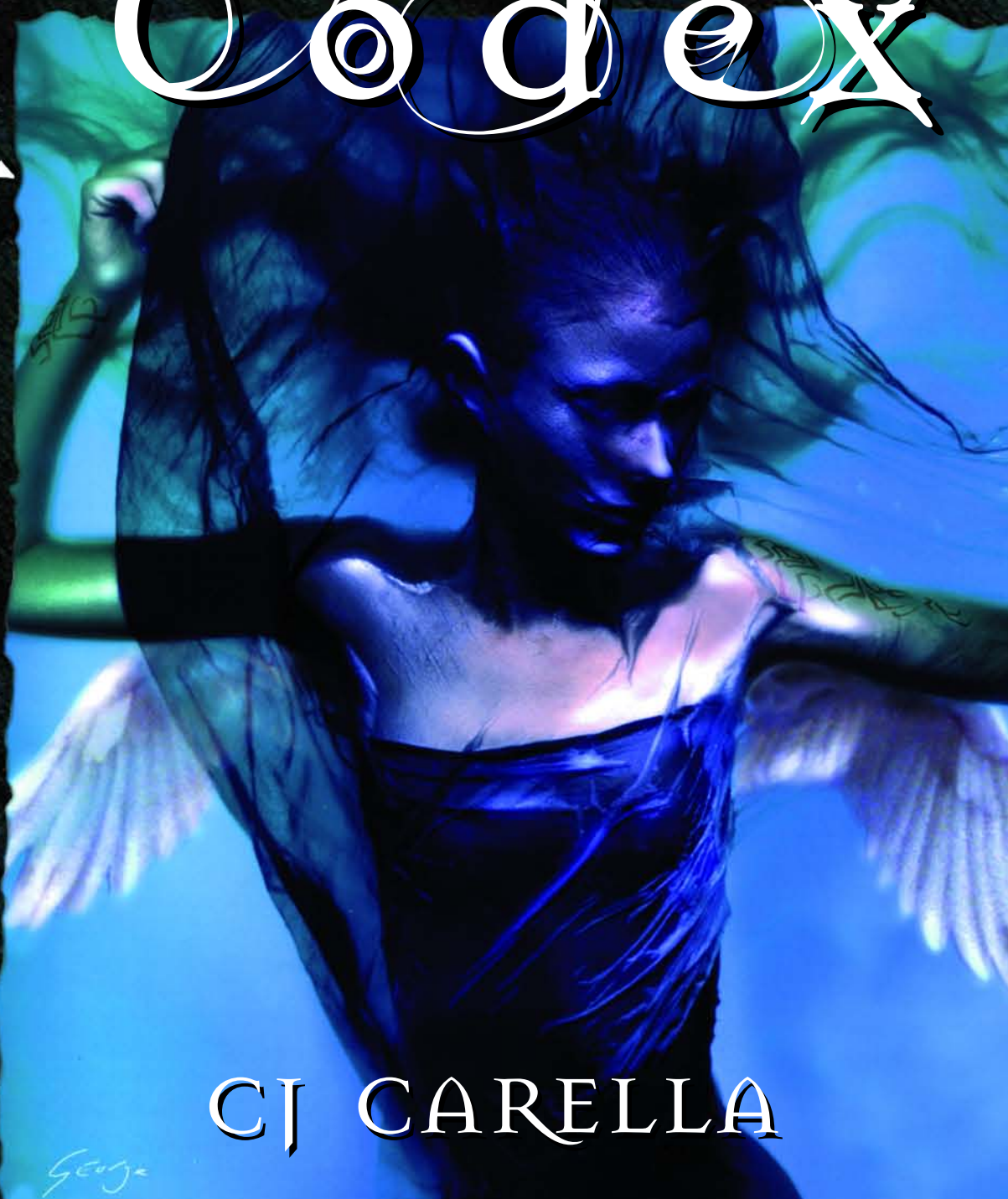




Mystery Codex



CJ CARELLA'S

Witchcraft



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CJ CARELLA

George

The world of WitchCraft is a place of mystery, danger and dark secrets.

THE MAGICALLY AWARE ALL KNOW THAT A MAJOR CHANGE IS APPROACHING, A NEW ERA THAT WILL BE PRECEDED BY TERRIFYING, CATASTROPHIC EVENTS. BUT THE TRANSITIONS BROUGHT ON BY THIS TIME OF RECKONING ARE UNKNOWN. GREAT POWER, GREAT DESTRUCTION, GREAT ANGUISH -- ALL OR NONE MAY ARISE.

THE THREAT OF THE RECKONING IS NOT LIMITED TO HUMANS. IT HAS ALSO STIRRED BEINGS FROM THE OTHERWORLDS, AND CREATURES THAT ONCE WERE HUMAN, BUT NOW LIVE ON AS SPIRITS OR THE UNDEAD. SOME OF THEM ARE WILLING TO WORK OPENLY, SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE GIFTED AND THE MUNDANE. OTHERS PREFER TO OPERATE IN SECRECY. STILL OTHERS HAVE HIDDEN AGENDAS THAT THEY PURSUE AHEAD OF ANY COMMON PURPOSE.

Only time will tell what lays ahead.
Time . . . and your choices.

Mystery Codex is a supplement for the WitchCraft roleplaying game.

In it, you will find:

Two new Character Types, the Spirits and Undead, with accompanying character creation rules, powers, vulnerabilities and background for Ghosts, Phantasms, Vampyres and the Relentless Dead

New Associations: shunned Pariahs, dedicated Iscariots, elite Storm Dragons and death-obsessed Thanatoi

New Invocations and Necromancy, the gruesome Disciplines of the Flesh, and the mystical Tao-Chi

Background on Geburah, the Sephiroth of the Dead

New Character Concepts, Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills and Rules



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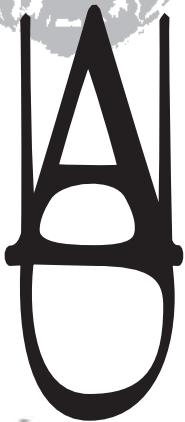
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Mystery Codes



Sourcebook
for C.J. Carella's
WitchCraft



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LAST-MINUTE ASSISTANCE AND IRIS MORI FOR
THE MILLION-AND-ONE QUESTIONS SHE ASKED
US ON AOL (tm).

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Reader discretion is advised.

Comments and questions can be directed via the Internet at www.edenstudios.net/witchcraft, via e-mail at EdenProd@aol.com or via letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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A Word to the Wise

As I did in the WitchCraft main rulebook, I would like to state expressly that the contents of this book are purely fictional and meant to entertain, not to enlighten, guide or suggest any real life behaviors. Some of the themes of WitchCraft may not be appropriate for younger readers, and parents should exercise their best judgment when reviewing this material.

As always, those who think any of the material here is anything other than fantasy intended for storytelling purposes are mistaken. Those who belittle, degrade and fear this and other roleplaying games may wish to seek psychiatric help and get a prescription for some happy pills. WitchCraft is no more a handbook for the occult than Monopoly (tm) is a manual of business

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Chapter One: Introduction



"We are very close," the tall man in the tuxedo said. Even in the weak light of the flash-lights, he looked utterly out of place. Although he was dressed like he was going to the opera, he was guiding a small group through the sewers beneath the city. He even wore a cape, for Crissakes! And a silly-ass cane, richly carved with gold inlays. The guy looked like a refugee from something on *AS-E* or public television — not that Harold would be caught dead watching either channel.

"I don't trust him," Harold muttered angrily. The hasty summons, the meeting with the stranger, and now this expedition into the cold, damp and above all stinking sewers had completely ruined his mood. Fear of what lay at the end of the tunnel made it even worse.

Sally stared strangely at him. Her thoughts touched his mind telepathically. You better shut up, Harold, she sent. You don't want him pissed off at you.

What do you mean? he telepathed back.

I did a surface scan of him when David introduced us during the meeting. Mind and body scan. Harold, he's not even alive!

What? Harold started to telepath more, but then David broke into their psychic chat. He was the oldest member in the team, and was in charge of all the operations of the Cabal of Psyche in the city and surrounding areas. His Mindtalk was the strongest Harold had ever encountered. Keep the noise down to a dull roar, kids, David sent. Yakov is a good friend of mine. I trust him, even if he is something of a bloodsucker.

Harold and Sally exchanged looks but said nothing. Harold had never suspected David kept company with that kind of creature. Tuxedo — Yakov — bloodsucker. The guy was a vampire! Three Seers and a vampire — or Vampyre as the occultists prefer to call 'em — crawling into a sewer looking for a monster. Harold didn't know what the punch line would be to this joke, but he had the feeling he would soon find out.

They reached a corner. At their feed, the unending stream of waste had slowed to a weak trickle, but the smells had become even worse. The tuxedo-clad Undead did something to a section of wall, and it slid open with a grating, grudging noise. "These sewer tunnels are very old," Yakov explained. "I was involved in some stages of their construction, and made a few minor modifications that do not show up in any map."

"So how did that . . . thing find it?" Sally asked.

"An accident. It was prowling the sewers, and a section of wall must have collapsed during last year's floods. When I became aware of its presence, I knew something had to be done."

"And here we are," David finished for him. "So less chit-chat and more walking, all right?"

Yakov smiled. "Still impatient, old friend," he said, but led the way once again.

Old friend? How old did that make David? Harold wondered. Some psychics could slow down the aging process. David appeared to be in his thirties, but he might be a hundred, two hundred years old. I might live that long, Harold unintentionally projected. If I survive the next few minutes.

Sally chuckled nervously. She must have picked up his thoughts.

This tunnel was unlike the sewer system or maintenance shafts they had been using before. The walls were wider, allowing the group to easily walk three or even four abreast. A series of glowing strips provided faint but steady illumination, and they turned off their flashlights. A breeze arose, gently touching their faces as they advanced.

This is good, David telepathed to the group. It won't be able to smell us.

Before the thought was completed, the breeze carried its smell to them. Sally coughed and grimaced, and Harold actually dry-heaved a couple of times before regaining control over his guts. The stench was pungent, rich and sickening. Harold thought of a bag of rotten tomatoes, swollen with the gas of their corruption, suddenly punctured and exposed to the air, and he dry-heaved again.

Sally touched his arm. *Chill out*, she sent to him. The nausea magically disappeared, courtesy of Sally's Mindheal. Harold nodded his thanks and continued walking, but his legs were feeling rubbery and weak.

They were hunting the Abductor, as the press had dubbed him — it. It had been responsible for at least a dozen and a half official disappearances and God knew how many unreported ones. The Abductor only attacked pedestrians, lone men and women whom it dragged into the sewers. Most of the attacks had happened in the worst neighborhoods. Many victims had doubtless gone unnoticed by the police or the media.

They passed the first body parts a few minutes into the tunnel. Harold did his best to avoid looking at them, stepping carefully over an arm, a leg, something that looked like half or two-thirds of a skull with maybe one-fourth of a face still dangling from it. Crusty, dried blood crunched underfoot. It must have pooled when wet, and caked after it dried.

A growl echoed down the corridor.

It's coming, David warned unnecessarily. Footsteps, beating an unnaturally fast tattoo on the stone floor, became louder by the second. Harold concentrated on his Mindhands, on the power to move and break things with his will. David and Sally also prepared their psychic abilities.

Vakov stepped forward. His delicate and manicured hands had been replaced with huge talons. His mouth was full of teeth. These were not the elegant fangs of vampire mythology, but rows of huge canines meant to rend and tear chunks of flesh with every bite. Harold did not know who he was more afraid of — until he saw the monstrosity rushing toward them.

It retained enough humanity to make its appearance all the more horrible. Tattered rags covered some of it but what he could see was enough. Its arms ended in huge clawed hands, twice as big as Vakov's. Tentacles of pink intestine spread from openings in its mid-section, each one tipped by a piranha-like mouth. Its one central eye blinked furiously as it advanced.

Harold screamed in terror and threw everything he had at the monster.

It took an eternity before it was over.

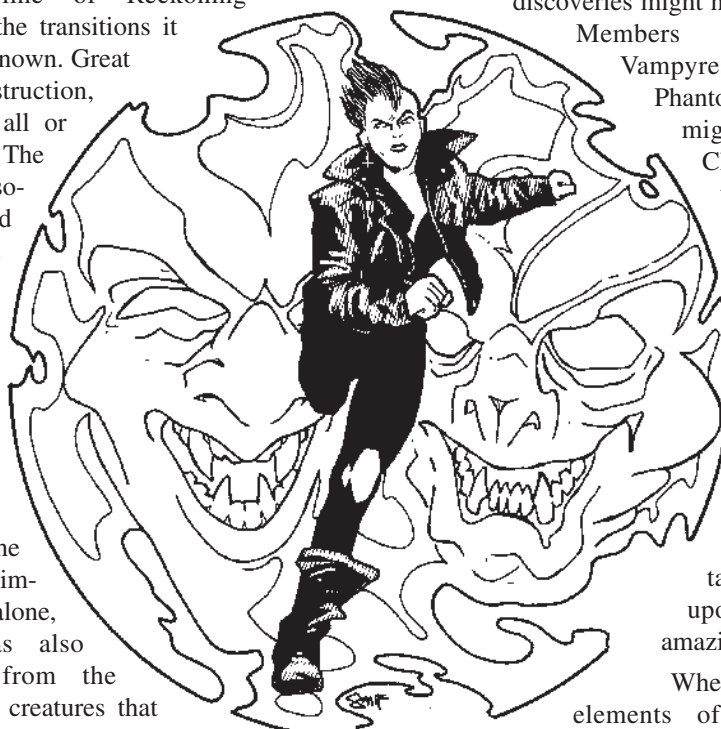


Introduction

The world of WitchCraft is a place of mystery and dark secrets. Each Covenant holds a piece of the overall puzzle, but no organization knows everything. What they all know, however, is bad enough: a major change is approaching, a new era that will be preceded by dangerous, catastrophic events. The Time of Reckoning approaches, and the transitions it will bring are unknown. Great power, great destruction, great anguish -- all or none may arise. The Covenants and associations that had largely stayed out of the affairs of the Mundane have begun to feel pressure to take direct action for the first time in centuries.

The threat of the Reckoning is not limited to humans alone, however. It has also stirred beings from the Otherworlds, and creatures that once were human, but now live on as Spirits or the Undead. Some of them are willing to work side by side with the Gifted and the Mundane, while others prefer to operate in secrecy, or have hidden agendas that they pursue ahead of any common purpose.

The Mystery Codex is the first sourcebook for the WitchCraft game. The Codices will expand on the themes and ideas presented in the WitchCraft main rulebook. Information is given on new Covenants, on creating and using supernatural creatures as Cast Members, on new Gifted abilities.



This and future Codices will give Chroniclers and players new choices for their games. Choices are an important part of roleplaying games. WitchCraft is meant to accommodate several styles and themes, from heroic roleplaying to dark, overwhelming horror. Each gaming group should decide what choices to make when crafting their own WitchCraft stories. A Story of slow, terrifying

discoveries might not work if the Cast Members include ancient Vampyres or powerful Phantom warriors -- or it might, if the Chronicler weaves a truly complex and powerful plot. By the same token, a quest of cosmic proportions needs larger-than-life characters to complete -- or it might work even better with relatively normal protagonists called upon to perform amazing feats.

When choosing which elements of WitchCraft are appropriate for a story, the Chronicler must think about the consequences for his game. Something that brings fear to the heart of a Mundane might not faze a Relentless Dead, for example. Devising a situation that might awe and terrorize even a near-indestructible Undead will be challenging, but it may result in a highly dramatic story. This book and others will present players with as many choices as possible, giving all the elements needed to devise any kind of mysterious and supernatural tale.

The New Order

This book marks a new phase for the WitchCraft line. As of the summer of 1998, Myrmidon Press no longer produces WitchCraft books. Eden Studios (the creative folks behind the Conspiracy X RPG and the Abduction card game) will now produce and market all WitchCraft (and future Unisystem) products. At a time when gaming companies seem to be dropping like flies, Eden has been consistently expanding, supporting their existing game lines and developing great new games. For WitchCraft, this move opens all kinds of exciting possibilities.

Relatively soon after this sourcebook is released, a new edition of the WitchCraft main rulebook will become available. This revised Eden Studios edition of WitchCraft cleans, clarifies and polishes a number of features of the game world, and the Unisystem. Those who purchased the First Edition of WitchCraft need not fear missing anything. This sourcebook presents the major clarifications and/or revised rules in special text boxes. Using the Mystery Codex to update the First Edition printing of WitchCraft, all Chroniclers may enjoy the latest WitchCraft has to offer.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction contains these introductory remarks.

Chapter Two: Rules provides new and expanded game mechanics for any WitchCraft game. New Character Concepts, Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills, Combat and Martial Arts rules are given. A short discussion of several new covenants is also presented.

Chapter Three: Inhumans details four new character types for player characters. Ghosts, Phantasms, Vampyres, and Relentless Undead are described. Special powers, abilities, rules and vulnerabilities for each character type are addressed.

Chapter Four: Associations gives further information on four new groups that player characters might call their own. The psychologically scarred Pariahs, the elite Storm Dragons, the redemption-seeking Iscariots, and the immortal Thanatoi are given their due. Some, like the martial artists of the Storm Dragons, have a well-defined structure and organization, and a very detailed agenda. Others, like the Pariahs, are a collection of outcasts and misfits, marked by their scarred psyches as much as by their bizarre powers. And some, like the House of Thanatos, are dominated by supernatural beings.

Chapter Five: Metaphysics expands the invocation and necromantic power lists. It also covers two new metaphysical arts: the martial arts-based Tao-Chi and the horrific Disciplines of the Flesh.

Chapter Six: Supernatural moves the WitchCraft world beyond the mundane realm. The Death Realms are presented. A new Dark Covenant, and a new type of supernatural predator are also introduced.

Appendix: This section provides a number of handy reference charts, as well as character sheets for the new Character Types.



Conventions

Text Conventions

This supplement has a number of features that identify the type of information presented. The text you are reading at the moment is standard text, and it is used for general explanations.

Fiction is used to enhance or describe the *WitchCraft* world. This font indicates that fictional material is being read.

Certain text is set off from the standard text. This is sidebar text and it contains additional, but tangential information, or supplemental charts and tables.

This text is unique to the *Mystery Codex*. It indicates rule changes or revisions that vary from those presented in First Edition *WitchCraft*. These alterations are included in Second Edition *WitchCraft* but are presented here for those that already own the prior edition.

This text includes Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and other game aids.

Dice Notations

D10, D8, D6 and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die and a four-sided die, respectively. When a number appears before the D notation, that number of such dice rolled, and their results are added together. For example, 2D6 means roll two six-sided dice, generating a result between 2 and 12. Multipliers are expressed after the dice notation. For example, 3D10 x 4 means roll three ten-sided dice, add the results together, and multiply

that total result by 4. This generates a number between 12 and 120. A number in parenthesis after, or in the middle of, the dice notation is the default roll. This number is provided for those that want to avoid dice rolling and just get the result. So the notation 2D6 x 3(18) means that the default value is 18. Some notations cannot provide a set number because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength is used because the Strength value to be plugged into that notation will vary depending on who is acting.

Book References

Throughout the text, references direct the reader to areas of this book and the *WitchCraft* main rulebook. These references use the chapter names for the Second Edition main rulebook.

Gender

While the third person male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question that it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the "he or she" structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to "split the difference," this book uses male designations for odd chapters, and female designations for even chapters.

About the Author

C.J. Carella was born in New York and has lived in Peru, Venezuela, Connecticut, Florida, Michigan, and Connecticut once again. During his travels he has yet to experience any genuine supernatural events -- and he is not going out of his way to do so.

C.J. has authored some fifteen RPG books for such companies as Steve Jackson Games and Palladium Books, as well as numerous articles for *The Familiar*, *Pyramid* and *White Wolf* magazines. *Mystery Codex* is his second book for *WitchCraft*, and his first book for Eden Studios.

Chapter Two: Rules

id of dominant SM who knows
take my body into his mind for our
ritual gratification

fternoon delight be yours if
ou're a generous executive MM, 35-45
/a taste for a sexy petite SBF

leasure oriented, beautiful and
urvaceous WF will do whatever a
generous S/MM wats-but you've got to
give it up.

Kinky BF, 35, and her well endowed
BM boyfriend ,50, are looking for a
hot SE for ~~himself~~ watch

Night Games - Erotic couple seeking an
adventurous M or F to indulge in
dinner, teasing and pleasures of the
flesh. The kinkier the better. Bores need
not apply.

Mornings are the right time to bring
out your carnal creativity with this
carnal SWF

Sexy SBF, 30 wants to do the wild thing
with an adventurous SBF.

Hard working SBF looking for
safe sexual encounters with ~~like~~

Shy, tall WM, 35, has a ~~very~~ around
the swing thing ~~very~~ and
wants to meet ~~experience~~ Couple
who can really take him in hand

Cute SWF, 30, wants hot phone ~~times~~
with an intelligent, normal but ~~horny~~

Couples - share in friendship & hot
times with this BWFF, 35, and her well
endowed ~~BF~~, 42.

Generous WM desires an
sensual, educated, ~~and~~
with a taste for ~~delicious~~
isn't too shy to to ~~to~~
fine restaurant.

Sensual ~~and~~ ~~her~~ ~~through~~
are seen ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~style~~

Squeal
passi
sensual

Well end
sensuon
tantaliz
pushed

Ladies, if you ~~like~~ ~~the~~
the hottest move
this kinky WM will
latex to wrestle him
locks

Hoops

It was going to be one of those nights.

"Intruders!" screamed my elemental guardian at the top of its non-existent lungs. "Intruders at the gate! Intruders!"

"Tell us something we don't know," Santa Claws, my Bast roommate, hissed from his perch on top of my armchair. His back was arched, and his tail was as puffed up as I'd ever seen it.

I switched off the TV. It was only a rerun of *Friends* anyway. "Will you all relax?" I shouted, finally silencing the elemental familiar. "Let's see who it is." I went over to my PC and clicked on the security network. Camera One was off-line, probably destroyed by whatever was tearing the high-security metal door off its hinges. Camera Two, in the foyer, showed the door being twisted and pulled out of shape. It would get totaled any second now.

As the door was torn off its hinges, I took a last look at the expensive furniture and carpeting in the foyer. "Damn. What a waste," I muttered as I concentrated. The intricate network of mystic symbols woven into the foyer's floor came to life as I fed my Essence into it.

A misshapen monstrosity shambled into the foyer through the wrecked doorway. It looked only vaguely human, with long ape-like arms terminating in six-inch clawed digits, a huge mouth filled with multiple rows of teeth, and glowing red eyes.

The foyer exploded in white-hot flames.

Camera Two went off line.

"Artame," I called out to my elemental familiar. "Go check on our guest."

"But the flames..." Art was an air elemental. He really hated fire.

I made a mystical gesture. "They are gone now, mostly. The spell could only last a few seconds, anyway, and I've stopped empowering it. There will be some smoldering embers and such, but that is all. Go!"

Artame flew down the hallway. I checked on Camera Three, which kept watch on the living room. I could see smoke filtering through the double doors separating it from the foyer. With a couple of mouse clicks, I disconnected the smoke alarms and directed the fire-suppression system to deal with the fire. All electronically — why use magic when you have the best security system money can buy?

"Are you sure it's dead?" Santa Claws asked, giving me a cold, calculating stare.

"We'll find out soon enough," I replied. "It should be, though. That flame spell was powerful enough to char-broil anything."

The double doors to the living room collapsed inward, shattered by a brutal impact. "Or maybe not."

The creature, looking some worse for the wear, strode in. Burned black flesh flaked off with every step; pink, fetus-like skin could be seen beneath. It swiped at empty air, and in my mind I heard Artame's cry of terror. The elemental could not be seen by cameras or mortal eyes, but the intruder had detected him. No fool he, Artame fled the way he had come, screaming bloody murder and cursing me for sending him on a suicide mission.

"We'd better go in there before that thing finishes trashing the house," I said.

"What do you mean 'we,' white man?" Santa Claws said, but he jumped off the armchair and followed me anyway. The Bast is a good friend, even if he had picked the stupidest names for himself. Artame flew past us, accidentally brushing the Shield I had erected around me. He bounced off painfully. "Murder!" he screamed, and disappeared, gone to his own dimension. Magical Shields are meant to repel constructs of Essence; to the elemental, touching one was like sticking your tongue in a light-socket.

The creature turned a corner and faced us. It growled threateningly. "I Banish Thee to the Hell that Spawned Thy Kind," I said in Old Latin, releasing a good deal of my Essence into the Incantation. Eldritch energies crackled around the monster, encircling it and then closing in an inescapable vise. A blinding flash of light erupted.

The creature remained where it was. It snickered a little.

"Litter droppings!" Santa Claws snarled. He stood on his hind legs and assumed a pose that no normal feline would have attempted. A bolt of Soulfire exploded from between his outstretched paws, and it struck the creature square in the chest. The monster staggered back with a surprised grunt of pain, but it recovered quickly, and started to walk towards us.

"Your tricks ain't gonna help you, Biggins!" the monster roared. "I'm gonna make you pay!"

I stopped my next Incantation in mid-sentence, and had to take a second to dismiss the summoned-up Essence before it could do some mischief. "Biggins? Randolph R. Biggins?" I said.

The creature paused for a moment. "Yes!" it roared, a little bit dubiously.

"You have the wrong house!" I shouted. "Biggins Manor is over a mile away!"

The red glow in its eyes dimmed somewhat. "This isn't one thousand Red River Road?"

"Yes, it is," I replied. "But Biggins lives at eleven hundred Red River Road, you moron."

The monster's flesh seemed to sink into its skin. It shrank in size in a matter of moments, and in its place there stood a brown-haired girl, not a day over eighteen, dressed only in pink underwear. She was blushing furiously. "I... I'm..."

"It's a good thing you came to the house of a sorcerer, or you might have killed some innocent Mundane," I went on sternly. "And it's a good thing I'm not particularly bloodthirsty, or you might have gotten yourself killed." I wasn't sure I could kill her, I didn't add, even if I thought it. "What has Biggins done to you anyway?" All I knew about my neighbor is that he was filthy rich and that he was a very private person, but that was true of the entire neighborhood, myself included.

"He's a murderer, a serial killer who preys on children. And a demon worshipper," the girl said, on surer ground in this matter. She looked at me, and for a moment her eyes became the huge glowing red pits the monster had sported. I felt her gaze slide past my shields and into my very soul. "You aren't lying," she said with conviction. "I'm, ah, sorry for wrecking the house."

"Mistakes happen, I guess," I said absently. If what the girl had said about Biggins was true, I'd have to help her. And if it wasn't, I'd have to stop her again. "Never mind the house. I'm coming with you, to make sure you don't make the same mistake twice."

"Okay," she replied, still looking subdued.

"You should have let her have it anyway," Santa Claws hissed. He was very defensive of his territory.

Fighting is always an option, I replied mentally. But it should be the last option. To the girl, I said, "So how did you get here?"

"I drove. My motorcycle is behind some bushes outside, with my clothes."

I sighed. I hate motorcycles. "We'll take my Mercedes. By the way, how did you transform like you did?" I realized now that trying to banish her had been a futile mistake — she was as human as I was.

Her expression became haunted, as if I'd mentioned a recently dead relative. "It's called the Disciplines of the Flesh," she replied. "You wouldn't want to go through what I did to get them."

I'd heard of the Disciplines, and the price you unwillingly paid to get them. "You're right, I wouldn't." I tried to cheer her up. "Well, we're off to kill the wizard."

A good third of my house was destroyed, my familiar had deserted me, my cat roommate was pissed off, and I was heading out with a clearly unbalanced girl to fight a demon-worshipping serial killer. The night was young; I had a feeling it was going to get worse.



Introduction

This chapter contains a variety of new material for the WitchCraft RPG. Included here are new Character Concepts and Types, a brief description of several new Associations, and a number of new Qualities, Drawbacks and Skills. Most of this new information can be used in any WitchCraft games without modifications.

Some rules clarifications and corrections from the first edition of WitchCraft have been noted in sidebars throughout this text. These changes will be added to the future editions of WitchCraft, but are provided here so players are not required to buy another copy of the main rulebook.

Some optional rule suggestions are given. These may be discarded or used as desired. As always, the Chronicler should disallow or alter any of this information to suit the needs of her game.

New Character Concepts

These new Concepts are used to form the basic personality and motivations of the character. Players can use elements of more than one Concept to round out their characters. For example, a Forsaken-Survivor or a Scoundrel-Wanderer are certainly possible, and by filling in both sets of questions players can create a more unique character for the game. Along with those questions, however, players should also ask themselves if the characters they are developing would work well in a game setting (as opposed to a novel or movie focusing on one protagonist). Keep in mind that a good game requires everyone to share the spotlight and not spoil others' fun.

Forsaken

You have lost everything and nobody cares about you -- or at least you think so. Maybe you ran away from home or are an orphan. Perhaps you committed a crime so heinous that all your friends and loved ones turned away from you, or perhaps you

were falsely accused of such a crime. You could belong to a group or sect of society that is despised by the mainstream, or could be afflicted by a severe problem or disease that makes you undesirable or contemptible in the eyes of others. This might not be your fault, yet the effect is the same: you are alone, an outcast.

You have few friends but you are often very loyal to those who would befriend you. You might be bitter towards the world that has rejected you, or you might blame yourself and are consumed by self-loathing. Among the Forsaken are runaways, prostitutes, the homeless, and people with unconventional lifestyles (punk, gay, gothic, and similar fringe or underground groups).

Unlike the Weird Ones (who may be just as unconventional; see Witchcraft, Chapter Three: Roles, Character Concepts), your behavior or history make most people react negatively to you. While a typical Weird One inspires puzzlement and maybe a little fear, you attract repugnance and contempt. Whether or not you have earned such feelings is up to each individual character story and is left to the player and Chronicler, of course.

Defining Questions: What made you an outcast? Was it something you did (or people think you did), or just who you are or what group or minority you belong to? Why isn't your family on your side? Do you even have a family, and, if not, what happened to them? How do you feel about being Forsaken? Do you return society's contempt with your own, or do you wish you could change?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You usually have very low Social Levels and Resources. Many of you are Addicts or suffer from such mental Drawbacks as Delusions, Emotional Problems or Paranoia. Some have Contacts among other people in the fringes of society.

Professions: You generally work in marginal jobs, either low-paying (like busboy at a low-rent diner, or a burger flipper) or illegal (panhandling, prostitution, petty theft).

Association: The Pariahs Covenant has many of the Forsaken among its members. Other common Covenants for you include the House of Thanatos, which recruits people from the fringe of society, and the Fellowship of Judas, many of whose members are undead who committed suicide, or humans who narrowly avoided killing themselves.

Scoundrel

You are always looking out for number one, always ready to lie, cheat or steal. Even when you do the right thing, you often try to squeeze out some profit or benefit for yourself. You may or may not exploit your friends, but strangers are almost always fair game. This doesn't mean that you are wholly evil -- sometimes, you act with perfectly good intentions, but your path always seems to lead to trouble. You can be humorously incompetent, or coldly efficient. Many of you are con men, gifted with charm and a good eye for human weakness. Even when fighting for a good cause, your methods will often be questionable.

Keep in mind that using this Character Concept does not excuse acting against the interests of other Cast Members. You do have friends and allies that you would not betray. Furthermore, even a villainous or weasel-like character like you will not foolishly endanger your position (or your life) by incurring the wrath of powerful companions. If you needlessly provoke others, you will not be protected from the consequences of your actions.

Defining Questions: What made you into a scoundrel? Were you deprived as a child, making you desperate to accumulate wealth and fortune? What do you want to acquire -- money, power or knowledge -- and how far will you go to acquire it? Do you seek to exploit everyone around you, or do you have some limits? Would you betray a friend for a large enough reward, or do you save your dirty tricks for your enemies?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most commonly, you are Covetous. Those among you who are successful may have high Resource levels, but you are usually relatively poor and hungry (which motivates you to do anything to get ahead).

Professions: You often belong to illegal or quasi-legal professions, such as confidence man or thief. Sometime, you belong to mainstream professions, but tend to stick to the seedier aspects, such as an ambulance-chaser lawyer or a used car salesman. You often exaggerate their knowledge and power to impress and exploit the gullible.

Association: You are rarely found among the Wicce and Sentinels, as their moral code precludes your type of behavior. Most of you are Solitaires. On rare occasions, you might be a Rosicrucian (if you are power-hungry) or a self-serving Pariah.



Student

You have embarked on a quest for knowledge. Unlike the Seeker (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Three: Roles, Character Concepts), you have recently begun and are just now being initiated in the ways you have chosen to follow. Whether you are a budding martial artist learning the legendary arts of Tao-Chi, or a graduate student of archeology being introduced to forbidden knowledge, you are eager to learn and perhaps a little too impatient. Sometimes you think you are more powerful and learned than you really are, which may lead to serious trouble.

You must always have a teacher. You may be a new member of a Covenant, being introduced to the mysteries of the Gifted, or you may have been taken under the wing of a Solitaire practitioner. The teacher can be helping you out of sheer altruism, or may demand a heavy price (typically in services rather than money) for his knowledge.



Defining Questions: What made you interested in learning the secret arts? Does curiosity or ambition motivate you? Who are your teachers? How did you come to be their student?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Depending on your motivations and previous histories, you may have a wide variety of Qualities and Drawbacks. Some of you are Covetous, being motivated by the desire for power. You might also be Obsessed with the desire for knowledge. You generally have low or average Resource levels, but your school or teacher counts as a Contact.

Professions: Since you must spend most of your time pursuing your vocation, you largely work at part-time jobs, and can be anything from a librarian to a waiter to a bouncer. Sometimes your school employs you in any number of capacities.

Association: Any Association is possible, although you work best with the Rosicrucians, Storm Dragons, and the Twilight Order, which have more formalized teacher-student traditions. The Wicce train young Gifted like you to master your abilities, but they place less focus on hierarchy and advancement. Some Covens even prefer that you develop your own styles of magic. This usually does not suit your type.

Wanderer

You are a modern day nomad, never staying in one place for too long, never settling down. You eventually find an excuse to move on. Maybe you are afraid of the responsibility of committing to one place and the people in it, or perhaps you feel there is something better waiting for you in the next city. You might just be driven by the desire to see new things. Unlike the Fugitive (see WitchCraft, Chapter Three: Roles, Character Concept), you are motivated by your own inner demons or yearnings. Like many nomads, you may have a “circuit” of places you visit periodically so that anybody who knows you will have an idea of where you’ll be at a given time of the year. Alternatively, you may wander at random, rarely returning to the places you previously visited.

You tend to travel through countries or continents. You may wander around in a vehicle, on foot or by relying on the kindness of strangers. The remote roads of WitchCraft’s America are dangerous places, and you have to be quite adept at a number of mystical and mundane skills if you hope to survive. Nomads like you, especially those that choose the roads less traveled, often find signs of the Reckoning in small towns and on lonely trails, haunting the wilderness or hiding in the underbelly of the cities.

Your type works best for Stories where you arrive in a locale, deal with whatever conflict exists there (working with local Cast Members), and then move on. You could also participate in Stories where all the characters are on the move for their own reasons (the other Cast Members could be other Wanderers, Fugitives, or Seekers). On the other hand, you might decide to stay in one place for an indefinite period of time as long as there was a compelling reason for it (i.e., for the duration of a Story).

Defining Questions: What made you choose your nomadic lifestyle? Do you have a destination (real or imagined) in mind? What is your preferred mode of transportation? How do you make a living as you travel? Do you stick to a regular route, going back and forth between a string of destinations, or do you wander aimlessly, always going to a different place? Do you make friends in your travels, and do you ever return and visit them? What are your favorite places to visit whenever you arrive at a new destination?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You are sometimes motivated by a negative mental trait such as an Obsession or Emotional Problem. You usually do not have much in the way of Resources. At best, you might own a vehicle and whatever you can carry in it. If you follow a specific path back and forth, you often have Contacts (and Adversaries) at some of your customary stopping points.

Professions: Most “ordinary” jobs are difficult to perform if you do not have a permanent address, so you tend to stick to temporary work. You usually stay only long enough to earn enough money to move on. You might play guitar at a club in one town, and pick fruit for the minimum wage at the next.

Association: Your nature generally leads you to be a Solitaire, owing no allegiance to any one Covenant. Among the Wicce, however, a growing number of young Gifted members have become like you and decided to explore the world, looking for signs of the Reckoning. As a wandering Wicce, you travel alone or in small groups searching for supernatural outbreaks and putting a stop to them. Other Covenants with a good number of Wanderers include the Storm Dragons (for much the same reason as the Wicce) and the Pariahs (some of whom wander from city to city).

New Character Types

Two new Character Types are presented in this sourcebook. These Types can be chosen in addition to the four described previously (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Three: Roles, Character Types).

Only the basic information on the new Character Types appears in this chapter. They are discussed in much greater detail in a chapter of their own, Chapter Three: Inhumans. A handy comparative reference chart listing all the generation points and special traits of the various *WitchCraft* Character Types is included in the Appendix. A separate character sheet for each Type is also included in the Appendix.

Spirits: Disembodied beings of pure Essence, spirits include all manner of strange creatures, from inhuman elementals and demonic fiends to the wandering souls of deceased humans. Two types, Ghosts and Phantasms, are described.

Undead: These characters have died but continue to inhabit their bodies, imbuing their physical shell with the semblance of life. Undead player characters include Vampyres and Relentless Dead.

New Associations

Described below are four new Associations, three of which are controlled by supernatural creatures. The following descriptions are brief and include only the most basic knowledge about the Association. Each is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four: Associations. Chroniclers who wish to have the players discover facts about their Associations as they learn about the world of *WitchCraft* should limit their players to the material presented here. Otherwise, players and Chroniclers alike may review this information and the more expansive text of Chapter Four.

Fellowship of Judas -- The Iscariots

"Your life until now has been a waste -- or worse, you have been part of the problem. Now you have been Unborn and can try to fix all the damage you've done. Betray our trust or refuse us, and no Hell can compare to what we will do to you."

-- Customary Iscariot greeting to new members

"The same bastards who killed the Messiah and persecuted Christians are still around. The Inquisition and the Holocaust and worse are all the work of one group, a powerful Combine. We have to do something to stop it, or even the Undead will suffer."

-- Conrad the Apostle

Description: This Covenant is concerned mostly with redeeming the misdeeds of its members, and with combating any being that seeks to seize power over mortals. The Iscariots risk all against the Combine, the followers of the Mad Gods, and other foes -- their war is a form of penance.

The Iscariots choose new members from those who have damned themselves by their actions or cowardice. Many suicides are met by Vampyre Iscariots at the Threshold (see Chapter Six: Supernatural) and are forced to contemplate the consequences of their actions, the pain and suffering they inflicted on their loved ones, or the things they might have achieved. Those who repent and want to expiate their sins return from the Threshold as Undead members of the Fellowship or manage to escape death and become living Iscariots. Other Iscariots find still-living sinners and offer them a chance to undo the harm they've done. Non-Undead members are usually Mundane, but a large minority are Gifted or Lesser Gifted characters with diverse metaphysical powers, including the Disciplines of the Flesh.

Attributes: Attributes of the Iscariots vary widely. They are less concerned with any particular characteristic than with the idea that one's sins must be undone.

Qualities and Drawbacks: The Fellowship's network of information and assistance can be purchased as a Contact (it costs 3-5 character points depending on the capacity of the Fellowship in a particular Chronicler's campaign). After mending their ways, most members become Honorable and a few turn into Zealots. Sometimes, the desire to expiate one's sins can lead to a number of Mental Drawbacks, including Delusions, Emotional Problems, and Obsessions.

Metaphysics: Vampyre members typically develop extensive Undead powers and a few learn magical abilities. Gifted members favor Magic, Necromancy, Seer powers, and the Disciplines of the Flesh. There are even a number of Inspired humans in the group, whose faith has become so strong that they can perform miracles. Apparently, the Deity does not seem to mind that they are working side by side with Undead, something that would drive most theologians to distractions if they knew about it.

Special Abilities: The sense of purpose of the Iscariots gives them the strength to resist many of the typical measures taken against the Undead. Undead members have a +3 bonus to resist any Inspired Miracle or prayer (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics) that directly affects or restrains them, providing they are attacked while performing a task of redemption or for a good cause (this is determined by the Chronicler). Due to their prolonged contact and familiarity with Vampyres, as well as their own faith, non-Undead members gain a +2 bonus against any Undead effect or power that requires the target to make a Resisted Test or Task.

Also, all Iscariots are given a special tattoo that allows members to recognize one another on sight.

Common Professions: Most Iscariots were recruited from among the damned and the losers of society. Many were thieves, junkies, drug pushers or murderers. Others were misfits and geeks, unwanted and unloved people who often took their

own lives out of spite. They may come from all walks of life, from high school and college students to people living on the fringes of society.

Roleplaying Iscariots: Your old life was a big nothing, a drop in a bucket of misery and petty cruelty. You cared about nobody but yourself, about satisfying your needs. Nothing ever seemed to satisfy you, and eventually you became mired in self-pity. Your problems seemed so overwhelming that, as a final slap on the face of the world and the few people who still gave a damn about you, you tried to kill yourself or overdosed or drunkenly drove your car off a cliff. Your suicide attempt was an act of self-centered stupidity. You weren't suffering from a horrible, terminal disease, nor were you in a truly hopeless, horrible situation. You simply didn't love yourself (or those around you) enough to care.

At the Threshold between Life and Death, you were confronted by an Iscariot. He manipulated the Deathscape and showed you just how pathetic your existence had become. For the first time in your life, you realized the extent of your actions. All the cruelty and lack of empathy in your life was thrown back at you. Facing damnation or a chance to redeem yourself, you finally abandoned your self-centered existence and transformed your life. Whether you were revived, woke up as an Undead, or became a bodiless Spirit, your old existence was gone: you were now an Iscariot, and your actions would finally have meaning.

It hasn't been easy. You now have to think about what you do, both because you no longer want to be part of the problem, and because the Fellowship has many enemies. A misstep will mean a new, final death. You still have some of the lack of respect for authority that you had in your previous life, but now you put them to good use, bringing down those who would control the lives of others and letting people choose their own destinies, for good or ill. It is a hazardous, often grim existence.

You've never felt so good in your life.

House of Thanatos

"Death is but a revolving door between two worlds. We discovered how to travel back and forth unhampered. If we ever achieve our goals, no one will have to fear dying, because nobody will have to die."

-- Albert Niall, Vampire House Scholar

"Dark forces threaten the land of the living and the abodes of the dead. Things that aren't human, that were never human, now crawl through the dark corners of the physical world and threaten the Death Realms. Only our kind, who can visit both worlds, has any hope of stopping them."

-- Alexandra Benitez, House Scholar

Description: Worshipers and masters of the passions and secrets of Life, Death and Unlife, the Thanatoi's ultimate goal is to transcend the Cycle of Life and Death, to become immortal without being Undead, and to unify Earth and the Otherworlds. Besides these long-term and perhaps unattainable purposes, the House also works to protect members from those who would destroy them, and to fight any incursions from beyond reality, specifically the bizarre entities known as the Mad Gods.

The House of Thanatos has a firm presence in the fringe areas of society. Wherever discontented youths and jaded artists gather to jeer at the world and ponder about the meaninglessness of life, a Thanatoi or two can be found among the crowds. Members frequent underground clubs, cafes, and other dark places. They recruit new members from among those misfits and educate them in the secrets and passions of life after death. New House members soon find themselves exploring the Death Realms, where the darkness is all too real, and where the revelers found drinking, imbibing coffee and smoking cigarettes are quite dead.

Members of the House of Thanatos include Undead (mostly Vampyres), Spirits (usually Phantasms or Ghosts), and humans, including Necromancers, Magicians, and highly skilled or influential Mundanes. The leadership of the House is dominated by supernatural beings, but there is no bias against humans, provided they have the right look and attitude -- dark, ominous, and Gothic.

Attributes: Members of the House run the gamut from thinkers and philosophers to assassins and enforcers. Any combination of Attributes is possible. Non-human members may have superhuman Attributes (see Chapter Three: Inhumans).

Qualities and Drawbacks: Good, evil, self-serving egotism, saintly devotion and plain insanity can all be found among the Thanatoi, with all the accompanying Mental Drawbacks. The Covenant is very tolerant of members, as long as they uphold the principles of the Covenant. Many older members have considerable Resources, and talented performers have higher-than-average Social Levels, as well as Artistic Talent.

Metaphysics: The supernatural members of the Covenant tend to specialize in their unique powers and abilities (see Chapter Three: Inhumans). Additionally, many members learn Necromancy. Seers and Magicians can also be found among the Thanatoi, although in lesser numbers. A few Gifted with other Arts exist, but Divinely Inspired characters are unheard of.

Special Abilities: All Thanatoi have a +2 bonus to any Resisted Test or Task against the powers of Ghosts, Phantasms and other spirits of the Dead (where applicable).

Common Professions: The Undead and ghostly Thanatoi have no need to work for a living, but many use their powers to appear as human and are employed, mostly as performers or scholars. The House owns and runs a number of clubs and cafes,

and many members give performances there. A couple of all-Vampyre bands sponsored by the House have become quite popular among the goth and post-industrial circles.

Human members of the Covenant are evenly divided among Gifted and Mundanes. The Gifted are almost all Necromancers or Sorcerers, with a smattering of Seers. Most of them live off grants given to them by the House, although a few have other occupations, typically scholastic professions such as college professor, lecturer, or performers.

Roleplaying the Thanatoi: You were always interested -- some say obsessed -- with death and the world of the spirits. When your pet died, you didn't cry but became very pensive and asked questions that made the adults around you uncomfortable. You soon learned that most people prefer to avoid thinking about the end of their lives. To you, life and death were part of a greater whole. You wanted to experience the most intense elements of life -- both pleasure and pain -- and you were not afraid of what lay at the other side of existence.

The Thanatoi found you and inducted you into their ranks. Soon you knew a great deal more about life and death than you had ever bargained for. Perhaps your induction involved Unbirth and a new existence as a Vampyre or a Phantasm. Perhaps the experience awakened latent Necromantic powers. Either way, now you travel freely between both worlds, dealing with the Living and Dead with the same degree of curiosity and interest.

Life in the House of Thanatos is not all research and exploration, however. Those who travel between the worlds have their share of enemies, from the rulers of Death Realms who see you as interlopers to monstrous beings who prey on the souls of humans both living and dead. You may have rivals within the House -- there are factions in the Covenant whose goals and purposes may be at odds with your own. Even petty disputes can be deadly when the people involved are powerful Undead, Spirits or Necromancers.

Pariahs

"You are one of us now. Your pain and your madness called out to us. You have suffered much, but your will is strong, and now you have abilities mere mortals only dream of. Embrace your suffering and savor your dark memories, for within them you will find true power. We can unmake ourselves and transform into living nightmares to bring terror to those who hurt us."

-- Common Induction Greeting of the Pariahs

"Give us your hungry, your poor, your huddled masses -- and we will make them into monsters."

-- Aaron the Unclean, Pariah Leader

Description: Some among the Gifted lived tortured, miserable existences. Victims of years of abuse and privation, their powers acquired a unique form, enabling them to remold their bodies in a variety of ways. Due to the anger and self-loathing that often afflicts abuse survivors, their shape shifting is almost always monstrous and terrifying. Persecuted and named unclean by normal society, these Gifted hid. They dwell among the homeless and the runaways. They recruit members from among the shunned, the destitute, the helpless. They teach neophytes about turning their misery into anger, and their anger into power. They call themselves the Pariahs and have been part of the urban landscapes of the world since the beginning of history. Although few in number, the Pariahs' influence among the dispossessed and powerless has been long lasting.

What sets the Pariahs apart is their ability to channel their suffering and anguish through their bodies, allowing them to transform their flesh in strange and bizarre ways. Pariahs are masters of the Disciplines of the Flesh, a bizarre Gifted power which channels the Essence of the person through his body, altering it in monstrous and terrifying ways. Some Pariahs love piercing and self-mutilation; others can adopt gruesome visages. Their special powers are very effective, but carry a

high price: to activate them, the Pariahs must relive the horrors that triggered their transformation in the first place. This continual reopening of emotional wounds has a terrible effect on their psyches.

The Pariahs are loosely organized. Each city or region where any significant numbers (anything more than a handful) of Pariahs congregate has a Beggar King, a title that originated in the Middle Ages when the Pariahs hid among the poorest and most destitute in the infant cities of Europe. Members are subject to the decisions of their local Beggar King, although for the most part they are free to do as they please. Their rules are few but rigidly enforced: defend all Pariahs from outside enemies, maintain the secrecy of their existence from the Mundane world (although Pariahs recognize that other Gifted are privy to many of their secrets, they don't like it), and, when possible, save those who are enduring the same horrors that created them. "Deliver others from the horrors that made you" is a Pariah motto; like many ideals, it is followed less often than some would like.

Attributes: Pariahs typically have average physical Attributes. Their mental Attributes tend to be higher than normal, with more emphasis on Willpower than Perception, and both are more favored than Intelligence. Their powers allow them to reshape their bodies and enhance their physiques to superhuman levels, however. A skinny teenage Pariah can turn into a gigantic muscle-bound beast in a matter of seconds.

Qualities and Drawbacks: All Pariahs are survivors of extensive abuse, typically during their childhood or adolescence; most are crippled (physically or emotionally) as a result. Mental Drawbacks are very common. Physical Drawbacks are also not unknown, but the Disciplines of the Flesh allow them to overcome any physical disability with ease, so the value of most such Drawbacks should be reduced by half or one-third at the Chronicler's discretion (the more easily the Pariah can sidestep the problems of his disability, the less it should be worth). Most Pariahs have

extensive Contacts among those in the fringes of society, including the homeless, runaways, prostitutes and other unwanted. A few also have Contacts with criminal organizations, although only at the "street" level (such as gangs, local criminal networks, and so forth).

Metaphysics: About half of all Pariahs know the Disciplines of the Flesh, the eerie ability to remold their bodies by awakening memories of their life's suffering and misery. This ability requires the character to know Anguish, a Special skill (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics). A smaller percentage are Gifted with the Sight, and a sizable fraction of the group is made up of Mundanes. The Pariahs have little access to magical knowledge; many of them are not even sure magic exists, and think it is merely some form of the Second Sight. No other Arts are commonly known.

Special Abilities: This Covenant recruits people from among the most victimized, exploited and brutalized. Survivors of child abuse, incest, slavery, and worse are the preferred members. Their mental scars are used as fuel for the Disciplines of the Flesh. As a result, all Disciple Pariahs start out with one free level of Anguish. Non-Disciple Pariahs get a bonus of +1 to their Willpower. This additional level of Anguish or Willpower is added on top of any levels purchased normally.

Common Professions: Many members work as social workers or participate in organizations that help the abused and helpless. One can find Pariahs manning battered women shelters, soup kitchens, and similar institutions (and woe to any abuser who tries to break into those places). Other Pariahs lead double lives, often masquerading as homeless people, prostitutes and other undesirables -- the better to find others of their kind, and to deal with those who would harm them.

Roleplaying Pariahs: Your youth was a living hell. Most adults around you were at best dysfunctional figures, unable to fulfill their responsibilities. At worst, they were monsters far more terrible

than any shape you have assumed. Years of brutality and abuse have permanently marked you. Unlike most victims, however, your suffering also carried a strange gift, and you can make your victim's rage and despair come to life and give you raw, destructive power. Along the way, others like you found and adopted you into their group, and you became a Pariah. You believe that your fellow monsters are the only one who truly understand your existence, since they have experienced some of the same horrors you endured.

Your motivations are often determined by your early experiences. You might wish revenge on your tormentors, or on anybody like them. Maybe you only want to be left alone, to crawl into the dark places of the world and lick your wounds in peace. Like all other Gifted, however, you will be dragged into the secret conflicts of the occult world, willingly or not. Even if that were not the case, your life could never be normal. If you are a Disciple of the Flesh, every time you use your power, you are forced to relive your worst ordeals. Where other abuse victims can at least find some solace in forgetfulness, your traumas are always being brought to the fore, again and again. One might think you would have grown jaded from the repetitive experiences, but each time feels as painful as the first. And people wonder if you are insane: after such experiences, sometimes you marvel at the fact that you haven't completely lost your mind.



Storm Dragons

"The Shaolin know of us, but they are the students of renegades who rejected our ways. The wise men of Tibet understood us, but they preferred to take no sides in our war. We alone made no distinctions and accepted all who were willing to fight for the cause, be they Western or Asian, Chinese or Japanese, yellow, white or brown. For are we all not beings of Chi and Flesh? To the demons from beyond, we are all prey. If we make any finer distinctions, we shall surely fail."

-- Tsao Lung, introduction to the Book of Storms

"I buried my two best friends last night. We had become complacent, and even displayed some of our abilities in public. 'What's the harm in that?' we asked ourselves. We had money and fame, the respect of thousands of students, and we were still doing the work of the Storm Dragons. But our enemies knew where to find us, and where to strike. Even our powers were no match for treachery and bombs, dark sorcery and poison. To those of us who are out there starring in movies and giving public shows, I tell you 'beware' -- the dark forces being stirred will target you first."

-- Johnny Wang, Storm Dragon

Description: Almost every martial arts style in the world has legends about masters who can perform superhuman feats as a result of their dedication and strength of spirit. After decades of movies and television shows depicting such feats, the general public has become jaded to those so called "kung fu tricks" and no longer finds any wonderment in the martial arts. In the world of WitchCraft, however, there are Gifted martial artist who can outdo the most dazzling special effects of the movies. A gathering of these masters, the Storm Dragons, use their powers not for self-aggrandizement but to keep at bay the unspeakable beings known as the Mad Gods and to hunt down all supernatural predators.

Storm Dragons recruit members from many different places. Although they emerged in Asia, they have expanded to other parts of the world, often following communities of Asian emigrants through all five continents. Storm Dragons recruit not only martial arts enthusiasts but also thinkers and philosophers, psychic sensitives, and anybody who seems a good candidate for enlightenment. The new members are taught the secrets of Storm Fist, a system of physical and spiritual enlightenment that combines breathing exercises, philosophical teachings and intensive gymnastics and combat training. The Dragons have been taught to think as well as to fight, and to combine ancient teachings with modern technology. The Gifted among them also learn the metaphysical arts of Tao-Chi, which significantly enhances their already advanced physical abilities.

This Covenant has had its share of problems, however. Many former students have abandoned the teachings of the Covenant. Over the centuries, some of these renegades founded their own schools of martial arts. If one believes the more militant Storm Dragons, every martial arts clan in Asia, from the Shaolin Temple to the Ninja, is the creation of a former Dragon who went astray. More recently, some members have started to show off their abilities in public, attracting unwanted interest and endangering their lives as well as the safety of the entire Covenant.

Although their goals are similar to those of the Sentinels and other “guardian” Covenants, the Storm Dragons do not claim to worship a greater power. At the root of their teachings is the idea that all living beings have the potential to achieve godhood through personal enlightenment and development. They would be the first to admit that humans are a long way from reaching that ideal, however.

Attributes: Storm Dragons should have good physical Attributes. They do not have to be extraordinary. Some members are only average, but since most recruits start out as martial artists or athletes, or are raised by the society from early

childhood, they are usually in good shape. Characters who belong to this Association are granted special abilities that affect their Attributes (see Special Abilities below).

Qualities and Drawbacks: Some Storm Dragons have combat-oriented Qualities like Situational Awareness and Hard to Kill. Although there are a few wealthy members, most have relatively low Resources. The Society can be considered a Contact, although usually of low value (1-3 points depending on the abilities granted them in a particular Chronicler’s campaign), because it does not have a great deal of influence or numbers outside martial arts circles.

Metaphysics: All Gifted Storm Dragons are trained in the secrets of Tao-Chi, the Way of the Soul, which allows practitioners to channel their Essence through their bodies. Gifted and Lesser Gifted members should have both Chi Mastery (a Special skill) and at least one Tao-Chi power (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics). The second most common Gifted power among the Storm Dragons is the Second Sight. Members with psychic potential are encouraged to cultivate and develop this power. Magic and Necromancy are rare: the secrets of magic are not taught by the organization, but may be acquired elsewhere.

Other powers are almost never found among the society. The Disciplines of the Flesh, being the result of mental suffering and a symptom of tortured souls, are considered to be more of a disease than a power. Finally, the world-view of the Storm Dragons is incompatible with Divine Inspiration.

Special Abilities: Storm Dragons all undergo extensive physical training, which grants them access to the Storm Fist Martial Arts discipline, and gives them certain bonuses to their Attributes. Add one to any two of their physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Constitution; the bonuses cannot be “stacked” on a single Attribute). Being human, Storm Dragons cannot have an Attribute value over 6, however.

Additionally, up to 10 points of a non-Mundane character's Metaphysics points can be used to raise Attributes instead. Of course, this will reduce the amount of points available to purchase special powers. These points are used just like Drawback points in terms of the cost (see Chapter Two: Rules, Purchasing Attributes with Drawback Points).

Common Professions: Storm Dragons belong to a variety of professions. Many are self-employed, either as artists or sportsmen, which allows them to set their own hours and perform jobs for the society when necessary. The Storm Dragons fund a number of martial arts schools across the world, and many members are employed as instructors.

Roleplaying Storm Dragons: You have spent years honing your body and your mind into the ultimate weapon and tool. You can heal as well as well as destroy, protect as well as attack. Violence must be used only as a last resort and must always be tempered with reason and compassion. You have learned to control your baser passions, although, being human, you know this control is not perfect. Your enemies are terrible creatures from beyond our reality, or perversions of the natural order of life. Unlike your predecessors, many of whom lived out their existence without contact with the supernatural, you now have to battle bizarre creatures with increasing frequency. It was your fate to be born in time for a major conflict, and your purpose is to do your best, no matter what the cost.



Attributes

Attribute types, descriptions and purchasing remains the same under the revised WitchCraft game rules. The formulas for determining Secondary Attributes, especially Life and Endurance Points, were not as clear as they could have been in First Edition, however. For the sake of clarity, the formula descriptions for Life and Endurance points are modified as follows:

Life Points: Add Constitution and Strength together, multiply by four, and add 10 to the result. The formula is best written as $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength}) \times 4) + 10$.

Endurance Points: Add Constitution, Strength and Willpower together, multiply by three, and add 5 to the result. The formula is best written as $((\text{Constitution} + \text{Strength} + \text{Willpower}) \times 3) + 5$.

New Qualities and Drawbacks

The following new Qualities and Drawbacks may be taken by any WitchCraft character, as long as the Chronicler approves. These traits are combined with those from the WitchCraft main rulebook in a reference chart in the Appendix.

SUPERNATURAL QUALITIES ARE, with a few exceptions, restricted to Gifted, Lesser Gifted and supernatural beings. These Qualities can be purchased from either the Qualities or Metaphysics point pools. SUPERNATURAL DRAWBACKS can afflict Mundanes as well as Gifted, however, and Mundane characters can acquire them and get extra points.

Addiction

Variable Mental Drawback

An addict craves a substance and must have it, even against his better judgement. Most addictive substances eventually impact on his health. Many of them are also illegal and using or purchasing them may result in prosecution and jail time. Those concerns matter little to the addict, however; when the craving hits, he can rarely resist for any length of time. He often does things he would normally never consider in order to satisfy his need, from cheating and stealing to committing serious crimes to selling his body or even betraying his friends.

When an addicted character goes without his "fix," he suffers debilitating withdrawal symptoms. Most mental actions (e.g., any Tasks or Tests using Intelligence, Perception or Willpower) are at a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback (a character with a 2-point Addiction suffers a -2 penalty to most tasks) until the addict can get what he needs. The most severe drugs (like heroin) also produce strong physical effects; such addicts have a penalty of -3 to all physical actions in addition to the above penalty on mental actions. To make matters worse, severe addicts also suffer physically if they cannot or do not give in to their craving.

The value of this Drawback is determined by the severity of the Addiction and the relative effects of the drug or substance. A detailed description of the effects of different addictive substances would fill an entire book or more. Chroniclers should adjudicate the game effects of a "high" on a character. This can range from a small action penalty for being slightly "buzzed", to the complete stupor of a heroin trip. In the game, as in real life, drugs are dangerous and unpredictable, and an addict character is often unable to control himself.

The nearby Addiction Point Value Table gives guidelines for how much a given type of addiction is worth. Again, Chroniclers should modify these values as desired.

Addiction Point Value Table

Habitual drinking or smoking: 1 point.

Heavy drinking or smoking; light use of marijuana or LSO: 2 points

Heavy use of marijuana or LSO: 3 points

Alcoholism; habitual use of barbiturates or cocaine: 4 points

Habitual use of heroin; heavy use of barbiturates or cocaine: 5 points

Heavy Use of Heroin: 6 points

Like most Drawbacks, this problem cannot be easily overcome. Generally, the best a character can hope to do is to deny his craving, "one day at a time." Getting rid of this Drawback should never be a matter of saving up enough points to "buy it off." Resisting the craving requires a series of daily Willpower Tests. For each Willpower Test up to the level of the character's Willpower, these Tests are Simple. For each one after that, the Tests are Difficult. All Tests suffer a penalty equal to the point value of the Drawback, plus an additional -1 to -4 depending on the strength of the drug and its availability (tobacco is so available and addictive that Willpower Tests incur a penalty of -4 or even higher). Once the character accumulates 10 Success Levels in succession from successful Willpower Tests, 1 character point may be spent to reduce the strength of the Addiction by 1 point. Another 10 Success Levels in succession are needed for the next point, and so on, until the Drawback is eliminated. If any Test is failed during the course of accumulating the 10 Success Levels, all are lost, and the accumulation process must begin again.

For example, Joshua has a level 3 Willpower, and a 2-point Addiction to marijuana. He starts to kick the habit, and begins making daily, Simple Willpower Tests. These Tests have a -2 penalty for the level of the Addiction, and a further -1 for the drugs availability and potency (Chronicler's judgment). For three days, Joshua rolls a 6, 8 and 15. Adding his Willpower doubled (6), and subtracting

his penalties (-3), the results are 9 (one Success Level), 11 (two Success Levels) and 18 (five Success Levels). This amounts to eight Success Levels. Joshua only needs two Success Levels to bring the Addiction down to a 1-point Drawback. Unfortunately for Joshua, however, the going gets tougher, and Difficult Willpower Tests are now required. The next day, Joshua rolls a 4. Adding his Willpower (3 -- no doubling) and subtracting his penalties (still -3), the result is 4. This failure sends Joshua in desperate search of a "fix." If he decides to try and kick the habit again, a new series of Willpower Tests must be attempted with no successes accumulated.

This struggle to "kick the habit" should be a major part of the character's roleplaying. A convincing depiction of the torments of the addict may be awarded with bonuses to the Willpower Tests, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Age

5-points/level Supernatural Quality

Most supernatural beings in this game are assumed to be less than a hundred and fifty years old. Some beings have been alive and active for several life spans; they could be powerful Gifted humans, ancient Undead, or long-lived Ghosts or other Supernatural beings. Ancient characters are very powerful, having refined their powers with centuries of practice. This Quality assumes that the character has powers or natural abilities that allowed him to survive this long (such powers must be purchased separately). Gifted characters with the appropriate Essence Pool can purchase this Quality (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics, Essence and Immortality), as can long-lived beings like Vampyres or Ghosts.

The Age Quality described here has been changed from the Power listed in First Edition Armageddon.

Each level of Age adds one century to the character's life span. Truly ancient supernaturals (nearly a millennium old) have ten or so levels of Age, and are extremely powerful. As such, they are not appropriate as Cast Members in Pre-Heroic and Heroic games, or even in most Legendary ones. Beings over 1,000 years old work only in Mythical campaigns. (See Campaign Levels discussed later in this chapter.)

Note that the Age Quality only refers to periods during which the character was active. Many Supernatural beings, like Vampyres and Phantasms, often have long periods of "down time"; times when they slumber, or were Unraveled (see Chapter Three: Inhumans). A player who wants to create a character from a truly ancient period can do so, adding as many levels of Age as he can afford, and consider the rest of the time to be "down time" for whatever reasons. The bonuses the character gets are restricted to those levels of Age he bought, however.

For example, Kathy is creating the Vampire Kendall. She wants her character to have lived during the Middle Ages, becoming unborn around 1340. That would make the character 650 years old. Since Kathy does not have 30 points to spend on the Age Quality, she says that for several decades Kendall was in suspended animation.

In game terms, each level of Age gives the character one point per level of Intelligence to put into Skills, one point per level of the character's highest mental Attribute (Intelligence, Willpower or Perception) to put into Metaphysics, and one extra point to their Essence Pool per Willpower level (where applicable, this Essence is split between the Vital and Energy Essence Pool, with a remainder going to the latter). If using the optional Skill Points Calculation rule (detailed later in this chapter), a character with one or more levels of Age also gets a bonus of five Skill points per level and no modifiers to their Attributes. This addition is cumulative with the Skill points based on Intelligence normally gained with each level of the Age Quality.

Artistic Talent (Type)

3-point Mental Quality

Some people have a natural gift and are able to produce astounding works of art, even if they lack formal training. Geniuses like Mozart and Picasso had the ability to create true art seemingly without effort. A character with this Quality has the talent to become a famous artist. Artistic Talent affects only one form of artistic expression, such as Painting/Drawing, Sculpture, Singing, etc. It is possible to buy this Quality multiple times; each additional purchase grants the bonuses to an additional form of art. Essence bonuses are cumulative.

Whenever a work of art is created, the character receives a +3 bonus to all related Task attempts. Additionally, even if the Task is failed, a minimum of one Success Level is always acquired -- even a failure by the truly talented still has artistic merit.

In the world of WitchCraft, true artists have very strong souls. A character with Artistic Talent adds 12 Essence points to his Pool, to represent the power of his spirit. This also makes artists more likely to be targeted by entities that feed on Essence, such as Ghosts and Vampyres, which may explain the often tortured existences of true artists.

Covetous

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Covetous character wants certain things and is prepared to go to great lengths to acquire them. He may be motivated by love of money, lust for sensual satisfaction, hunger for power, or the search for glory. Whatever he desires, be it fame, fortune or influence, he will do almost anything to get it, limited only by any sense of caution or morality he may have -- and in some cases, not even by that. A Covetous character usually refrains from breaking his own moral code or the laws of the land in the pursuit of his goals, but if a golden opportunity presents itself, the temptation may be just too great.

There are four types of covetousness, based on what the character wants: Greedy (money and wealth), Lecherous (sexually attractive people), Ambitious (power and influence), and Conspicuous (fame and renown). It is possible to covet two or more of those things, but each additional source of desire adds but a single point to the value of this Drawback, regardless of its level.

The Covetous Drawback has three levels of severity, worth 1, 2 and 3 points respectively. The first level is relatively mild. The character knows what he wants, and he spends a great deal of time and effort to attain this goal, but he won't break his own rules or those of society to do so. His desire otherwise dominates his life, however. Most of his actions should be directed towards achieving his objective, directly or indirectly. An Ambitious Rosicrucian, for example, will seek to advance his standing in the order in every way he can, from redoubling his studies to mastering new Arts to brown-nosing among the upper hierarchy.

The second level is stronger -- presented with enough temptation, the character may act even if it goes against his better judgement or morality. He may resist if the action he contemplates is truly wrong and reprehensible -- stealing credit for a heroic deed performed by a friend, for example -- but resisting requires a Simple Willpower Test, at a penalty of -1 to -3 if the temptation and possible rewards are great.

The third level is the strongest -- a desire so strong that it often overwhelms any compunction or scruples the character may have. When presented with temptation, he can only avoid acting by passing a Difficult Willpower Test, with penalties ranging from -1 to -5 depending on the size of the "prize." For a high enough reward, the character will turn on friends or loved ones, and even betray his cause or principles.

Cowardly

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Cowardly character is easily scared and intimidated. He is very reluctant to take any risks; putting his neck on the line always strikes him as incredibly foolhardy. This does not mean that a Cowardly character will not fight if necessary. He usually tries to stack the odds in his favor, however, before resorting to violence. He would have no compunction (except as determined by other Drawbacks) against attacking others if circumstances minimized the danger. A coward can hide his Drawback from others easily, as long as he is not involved in a situation that is clearly dangerous. Only then may his limitations become apparent.

This Drawback has three levels of intensity, worth 1, 2 and 3 points respectively. The level of the Drawback acts as a modifier to any Test or Task to resist fear, intimidation or bullying. For example, a character with a 2-point Cowardly Drawback incurs a -2 penalty to any Fear Test.

At the first level, the character avoids taking unnecessary risks, but fights when cornered (or when he thinks he has the upper hand). Simple Willpower Tests are necessary to avoid fleeing or surrendering when confronted by what the character considers to be superior foes. The same goes for taking even small chances, like asking for a raise, complaining about some problem, etc.

The second level of this drawback is stronger. The character must pass a Simple Willpower Test to fight back even when he thinks the odds are in his favor; a Difficult Test is required to avoid fleeing dangerous situations, or taking riskier chances.

The last level is the worst, requiring Difficult Willpower Tests to get involved in confrontations or risky situations even when the character has a good chance of succeeding. Truly dangerous or heroic acts are simply impossible; the character never knowingly or willingly endangers himself, and may actually betray his friends if he thinks he will save himself in the process.

Ghost

8-point Supernatural Quality

Ghosts are basic, intact Essence patterns of deceased humans, unbound by a physical body. They wander the Earth, or one of the Death Realms, with a burning purpose, or a special connection to a place, person or thing. Players who wish to play Ghosts must choose the Spirit Character Type, and the purchase this Quality. The Ghost Quality conveys certain powers and vulnerabilities that are included in the cost of the Quality, and grants access to certain others that must be purchased separately. A detailed discussion of Ghosts appears in Chapter Three: Inhumans.

Good/Bad Luck

3-points/level Supernatural Quality/Drawback

If a character enjoys Good Luck, Fortune smiles on him far more often than most people. Sometimes, he pulls off amazing stunts that by rights should be impossible to perform. Whenever he needs a break, there is a good chance that circumstances will conspire to give him one. If the character suffers from Bad Luck, on the other hand, Murphy's Law ("if anything can go wrong, it will") always applies to everything he does.

In game terms, each level of Luck counts as a +1 bonus (or -1 penalty) that can be applied to any Task or Test, once per game session. Multiple levels can be added together for a big bonus on one Task/Test, or spread around several different actions. For example, a character with three levels of Good Luck can get a +3 bonus on one action, a +1 bonus to three actions, or a +2 bonus for one and a +1 bonus for another.

With Good Luck, the player decides when it comes into play. Bad Luck, however, is in the hands of the Chronicler, who chooses when it affects a given Task or Test. Chroniclers should exercise caution and good judgement when applying Bad Luck. If they use Bad Luck for meaningless rolls, then the Drawback becomes little more than a minor inconvenience. On the other hand,

applying Bad Luck to Survival Tests or other critical rolls/draws generates resentment among players. Make the Bad Luck count, but don't abuse the characters. For example, Jenna has a 2-point Bad Luck Drawback. At one point in the Story, Jenna takes aim with her gun as a potential source attempts to flee the area. The character's mission will be much harder if the source escapes, but Jenna is in no immediate danger, so the Chronicler states that a startled bird flies in front of her, spoiling her aim. A -2 penalty is applied to Jenna's shot.

Multiple Identities

2-point/Identity Social Quality

Some characters have more than one identity. False identities come complete with such records as a birth certificate, a social security number, and a credit rating. Only characters with criminal, espionage or law enforcement connections are likely to have this Quality, because convincing papers require access to good forgeries and computer records. Each fake identity costs 2 character points. Note that characters traveling under aliases or who have purchased a fake driver's license do not need to purchase this Quality. Each Multiple Identity grants a set of papers and records that pass all but the closest scrutiny. Most police organizations will be fooled by the fake identity; an all-out investigation by the FBI, NSA or the like would reveal the truth, but such investigations are not unlikely.

Nerves of Steel

3-point Mental Quality

This character is almost impossible to scare. Whether he is too dumb or too tough to be frightened is open to question, but he can keep his cool even in the face of unspeakable horror. Only the most bizarre and terrifying situations make an impression on a fearless character, and even then he has a good chance of not succumbing to panic. The character must make Fear Tests (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules) only when confronted with the strangest supernatural manifestations, and still gains a +4 bonus to his roll/draw.

Phantasm

15-point Supernatural Quality

Phantasms are powerful spirits. Extremely rare in days past, the coming Reckoning has greatly increased their numbers. Players who wish to play Phantasms must choose the Spirit Character Type, and then purchase this Quality. The Phantasm Quality conveys certain Powers and Vulnerabilities that are included in the cost of the Quality, and grants access to certain others that must be purchased separately. A detailed discussion of Phantasms appears in Chapter Three: Inhumans.

Reckless

2-point Mental Drawback

A Reckless character is supremely overconfident and impulsive, willing to take incredible risks, often without thinking of the consequences. Most of the time, he never looks before he leaps -- and gets into all kinds of trouble as a result. A Reckless character prefers to act first and think about it later. He says what's on his mind with no consideration for diplomacy or courtesy, rushes into dangerous situations, and rarely wastes time on second thoughts. Reckless does not necessarily mean suicidal, however. Acting on impulse no doubt puts the character in jeopardy, but doing something that is clearly lethal is not roleplaying, it's just stupid.

Relentless Dead

15-point Supernatural Quality

The Relentless once were human beings, but they died in some gruesome or shocking manner, often after witnessing the deaths of loved ones. They are consumed by fury -- it is what powers their unliving existence. Players who wish to play Relentless Dead must choose the Undead Character Type, and then purchase this Quality. The Relentless Dead Quality conveys certain Powers and Vulnerabilities that are included in the cost of the Quality, and grants access to others that must be purchased separately. A detailed discussion of the Relentless Dead appears in Chapter Three: Inhumans.

Showoff

2-point Mental Drawback

The whole world is the Showoff's audience, and he loves to perform for it. He never misses a chance to cast the spotlight on himself or his accomplishments, while quickly excusing or covering up his mistakes. A showoff loves to get public acclaim, or at least the respect of his peers. Most of the time, he simply makes sure people notice him, but on occasion he might try a bit too hard to attract attention to himself and his deeds. This Drawback is slightly more complex than the Covetous (Conspicuous) Drawback, and the Showoff is less likely to betray his principles in order to hog the spotlight.

Talentless

2-point Mental Drawback

The Talentless individual is totally lacking in creativity and artistic talent. Maybe he is too stolid and practical, or maybe he just doesn't have the imagination to do anything artistic. This Drawback does not just affect his ability in the arts, but also in many social situations where flair and creativity are necessary. A Talentless character has a -3 penalty when trying to do anything artistic. This penalty does not affect Tasks where other people's art is judged; many expert critics are Talentless. When he does try to do something himself, however, the best he can hope for is a mediocre result. In addition to the penalty, the character can never get more than one Success Level in artistic pursuits, regardless of how high his skill, roll or draw are. These people also make poor liars, charmers or social butterflies. The same penalty applies to skills such as Intimidation and Seduction -- a lack of creativity affects the ability to influence others.

Vampyre

15-point Supernatural Quality

Vampyres are undead parasites living off the life forces of their victims. Whether they revel in their depredations, or attempt to minimize the harm they do, Vampyres survive by taking the Essence of others. Players who wish to play Vampyres must choose the Undead Character Type, and then purchase this Quality. The Vampyre Quality conveys certain powers and vulnerabilities that are included in the cost of the Quality, and grants access to certain others that must be purchased separately. A detailed discussion of Vampyres appears in Chapter Three: Inhumans.



New Skills

After a couple of skill rules points, this section lists a number of new skills. The skills may be learned by any WitchCraft character. These skills and those from the WitchCraft main rulebook are grouped together in one handy chart in the Appendix to ease character generation.

Skill Types and Specializations

Players should take care to distinguish between skill types and specializations. Skill types are required for some skills and represent broad areas of knowledge within the more generic skill category. For example, within the Guns skill are the Handgun, Rifle, and Shotgun types. Within each of these types, individual guns are specializations. For example within the Handgun type is the 9mm Automatic, or the .357 Magnum Revolver.

Types cost no extra character points. They are purchased when the generic skill is taken. Specializations costs 1 point, and add +2 to Tasks involving that specialization. Points spent on specializations do not affect the generic skill or type levels. If the type level is raised, the specialization level rises as well. If the character does not have a skill type, he may not buy specializations of it.

For example, Peter wants to play a combat oriented Mundane. He purchases Guns (Handgun) at level 4, and Guns (Rifle) at level 3. This costs a total of 7 points. Peter then chooses a specialization of Guns (Handgun) of .357 Magnum Revolver. This costs 1 point. For 8 points, Peter has Guns (Rifle) 3, Guns (Handgun) 4, and Guns (.357 Magnum Revolver) 6. Peter could not purchase Guns (Double-Gauge Shotgun) because he has no skill level with shotguns.

Julie is playing a scientist. She buys Science (Biology) to level 4. She picks two specializations with that type: Microbiology and Circulatory Systems. She spends 6 points and gains Science

(Biology) 4, Science (Microbiology) 6 and Science (Circulatory Systems) 6. Julie could not buy a Science (Astrophysics) specialization because she knows neither Science (Astronomy) or Science (Physics) -- either of which could grant access to that specialization.

Regular and Special Skills

Most of the skills listed below and in the Witchcraft main rulebook are Regular skills. During character creation, they cost 1 point per level to level 5, and 3 points per level thereafter. Special Skills are more difficult and require extra time and dedication to learn. This includes some mundane skills like Martial Arts, which have special bonuses, and certain supernatural skills like Spiritus (see Chapter Three: Inhumans). Special skills cost 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter, unless otherwise specified in the skill description.

Acting

The ability to play a role and successfully counterfeit behaviors, emotions and other character traits. A talented actor can weep on demand, or convincingly display an array of emotions. This skill is useful to both legitimate artists and criminals and con men. Use Intelligence and Acting to give a good performance, and Perception and Acting to spot or judge someone else's act.

Bureaucracy

This skill provides familiarity with the organization of, and procedures used by, bureaucratic institutions. With this skill, the character can find ways to improve an organization's service and performance, or otherwise obtain their services or products more efficiently. Use Intelligence and Bureaucracy to devise ways to make a large group or organization more (or less) efficient; use Willpower and Bureaucracy to "cut through red tape" and get the services desired.

Craft (Type)

The Craft skill covers numerous types of skills such as those employed by Carpenters, Seamstresses, Weavers, Weaponsmiths, Woodworkers, etc. When the Craft skill is purchased, a particular type of skill must be specified. Further, characters may want to specialize. For example, a Gunsmith is a specialization of the Craft (Weaponsmith) skill focusing on guns. Bowyer would likewise relate to bows.

Intelligence and Craft is used to conceive and plan an item. Dexterity and Craft is tested to create the item, or repair a damaged item. Perception and Craft serves to appraise an item. The Fine Arts, Electronic, Engineering, Mechanic and other skills may be used to supplement the Craft skill. Note that devising and creating a particular item may be a time consuming and difficult task. Often, it is far easier to simply buy a mass-produced item.

Haggling

The skill provides the character with the ability to deal for goods and services, or otherwise bring two or more parties to some common ground. It may be applied when buying, selling or bartering goods or services. Often used in a Resisted Task, each level of success decreases/increases the price of the subject by 10%. Further, it may be used for less tangible exchanges, such as political dealmaking. In such circumstances, the Chronicler should adjudicate the result given the goal and the levels of success. Haggling can also be used to determine whether the character is being mislead or conned. Use Willpower and Haggling to get the best deal; use Perception and Haggling to spot a con.

Escapism

This is the ability to escape from ropes, handcuffs and other restraints. Most of these tasks use Dexterity and Escapism, with each attempt taking between one and five minutes, depending on the complexity of the bonds. The more complex the bindings, the higher the penalties to the task. A simple rope tie would have no modifier, but complex knots might have penalties of -1 to -5, police handcuffs involve a penalty of -4, and a straitjacket/strap/chain combo might have penalties of -5 to -8. Expert escape artists also use visualization techniques -- they carefully think about their method of escape before attempting it. This is an Intelligence and Escapism task that takes two minutes; each Success Level in this Task adds a +1 to an immediately subsequent Dexterity and Escapism Task.

Electronics

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of electronic devices and tools, and grants him knowledge about electronic systems and the like. The difficulty of repairing an electronic device depends on how intricate the device is, and how damaged it is. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Constructing an electronic item is also more difficult the more advanced and complex the device. Again, modifiers should be imposed by the Chronicler. Finally, an electronic tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, from a couple of hours to days (as determined by the Chronicler).

Understanding an existing electronic device calls for a Perception and Electronics Task; repairing or constructing a device requires an Intelligence and Electronics Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Mechanic skill complement one another, and are often used together to make repairs to an item or to construct an item.

Engineer (Type)

This skill reflects the general knowledge of structural design, material strengths, and construction techniques in a variety of fields and applications. Examples of the types of Engineering skill include: Architecture, Civil, Construction, Mechanical, Electrical, and Biological. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Planning or devising an object, structure or device within the character's Engineering type demands an Intelligence and Engineering Task.

Fine Arts (Type)

There are many types of Fine Arts skill, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, computer graphics, etc. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story.

Rolls to conceptualize a work of art, or to produce it from memory, improvisation or imagination require Intelligence and Fine Arts. Rendering a concept that is recorded, such as using models or plans, requires Dexterity and Fine Arts. Appreciating another's work uses Perception and Fine Arts.

The Success Levels of a Fine Arts Task indicate how good the artistic expression is. Regardless of the final Task result, the Success Levels cannot exceed the skill level of the artist. For example, a character with Fine Arts (Drawing) 2 cannot accumulate more than 2 Success Levels on a drawing.

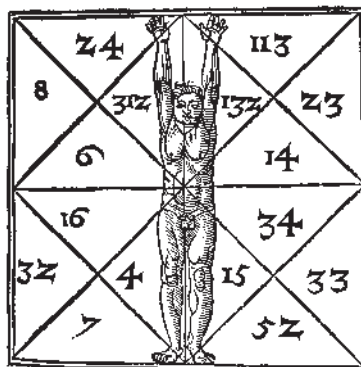
The Fine Arts skill is new, but it essentially replaces several skills in First Edition WitchCraft, such as Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. For that reason, it may be seen as a rules correction, rather than a rules addition.

Humanities (Type)

Each of the various Humanities disciplines (archeology, anthropology, economics, history, law, political science, sociology, theology, etc.) counts as a separate type. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Most Humanities Tasks use Intelligence or Perception and Humanities.

Humanities types should almost always include a specialization. For example, Humanities (Law) includes a number of different subjects, any one of which may be a specialization (e.g., corporate law, environmental law, criminal law). Other than giving a character the normal +2 Task bonus for specializations, Chroniclers may wish to penalize Tasks attempted outside the specialization. For example, a character with Humanities (Ancient History) gains a +2 bonus for Tasks involving the wars of Sparta, but may incur a -1 penalty for a question concerning the Renaissance, or a -3 penalty for a question about World War I.

The Humanities skill is new, but it essentially replaces several skills in First Edition WitchCraft, such as Archeology, Law and Theology. For that reason, it may be seen as a rules correction, rather than a rules addition.



Instruction

Teaching is a skill and an art. The subject matter is important but conveying that information in an interesting, stimulating and comprehensive manner is the heart of the Instruction skill.

The first step in using the Instruction skill is to pick a subject matter to teach. This may be any skill known by the teacher. Whatever the skill to be taught, the teacher must possess that skill at a level at least two higher than the student's level.

If the required skill level is possessed, the teacher and student must spend a certain period to time on lessons. Every week of game time that the teacher and student spend at least 10 hours studying the skill, the teacher can attempt an Intelligence and Instruction Task. The Success Levels of this Task are cumulative; for example, if the teacher and student spend three weeks working on the skill, the Success Levels of all three rolls are added together. When the teacher accumulates five Success Levels in the Task, the student gets 1 Experience point towards improving that skill.

For example, Rolando is an accomplished singer (level 5), and a decent teacher (level 3). Maria wants to learn to sing better; she has Singing 1.

Rolando's Singing skill is more than two level higher than Maria's, so he may teach her. After they spend a good deal of time working together during one week, Rolando tests his Instruction skill. He rolls a 6, adds 3 for the Instructor skill level, and 2 for his Willpower for a total of 11. That is two Success Levels. The next week, they study together again, and Rolando rolls particularly well -- gaining three Success Levels. Maria gains 1 Skill point dedicated to the Singing skill.

Language (Type)

Every character is assumed to have level 5 in their native or primary language. Each additional language must be purchased as a separate skill. The skill level in a language determines not only basic fluency, but the "thickness" of the character's accent (see the Fluency Skill Level Table nearby). Most of the time, the character need not pass a Task to see if he communicates; as long as the character knows the language, assume that he can talk in it without needing to roll or draw. A Task roll would be necessary in situations involving highly technical or scholarly speech (which may use a lot of words the character doesn't know) or when dealing with extreme regional accents or slang.

Language Skill Level Table

Skill Level	Fluency
1	Very thick accent and frequent grammatical mistakes; the character will be immediately identified as a foreigner, and may be misunderstood.
2	Thick accent but largely fluent; the character should have no problems being understood.
3	Slight accent; native speakers will realize this is not the character's first language.
4	Full fluency, only a Resisted Test (listener's Simple Perception versus speaker's Simple Intelligence) will spot the character's accent.
5	Complete mastery; the character can pass for a native without problems.
6+	Dialects: character can perfectly imitate regional accents and dialects in addition to the main version of the language.

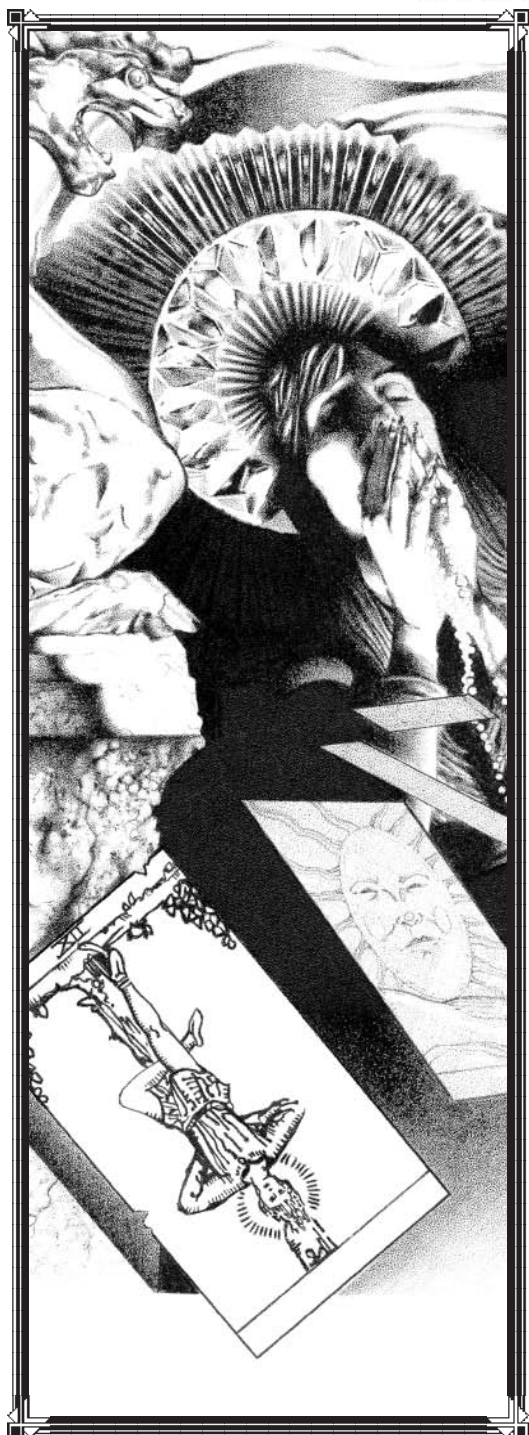
Magic Theory

Students of the occult arts often learn this skill, which covers the elements and techniques of magic. Ceremonial Covenants like the Rosicrucians study magic like a science, and are more likely to have this skill, although some among the Wicce also have this systematic knowledge. Magic Theory is used with either Intelligence or Perception to identify and recognize styles of magic. Gifted characters with this skill can judge the strengths and weaknesses of any magical matrix (such as that of an ongoing or maintained incantation). This allows magicians to best plan a way to counteract or dispel the magic abilities of an enemy. Use Perception and Magic Theory for this purpose; every level of success adds a +1 bonus on any Task involving resisting or counteracting a magical effect.

Mechanic

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of mechanical devices and tools, and grants him knowledge about mechanical systems and the like. The difficulty of repairing a mechanism depends on how intricate the device is, and how damaged it is. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Constructing an mechanic item is also more difficult the more advanced and complex the device. Again, modifiers should be imposed by the Chronicler. Finally, a mechanical tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may also be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, from a couple hours to days. This too should be determined by the Chronicler.

Understanding an existing mechanical device calls for a Perception and Mechanic Task; repairing or constructing a mechanism requires an Intelligence and Mechanic Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Electronic skill complement one another, and are often used together to make repairs to an item or to construct an item.



Play Instrument (Type)

The character is able to play a musical instrument. He may choose more than one type of instrument to play, but each instrument is counted as a separate skill. At the higher levels of the skill, the character is more proficient in tonal quality, rhythm, and improvisation. In order to play for pleasure, the character would use Dexterity and Play Instrument. If performing a complex piece of music, he would use Intelligence and Play Instrument. If the character is performing a long piece of music, use Constitution and Play Instrument. In all circumstances the quality of the performance is reflected in the levels of success. No matter what the ultimate roll, no musician may enjoy more Success Levels than he has skill levels.

Questioning

As the ability to interrogate, spot lies, and otherwise extract the truth from people, this skill is learned by police officers, PIs, and investigative reporters. Most interrogations should be roleplayed. If a Task or Test is needed, how well the player roleplayed the interview grants a modifier of +5 to -5, at the Chronicler's discretion. Tricking somebody into revealing something uses Intelligence and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Spotting a lie uses Perception and Questioning, also resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Breaking a victim's will to resist uses Willpower and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Willpower Test. The use of torture and drugs may give bonuses of +1 to +6 to the questioner's Task.

Research/Investigation

This skill allows a character to search out information or follow a series of clues and leads to a reasonable conclusion through deduction, source checking, going to libraries, searching on the Internet, and the like. Alternatively, this skill

can be used by the character to do legwork, running down leads on a story, questioning contacts and sources of information (the later would incur some penalties; this aspect would best be left to the Questioning skill).

In all cases, using this skill takes time. This is determined by the Chronicler, based on the nature of the task being undertaken. Most skill uses involve Intelligence and Research Tasks. In other cases, Constitution and Research (when searching through dusty old tomes for long periods of time or walking the length and breadth of a library for the better part of a day), or Perception and Research (when researching obscure facts in voluminous materials) are used.

Storytelling

This skill allows a character to sway or influence an audience, be it one individual or a group of people, from one emotion to the next by means of a tale. It can be used for the purpose of educating an individual or a group of people, as well as merely for entertainment. In some cultures, storytelling is the means by which knowledge and lore are passed down, and so the skill is highly valued in some primitive societies, but is also quite useful under certain circumstances when dealing with Myth and Legend and Occult Knowledge and the like. The character may tell a tale that is true or fictional, although the audience will generally not know the difference. The character must constantly be aware of how the listeners are reacting to the tale. He may alter his pacing, volume, or even change the course of the story to elicit a better or greater response.

Storytellers use Willpower and Storytelling Tasks. The level of success dictates the effectiveness or entertainment value of the story. If the people listening to the story are familiar with the tale, they may resist the attempt of the storyteller character to influence them with a Difficult Willpower Test; use a Simple Willpower Test in the case of Gifted characters.

Swimming

Swimming is the skill that allows a character to stay afloat and to move in the water without drowning. Floating is an Average difficulty Constitution and Swimming Task when fully clothed; it becomes Easy with little or no clothing. Each pound/kilogram of equipment or weight effectively reduces a character's Swimming skill level by one.

If the Task is failed, the character sinks and drowns in a number of turns equal to his Constitution. Shedding clothing and/or equipment (which requires one turn) allows a character to attempt the Task anew.

If the character succeeds, he stays afloat and may swim at a speed equal to his Swimming skill in meters (yards) per turn. Swimming is an exhausting activity. Floating with little clothing uses one Endurance point per ten minutes. Floating while fully clothed uses one Endurance point per minute. Swimming unclothed takes one Endurance point per minute at half-speed and five Endurance points per minute at full speed. Those who swim clothed, or who carry equipment when they swim, use double the Endurance cost and move at half speed. Towing another person while Swimming imposes a -1 modifier, doubles the Endurance cost, and halves the swimmer's speed.

Trance (Special)

Trance is often used by shamans and mystics. It enables the character to enter a meditative state that transcends physical limitations. Among other things, someone in a trance can withstand pain, hunger and thirst better than the average human being. A trance is also helpful when communicating with spirits or sensing the supernatural.

To enter into a trance, use Willpower and the Trance skill. If successful, the character becomes extremely focused on the task at hand, which gives him a -2 penalty on all non-related Perception Tests. On the other hand, the character is not

affected by pain and shock penalties (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules), and he gains a +2 bonus on all Tasks and Tests he is concentrating on, including supernatural abilities like Magic or Tao-Chi. A character in Trance also regains Essence more rapidly; characters without Essence Channeling gain double the normal Essence amount per hour of meditation (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules). Characters with Essence Channeling get an additional point of Essence per minute, as long as they remain motionless and in a meditative state.

Trance is a Special skill, which costs 2 points per level until level 5 and 5 points per level thereafter.

Writing (Type)

This skill allows the character to construct and write entertaining and/or meaningful written accounts and narratives. The character is able to write text in a convincing manner to suit whatever goal or presentation is required. Types of skills would include Academic (learned expositions of the arts, humanities or sciences), Advocacy (legal arguments, ad copy or promotional materials), Creative (novels, poems or plays), Journalistic (informative discussions of newsworthy topics), and Technical (precise descriptions using nomenclature specific to a certain technology).

Using an Intelligence and Writing Task, the character is able to write documents, items, notes, or whatever the type of specialization implies. The quality of the writing depends on the successes obtained. The Success Level of such a work cannot exceed the writer's skill, however. Using a Perception and Writing Task, the character can critique writing of the style with which he is familiar.

New Character Rules

Additional and optional rules are included in this section. They may add detail to a game, or help the Chronicler run things more smoothly. The Chronicler is the best judge of how much detail a particular Story or gaming group needs to run smoothly. Sometimes, rolling dice gets in the way of the Story, while on other occasions determining results arbitrarily only alienates or angers the players. Use the rules as guidelines, but realize that no game system can cover every conceivable situation, and that a strict reading of the rules may sometimes lead to unrealistic or even ridiculous results. Common sense and the enjoyment of the game should always take precedence.

Special sidebars located throughout this text discuss rule changes from First Edition WitchCraft. These changes will be incorporated in Second Edition WitchCraft, but are included here as well.

Campaign Levels

WitchCraft may be played a number of different ways with different themes. The easiest way to vary the WitchCraft game is to assign a campaign level. Four such levels are suggested below.

Pre-Heroic: This is a campaign involving young or inexperienced characters. They have not accomplished much in life, and their Skills, Metaphysics and backgrounds reveal this. Play groups that wish to see their characters develop and evolve quickly should choose a Pre-Heroic game level. Of course, unless they are careful, their weaker characters may not make it to a more experienced age. Characters in Pre-Heroic games can only be Mundane and Lesser Gifted; Gifted or Supernatural characters (such as Undead, Spirits or Fey) cannot be selected. Furthermore, characters get 5 fewer Attribute points and 5 fewer Skill points than normal. The recommended maximum level for any starting skill is 3, with perhaps one or two at most at level 4.

Heroic: This is the default campaign level for the WitchCraft game. Characters have a goodly number of Skills and abilities, but are not world-beaters. Character development is slow but steady, and moderately powerful foes may be engaged, and sometimes beaten. All the regular point allotments in the character creation rules are set for Heroic games. No changes are necessary.

Legendary: In this campaign level, the characters are powerful and renowned. They have many Skills and abilities. They are tough, strong and smart. The characters usually wield a degree of power and influence over groups or sectors of society. Such characters advance slowly, if at all, but may challenge, and be challenged by the mightiest of foes. Characters at this level get an additional 40-50 points divided among the different categories, with most extra points going into Skills and Metaphysics. Mundanes are not really viable at this level, unless one is creating the most heroic figures of fiction and myth; Gifted and Supernatural characters are far more appropriate. Legendary characters are not recommended for most Witchcraft game settings. They “fit” better in Armageddon.

Mythical: Mythical games revolve around major forces in the campaign world. The character’s abilities and reputations are near the top levels of most settings, except perhaps in “super-hero” worlds or a supernatural equivalent. It would be very difficult to run a WitchCraft game at this level without making some major changes in the game world. Typically, these characters get at least 100 extra points distributed among the different categories.

The Skill point modifications listed in this section apply only to the basic Skill point allocation system. For those using the optional Skill point method (see Skill Point Calculations later in this chapter), the campaign level is factored into the calculation differently.

Purchasing Attributes with Drawback Points

Some Chroniclers may find that certain players put all their Drawback points into Attributes, resulting in unbalanced characters. To remedy this, Chroniclers may wish to modify the Character Creation rules as follows.

Drawback points can be used to purchase Attribute levels, but at a much higher cost. The cost to raise an Attribute one level is equal to the value of that level. For example, raising an Attribute from 3 to 4 costs 4 Drawback points, raising it from 4 to 5 would cost 5 points, and so on. Further, the costs are cumulative. Raising an Attribute from 3 to 5, for example, would cost a total of 9 Drawback points. This rule keeps Attributes at a relatively low level, which is both more realistic and balanced.

Beginning Skill Levels

Some players may want to over-specialize by spending many or most of their points in a few skills, raising them to inhuman levels. This is not realistic and can unbalance the game. It is recommended that the Chronicler limit the maximum skill level during character creation to 5, or maybe 6. This results in more rounded characters with a good assortment of skills. Characters who are old and experienced, especially those with the Age Quality (see earlier in this chapter) may be exempted from this restriction, or perhaps may be given a higher limit. For example, normal characters might only go up to 5 in any skill during character creation, while those with Age could get a limit of 6, or maybe 5 plus their Age level.



Skills Point Calculations

This optional rule makes the amount of points available for Skills during character creation dependent on a number of factors. Some Chroniclers and players may find these rules too time-consuming; in that case, they can retain the standard point allotments already in use.

Under the new mechanic, characters do not get a fixed number of points for Skills. Instead, they use the following formulas, which take into account the character's Type, Intelligence (i.e., how well they remember and assimilate experience), age, background and the campaign level.

To determine beginning Skill points, add together the numbers generated by the following factors:

Character Type: Gifted, Bast, Spirit, and Undead characters get 15 points. Lesser Gifted get 20 points and Mundanes 25 points.

Intelligence: 3 points per level of the character's Intelligence Attribute. Characters with 0 Intelligence or less get only one point.

Age: Starting characters are assumed to be 18-30 years old (players and Chroniclers may set the character's age anywhere within that range). Younger characters subtract 5 points from their total Skill points. Every 10 years after 30, characters add 5 Skill points but subtract 2 levels from Attributes (these subtractions can be taken from any Attribute).

For example, Jory's character is a 50-year old Mundane detective with an Intelligence of 5. His base Skill points are 25, and with his high intelligence he gets an additional 15 points. Due to his age, the character has an extra 10 points to put into skills, but he loses 4 attribute levels. Although he originally had Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Constitution 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, and Willpower 5, Jory decides to reduce the character's Strength to

2, his Perception to 4 and his Willpower to 4. He has a total of 50 points to put into skills.

Characters with supernatural longevity (see the Age Quality earlier in this chapter) get a flat 5 Skill point bonus but no attribute reductions, before adding in the bonuses granted by the Age Quality. This reflects the greater amount of time both to learn and forget skills.

Social Level or Resources: Characters with a positive Social Level or Resources take the highest level in either of those Qualities and add 1 Skill point per level. Characters with Resources of 0 or below get no bonus or penalty.

Campaign Level: Pre-Heroic campaigns give five points to Mundane characters, three points to Lesser Gifted, and two points to Gifted and Inhuman (Spirit and Undead) characters. Heroic campaigns grant 10 points to Mundanes, seven points to Lesser Gifted, and five points for Gifted and Inhuman characters. Legendary campaign provide 15 points for Mundanes, 10 for Lesser Gifted, and seven for Gifted and Inhuman characters.

For example, Grygori is a 23-year old Mundane with Intelligence 3, Resources 1, in a Heroic game. He gets 25 points for being a Mundane, 9 points for his Intelligence, 0 points for his age, 1 point for his Status and 10 points for the Heroic campaign level, for a total of 45 Skill points. His Gifted ally, Fatima, is 40 years old, with an Intelligence of 4 and average Status and Resources. She would get 15 points for being Gifted, 12 points for her Intelligence, 5 points for her age, 0 points for Resources, and 5 points for the campaign level, for a total of 37 Skill points. Fatima would also have to decrease her Attributes by two due to the depredations of age.

Experience Point Allotments

Some Chroniclers may dislike players over-specializing their characters in one Skill or Power, especially after getting experience in game sessions when they did not use those Skills or Powers. The following rule curtails that tendency, at the cost of certain bookkeeping and complexity.

Under this rule, the Chronicler assigns experience to each of the following categories. Characters use those points only in the appropriate categories.

Combat Points:

Awarded when the characters used any combat skills, such as Weapon skills, and Dodge. These points can be used to raise combat skills, Strength, Dexterity and Constitution.

Non-Combat

Points: Assigned when scholastic, investigative or non-violent activities, from scientific skills to Smooth Talking, were employed. These points can be used to raise the appropriate non-combat skills, as well as any mental Attribute.

Metaphysics Points: Assigned whenever any Supernatural or Gifted power was used, whether in combat or non-combat situations. These points can

be used to advance any Supernatural/Metaphysical power or to acquire new ones. They can also be used to increase mental Attributes.

Chroniclers may also grant characters "freebie" experience points that can be used for any purpose, especially when the characters have achieved a goal, performed some great feat or reached the Story's conclusion.

For example, during a game session, Lukas, a Rosicrucian troubleshooter, successfully followed an alleged cultist, broke into his house, opened his safe, was surprised in the act and summoned a fire elemental to cover his escape by starting a minor conflagration in the cultist's home. The Chronicler awards Lukas two Non-Combat points and one Metaphysics point.

Although there was some combat (Lukas was shot at during his escape), he only used magic, not any actual combat skills, so he gets no points for that category.



Purchasing Metaphysics After Character Creation

First Edition WitchCraft failed to provide a cost for every Gifted power and ability purchased after character creation. For each Power discussed in WitchCraft and this supplement, such costs are listed in the Metaphysics Experience Cost Table. Further, gaining new Powers, as opposed to perfecting already known ones, requires a rationale to be built into the plotline. A teacher may be introduced, an ancient tome uncovered, or a particular quest completed. The Gifted and supernatural creatures do not simply gain entirely new understandings of Metaphysics Powers over night.

Metaphysics Experience Cost Table

Trait	Point Cost
Essence Channeling	4 points per level until level 5; 7 points per level thereafter
Increased Essence Pool	2 points per level
New Invocations	10 points for the first level
Previously Known Invocations	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
Seer Powers (Strength)	6 points per level until level 5; 10 points per level thereafter
Seer Powers (Art)	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
Necromancy Skill	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter
Necromantic Powers	10 points per new Power
Previously Known Necro Powers	6 points per level until level 5; 10 points per level thereafter
Inspired Miracles	10 points per new Miracle
Spiritus	2 points per level until level 5; 5 points per level thereafter
Anguish	2 points per level until level 5; 5 points per level thereafter
Wrath	6 points per level until level 5; 10 points per level thereafter
Disciplines	8 points per new Discipline
Chi Mastery	2 points per level until level 5; 5 points per level thereafter
Tao-Chi	6 points per new Tao-Chi
Previously Known Tao-Chi	5 points per level until level 5; 8 points per level thereafter

Becoming Gifted During Play

The distinction between the Gifted and the Mundane is, to a great degree, purely artificial. In the world of WitchCraft, all human beings are born with the Divine Spark, being made in the image of the Creator, and everyone has the potential to achieve levels of god-like power. In practice, most human souls are undeveloped and undisciplined, a long way from achieving a fraction of what they could be capable of becoming. The difficulty of transcending human limits means that most Mundanes remain blind to the supernatural world for their entire lives, and they have to undergo multiple reincarnations to reach the right level of spiritual development.

However, it is theoretically possible for a Mundane WitchCraft character to become Gifted in the course of a Story. Since most Mundane Cast Members are exposed to supernatural events as they traffic with the Gifted, there is always a chance that they become “enlightened.” Mere exposure to the supernatural is insufficient, however, and the process is long and difficult.

In game terms, the character must accumulate enough experience points to purchase the Gifted Quality. For Mundane characters, however, the Gifted quality costs double (10 points).

Additionally, the Chronicler must decide whether the character’s experiences and actions merit this major change. Just shooting strange creatures and helping out Gifted magicians is not enough. Harrowing experiences (becoming the slave of a Vampyre or having one’s mind nearly fried by a devastating psychic attack, for example) are much more likely to transform the character.

After the Gifted quality is purchased, the Chronicler and the player should determine what type of Metaphysics would be appropriate. The choice should be governed by the events that led to the character’s transformation. For example, if the character’s faith in the Deity was somehow strengthened by his experiences, then he probably should acquire Inspired Miracles. If the profound exposure to the Wise Arts involved Seer powers, on the other hand, then the character might suddenly know such powers, the result of his latent abilities being awakened by the exposure to them. These new Metaphysics should be purchased normally (see Purchasing Metaphysics After Character Creation, earlier in this chapter)

Skill Improvement During Play

Most Chroniclers felt that skill improvement rules contained in First Edition WitchCraft, allowed for too rapid development, especially if players concentrated on improving only one or two skills. While the optional Experience Point Allotment may be used to mitigate this problem, the formulas contained in this rule slow down advancement, especially at high levels, to a more reasonable rate. Improving a skill from 2 to 3 should be fairly easy; raising it from 8 to 9 should take a long time. In all other ways, the improvement of abilities and the learning of new skills remains the same (see WitchCraft, Chapter Three: Rules, Experience).

The actual cost of improvement depends on whether the skill is a Regular one, or designated as Special (e.g., Martial Arts, Occult Knowledge, Spiritus, etc.).

Regular skill: The cost of increasing such skills is equal to the value of the new level. For example, raising a skill from 2 to 3 would cost 3 points, from 4 to 5 would cost 5 points, etc.

Special skill: Use the formula for Regular skills, and add one. For example, raising a skill from 1 to 2 would cost 3 points, from 2 to 3 would cost 4 points, etc.

New Combat Rules

Some players may want more detailed rules for action sequences. The following optional rules are provided for them. Chroniclers are, as always, free to tweak, change or ignore them as they see fit.

Bullet Type Damage Rules

Different kinds of bullets do different forms of damage. These new rules account for that fact, and make handguns extremely lethal, especially to Mundanes. A couple of gunshots from a heavy-caliber gun will knock down and probably kill the target. This is realistic and should discourage players from rushing their characters into combat.

The basic damage numbers of firearms given in the WitchCraft main rulebook remain the same. The following modifiers apply depending on the type of bullet used.

Normal Bullets: A normal jacketed bullet tends to corkscrew and ricochet inside the human body, shattering bone, piercing vital organs and doing assorted forms of mayhem. Thus, normal bullet damage is doubled after subtracting any armor value. Characters without armor take double the damage rolled. Characters with armor subtract the Armor Value first, then double whatever is left.

For example, Jessie is shot by a normal round from a 9mm pistol (1D6 x 4 damage). She is wearing a light Kevlar vest (1D6 x 2 protection). Jessie's attacker rolls a 4, and hits for 16 points of damage. Jessie rolls a 5, and gains 10 points of protection. The armor absorbs all but 6 points of damage. That penetrating damage is doubled, and Jessie takes 12 Life Points of damage. If Jessie had not been wearing armor, she would have taken 32 (16 x 2) points of damage.

Hollow-Point Bullets: These bullets flatten and mushroom upon impact and create greater wound cavities. On the other hand, armor more easily stops these bullets. Double any Armor Value between the target and the bullet. Any penetrating damage is tripled.

For example, Roger is shot by a hollow-point round from a 10mm pistol (1D8 x 4 damage). He is wearing a Leather Jacket (1D4 protection). Roger's attacker rolls a 3, and hits for 12 points of damage. Roger rolls a 4, and gains that many points of basic protection. This number is doubled to 8, due to the nature of the bullet's impact. Thus, only 4 points of damage penetrate. Again, this number is modified due to the bullet type, and Roger loses 12 Life Points. If Roger had not been wearing armor, he would have taken 36 (12 x 3) points of damage.

Armor-Piercing Bullets: These high-velocity, solid rounds punch through armor and obstacles. They also treat flesh the same way, and tend to pass through the target in a relatively flat trajectory, doing reduced damage. Armor-piercing rounds halve any Armor Value in their path (round up), but the penetrating damage inflicted is not modified.

For example, Clyde is shot by an armor-piercing shell from a light assault rifle (1D8 x 5 damage). He is wearing a Heavy Vest (1D8 x 3 protection). Clyde's attacker rolls a 2, and hits for 10 points of damage. Clyde rolls a 3, and gains 9 points of basic protection. This number is halved, to 5, and 5 points of damage penetrate. No further modifications are made, and Clyde suffers a 5 Life Point loss. If he had not been wearing his armor, Clyde would have taken 10 points of damage (the base 10 points is unmodified).

Targeting Specific Parts of the Body

These rules can be used for dramatic purposes. They add more complexity to combat, though, so they should be used sparingly. The following table determines the penalty to the attack, and the modifier to the damage inflicted. All bonuses are applied only to damage that penetrates armor (if the target is not wearing armor, all the damage is then modified accordingly, of course).

Head: -4 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is tripled. Bullet damage is modified by two levels (i.e., armor-piercing bullets inflict triple damage, normal bullets inflict four times damage, hollow-point bullets inflict five times damage). Endurance damage (non-lethal combat) is quadrupled.

Neck/Throat: -5 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is quadrupled. A slashing attack on this area that does enough damage to kill the victim results in decapitation. Bullet damage is modified by one level (armor-piercing bullets inflict double damage, and so on).

Arms/Legs: -2 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/3 cripples the limb; any extra damage is lost.

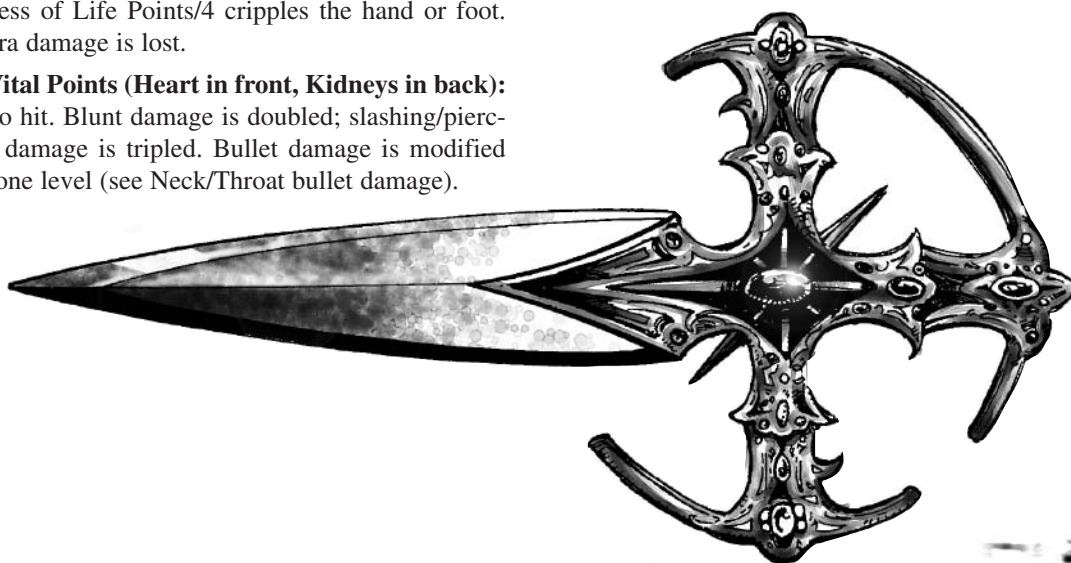
Hand/Wrist/Foot/Ankle: -3 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/4 cripples the hand or foot. Extra damage is lost.

Vital Points (Heart in front, Kidneys in back): -2 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is tripled. Bullet damage is modified by one level (see Neck/Throat bullet damage).

Success Level and Damage

The damage bonuses mentioned in the Outcome Table (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Three: Rules) should be applied to the die roll rather than the multiplier. This tends to increase the minimal damage inflicted and avoids the frustration of launching a well-executed attack, only to do minimal damage on a bad die roll.

For example, Luigi punches an opponent and his player's attack roll is a 17 (fifth level success: +2 damage bonus). Luigi's normal punch damage is $1D4 \times 3$. Under the basic rule, the bonus would apply to the multiplier and the damage roll would be $1D4 \times 5$, or 5 to 20 points. Under this optional rule, the roll would become $(1D4+2) \times 3$, or 9 to 18 points. Thus, even on a bad damage roll, the attack inflicts a decent amount of damage.



Martial Arts Styles

Anybody who knows anything about the martial arts realizes that each style of fighting has its own special moves, advantages, and weaknesses. Indeed, one of the Covenants in this book, the Storm Dragons, specializes in a certain type of martial arts training. These optional rules may be introduced to a campaign to more accurately represent styles of armed or unarmed fighting.

A character with the Martial Arts skill can choose to specialize in a particular style. Additionally, the character can develop a number of combat moves -- special maneuvers that have their own advantages and disadvantages. The following styles are presented: Karate/Kickboxing, Judo/Aikido, Boxing, and Storm Fist.

Combat Moves

A Combat Move ranges from a simple punch and kick to special martial arts tricks like crescent kicks and arm locks. Each Move has certain modifiers and effects that apply to it. Putting an arm lock on somebody has different effects (and is more difficult) than punching him in the gut, for example. Described in the Combat Moves Lists are several maneuvers often used in the movies or fiction. The Chronicler should refer to the special modifiers and effects when necessary. As usual, it is better to make a quick ruling rather than let the action bog down while you flip through a book.

Players who want their characters to use Combat Moves should list them on their character sheet. Each Move has an accompanying skill level. Players may wish to jot down the special features of each Move known by their characters. This will ease game play when the Move is used.

Learning Combat Moves

When a character learns a Martial Arts style, he automatically acquires a number of Basic Moves that are taught to all students. Additionally, he slowly develops more complex and effective Special Moves as he increases his overall skills. Each Martial Arts style has a list of Basic and Special Moves. Moves from other Martial Arts styles cannot be acquired unless the character also has at least one skill level in that Martial Arts style. For example, a character could have both the Karate and Judo Martial Arts styles. He could acquire Moves from either style, but could not use Moves particular to the Boxing style.

As discussed, basic Martial Arts Moves have a skill level equal to the character's Martial Arts style skill. Further, every level in the Martial Arts style skill confers three "Combat Move points" with which to purchase Special Moves. Each Move costs one point per skill level until level five, and three points per level thereafter.

No Combat Move skill level can exceed the basic Martial Arts style skill level. For example, if a character has Martial Arts Storm Fist at level 5, none of his Combat Moves can exceed level 5, and some should probably be lower. When a character improves the Martial Art style skill through experience, the Basic Moves automatically go up. The rest may then be raised using the new Combat Move points provided with each new Martial Arts level, or by spending other points earned during play (again with the limit that they may not be raised above the basic Martial Arts style skill level). Moves can never be improved more than one level at a time, but Moves that were not acquired before character creation can be purchased if the character tried to use them during the game (reflecting teachings that the character had not practiced fully, but which he is developing).

For example, Marybell (played by Judy) has Martial Arts (Judo) at level 4, which gives her 12 points to purchase Special Combat Moves. Judo has two “free” Moves -- Judo Throw and Break Fall -- which are automatically learned to level 4. Judo Special Moves include Arm Lock, Disarm, Roll with Blow, Shove, and Trip. Using her 12 available points, Judy purchases Arm Lock and Roll with Blow at level 4 (the maximum allowable level), for a total of 8 points, and divides the remaining 4 points evenly between Disarm and Trip, buying 2 levels of each. Judy’s Combat Move List (which can be listed under Skills) looks like this: Martial Arts (Judo) 4, Judo Throw 4, Break Fall 4, Arm Lock 4, Roll with Blow 4, Disarm 2, Trip 2.

Later on, Marybell accumulates some experience, and Judy decides to improve the character’s Martial Arts skills. She spends 6 experience points to raise the Martial Arts (Judo) skill from 4 to 5. The two Basic Moves, Judo Throw and Break Fall, automatically go up to level 5. The new Martial Arts level gives Judy 3 more points to spend on Special Moves. Judy decides to spend 1 point on Arm Lock, 1 point on Disarm (her character has been using that Move quite a bit in the game), and 1 point on Shove, a Move she hadn’t acquired before. After spending these points, her list would be modified as follows: Martial Arts (Judo) 5, Judo Throw 5, Break Fall 5, Arm Lock 5, Roll with Blow 4, Disarm 3, Trip 2, Shove 1.



Combat Moves List

Arm Lock: Damage: Strength. The character must have successfully parried an attack or grabbed the target before Arm Lock may be applied. Once the Arm Lock is successful, the attacker can inflict damage once each turn until the lock is broken. Breaking free requires a Difficult Strength Test against the attacker's Arm Lock and Strength, or a Resisted Task between the opponents' Martial Arts and Strength levels.

Back Kick: Damage: $1D4(2) \times \text{Strength}$. This Move allows the character to attack targets behind him without turning around. On a failed Dexterity and Back Kick Task, the character must succeed at a second Dexterity and Martial Arts Task, or he becomes off-balance (-2 to all combat actions for the next turn). On the roll or draw of a 1, the character must pass a Dexterity and Martial Arts Task or he falls down (-4 penalty to most combat action until he spends an attack action to get up -- defense actions may still be used that turn but incur the -4 penalty).

Breakfall: Damage: None. Each level of success in a Dexterity and Breakfall Task reduces the damage multiplier from falls by one level. This prevents damage from most Judo Throws and Trips.

Counterpunch: Damage: $1D4(2) \times \text{Strength}$. A quick follow-up punch to a successful parry. Each level of success in the defense Task adds +1 to the immediately following Counterpunch attack roll.

Crescent Kick: Damage: $1D6(3) \times \text{Strength}$. A powerful circular kick. This attack suffers the same unbalancing risk as the Back Kick Move.

Disarm: Damage: None. The Dexterity and Disarm Task is resisted by the target's Dexterity and Weapon Skill. If the attacker wins, the weapon is dropped or tossed away.

Flip: Damage: None. When prone, the character may attempt a Dexterity and Flip Task to get up without using an action. If successful, the character may act normally that round (performing both an

attack and defense action). Failure uses a defense action, and the character remains on the ground.

Head Butt: Damage: $1D4(2) \times \text{Strength}$. On a failed Dexterity and Head Butt Task, the attacker suffers the damage.

Jab: Damage: $1D4(2) \times (\text{Strength}-1)$. A light, fast punch that can be used twice in a turn without incurring extra action penalties (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules)

Judo Throw: Damage: $1D4(2)$. A successful Dexterity and Judo Throw Task knocks the target down, imposing a -4 penalty to most combat actions until he spends an attack action to get up (defense actions may still be used that turn but incur the -4 penalty).

Jump Kick: Damage: $1D6(3) \times (\text{Strength}+2)$. On a failed Dexterity and Jump Kick Task, the character must pass a Difficult Dexterity Test or fall down, suffering $1D4(2)$ points of damage, and incurring a -4 penalty to most combat actions until he spends an attack action to get up (defense actions may still be used that turn at a -4 penalty).

Kick: Damage: $1D4(2) \times (\text{Strength}+1)$. This attack suffers the same unbalancing risk as the Back Kick Move.

Punch: Damage: $1D4(2) \times \text{Strength}$.

Roll with Blow: Damage: None. This Move is used whenever the character has been successfully hit in hand-to-hand or melee combat. It is tested immediately after a blow lands but before damage is calculated. Each success level in a Dexterity and Roll with Blow Task reduces the damage multiplier of the attack by 1 (if the multiplier is reduced to 0, no damage is inflicted). Whether successful or not, using this Move sacrifices the combatant's next attack move.

Roundhouse: Damage: $1D6(3) \times \text{Strength}$.

Stabbing Hand: Damage: $1D4(2) \times (\text{Strength}+1)$.

Shove: Damage: None. This Move uses Strength and Shove in a Resisted Task against the target's Strength and Dexterity or Strength and Martial Arts skill. If the attacker wins, the target is pushed back one meter (yard) per success level, and must pass a Simple Dexterity Test minus the Success Level of the Shove or fall down. Downed characters suffer a -4 penalty to most combat actions until they spend an attack action to get up (defense actions may still be used that turn but incur the -4 penalty).

Spin Kick: Damage: $1D4(2) \times (\text{Strength}+2)$. Other than the increased damage, this Move is the same as the Kick Move, and suffers the same unbalancing risks.

Sucker Punch: Damage: $1D4(2) \times \text{Strength}$. If the attacker wins a Resisted Task (Sucker Punch and Intelligence against a Simple Perception Test), the target cannot defend against the punch.

Trip: Damage: $1D6(3)$. When the attacker succeeds with a Dexterity and Trip Task, the target is knocked down, imposing a -4 penalty to most combat actions until he spends an attack action to get up (defense actions may still be used that turn but incur the -4 penalty).

Martial Art Styles Descriptions

Karate: This style covers such styles as Kickboxing and Tae Kwon Do. Karate concentrates on hard attack and defense moves -- punches and kicks, with the goal being to batter down the enemy. Karate is a good, solid style with a variety of Moves. Characters with Karate can select one extra Basic Move, representing their school's specialty.

Basic Moves: Punch, Kick, and one Special Move of choice from the list below.

Special Moves: Back Kick, Counterpunch, Crescent Kick, Jump Kick, Spin Kick, and Stabbing Hand.

Judo: This is a "soft" combat style in which the enemy's own strength is turned against him. Besides Judo, other "soft" styles include Aikido and Tai-Chi. Judo students are first taught throws and falling techniques, and then move on to locks, trips and other maneuvers.

Basic Moves: Breakfall, Judo Throw.

Special Moves: Arm Lock, Flip, Disarm, Roll with Blow, Shove, Trip.

Boxing: Professional boxing is an effective combat system, despite its reliance on punches and lack of kick training. A good boxer can be a dangerous opponent.

Basic Moves: Punch, Roundhouse.

Special Moves: Counterpunch, Jab, Sucker Punch.

Storm Fist: This style is usually taught only by members of the Storm Dragons. Members claim it is the most complete Martial Art ever devised, and some even argue that it was the original "art" that lead to all other Martial Arts styles.

Storm Fist is an amalgam of hundreds of different styles. The Storm Dragons primarily recruit promising martial artists from all cultures, and each student adds something new to the combat "melting pot." Storm Fist is a very pragmatic Martial Art, and members are encouraged to study and copy moves from other styles. As a result, the variety of Moves and combat techniques within Storm Fist is huge.

Beginners are taught basic punching and kicking techniques, as well as painful arm locks. From there, students can go in any number of directions. Virtually every known Combat Move can be learned through Storm Fist. Masters know dozens of different combat techniques.

Basic Moves: Arm Lock, Kick, Punch.

Special Moves: Any.

Poison

Poisons are foreign substances that, when introduced into a person's body, cause harm, injury or death. They include manufactured chemicals and substances secreted or injected by animals or supernatural creatures. In the real world, some poisons can kill a person instantly, while others have varying degrees of lethality. As a weapon, poison is often unreliable and can be as dangerous to the wielder as to the intended victim.

In game terms, poisons all have a Strength rating. This Strength determines how much damage the poison inflicts, or how difficult it is to resist its effects. The Strength rating of a poison depends on the type of toxin. There are three basic kinds of poisons: corrosive, irritant and narcotic (also known as nerve poisons). Each kind has its own characteristics.

Corrosive poisons include a number of acids, and several common cleaning fluids. They can burn the skin directly, inflicting a number of points of damage (see the nearby Corrosive Damage Table) every turn the person is exposed (being splashed with the liquid means the victim is exposed until the corrosive is washed off with water). If ingested, they do the same damage until the poison is neutralized with an antidote, or ejected by vomiting.

CORROSIVE Damage Table	
Poison Strength Rating	Damage
1	1 point
2	1D4(2)
3	1D6(3)
4	1D8(4)
5	1D10(5)
6	1D6 x 2(6)

Irritants include such poisons as arsenic; they are more slow-acting, and require multiple doses. Instead of direct damage, the poison slowly drains Life Points, typically one point per every two Strength levels of the poison, for every dose ingested. For example, if the poison has a Strength rating of 1, damage occurs after two doses. This Life Point damage can only be healed if the poison is purged from the system. When the victim's Life Points are reduced to 0, the victim may die (a Survival Test postpones death).

Narcotic, or nerve poisons include curare, chloroform and strychnine. They directly suppress the victim's nervous system and such functions as breathing. They can induce unconsciousness, paralysis, or death. These poisons do not inflict damage directly. Instead, they use a Simple Strength Test against a Simple Constitution Test by the victim. If the poison's Strength wins the contest, the victim suffers the poison's specific effects. Typically they include drowsiness or unconsciousness (for weak narcotics) to heart or respiratory arrest (resulting in death by suffocation unless first aid or medical care are immediately provided).

Sample Poisons

Cobra Venom

This powerful neurotoxin has an average fatality rate, although some cobras have a deadlier bite than others. Depending on the species, this venom has a Strength of 3 to 6. Each bite injects one dose, and inflicts Corrosive damage based on its Strength for 5 turns. For example, the bite of a relatively weak cobra (Strength 4 venom) would inflict D8(4) points of damage for 5 turns. If the bite is drained, the venom does half damage. After administration, an anti-toxin prevents further damage. A cobra can bite more than once in a 24-hour period, but the Strength of the venom drops one level per bite, as the dosage is reduced. In the example above, the cobra's next bite would do D6(3) points of damage.

On the other hand, if the cobra bit the same person twice or more times, the damage is cumulative.

Some cobras can spit venom. It is treated as a Strength 1 Corrosive (1 point), but if the venom hits a victim's eyes, he must pass a Difficult Constitution Test or be blinded for 1 hour. After that, a Simple Constitution Test at +4 must be passed, or the blindness becomes permanent.

Curare

Curare is a nerve poison that paralyzes and may kill. The natives of the Amazon use it to bring down large game, often dropping small deer in their tracks with one arrow or blowgun hit. Curare may be administered through poisoned darts or other injection, with each application having a Strength 4 dose. Additional darts or doses increase this Strength by 1 level (i.e., three hits with darts has a combined Strength of 6). If the victim fails a Resisted Simple Constitution Test against the poison's Simple Strength Test, the victim's Dexterity is reduced by 1 level per Success Level of the poison's Strength Test. If Dexterity is reduced to 0, the victim is totally paralyzed and unable to move. If the Success Levels of the poison are greater than the victim's Constitution +1 (three Success Levels for the average Constitution 2 person), the victim's heart stops, and he dies in 20 minutes unless medical or magical healing is applied. Even if the victim wins the Resisted Test, his Dexterity is reduced by 1 level per dose!

The effects of curare (if the victim survives) last for 6-Constitution hours (minimum 1 hour).

Arsenic

This irritant poison can be found in some insecticides and weed killers. In the ancient world, arsenic oxide, which is colorless and flavorless, was a favored poison, although its effects take a long time and people can actually develop an immunity by ingesting small doses. A large dose of arsenic has a Strength of 6, and inflicts 3 points of damage per hour until the poison is removed (usu-

ally by inducing vomiting, although a full stomach pump in a hospital is preferred). Smaller doses have a Strength of 2, and inflict 1 point of damage per day. Symptoms of gradual poisoning (ingesting one small dose daily for 5 or more days) include weakness (reduce Strength by 1 and Endurance Points by 10), stomach problems, slight disorientation (reduce Intelligence by 1) and a greenish pigmentation of the skin. Each dose adds to the daily damage (after five days of gradual poisoning, the victim would suffer from 5 points of damage per day). Medical attention will quickly eliminate all traces of arsenic from a person's system, however.

Supernatural Healing and Poisons

Any Gifted power that heals injuries can undo the damage inflicted by corrosive and irritant poisons. If the poison is still in the victim's system, it must be removed or the damage or effect continues even if the previous damage was cured.

Mindheal can cause the body of the victim to expel the poison; this requires a Resisted Task using Mindheal and the Willpower of the Seer against a Simple Strength Test using the poison's Rating. The Touch of Healing Miracle undoes the effects of any poison and removes them from the body of the victim, at the cost of 10 Essence points.

Supernatural beings are immune to some types of poison. Vampyres and the Relentless Dead take no damage from irritant or narcotic poisons, but corrosive substances damage their Undead flesh. Such damage can be healed or regenerated normally, although the substance may be strong enough to overwhelm the entity's recuperative powers. If a Relentless Dead is submerged in a vat of acid, for example, the corrosive may inflict damage faster than the creature regenerates.

Chapter Three: Inhumans



Harry was prepared to kill that night. Threaten him? That piece of shit dared to threaten him? Nobody messed with Harry on his turf. This was his corner, those were his girls, and no greaser was going to take it away from him. He had acted cool, though. When the phone call came and Ricardo had suggested it was time for Harry to go, Harry had replied he would like to discuss matters privately. After Ricardo had hung up, Harry had made a few other phone calls.

For his usual problems — a girl who tried to steal from him, a john that got a little carried away — he relied on Jamal, who would have played pro ball if he hadn't been caught sniffing the wrong powder. For this situation, however, Harry decided to spend some money and hire more muscle. Ricardo's reputation was well known on the streets. He had come to the city three years ago; a pimp had disappeared, and Ricardo had taken over his business. He always had more than enough girls for his territory, and his territory kept growing. Maybe he wanted to be King Pimp. Harry had other plans for the little Spanish snot.

Harry placed his troops like a general. Jamal he kept at his side. The other three guys would stay in the shadows of a nearby alley. When Ricardo arrived, Harry would lead him into the alley. The hired guns would emerge behind them, bottling them in. Then Ricardo would get his.

Ricardo was late in arriving. Harry was beginning to wonder if it all had been some sort of trick when he saw him, wearing an old-fashioned black suit and a coat — no, it was a damn cloak — strutting like he was Antonio Banderas's twin or something.

"Hola, Ricardo," Harry said.

"Good evening, Harry," Ricardo said in his prissy Spanish accent.

"If you will step into my office?" Harry led the way into the alley. He nodded his head, ever so slightly, towards the hidden guards. They were hidden so well that even he couldn't see them.

"So," he said to keep Ricardo distracted, "what's this about me moving my operation?"

"I think the plans have changed, Harry. Trying to kill me tonight was a mistake."

Harry's insides froze. "What are you talking about?"

Ricardo reached for something under his cloak. Harry's mind screamed "Gun!" but before either he or Jamal could react, Ricardo dropped something that plopped wetly on the ground.

A severed hand with a ring exactly like one of the hired guns had been wearing.

Harry reached for his gun. Ricardo backhanded him casually. The seemingly light impact sent Harry flying halfway across the alley. He landed hard, tasting blood in his mouth. When he tried to move, agony flared in his right arm. Faintly, Harry could hear a scuffle. Jamal grunted, then started to scream in agony. A heavy, meaty "thwack!" cut the scream short.

Hands gently helped Harry sit up against the wall of the alley. Ricardo was leaning over him. His arms were drenched in blood up to the elbows. The fine suit was soaking wet. "Sorry it had to be this way, Harry," Ricardo said. His eyes shone an unnatural shade of red.

Ricardo smiled as his flesh transformed. The smile became wider, sharper, and his upper and lower canines burst messily through the flesh of his lips and face. He opened his mouth further, and his skin tore to accommodate the huge fangs that were still growing. "Oh, it doesn't really hurt," Ricardo said, his voice horribly distorted by the huge teeth. "I'm afraid I cannot say the same about you, my friend."

Harry's final screams echoed through the alley.

Introduction

The daylight world of reason and science is but a thin facade covering up the strangeness that lurks beneath. Supernatural creatures are real and numerous in the world of WitchCraft. Many are monsters in every sense of the word and see humans merely as cattle or, at best, servants or slaves to be dominated. Some, however, are as concerned with the upheaval of the Reckoning as any human being.

All of these beings were once human. Phantasms and the Undead are, in many ways, as human as they were in life. Some overriding passion or motivation allowed them to break free from the currents of Death.

Several Supernatural creatures are driven by alien lusts or obsessive passions. They are, for all practical purposes, quite insane and almost impossible to deal with except in the most primitive and direct ways -- violence and intimidation, on the one hand, or total submission on the other. Some, however, are as complex and sensitive as any human -- this may or may not be a good thing. Possessing great power, the Inhumans can be of great help in stopping the Reckoning -- or they can bring it about all the more rapidly.

Players can assume the role of Supernatural creatures in a WitchCraft game. Role-playing an Inhuman can be interesting and challenging. To some, it allows the players a different perspective of the world; to others, it provides the opportunity to play powerful, dramatic characters.

Chroniclers should remind players that supernatural beings have their share of disadvantages as well as powers. Their very nature can earn them powerful enemies, and they are outsiders and misfits, even more so than Gifted humans are. Spirits and the Undead are dependent on the life force of living beings, or on some overriding goal. All Inhumans have unique weaknesses and vulnerabilities that their enemies can exploit.

In the end, Chroniclers must decide whether to allow Inhumans in a given campaign. Such creatures are powerful and, unless carefully checked, will serve to unbalance the game, particularly in relation to the Lesser Gifted or Mundane. If Chroniclers do decide to use Inhumans as player characters, they must introduce Story elements that counter the Inhumans' powerful nature, create Stories that center around the Inhumans, or warn players that human characters will be hard pressed to compete with the Inhumans.

Creating Inhuman Characters

Inhuman character creation follows the same steps used in designing any WitchCraft Cast Member. Instead of selecting a Gifted, Lesser Gifted or Mundane Character Type, supernatural creatures are chosen from the Undead or Spirit categories. Further, a particular Quality must be purchased, such as Vampyre, Phantasm or Relentless Dead. Such Qualities are purchased using Quality or Metaphysics points. All other steps, like selecting a Concept, Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks, and Skills, are determined normally. Depending on the character's background, however, some Qualities and Skills may not be appropriate unless the player comes up with a convincing explanation for them. For example, most Spirits from primitive periods may not know a great deal about computers and modern weapons or vehicles, unless they spent some time and effort familiarizing themselves with them. On the other hand, a Vampyre character who had been living on Earth for several years could become a skilled computer hacker.



Powers and Vulnerabilities

Each type of supernatural being has its own special powers. Some of these traits are inherent, and are gained simply by buying the appropriate Quality. Others must be purchased using Qualities or Metaphysics character points.

Note that different creature may have similar powers but their actual effects and character point costs may vary. Usually, a Power that is common among a “species” of supernatural being will be cheaper to acquire than one that is rare.

By the same token, Supernatural beings have their own unique problems and disabilities. Vulnerabilities are special Drawbacks that can be acquired only by those supernatural beings. They are specific to each “species” of being. For example, unless otherwise noted, Vulnerabilities that apply to Vampyres cannot be acquired by the Relentless Dead.

When creating an Inhuman character, special Powers and Vulnerabilities (those not inherent to the Character Type) are acquired like Qualities and Drawbacks, except that they cost or grant points in the Metaphysics category. Each Power has a point cost. This is how many character points are required to “buy” the power during character creation. The descriptions of some Powers also mention the Essence costs to activate the ability. This is a temporary loss of Energy Essence, recovered as detailed later in the chapter.

Each Vulnerability has a character point gain. This is how many character points are granted by taking this flaw. Vulnerabilities with a total value of up to 10 character points can be acquired by Inhuman characters without counting towards the normal limit on Drawbacks. Note, however, that some Vulnerabilities may literally cripple the character in most games. If a player loads her character up with Vulnerabilities, Chroniclers should make a point of using them to her detriment during the Story.

Gaining or Losing Powers and Vulnerabilities

Special Powers and Vulnerabilities may be gained or lost after character creation. Any event of this sort requires a rationale to be woven into the storyline.

Further, gaining Powers or losing Vulnerabilities requires the character to spend double the character creation cost or benefit. Gaining Vulnerabilities is entirely story driven and occurs at the discretion of the Chronicler. Acquiring a Vulnerability after character creation grants no points to the character. For example, during game play, a Ghost repeatedly frightens people to tap their Essence. In time, the Chronicler decides that, if desired, the Ghost may purchase the Terror Leech special Power. The Ghost would have to spend 10 points to do so, however.



The Inhumans

This chapter presents four new character subtypes, all of which are not human. The new subtypes are returned dead, those that violated the normal pattern of Life. Ghosts and Phantasms belong to the Spirit Character Type; Vampyres and Relentless Dead are part of the Undead Character Type. These entities are summarized in the next two sections. Later in the chapter, each of these creatures is detailed in turn. A sample character for each new subtype is provided. These characters were created using the optional skill point calculation system presented in Chapter Two: Rules. They are assumed to get no bonus points for age, and to be playing in a Heroic campaign level.

Visitors From Beyond the Grave

Death in the world of WitchCraft is but another stage of reality. Souls are immortal and very hard to destroy, even by arcane means. Some enter Heaven, but nobody truly knows what lies there, for no one who enters ever returns. Some go to Hell -- a whole slew of them, actually -- to be purified through torment and ordeal. Some are snatched away to realms of shadows where god-like beings rule over kingdoms of the dead. Many are reborn into new bodies on Earth, evolving through a process of death and reincarnation, each new lifetime a reflection of past lives' experiences.

Some among the dead return to Earth in violation of the normal Cycle. They wander the world as incorporeal entities or re-animate their corpses and become Undead. In older times such visitors from beyond the grave were weak and few in number. All cultures had legends and lore on how to deal with them. The creatures were largely kept in check, except during times of crisis like war or plague. The Reckoning has weakened the barriers separating the Lands of the Living from the Realms of the Dead, however. In some places, the walls are thin enough for intruders to venture forth to Earth. Errant souls are finding it easier to return to their bodies and rise as Undead.

This chapter describes four kinds of returned dead. Two of them (Ghosts and Phantasms) are Spirits, bodiless souls that wander the world. The other two (Vampyres and the Relentless Dead) are Undead, spirits who have revived their corpses to fulfill their strange destinies.

Felix was a cool one; I had to give him that. His expression when he opened the door of his crib and saw me barely changed. Only a slight narrowing of his eyes betrayed the fact that I was the last person he was expecting to see.

"Eddie," he said after a tiny pause. "What's up?"

"We need to talk, Felix," I said. "Partner, old buddy. We need to talk."

"Sure, man. Come on in." He moved smoothly, stepping aside to let me walk in, and whipping out his 9-millimeter pistol all in the same motion so that when I turned around he had me covered.

"Just don't be making no moves, Eddie," Felix said. "You be cool, okay?"

I kept my hands by my sides. "I'm cool, Felix."

"Keep cool. Sit over there." He motioned towards an old armchair, a souvenir of the old neighborhood Felix had taken with him when he moved to the big time. I obeyed. Felix sat opposite me in a plush leather sofa; his gun always trained on me.

"Is your lady home, Felix?"

"No, she had to go over to her folks' place. Won't be back 'till Monday."

"That's good. We can talk, then."

"So talk. What are you doing here?"

"Don't you mean 'Why are you alive,' Felix?" I replied. "You set me up. After all the stuff we went through together, you put a contract out on me. Was it the money? I thought we were both making more than we would ever need. Or do you still hate me because I went to college while you stayed in the 'hood?"

"I hate you 'cause you came back with your money and your big plans," Felix replied. "You always acting like your shit don't smell. I'm running the business now, Eddie. I don't know how you got away, but . . ."

"I didn't," I cut him off. For the first time since I showed up, Felix looked nonplused.

"You didn't what?"

"Get away. The contract worked. Your guys pumped me full of bullets, stuffed me in the trunk of my BMW and sent me over a cliff. My body is being eaten by crabs at the bottom of the bay right now. I should know, I checked on it half an hour ago."

Felix's eyes widened. "What shit you talking about, man?"

"You can drop the phony gansta talk, Felix. We both know you're not black, you're Palestinian like me, only you tan darker than me. You killed me, you bastard. Your own cousin, and you killed me. I've come back to collect on all debts. You owe me my life."

There was nothing wrong with Felix's reflexes, or with his marksmanship. He fired three shots in rapid succession. Two scored, one right above my left eye, the other messily taking the top of my head off. There was some discomfort as blood ran down the ruined left side of my face, and I actually felt part of my brain splattering against the wall. I smiled. It wasn't a pretty smile — the bullet had ripped off most of the skin off my left cheek.



"No good, Felix. You can't shoot me down and forget me."

Felix finally broke. Screaming hysterically, he started pumping shots into me. I rushed him before he could inflict enough damage to ruin the body I had crafted. The ghost of my father had warned me that even the Dead have limits. I ripped the gun out of Felix's hand, breaking a couple of fingers, and knocked him to the ground.

"Don't kill me! Please don't kill me!"

I stood over him. Some of the gore from my head wound dripped on my cowering cousin. He flinched. "I'm not going to kill you, Felix. That would be too easy, and I know first hand that death does not end things. No, I'm going to let you live."

Felix didn't look very relieved. He was smart enough to know there would be a catch.

"I'm going to haunt you, cousin. Wherever you go, whatever you do, I'll be there."

The words took a few seconds to sink in. I continued even as his expression froze in terrible realization. "You will have no rest. When things seem to be going well, I'll sour them up. Before I came by, I dropped a dime on your operation. If you're lucky your boys won't turn you in, and you'll simply be ruined. Otherwise, you'll be in jail for a long time. Either way, I'll be there to keep you company, cousin. I'll be there."

When I left he was still screaming. I waited a little to see if he had the guts to eat his gun. He didn't.

I'd pay him another visit pretty soon.

Spirits

"Being dead is no joke, lemme tell you. After the accident, I had one of them out of body experiences, only when I came back, my body was no longer up and running. Now I'm sort of stuck here. You know, I could Move On, but that scares the blazes out of me. I've seen Hell, and, you know, I like New Jersey better."

Death marks the end of one stage of existence, and the beginning of another. Most humans are swept away in the currents of a cycle of death and reincarnation or Move On to different planes of existence. Driven by anger, love, despair or some other powerful emotion, a few break free from the Cycle. Some do so by reviving their former bodies; they are known as the Undead, and are described elsewhere. Many more remain in the physical world in spirit, errant souls able to travel between Earth and the Death Realms.

The souls of the dead, like their bodies in life, are not all created equal. They vary in overall strength and ability to affect the physical world. Many are pitiful things, mere shadows of their former selves, lacking in intellect and memory and all but helpless until they return to the eternal cycle and are reincarnated or transported to another plane of existence. Others are powerful enough to play important roles both on Earth and in the Otherworlds.

Spirit Groupings

There are three levels or classifications of Spirit. The less powerful are known as Lesser Spirits or Apparitions. These are unsuitable as player characters. The second level, Ghosts, has little ability to manifest physically, but may be very powerful in certain areas. Greater Spirits or Phantasms, the third level, are able to become corporeal. The three general classifications are summarized here. Ghosts and Phantasms are discussed in much greater detail later in the chapter.

Lesser Spirits: Apparitions

Some ghostly manifestations are little more than psychic footprints. Unlike "true" Ghosts, Apparitions are created by traumatic events that leave behind an echo of their occurrence. They are the result of Essence released by humans undergoing severe shock or suffering. This Essence forms itself into a re-enactment of the events that caused the human's suffering. The Essence becomes a psychic matrix that may be activated at certain times. Most hauntings, or spiritual manifestations, are the results of these Apparitions. They are often triggered by the Essence of people or animals in the area, or during special Times of Power (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics).

Typical Apparitions include strange noises (laughter or crying, for example) or ghostly images, often repeating the same event over and over. In some of the most extreme cases, complete sensory "re-enactments" of past events spring to life. Apparitions tend to be harmless, instilling fear and some Essence loss but little else. Some of the most powerful Apparitions can create "poltergeist effects" -- slamming doors shut, moving objects, and so on -- but they are rare and require a great deal of Essence to activate.

Apparitions are Essence fragments, all but mindless entities retaining scraps of their creator's personalities. They linger in that miserable state for years or centuries, until something or somebody releases them. Many Necromancers make it a point to discover and free these Spirits; often this requires appeasing the entity and somehow fulfilling or undoing the passions that created it in the first place.

Sample Apparition The Kingsgrave Ghost

The Kingsgrave building used to be a prosperous inn in a quiet New England town. Now it is a small museum that attracts a trickle of tourists every summer and spends the rest of the year gathering dust. Locals speak of strange moans and choking sounds being heard in the dead of the night, coming from the basement and sometimes the back door, near what now is a commercial parking lot. Further, there have been a couple of strange accidents in the museum -- a caretaker that tripped and fell down the basement stairs, a tourist that lost two fingers when the door of his Subaru slammed down on his hand -- that may or may not be supernatural.

The Kingsgrave Apparition was created in the late 19th century, when a former poet and Civil War veteran went on a drinking binge and died in the inn's basement. The last thing the soldier saw was a terrifying flashback of the battle of Antietam. The death occurred during an Equinox, which, combined with the psychic shock caused by the vision, provided enough Essence to leave a lasting imprint. During the full moon at midnight, the Apparition gathers enough Essence to produce weak sounds -- ghostly echoes of the man's dying gasps. During other Times of Power, there is a small chance (a 9 or higher on the roll of a D10 or a card draw, with a +1 for every 20 points of available ambient Essence) that a minor poltergeist effect (Strength 2) occurs sometime during the night. The Apparition is apparently malevolent, striking at random and for no apparent purpose. Or perhaps it is trying to communicate something, lashing out in frustration . . .

Common Ghosts

A true Ghost is the soul -- the basic Essence pattern -- of a deceased human being, unbound to a physical body. Many Ghosts dwell in one of the Death Realms, only occasionally venturing into the physical world. Others remain on Earth for decades or even centuries, driven by whatever obsession motivates them.

Most Ghosts have little control over the physical world. Some can intrude in the dreams of sleeping humans, while others are able, with difficulty, to move small objects, make noises, or create translucent images. The most powerful Ghosts are typically bound to a specific location, usually the place of their death or where their body is interred. Their link to that place allows them to tap into a great deal of Essence, enabling them to perform a variety of feats, from moving large objects to manipulating reality itself. The most dangerous haunted houses are the domains of these Ghosts.

Greater Spirits: Phantasms

Phantasms are a special type of Ghost, believed to be the spirit of a Gifted person, with more Essence and control over the world than most Spirits. Phantasms have the unique ability to become physical beings for limited amounts of time by using their Essence to "build" a new body for themselves. These Spirits were very rare, but as the barriers between the Lands of the Living and the Realms of the Dead weaken they are becoming increasingly more common.

Some Phantasms are the souls of the recently deceased, while others belong to ancient dead, some of whom dwelled in the Death Realms for centuries before returning to the physical world. Some of the more powerful of these Spirits are an amalgam of several reincarnations, combining the knowledge and traits of several lifetimes.

Creating Spirits

Designing a Spirit character requires the player to choose the Spirit Character Type during step two of character creation. Spirits start out with 20 points for Attributes, 20 points for Qualities (and can gain up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 20 points for Skills, and 20 points for Metaphysics. Spirit character must purchase certain Qualities; Ghost characters require the Ghost Quality (8 points), while Phantasm characters have their own Quality (15 points). These Qualities must be purchased using Quality or Metaphysics points. For example, a player with a Phantasm character might spend 10 Quality points and 5 Metaphysics points to buy the Phantasm Quality, or she might split the cost more evenly, spending 8 Quality points (leaving her with 12 points left) and 7 Metaphysics points (leaving her with 13 points in that category). The specific Quality purchased provides certain special Powers and Drawbacks (the point cost is included in the cost of the Quality), and grants access to a number of others (which must be bought separately). The special features of Ghosts and Phantasms are discussed separately later in this chapter.

Spiritus: The Arts of the Soul

This is an ability unique to Spirit entities. Only beings unfettered from the material world can use Spiritus; humans and the Undead are unable to do so. A character's level with this ability determines how experienced and knowledgeable she is about the powers and physical laws of the Twilight World and the Death Realms. Spiritus is used in most tasks involving the various Spirit Powers described later in this chapter. When used with Perception, Spiritus can detect the presence of other Spirit entities within ten meters (yards) per Success Level (this will not determine the exact distance or position of the Spirits, just their total numbers and relative power levels).

Spiritus costs 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter, and is purchased with

Metaphysics character points. After character creation, the experience cost for improvement is uses the same formula.

Spirits and Essence

Spirits are beings closely tied to pure Essence. As such, they have a number of special abilities and disadvantages. Essence is the life force of all living beings and the basic building block of all Spirits. Spirits can use their Essence in a variety of ways.

Vital and Energy Essence

Spirits have two different Essence Pools. Their Vital Essence is the spiritual equivalent of Life Points; when it is depleted, the Spirit risks being destroyed. Energy Essence works much like the Essence Pool of living beings, and is used to activate any supernatural abilities the Spirit might have. It is possible to use one's Vital Essence just like Energy Essence, but doing so puts the Spirit's existence at great risk.

Spirit "injuries" are marked off the Spirit's Vital Essence pool, just like Life Points. Attacks that drain Essence from living beings (like the Vampyre's abilities) first reduce the Spirit's Energy Essence until it is completely depleted, and then its Vital Essence.

All Spirit characters have a base Energy Essence equal to the sum of their Attributes, and a base Vital Essence equal to two times that amount. Extra Vital Essence and Energy Essence can be purchased during character creation. For each character point spent, the Spirit gets two Vital Essence points and two Energy Essence points. After character creation, Essence can only be gained through Evolution (see below).

Using Essence

Spirits possess a number of unique Powers; some of them cost Essence to activate and maintain. Due to their wholly spiritual nature, Spirits can manipulate Essence with more freedom than normal mortals can. They can channel up

Killing Spirits

So what happens when you kill the already dead? The human soul is nearly indestructible; only the most powerful beings (including creatures from beyond Reality) have the power to truly eradicate a soul. Most of the time, all one can achieve is to transform or weaken it. In a game, however, this transformation can be radical enough to remove a Spirit from play as permanently as death would to a living character.

If a Spirit's Vital Essence is depleted, a Survival Test (see WitchCraft, Chapter Three: Rules, Survival Tests) is required, using a Simple Willpower Test instead of Willpower and Constitution. If the Spirit fails the Survival Test, it becomes Unraveled. To lesser Spirits like Elementals and Nature Spirits, this means total obliteration. The fate of human souls is less devastating, but nearly as dramatic. An Unraveled soul is scattered across all of Creation, but is not destroyed. It will take a long time before the broken pieces put themselves together -- at least decades, perhaps centuries. Even after enough of the Spirit's basic matrix is recovered, some of the soul's memories may be a long time coming back. A recently reconstituted Spirit will suffer from partial or even total amnesia, somewhat similar to what happens to most reincarnated souls when they start their new life.

During a WitchCraft game, if a Spirit character is Unraveled, she is effectively removed from play (unless the game time is pushed forward by several decades). It is rumored that there are ways to put an Unraveled Spirit back together, but they are closely guarded secrets far beyond any Necromantic or Magic abilities the characters (or their Covenants) may have. Finding a way to restore a fallen Spirit comrade could be the focus of an entire story (with the Ghost's player taking on the role of another character for the duration).

to one point of Essence per turn for each level of Willpower they have. For example, a Ghost with a Willpower of 2 can channel up to two Essence points per turn. Spirit characters with Essence Channeling use the higher of the two. Thus, if the ghost had Essence Channeling of 4 and a Willpower of 2, it would be able to channel up to four Essence points per turn.

Regaining Essence

Spirits regenerate Energy Essence at the same rate as normal humans, one point per Willpower level, every hour. Vital Essence is regained much more slowly -- one point per Willpower level, each day. Some Spirits were Gifted and had Essence Channeling in life; they can regain power more rapidly. Use the Channeling level normally to regain Energy Essence, and add the character's Channeling level to her Willpower to determine Vital Essence regeneration. For example, Alexa is the Ghost with Willpower 4. She regenerates Energy Essence at the rate of 4 points per hour, and Vital Energy at the rate of 4 points per day. If she had Essence Channeling 3, as well as a Willpower of 4, Alexa would regain 3 Energy Essence points every minute, and 7 Vital Essence points every day.

Phantasms regain Essence as any other Spirit while in their natural, ephemeral shape. While Incarnated, Phantasms cannot regenerate either Energy or Vital Essence.

Times and Places of Power

Spirits can tap into ambient Essence exactly like Gifted humans. This makes Places of Power very attractive to Spirits. Many Spirits gather around those places and use the ambient Essence to empower their abilities. Some Haunts (see later in this chapter) have taken over powerful mystical sites. Intruders who venture into those locales risk their lives and their sanity.

Times of Power are often used by weak Spirits to do things they are normally unable to perform. As a result, Halloween and other Days of Power are often accompanied by explosions of supernatural activity. One of the signs of the Reckoning is that, each successive year, Halloween is being regarded with more fear than anticipation.

Essence Hoarding

Spirits can absorb Essence from a variety of sources. Most of this energy is used to replenish any Vital or Energy Essence losses, or to empower special abilities. Spirits can also temporarily store extra Essence for short periods of time. This "hoarded" Essence fades away within an hour unless used. Whenever Essence is spent, it will be taken away from these extra levels first (except when the Spirit is being "wounded" by an attack, in which case the damage is applied to the Spirit's Vital Essence Pool).

Evolution

Spirits can increase their power by taking Essence from other living beings. This Essence must be acquired through one of the many Powers

that drain Essence from others or must be given freely by the subject. After the Spirit accumulates 20 points in this manner (this Essence cannot be used for any other purposes; in game terms, it is "spent" as soon as it is acquired), her Vital and Energy Essence Pools are raised by 1 point each.

Stealing Essence from living beings is an extremely painful experience for the victim, who will feel a piece of her soul being ripped apart. Even when done voluntarily, surrendering Essence to a Spirit is a harrowing experience. The person will feel a profound sense of loss akin to being violated or losing a loved one. Furthermore, any Essence taken by a Spirit in this manner will take a long time to replenish. Normal humans regain the lost Essence at the rate of 1 point per week; characters with Essence Channeling regain it at the rate of their Channeling level, also per week. Until the Essence is regained, the character's Essence Pool will be reduced by that amount. Spirits usually only take Essence from those they hate the most -- or accept it from their closest friends, and then only grudgingly. Those who steal it casually will soon acquire more than their share of enemies.



Errant Souls:

Ghosts Characters

Restless Spirits who remain in or near Earth, Ghosts are the most common of the wandering dead. The weakest ones are obsessed with their memories and are often condemned to relive significant moments of their life; they are only a little more powerful than Apparitions.

Others are more aware and capable, although they are usually bound to a physical location and are able to affect the physical world only erratically and with great difficulty. As the Reckoning approaches, however, the barriers between the Death Realms and the physical world are becoming weaker, and Ghosts, who before were only able to recreate moments of their past or produce weak and erratic manifestations, can now perform amazing and terrible deeds.

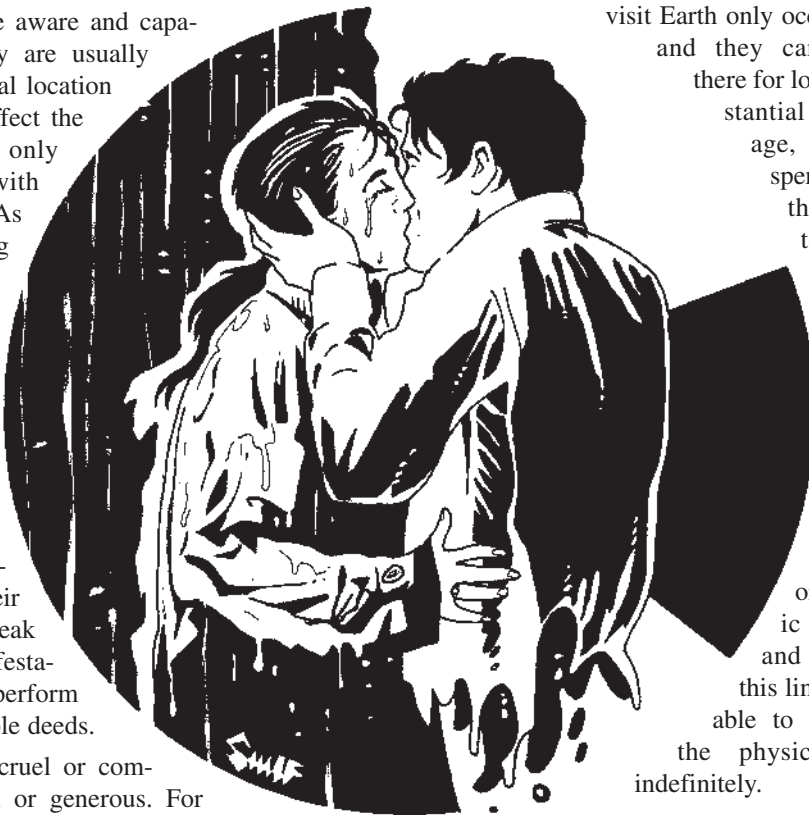
Ghosts can be cruel or compassionate, selfish or generous. For all their supernatural abilities, they remain all too human, for good or for ill. Some Ghosts are consumed by thoughts of revenge or strong emotions like love or hate. Others are adventurous explorers of the worlds of the living and lands of the dead. A few yearn for a return to the flesh and may try to steal the body of an unwary human; some cases of "multiple personalities" and

strange changes in character or demeanor are the result of such ghostly possessions.

In occult circles, the term "Ghost" is used to label those spirits of the dead who are not bound to one of the greater Death Realms, places like Hades, Hel, and Valhalla. Souls in those places have the equivalent of a material body and have many of the limitations of normal living humans. Ghosts are free Spirits who either wander the Earth or dwell in the Twilight World. Many Ghosts

visit Earth only occasionally, and they cannot stay there for long. A substantial percentage, however, spend most of their existence on Earth.

These Spirits have established a link with a location, a person, or a specific purpose, and through this link they are able to remain in the physical plane indefinitely.



Playing a Ghost

The Chronicler may allow players to take on the role of Ghosts, although Phantasms (see below) are more appropriate for a wider variety of Stories. Ghosts work best in games dealing primarily with the spirit world or where the other characters are themselves Ghosts, Phantasms, or Necromancers.

As with any character, Chronicles can veto any special Power or Vulnerability that would interfere with the smooth running of a game.

After creating the Ghost character, the question of how to roleplay her arises. Unlike living humans, Ghosts don't have many needs. They do have lusts and desires, however, many of which they cannot satisfy. For example, Ghosts don't have to eat, but they miss the taste and texture of food. Ghosts are largely limited to the senses of vision and hearing; taste, smell and touch are lost to them, except when they possess a human body. As a result, many Ghosts are ill-tempered, while others compensate with a wicked sense of humor.

Think about role-playing somebody who rarely gets a chance to enjoy herself. What would you do under those circumstances? Many Ghosts dislike or hate Vampyres, because those Undead can satisfy all normal human cravings, and enjoy pleasures beyond human limits. Most Ghosts become depressed or angry if their human allies remind or mock them for their inability to experience many sensual pleasures. A living person grants a Ghost a huge boon by allowing the Spirit to possess her body for some time to enjoy fleshly pleasures. Of course, doing so entails the risk that the Ghost may be unwilling to leave!

Not all Ghosts are the Spirits of the recently dead. The soul of anybody from any historical period may be assumed (see Chapter Two: Rules, Age Quality). Old Ghosts may be more powerful than the younger breed, but this is not always the case. Some of these Spirits may have spent the last few centuries being reborn after an Unraveling (see Killing Spirits sidebar earlier in this chapter), or might have been in a comatose state as an Apparition for a long time, until the shifting energies that presage the Reckoning awakened them. Roleplaying an anachronistic character, and her reactions to the modern world and modern situations, can be very entertaining.

Creating a Ghost Character

Ghosts are created using the Spirit Character Type. They get no particular bonuses or penalties to their Attributes but they must purchase the Ghost Quality, which costs 8 points (from the Qualities or Metaphysics categories).

In most other ways, the process works just like developing any other character (choose Concept, Association, Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills, Metaphysics and Possessions, if any). The central question is "Why is the character a Ghost?" If she is on Earth, what trauma, self-assigned mission, or obsession prompts her to stay in a world she can barely experience? If the Ghost dwells in the Twilight World, what prompted her to abandon the Cycle of Life and Death? Some Ghosts did so because they were afraid of what lay Beyond, either in the unknowable realm of Kether or in the horrors of Hel and Hades. Others became Ghosts by accident -- the Cycle of Life and Death is breaking down in some places as a result of the disruptive effect of the Reckoning.

Secondary Attributes: Ghosts have Vital Essence instead of Life Points, and Essence Energy instead of Essence points. Ghosts are not subject to fatigue and have no Endurance points.

Metaphysics: Ghosts have a number of special Powers (see below) that they can learn and use. If the Ghost purchases Gifted abilities, these are assumed to be left over from life. The disembodied nature of Ghosts prevents them from using these Powers, except in certain parts of the Death Realms like the Twilight World where Ghosts are granted physical form. A Ghost character can decide to learn Gifted Arts during game play (see Chapter Two: Rules, Purchasing Metaphysics After Character Creation), but again they cannot use their abilities except when they find themselves with a physical form.

Fighting Ghosts

An angry Spirit with the right powers can be a dangerous opponent. Against Mundanes, Ghosts have all the advantages. Mere mortals cannot harm them -- they cannot even see Ghosts unless the Spirit chooses to show its presence -- while the Spirit's special abilities can at the very least terrify and at most cripple or kill.

Gifted humans are able to detect Spirits (although powers like Mindsight and Necromancy and Invocations like Insight are needed to actually "see" a Ghost or Phantasm). All psychic powers can have some effect on Ghosts: Mindhands can actually "touch," "push" or even "pummel" Spirits. Elemental Invocations can also be "charged" with Essence to hurt immaterial beings, although those attacks cost double the normal Essence cost. A number of Gifted powers will also harm beings of Essence; for example, the Soulfire Invocation and the Tao-Chi Spirit Strike. This makes Ghosts wary of crossing paths with those humans.

Mundanes have much fewer choices. If the Ghost has an Anchor or is a Haunt (see below), destroying those physical links will weaken her considerably. The Spirit's main weakness with respect to Mundanes is their vulnerability to table salt (see WitchCraft, Chapter Five: Metaphysics). Faithful Mundanes may also resist some of the Ghost's powers through prayer, but the Faithful are not common in most parts of the developed world.

Common Ghost Powers

These are supernatural abilities determined by the Ghost's special nature, and are part of the Ghost Quality. All Ghosts possess them.

Immaterial

Ghosts are beings of pure Essence, and as such they are not affected by the material world. Physical attacks and obstacles mean nothing to Ghosts. Neither bullets nor explosions can harm them. Only pure Essence attacks, like the Soulfire Invocation, or psychic attacks like those used through Mindtalk will damage a Spirit. They can be contained by magical barriers, however, and can be damaged by certain crystalline structures, including common table salt (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics). Ghosts can fly and float in any direction (using their Speed attribute), and they can speed up by spending Essence, accelerating to 100 miles per hour for each level of their Willpower attribute, at the cost of 1 Essence point per hour. While traveling at these speeds, the world becomes a blur, unless the Spirit is traveling high overhead.

When in the Death Realms, Ghosts (as well as all other inhabitants therein, be they living, unliving, or inhuman Spirits) are tangible. They cannot fly or walk through walls in such places as the Twilight World or Hades. In fact, in many ways they are as solid and vulnerable to harm as Mundanes, except that instead of Life Point damage, injuries sustained in the Death Realms are applied directly to their Vital Essence.

Invisibility

Ghosts cannot be seen by most Mundanes. Their presence can be felt by creative and imaginative people, young children (unless they've spent too much time watching television or playing video games), and most animals. Those people will feel vaguely uneasy if a Ghost is nearby. Also, local temperature drops between ten and twenty degrees Fahrenheit in the volume occupied by a Ghost. Somebody walking through a Ghost will feel a sudden, unexplained chill. Certain thermal sights can spot the outline of Spirits, who will show as blurry shapes colder than the ambient temperature.

When Ghosts are in one of the Death Realms, their shapes are clearly visible. Most Ghosts look like they did in life, most often shortly before their demise, although the Spirits of very old or very young people sometimes assume a more youthful or adult form. Clothing is usually typical of their previous lifetime. There are always exceptions, of course, and some Ghosts walk around in the nude or with sexless, featureless bodies. As beings of Essence, Ghosts can define their looks essentially as they wish (with Chronicler's approval).

Perceive Essence

Like all Spirit entities, Ghosts can see the world in spiritual terms. Ghosts see in the normal light spectrums like humans. They can also look into the Essence fields of all things, living or unliving. On human beings, this Essence aura reveals the human's emotional state (including the bursts of shame or fear that typically accompany lying), the strength of their souls, and any supernatural powers or knowledge. Ghosts can also immediately identify Undead, and other Supernatural beings, because their Essence matrix is radically different from that of normal humans. The Ghost may not know exactly what kind of being she is seeing (depending on her experience and knowledge) but she will certainly know whether or not they are human.

Barriers like the Shielding Invocation or the Soul Armor Necromantic Power can block this sense, and the power of the shield will be clearly apparent unless the Gifted hides it, at great Essence cost (see the WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Shielding Invocation). Some powerful Invocations or Gifted powers may also disguise the character's Essence matrix under a false construct, which will fool most Ghosts.

Summoning

Ghosts who remain on Earth, or those who dwell in the Twilight Lands or the Threshold are vulnerable to being summoned by Necromancers or even by Mundanes who knowingly or accidentally use the proper words and rituals. A Ghost's name is a powerful weapon to use against her. If her name is called out on Earth enough times, or with enough fervor, the Ghost, even if she is in the Otherworlds, will "hear" it. If enough devotion and effort is put into the call, the Ghost will start to feel the impulse to answer. Necromancers can compel Ghosts even more directly through Death Speech.

To avoid being summoned, the Ghost needs to pass a Simple Willpower Test. If the test fails, the Ghost will feel compelled to travel to the location of the summoner (usually by entering the Threshold and then "jumping" to the point of summoning). That, of course, does not mean the Ghost will be forced to do anything once she arrives. In fact, most Ghosts arrive in the area quite annoyed and may play some nasty tricks on the foolish mortals who disturbed them. Ghosts who wish to do so can also listen for calls to other Spirits, and will sometimes appear in the summoned Ghost's place, usually with a malicious purpose in mind.

Tap Essence

As mentioned above, Ghosts can access ambient Essence. Ghosts can also "grab" any Essence released by those around them (due to Fear Tests, for example). The Essence needs to be in pure form, and must not be bound into a matrix, such as that of an Invocation.

A Ghost in the area can "imbibe" some of that Essence by passing a Simple Willpower Test. The Spirit gains 1 point of Essence per Success Level (up to the maximum amount available). This Essence replenishes lost Vital or Energy Essence on a one-to-one basis. It may then be used in any manner that other Vital or Energy Essence may be used, including triggering Powers.

When a human or some other advanced being dies within a few meters (yards) of a Ghost, the Spirit can try to steal a piece of the dying being's soul. This is resolved as a Resisted Task: the Ghost's Willpower and Spiritus against a Simple Willpower Test by the victim. In this case, subtract the victim's Success Levels from the Ghost's; for every remaining level of success on the part of the Ghost, the victim permanently loses 1 Essence Point, which can be used by the Ghost to Evolve (see earlier in this chapter).

Travel Into and Out of the Death Realms

By their very nature, Ghosts can easily enter the Death Realms, especially the Threshold and the Twilight World. Ghosts often appear on the Threshold, from which they communicate with mediums who summon them. Most Ghosts in the Death Realms remain in the Twilight World, the only domain that is relatively free from the interference of the Death Powers, a collection of god-like entities that rule most known sub-worlds in the Sphere of Death (see Chapter Six: Supernatural).

Traveling from Earth to the Threshold costs Ghosts no Essence points and requires only 1D4(2) turns of concentration (between 5 and 20 seconds). Once in the Threshold, a similar period of concentration will take the Ghost to the Twilight World. From there, the Spirit can reach other Death Realms, provided she can find and activate the proper Gateway.

Traveling from most Death Realms to the material world is not as easy. Beings like Phantasms can do it with relative ease (see below), but Ghosts must spend 10 Essence points and pass a Difficult Willpower Test to enter the Threshold from all other Death Realms. Only one attempt can be made per day, and then only if the Ghost is not bound to the Realm somehow (see Chapter Six: Supernatural). From the Threshold, entering the physical world is easy, requiring only the usual 1D4(2) turns of concentration.

Special Ghost Powers and Vulnerabilities

These Powers are determined by the Spirit's strength of will, experience, and outlook. An aggressive and angry Spirit, for example, is likely to have the Animate power, while one that thrives on terrifying victims would have Spirit Glamour and Terror Leech. Powerful Ghosts have five or more Powers, making them dangerous opponents.

Some Ghosts also have Vulnerabilities, special disabilities unique to Spirits. They may be linked to the Ghost's origins. They might even be psychological, but to a creature of pure spirit, psychological traumas are as real as anything else. Vulnerabilities restrict the Spirit's actions, or can bring harm to it.

Anchoring

Variable Power or Vulnerability

Many Ghosts become obsessed with a place or large item. Maybe it is the place of their demise or something that brings them a measure of hope and happiness. Some errant souls appoint themselves as the guardians of a house or even a neighborhood. Others become bound to wherever their mortal remains are located. This obsession is so strong that it has physical effects. The Spirit is actually unable to leave the area without suffering debilitating or even fatal results. Anchoring can also be an advantage, however; some Ghosts actually draw power from a location or item, and become stronger while they remain in it. Many powerful Ghosts are forever bound to a small place, but they reign supreme there, petty despots of a tiny empire.

The Anchoring Vulnerability makes travel into the Death Realms for more than brief periods impossible. Being in another dimension separates the Ghosts from the Anchor point. Only the Threshold, which is outside the boundaries of time and space, can be visited by Anchored Ghosts without ill effect. Of course, that realm holds its own dangers.

The natures of the Anchors themselves vary widely. Some are actual locations, typically a Place of Power (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics), and as such they are virtually indestructible and eternal. The major disadvantage of such an Anchor is that the place may attract unwanted attention that may threaten the Ghost.

Other Anchors are specific (usually large) items, like a house, a headstone, or a vehicle. The Ghost is bound to the object rather than the location. For

example, if the Anchor was a house, and it was dismantled and substantial portions of the original materials were used to rebuild it on a different location, the Spirit would travel with it.

Anchors can be destroyed. For example, the house might be razed to the ground and the land sprinkled with salt, or a vehicle may be smashed beyond recognition. In such cases, the Anchor ceases to exist, and, if the Anchor was a Greater Binding, her soul would Unravel.

Anchor Characteristics

Lesser Binding: Whenever the Spirit is away from the Anchoring area, she loses 1 Energy Essence point per minute. This Essence loss cannot be regained through normal regeneration, but must be recouped by tapping ambient Essence. If the Spirit's Energy Essence is depleted while she is away from the Anchor, the Ghost suddenly disappears, just as if she had been Unraveled. The Spirit has not been destroyed, however. She will reappear at the Anchor as soon as her Energy Essence has been regained (which may take a few minutes or a few hours; normal Essence regeneration occurs after the Ghost vanishes). The Ghost incurs no Vital Essence losses from this process.

The Lesser Binding is a 2-point Vulnerability, since it makes it inconvenient, but not dangerous, for the Spirit to leave the Anchor point.

Greater Binding: This is a more powerful link, one that may endanger the existence of the Ghost. When the Spirit is away from the Anchor, she loses 1 Essence Point per minute and this loss cannot be regained until the Ghost returns to the Anchor point. After the Ghost's Energy Essence is depleted, the loss starts affecting her Vital Essence, which may result in Unraveling.

The Greater Binding is a 5-point Vulnerability, and is not recommended for Cast Members, because it greatly restricts their freedom of movement.

Small: If the Anchor is an object (the Spirit cannot go more than 10 yards/meters from the object without suffering side effects) or a small area (the equivalent of a large bedroom), the Vulnerability is worth 5 points. This is not recommended for Cast Members.

Medium: The Anchor is the size of a small (two-bedroom) house. This is a Vulnerability worth 3 points.

Large: The Anchor is the size of a large house, about half a block, or the area of a small cemetery. This Vulnerability is worth 2 points.

Very Large: The Anchor occupies an entire city block or a mansion and its surrounding terrain, or an entire cemetery. This Vulnerability is worth 1 point.

Immense: The Anchor fills an area of as many as five city blocks, or an entire castle and surrounding countryside, or the main strip of a good-sized town. This is a Power, not a Drawback, costing 1 point.

Source of Power: If the Anchor grants the Spirit extra Essence, it counts as a Power costing 1 point for every 10 Essence points provided (to a maximum of 50 Essence for 5 character points).

Anchoring restricts Ghosts to a specific location, so it is considered to be a Vulnerability. The smaller the location, and the more debilitating the effects of leaving it are, the greater the Anchoring's value as a Vulnerability. If the Anchor increases the Ghost's power, then it will also have some value as a Power. Several Anchoring characteristics and their costs or values are detailed in the Anchoring Characteristics sidebar. Using these as examples, Chroniclers should be able to value any Anchoring characteristic they or the Cast Members devise.

Both the positive and negative effects of the Anchoring characteristics count towards the total. For example, a specific Anchoring could be small and linked to the Spirit through a Greater Binding, for a total Vulnerability value of 10 points, but it could also provide the Spirit with 50 extra Essence every day, for a cost of 5 points. As a result, the Anchoring would be considered to be a 5-point Vulnerability (the basic 10-point value, reduced by 5 points for the special benefits).

Animate

2-point Power

Some Ghosts have the power to manipulate objects, lifting and moving them in a manner similar to the Gifted power of Mindhands. Unlike telekinesis, however, the Ghost must be in contact with or very close to the object animated. Basically, the Spirit grabs the object or moves it much like a puppeteer pulls the strings of a puppet. By spending Essence, the Ghost gains a measure of physical strength for the purpose of lifting and tossing things. Each Essence point used grants the Ghost the equivalent of 1 Strength level, lasting 1 turn (about 5 seconds). So, if a Ghost spends 5 Essence points, she can lift objects with an effective Strength of 5 (to a maximum of 250 pounds).

Animate uses the Spiritus skill, along with either Willpower (for brute force tasks) or Perception (for precise tasks).

Banshee

2-point Power

This Power allows Ghosts to make sounds in the physical world. The louder the sound, the more Essence it costs to activate it. Each activation allows the Spirit to speak a short sentence or make a sound lasting some 5 seconds or so (one turn in game terms). A whisper costs 1 Essence. A sentence in a normal speaking voice costs 3 Essence. A loud, startling sound costs 6 Essence points. A sound loud enough to stun (as loud as a gunshot in an enclosed space) costs 12 points, and a screech that will shatter glass costs 16 points.

The latter two sounds are loud enough to cause people who hear them to be stunned for several turns (1D6[3]) unless they pass a Difficult Constitution Test. They also cause most normal people to endure a Fear Test, especially if the sound is particularly sudden and terrifying. Depending on the situation, the Chronicler should assign penalties of -1 to -4 to the Fear Test.

Each activation of the Banshee Power requires a successful Task using Spiritus and Intelligence. If the Task fails, there is no sound or the sound is not what the Ghost intended. For example, when attempting to speak, the Ghost might utter what she was thinking rather than what she intended to say — this might be embarrassing if the Ghost was trying to deceive the listener.

Curse the Living

6-point Power

The curses of the Dead are dangerous things. As many legends reveal, a Ghost can bring bad luck to those that disturb her, especially those who summon her without her consent. Cursing somebody is not something done lightly, however, because the Ghost will be aware of all the pain and suffering her curse brings about. This is something that only the most sadistic beings enjoy.

The Curse must be conducted in the presence of the victim, who can resist the Willpower and Spiritus Task with a Simple Willpower Test. If the Ghost succeeds, the victim has been cursed. The strength of the Curse depends on how much Essence the Spirit spends on it. This Essence must come from the Ghost's Energy Essence Pool and it cannot be regained until the Ghost lifts the curse, so most will not inflict a very serious curse on her victim unless the unfortunate has done something to truly arouse the Ghost's ire.

If 1-5 Essence points are spent, the victim suffers one mishap per week for every point spent. For example, if the Ghost spends 3 Essence points, the target suffers three accidents every week. These mishaps are relatively minor but irritating, things like spilling a glass of juice on a brand-new white shirt, being involved in a fender-bender, or making some humiliating mistake at work.

If 6-9 Essence points are spent, one serious mishap occurs to the victim or his loved ones, once per week, for every 2 Essence points spent. These events are not directly lethal but will seriously affect the victim's life and peace of mind. For example, the character's vehicle is totaled in an accident, the victim loses his job due to some (real or alleged) mistake that makes it unlikely he will be hired again for a similar position, or the target is struck by some debilitating disease.

For 10 or more Essence points, the Ghost places a major curse on the victim, who is afflicted by the Accursed Drawback (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Three: Roles). Every 6 Essence points (once the minimum of 10 is reached) spent on the curse raises its "value" as a Drawback. Thus, for 10 Essence points, a level 1 Accursed Drawback is imposed; for 16 points, level 2 is reached; for 22 points, level 3 is reached; and so on.

Once the Spirit places the curse, she knows what befalls the victim; every time the curse strikes, the Ghost experiences a vision depicting the mishap or accident. Some Spirits delight in seeing the suffering of the victim, but usually all but the most evil

tire of making the victim miserable and lift the curse. Others do so simply because they need the Essence they have been funneling to keep the curse alive; yet others find themselves targeted by Inspired, Magicians or Necromancers who were contacted by the victim for help.

Ghostsmith

3-point Power; Requires a Permanent Loss of Essence Points

Some Ghosts are capable of creating items by permanently sacrificing some of their Essence. These objects are as "real" as the Ghost is, and in the Death Realms, they can wound and kill other Ghosts and spirit entities (including human astral travelers). Although this Power is most often used to create weapons, other tools and instruments can also be "built" using it.

Unlike other Powers, this ability costs not only character points, but also a permanent loss of Essence, used to create the item or weapon. A Ghostsmith creates objects by transforming pieces of her Essence into ghostly creations. The more powerful and versatile the object, the more Essence it costs to create. Once the Ghostsmith Power is purchased, the character can make as many weapons and items as she wants, but only from her own Essence Pools. Some unfortunates are enslaved and forced to build items for their overlords, slowly wasting away. They are kept from Unraveling by being fed Vital Essence of yet other slaves. This loathsome practice is depressingly common in many Realms.

Creating a hand weapon (knife, sword, baseball, etc.) requires a permanent sacrifice of 2 Essence points from the character's Vital or Energy Essence Pools (most Ghosts usually tap into their Energy Essence first). An item with moving parts (like a gun or a typewriter) costs 3 permanent Essence points. Large objects (a rifle, bicycle or motorcycle) cost 5 Essence points, and very large object (a car or a rowboat) cost 10 Essence points.

The character need not be a skilled builder or true smith to create an item. As long as she is familiar with the item (which must come from the historical period she lived in during her life), she can make it. Having a related Craft skill, however, makes the task less costly. If the character has no related skill, the Essence loss for making the item is doubled. If the character has a related skill, the appropriate Task may be rolled. Each three Success Levels decrease the Essence loss of the item created by 1, to a minimum of 1.

For example, Jerry wants to create a gun with his Ghostsmith Power. With no Craft (Weaponsmith) skill or Craft (Gunsmith) specialization, the gun would cost 6 Essence points, rather than the normal 3. With the proper skill or specialization, Jerry is entitled to a roll to lessen the cost. If Jerry gains 3 Success Levels on a Dexterity and Craft roll, the Essence cost of creating the weapon would be 2.

Items that require fuel or ammunition are empowered by Essence. This Essence can be provided by the user, who may or may not be the Ghostsmith. These expenditures are not permanent; they require Energy Essence, which is regained normally. For example, to reload a handgun costs 1 Essence point per 3 shots, to fill a fuel tank costs 1 Essence point per gallon, and to provide electrical power costs 1 Essence point per minute.

Haunt

Variable Power; Prerequisite: Anchoring

Some of the most powerful Ghosts on Earth are called Haunts. They have taken complete control over a house or other locality and have made it an extension of their own being. A Haunt's dominion is a living part of her: she is as aware of what is happening in the entire area in the same way as a human being is aware of her own body. This control goes much deeper than mere awareness, however. Provided she has enough Essence available, a Haunt can reshape space, time, and reality itself within her dominion (see Powers of the Haunt side-

bar nearby for some examples). In addition to these special abilities, the Haunt can use any other Ghost abilities it possesses. These Powers are always resisted by the targets, be they Gifted or Mundane. Mundanes resist these effects with a Difficult Willpower Test; the Gifted use a Simple Willpower Test or any Power that can, in the Chronicler's opinion, interfere with the Haunt's intentions. Spirits, Undead, Fey or Bast resist as do Gifted characters, unless they have some special power or ability that grants bonuses to such Resisted Tests. The Haunt uses her Willpower and Spiritus to overcome any resistance.

A true Haunted house is one of the most dangerous places on Earth. A Haunt's dominion is almost always left alone as if by some unspoken law. Even Mundanes sense that the Haunted place is not something to be trifled with, and developers and real estate agents change their plans for such properties as soon as they see them. If not, they soon learn why they should have.

The link between these Ghosts and their realms is nearly absolute. Unlike normal Spirits, Haunts cannot travel outside Earth; they are permanently bound to their tiny kingdoms. They also suffer all the penalties of the Anchoring Vulnerability (see earlier in this chapter) and must have that Vulnerability (the converse is not true; not all Anchored Ghosts are Haunts). The link is always with some sort of habitation, be it a house, a castle, or a cavern that was once home to some ancient tribe. If the building is utterly destroyed, the Haunt becomes Unraveled and loses all her powers over the locality. Destroying a Haunted House is difficult through conventional means, and almost always requires an exorcism of some sort (such as the Exorcism Miracle) in addition to mundane methods of demolition. Sowing the ground with salt after demolishing the building invariably banishes the Ghost from the area.

The larger the Haunted area, the more expensive the Power will be. For a small locale (the equivalent of a two-bedroom, one-story house), the Haunt cost is 6 points. A medium-sized locale (a three-bedroom, two-story house or equivalent) costs 9 points. A large locale (a mansion) costs 12 points, and a very large place (a castle, or a mansion and surrounding countryside) costs 15 points.

Powers of the Haunt

Manipulate Time: The control of the Haunt extends to such basic elements of reality as time and space. At the cost of 5 Essence points, the Haunt can halve or double the duration of "local" time for one hour. Each successive 5 Essence point increment spent doubles the time differential (i.e., 10 points for a four-fold change, 15 for an eight-fold one, and so forth). For example, three psychic investigators begin examining the cellar of a Haunted house at around two in the afternoon. The Haunt spends 10 Essence points, making local time flow at one fourth the normal speed. A subjective "hour" later, the investigators step outside, and discover that four hours have elapsed, and it is dark. By using this Power, the Haunt can turn an evening into a week's worth of terror and chaos, as long as she has enough Essence to spend.

Manipulate Space: The Haunt can make rooms bigger than they could possibly be, extend corridors until they become endless tunnels, and employ other size-based tricks to confuse and terrify intruders. These manipulations cannot directly harm living beings (for example, the Haunt could not cause a room to become so small it crushes its occupants), because the Haunt cannot directly manipulate the Essence matrix of beings and objects from outside her domain.

At the cost of 4 Essence points, the Haunt can halve or double any or all of an interior space's dimensions (height, length and width). Very large rooms require extra Essence (for simplicity's sake, any room in a normal middle-class house would be considered to be the average; a mansion's "seats

one hundred" dining room would not). Each additional 4 points of Essence spend doubles this increase or decrease.

Reshape Objects: Walls, furniture, and any items that are considered to be part of the Haunt's domain can be altered at will by the Ghost, provided she has enough Essence to empower and maintain those changes. Any unliving object that is placed inside the Haunt's domain for more than two months (8-10 weeks) will be "absorbed" into the Haunt's Essence matrix and can then be manipulated. These objects can be manipulated at the cost of 2 Essence for small items (a toy, a radio), 3 Essence for medium objects (a chair, a small dresser), 5 Essence for large items (a bed, a sofa, a table), and 8 Essence for very large objects (an entire section of wall or floor, a staircase). Objects can be deformed, weakened or twisted in the most unnatural ways. They can also be made to move. Staircases can suddenly become smooth, or floors might collapse, requiring anybody on them to pass Simple Dexterity Tests to avoid falls and injury. For double the cost, objects can become fully animated; they can move, protrude limbs and attack or entangle victims. These objects can sustain 2 to 20 Damage Points, and have a Strength of 1 for small objects, 2 for medium objects, 4 for large items, and 5 to 6 for limbs coming out of walls or floors. These effects will last for 2 turns; the Haunt must successively renew the Essence expenditure to keep them going for longer periods of time.

Legion

1- to 3-point Vulnerability

Some Ghosts are plagued by past reincarnations. Each personality is trying to vie for control over the Spirit. Although the newest persona is usually the one in control, the past lives can often break out for short periods of time, saying and doing things likely to get the character in trouble. Unlike some Phantasms who can integrate and even control past lives, Ghosts who suffer from the Legion “syndrome” are constantly struggling for control over their actions. Even when the primary person is in control, the previous lives can often communicate with it, cursing or whispering annoying or disturbing remarks when the character least expects it.

Ghosts and Past Lives

Many human beings have undergone one or more reincarnations during their existence. Ghosts, however, rarely remember their past lives; just as when they were alive, their current persona completely submerges past life experiences. Shortly after death, Ghosts often experience their accumulated past lives memories, but these impressions fade away very quickly. Only a few Ghosts remain in touch with their past existences, and for them the experience is more of a curse than a blessing. Each past life is a separate “person” with somewhat similar personalities and goals (each successive personality is a descendent of the previous one, after all) but with their own individuality. These Ghosts suffer the equivalent of multiple personality disorders, with the added disadvantage that each personality completely transforms the Spirit’s shape as well as mind.

A Ghost character can have from one to three past lives. Each of them should be designed as a separate character and may have different gender, racial and national origins. Some basic similarities should exist, however. After all, the current, dominant personality is the “descendant” of the previous ones. These older lives are not content to remain in the background; they were awakened for some reason, and now they crave existence, at the expense of the “others.”

In game terms, the Chronicler assumes the roles of these diverse personalities. They attempt to “butt in” at the most inappropriate moments, either giving the primary persona gratuitous advice or actually trying to seize control away from the dominant personality. When an alternate persona takes over, the body of the Ghost is actually transformed into what the old personality looked like. To those able to see the Ghost, this can be an unsettling experience, especially if, say, the 20th-century cab driver they had been talking to suddenly becomes a Puritan goodwife or an Aztec high priest. To resist these sudden “coups,” the dominant personality (i.e., the Cast Member) performs a Simple Willpower Test with a +2 bonus, against the alternate persona’s own Simple Willpower Test (with no bonuses). If the alternate personality wins control, the Chronicler takes over the character’s actions and behaviors. The upheaval rarely lasts more than a few seconds (one turn for each Success Level in the alternate’s Willpower Test), but during that time the past identity is free to cause any mischief that fits her personality.

Life Drain

5-point/level Power

All Ghosts can take some of the Essence found in living beings. Most of them are limited only to that released by people, however. Those with Life Drain can forcibly steal Essence without needing to wait for accidental or purposeful releases of life energy. This ability is most often used to temporarily absorb some of the target character's Essence Pool, inflicting losses that are regained normally. Ghosts can also use Life Drain to permanently steal some or even all of a being's Essence.

To use Life Drain, the Ghost must be in direct contact with the victim. Gifted and Inhuman characters will sense the attack and, if they can see the Ghost, can try to Dodge out of her path, requiring a Resisted Task -- the Ghost's Dexterity and Spiritus versus the target's Dexterity and Dodge. Mundanes cannot see the Ghost, and thus cannot dodge, but will feel a drop in temperature.

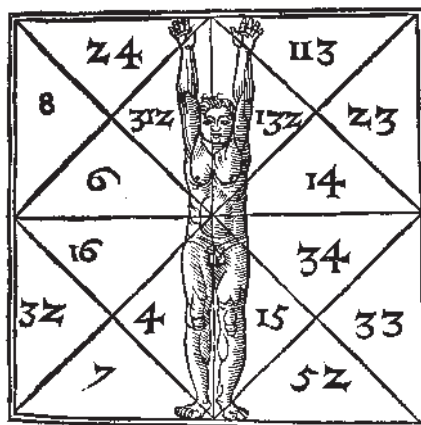
Once contact is established, the Ghost starts the mystical attack. This uses the Spirit's Willpower and Spiritus. The victim, if a Mundane, resists with a Difficult Willpower Test; Gifted characters can use any ability or Power that resists mental or Essence attacks, or a Simple Willpower Test. The victim subtracts his Success Levels (if any) from the Ghost's Success Levels. If the Ghost has no Success Levels left over, the Life Drain fails. If the Spirit wins, she steals 1 Essence point per Life Drain level for every remaining Success Level.

If a victim's Essence Pool is completely depleted in this manner, the Ghost can start draining permanent Essence points. These points can be used for Evolution purposes and diminish the Essence Pool of the victim. For Gifted characters and others, who can increase their pools as they become more experienced, this is not a terrible loss. For Mundanes and others, who have no easy way to increase their Essence capacity, this can be a fatal situation. Permanent Essence points are drained more slowly than the Essence Pool; 1 Essence point per success

is taken. The process of draining permanent Essence points is extremely painful. The victim feels as if his very soul was being torn apart. If the person's Essence Pool is permanently reduced to 0, the victim dies and his soul is automatically Unraveled. It will take centuries before that soul pulls itself back together. Total Life Drain is the worst punishment that a Ghost can inflict on any living being.

For example, Boris the Undying, played by Carmen, has 5 levels of Life Drain. The Ghost attacks a female Mundane (with an Essence Pool with 15 points) with that power. Boris' Willpower is 4; his Spiritus level is 5. The victim's Willpower is a 2. Carmen rolls a 7 on the dice, for a total result of 16 (four Success Levels). The Mundane's player rolls an 8, for a total result of 10 (one level of success). This leaves Boris with three Success Levels and he drains the Mundane of 15 Essence points. This reduces her Essence Pool to 0.

Boris uses Life Drain again on the same victim, and gains three successes. The victim gets one. Boris has two net Success Levels. He permanently drains the victim of 2 Essence points, reducing her Pool from 15 to 13 points. As the mortal writhes in utter agony, Boris decides to let his victim live, and stops the Drain. Boris now has 2 Essence points he can use to Evolve.





Phantom Shape

1-point Power

A few Ghosts can manifest themselves on the physical world by focusing Essence into visible “shells” they place around themselves. These manifestations are little more than illusions, however, able to do little beyond being seen. At best, they can create a weak shadow of a living being. A Phantom Shape can be a translucent image, a life-like but immaterial shape, or a close facsimile of a real being, but they are never fully solid or real. Unlike Phantasms, Ghosts cannot fully materialize in the “real” world.

The more “solid” the Phantom Shape is, the more Essence it requires. For 5 points, the Ghost can appear as a translucent version of herself. She will be clearly visible, but anybody seeing her will know this is not a normal person. The superstitious will believe (rightly) that this is a Ghost. Skeptics may think it’s a hologram or some other trick. For 10 points, the Ghost can appear as a realistic-looking figure, able to fool anybody looking at it. The shape is totally immaterial, and objects and people will go right through it. By spending 15 points, the Ghost can become partially material; her body can be touched and felt by others (the Ghost’s own senses of smell, touch and taste are still nearly non-existent, however). The body will feel strangely light for its size and somewhat fragile. It is also very weak, with a Strength of 1 regardless of the size and body type of the Ghost. Inflicting a point of damage (a slap or a hard shove might do the job) will cause the Phantom Shape to “pop” into non-existence.

A Phantom Shape lasts 1 minute per Success Level on a Willpower and Spiritus Task.

Possess Beast

3-point Power

This Power allows Ghosts to take control over the body of an animal. This works much like the normal Possess Mortal Power below, with a major difference. Animals are protected by a totemic Nature Spirit (see WitchCraft, Chapter Seven: Supernatural) that must be appeased by the Ghost before she can be allowed to take over the body of an animal. This requires a successful Spiritus and Intelligence Task, modified by any Charisma bonuses the character might have, to get permission from the Nature Spirit of the animal in question.

Possess Mortal

5-point Power

Ghosts can temporarily take over the body of a mortal. Most so-called “demonic possessions” are actually the work of a Ghost attempting to experience mortal life once again. Starved for the pleasures of the flesh, many Ghosts try to expel the soul of some unfortunate and take over her body for good; this often proves to be a vain undertaking, however, because even Mundanes have a link between their souls and bodies that is very difficult to break. Most possessions only last for short periods of time, and then the expelled soul regains control, often without realizing what just happened.

To possess someone, the Ghost has to spend as much Essence as the victim has in her Essence Pool (most Mundanes have between 10 and 15 Essence points). The Ghost then has to win a Resisted Task involving the Spirit's Willpower and Spiritus against the victim's Simple Willpower Test, at a +2 bonus. If the Ghost loses, the attempt fails and the spent Essence is lost. If the human victim loses, the Ghost seizes control for two minutes for each level of success in the Task. At the end of that period, the Ghost needs to win a new Resisted Task to keep control of the body, and this time the victim gets a +3 to her Willpower Test. A second or subsequent attempt costs the Ghost the same amount of

Essence. If the Ghost wins, she retains control for a like period of time, again based on the Success Level. The Ghost can use her own Essence and any ambient Essence available (most possession attempts occur during a Time of Power) but not the victim's Essence, which is in the expelled soul.

The Ghost is in total control of the victim's body for the duration of the possession. All of the body's physical Attributes remain unchanged. The Spirit does not have access to any skills or knowledge of the victim, however. The victim's memories are part of the evicted soul. During the first 1D4(2) minutes of possession, the Ghost has to learn how to “drive” the new body, so motor and verbal skills are severely hampered. Dexterity is reduced by 3 levels during that period, and speech is slurred and difficult to understand. To most onlookers, the victim may appear to be drunk or under the influence of some drug. After the learning period is over, the Ghost is in full control, but her speech pattern, demeanor and posture is her own, and people who know the victim may realize that something is not right. The Ghost is in total control until the victim's soul expels the intruder, the Ghost relinquishes control, or somebody conducts an exorcism or banishing ritual on the body.

Once the ordeal is over, the temporarily dispossessed soul represses all memories of the out-of-body experience. The victim has no recollection of what happened during the possession period, except under hypnosis or deep telepathic questioning. Even then, the victim's memories are jumbled and distorted, with images of the victim looking at her body from the outside while it did strange and terrifying things. Gifted victims have a chance to remember their ordeal; they must pass a Difficult Intelligence Test.

Powerful Ghosts may attempt to permanently possess a body. This difficult process requires that the Ghost maintain possession of the body for five Resisted Tasks in a row (which also requires a total Essence expenditure equal to the victim's

Essence Pool, times five). If the Ghost remains “on board” that long, and wishes to do so, she can try to sever the link between the victim’s soul and her body. This requires a sixth, final resisted Task, with the victim getting a +4 to the Willpower Test. If the Ghost wins, the connection is severed, and the victim becomes a wandering Ghost herself. If the Ghost loses, she is expelled from the body and permanently loses 1D4(2) points of Vital Essence.

Purpose

Variable Power or Vulnerability

Many Ghosts break free of the Cycle of Life and Death to fulfill some mission or obsession. This goal may be consciously or unconsciously determined; the Ghost might not even fully know exactly what her mission is. The Purpose Power gives the Spirit the strength to continue her current existence; it also can cause the Ghost to weaken and even become Unraveled if she does not carry out her self-appointed orders. Depending on what benefits or penalties a Ghost gains from her Purpose, this can be considered a Power or Vulnerability.

Typically, a Ghost with a Purpose gains extra Essence, available when pursuing a task that will help fulfill that purpose. For example, a Ghost might be devoted to fighting crime -- any action that involved investigating, foiling and preventing criminal activity would benefit from this extra Essence. This is treated as a secondary Essence Pool that renews itself at midnight every day. During that time, the Ghost can draw from it until it is temporarily exhausted, provided she uses it for the right reasons. This counts as a Power worth 1 point for every 10 extra points available in the pool, to a maximum of 50 Essence points (for 5 points).

For some Ghosts, their Purpose is so driving that if they are not pursuing it all the time, they start to weaken. Every day they spend not carrying out their mission, these Ghosts lose between 5 and 25 Essence points, first from their Energy Essence, then from their Vital Essence Pool. This loss

occurs at noon after a 24-hour period in which the Ghost, for whatever reasons, has not been working towards her goal. This Essence loss cannot be regenerated until the Ghost starts carrying out the Purpose once again. This counts as a Vulnerability, worth 1 character point for every 5 Essence points lost when the Spirit ignores her obsession, to a maximum of 5 character points.

The Purpose cannot be something vague or ambiguous. It must represent some obsession or driving desire. Revenge, lust or rage are all common motivations. Some Ghosts watch over former loved ones, either to protect them from harm, or to ensure they are never happy. Others become phantasmal crusaders, fighting real or imagined enemies. Keep in mind that if a Purpose is completely fulfilled most Ghosts abandon their current existence and Move On.

Spirit Glamour

5-point Power; Prerequisite: Phantom Shape

Some Ghosts have an enhanced form of the Phantom Shape Power (see earlier in this chapter) which allows them to create illusionary landscapes. Like Phantom Shapes, these illusions can be translucent (which will not fool anybody but may terrify onlookers), realistic but not solid, or, finally somewhat solid, albeit flimsy. Spirit Glammers cannot affect the world directly. Illusory weapons, even in their most solid form, will inflict at most 1 point of damage. The Glammers can confuse and scare victims quite effectively, however.

The Essence cost of these Glammers depends on the size and the “solidity” of the illusion. For man-sized or smaller illusions, use the Essence cost of normal Phantom Shapes (5, 10 and 15 Essence points for translucent, realistic or somewhat solid, respectively). Larger illusions (anything up to the size of a van or a small elephant) cost 10, 20 and 30 Essence points respectively. For 30 points, such an illusion can withstand a whole 2 points of damage before vanishing. A very large illusion (up to the size of a house) costs 20, 40 and 60 Essence points

respectively. The “solid” illusions can take 3 damage points.

Creating a convincing illusion requires a successful Task using Spiritus and Intelligence. The higher the Success Levels, the truer to life the illusion will be. For certain things, other Task rolls using skills like Mechanic or Vehicles (to simulate a particular car or aircraft), Occult Knowledge (to depict accurate supernatural creatures), and so on may add bonuses to the illusion creation Task (each level of success in those tasks will add a +1 to the Glamour Task).

The illusions, even at the highest Essence cost, do not affect reality like the real thing. An illusionary M-1 tank (which would cost 60 Essence points) may terrify onlookers and cause Iraqi soldiers to surrender, but a 10-year old with a baseball bat can pop it like a balloon. An illusionary plane can fly, but it cannot carry real passengers. An animal may act like the real thing, but it either passes harmlessly through people or, at most, inflicts minor scratches on them. The illusions fools the victim's eyes, ears and touch, but not smell or taste.

Terror Leech

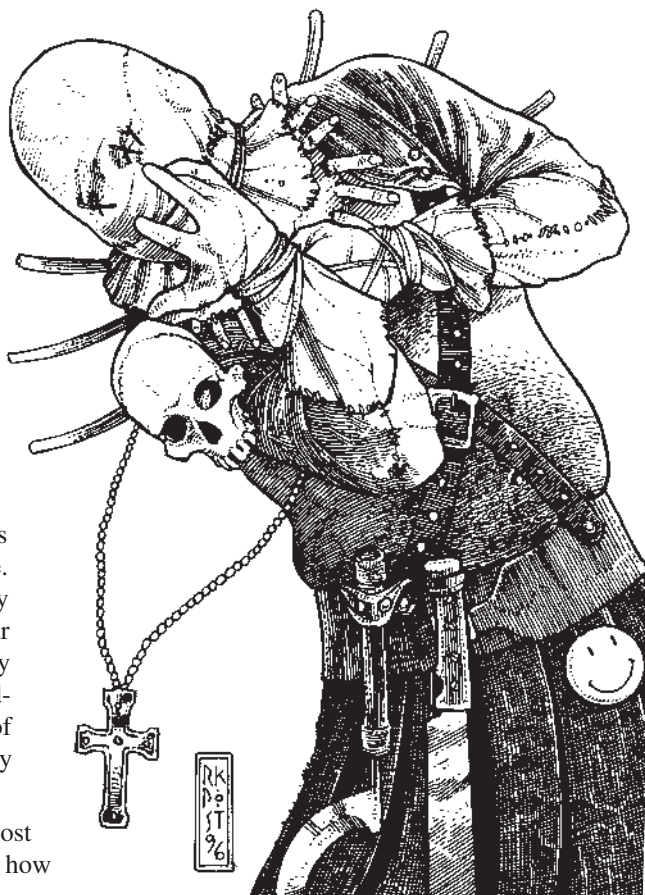
5-point Power

Through fear, some Ghosts can steal the Essence of living beings. This fear can be caused by any of the powers depicted above; how the victims are scared does not matter, as long as their terror is genuine. In game terms, the Ghost can absorb any Essence released as a result of a failed Fear Test (see Appendix). The Essence of any number of victims can be absorbed, provided they are within the area of influence of the Ghost -- 5 meters (yards) for every Willpower level of the Ghost.

The Fear Test penalties caused by the Ghost depends on how creative the effects are and how

inexperienced the victims are in dealing with the supernatural. A group of Gifted characters, especially if it includes one or two Necromancers, will be much harder to intimidate than a band of Mundane suburban teenagers, for example.

For every Success Level in the Fear Test, the Ghost can drain the victim of 1 Essence point for every level of the Ghost's Willpower. This draining may reduce victims below 0 Essence, and cause severe harm or even death. Furthermore, if the victim rolls more than 6 Success Levels on the Fear Table on a single roll, the Spirit may steal 1 permanent Essence point from the victim, which can then be used for Evolution purposes.



Ghost Vigilante

You were a cop just doing your job. You were going to clean up the city before they killed you, and you aren't going to let being dead stop you. Although you can no longer arrest the perps you pursue, you are also not deterred by legal technicalities -- or walls, for that matter. You are able to spy on criminals, to learn their biggest secrets, and to use that information to bring about their downfall. You have also discovered that there is a hidden layer in the local underworld. Once you get past the skulls and psychos you find beings who are no longer human. These beings are even stranger and more dangerous than what you have become -- a ghost.

Origins

You were a rarity, an honest cop in a corrupt city. As a result, you made plenty of enemies. In fact, your only friend was a local FBI agent who wanted to help expose the criminals in the police department. Unfortunately, before you could unearth enough evidence, you were set up. According to police records, you walked into a "gang shootout." At the Threshold, you refused to Pass On. You would not let the crime bosses who controlled the city, and ordered your death, get away unpunished. The job you started was not finished. You returned, an incorporeal Ghost with an overriding purpose.

Allies and Enemies

You are essentially a Solitaire. You have contacted the FBI agent you befriended in life, however. Although you cannot speak directly to the agent (he is a Mundane), you have used your Animate power to write messages, uncover clues, and on one occasion thwart an attempt on his life. Your chief enemy is the local crime boss, a seemingly respectable businessman who secretly controls the drug trade in the city and who ordered your murder. To your surprise, you have discovered that your enemy has some sort of supernatural ability, and can actually sense the presence of nearby spirits. You are aware of other Supernatural beings as well as Gifted humans, but for now are keeping your distance, waiting until you learn more.

Roleplaying the Character

You were a dedicated police officer before your death, and even now you wish to uphold the law, protect the innocent and punish the guilty. Your driving purpose is gradually eroding your principles, however, and you are often tempted to take the law into your own hands. You are serious and like to concentrate on the business at hand, perhaps to avoid thinking about the fact that you are dead. You also have a streak of racism that you were working on overcoming at the time of your death.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 6 skill levels must be dropped.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Solitaire

Concept

Fanatic

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

2

INTELLIGENCE

3

DEXTERITY

2

PERCEPTION

2

CONSTITUTION

2

WILLPOWER

6

Secondary Attributes

VITAL ESSENCE

66

ENDURANCE POINTS

n/a

SPEED

8

ENERGY ESSENCE

49

DEFEAT

Qualities

Point

Ghost

8

Extra Essence

16

Contacts: FBI Agent

4

Situational Awareness

2

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary: Crime Boss

3

Delusion: Prejudice against minorities

1

Honorable (2 levels)

Humorless

Skill/Power

Level

Brawling

2

Driving (Car)

2

Gambling

2

Guns (Handgun)

3

Humanities (Criminology)

2

Humanities (Law)

1

Intimidation

3

Language (Spanish)

2

Notice

3

Occult Knowledge (General)

1

Occult Knowledge (Ghosts Speciality)

3

Streetwise

3

Power/Vulnerability

Level

Spiritus

5

Common Ghost Powers

Common Ghost Vulnerabilities

Animate

Purpose: Convict Crime Bosses

5

(50 extra Energy Essence

when pursuing or fighting Bosses)

Champions of Death:

Phantasms

Also known as the Wandering Ones, the Free Souls, and the Fugitives, Phantasms are to Ghosts what the Gifted are to Mundanes. These Spirits do not need to be driven by an obsession or trauma to avoid being dragged back into the Cycle of Life and Death.

Phantasms are free from most of the constraints that limit other errant souls. They can travel freely through the Death Realms and to Earth, they are never bound to a place or time, and they are even able to become material for short periods of time, which allows them to satisfy the sensual urges denied to Ghosts.

There are many theories that try to explain why Phantasms are different from other souls of the dead. It is believed that Phantasms are the souls of Gifted men and women, whose greater power and strength allows them to overcome the usual limitations affecting the Mundane. This does not explain why many dead Gifted come back as Ghosts, however, nor why many Phantasms were perfectly ordinary people in life. Others postulate that Phantasms were freed from the constraints

of Death by one of the Powers of the Otherworlds; perhaps Phantasms were meant to be used as agents and warriors of one of the rulers of the Death Realms, or even the Death entity itself. For the time being, however, Phantasms appear to be free to serve whom they please. Some do take service under some of the Death Gods or even the Infernal Powers, but most refuse to acknowledge any masters and pursue their own goals.

The most powerful Phantasms have carved a place for themselves among the other Powers of Geburah, and are known as the Death Lords. The Death Lords are ancient Spirits who have amassed enormous power and influence in the Realms of the Dead. They rule their own kingdoms, controlling hundreds or thousands of Ghosts and other entities, and spend much of their time intriguing with other Lords or defending their kingdoms from incursions by their ene-

mies. Chief among them are the Pharaohs, the rulers of Egypt whose ritualistic burial customs endowed them with enormous power after their demise, and who now rule over the Death Realm of Khem (see Chapter Six: Supernatural). Others include the spirits of famous people who somehow draw strength from the worship and love of mortals to set themselves above other errant souls.



In the past, Phantasms were a rare breed of the Dead. Before the approach of the Reckoning, there were only a few hundred of them, their numbers rising slightly during the worst historical crises. The last fifty years or so, however, have been marked by the appearance of hundreds more Phantasms. Some are the spirits of recently killed individuals, others claim to be the souls of famous historical figures.

Able to come and go as they please, and far more powerful than mere mortals, Phantasms can be used as Cast Members in some games but may be unbalancing or disruptive in others. Phantasms are best used in Stories where the characters are dealing with powerful Death Realms' entities, enemies and rivals who know of the powers and weaknesses of Spirits. Phantasms are not bothered by most physical dangers and obstacles, and unlike Ghosts, they are not seriously hampered by supernatural limitations. Their major drawback is the fact that Phantasms attract powerful enemies, including the Grim Reapers (see Chapter Six: Supernatural), envious Ghosts, and evil Necromancers. These enemies should play a part in any Story involving Phantasms, if only by being used as reminders to characters not to abuse their Powers, since this may attract unwanted attention.

Playing a Phantasm

It is harder to make generalizations about Phantasms than about Ghosts. Unlike other Spirits, Phantasms are able to experience earthly pleasures, so only a few of them feel the anger and envy that often drives Ghosts. This does not imply that no Phantasms are driven by some purpose, but for those that are driven, the purpose is rarely completely obsessive or dominant. Common Character Concepts among Phantasms include Avengers, Reluctant Heroes, Wanderers and Warriors. The typical Phantasm prefers her shadowy existence between the worlds of the living and the dead to their previous life as mortals, or is simply afraid of what may await her on other planes of existence.

Creating a Phantasm Character

Phantasms have a number of special bonuses, Qualities and Drawbacks that are all part of the cost of the Phantasm Quality. Playing a Phantasm requires the expenditure of 15 character points, which can be drawn from the Qualities or Metaphysics categories. Other than certain Attributes and Metaphysics benefits and limitations, creating a Phantasm character is just like creating any other character.

Attributes: Legendary strength of will is one reason Phantasms lack many of the limitations of common Ghosts. Phantasms gain a +1 to their Willpower attribute, which can reach a maximum of 7. These bonuses are added after the player purchases whatever levels she desires. For example, if the player wanted a Willpower of 6, she would purchase up to level 5, and add the bonus level on top. All other Attributes are acquired normally.

Secondary Attributes: Phantasms have more Essence than the average Spirit. They receive a bonus of 10 Essence points to both their Vital and Energy Essence Pools. Phantasms have no Endurance Points.

Metaphysics: Phantasms can have Magic, Second Sight, and Tao-Chi. All other Gifted abilities are beyond their reach, and even these Powers can only be used in a limited fashion. While visiting Earth in immaterial form, Phantasms can only use their normal ghostly Powers. While in Incarnate form (see later in this chapter), or while in the Death Realms, Phantasms can use their Gifted abilities.

The biggest limitation for beginning players creating Phantasms will be the character points available. While creating Adversaries or Supporting Cast members, the Chronicler does not have to follow any of those limits, of course, and Phantasms can be among the most dangerous enemies the Cast Members may ever face.

Incarnation: A Unique Phantasm Ability

Unlike Ghosts, who can only materialize partially and with great difficulty, Phantasms can fully assume the form of a mortal, creating a semblance of life that will fool almost everybody. This process is known as Incarnation -- an ability unique to Phantasms that makes them the envy of the Spirits and, sometimes, the bane of the Living.

Incarnated Phantasms have totally solid bodies with all the advantages, but few of the shortcomings, of mere mortals. As long as they have Essence to fuel their transformation, Phantasms can experience the world and all worldly pleasures, but which is highly resistant to physical harm and mortal frailties. This existence can only be maintained for short periods of time, however, since the Essence cost of becoming Incarnate is very high. Even worse, each time an Incarnation is abandoned, the Phantasm once again experiences the helplessness and agonies of Death. Also, the Incarnated Spirit cannot regain the Essence spent in creating the physical body until it is abandoned and the Phantasm returns to her natural form. Finally, although the Incarnate body is very tough, it can be injured and even destroyed, risking Unraveling.

The physical shape of the Phantasm is determined by her previous life. The Phantasm can select the apparent age of the body, provided it lies within her character's life span. For example, the Phantasm of a 17-year old could not Incarnate as a 30-year old adult, but could take the shape of a younger child. The Incarnate body appears on the plane of the physical world naked. No tools or possessions from the Otherworlds can be carried over unless they are Soul-Linked.

Incarnating

Becoming Incarnate is costly and time consuming; the Rebirth is almost as painful and harrowing an experience as true birth. To Incarnate, the Phantasm must focus her entire will and concentration on the process of recreating a human body.

The Spirit's Essence matrix has the "memories" necessary to do so (among the information contained in the Essence of a soul is the entire DNA structure of her current and any previous lives), but the process of "remembering" how to be alive takes time and effort.

As the Phantasm spends Essence on the process, her body starts to be rebuilt cell by cell. Five minutes into the Rebirth, a small pool of blood appears on the ground. An observer would see the blood start to spread and divide into rivulets that eventually harden into veins and arteries until the entire circulatory system was spread on the floor, roughly following the outline of a human body. From there the entrails and other organs start to grow, followed by bones and the nervous system. Muscle tissue is next to last. Finally, the skin covers the quivering new body. Most normal people who witness such a gruesome spectacle are subject to a Fear Test at a -5 penalty.

The entire Rebirth process takes roughly half an hour and costs 25 Essence points, which must come from the Phantasm's Energy Essence Pool. This energy is not regained until the Incarnation is abandoned. As it is happening, the Phantasm feels the pains of existence, of organs and flesh reknitting themselves. Three times during the process, the Phantasm must pass a Simple Willpower Test to keep going despite the excruciating pain. If any Test is failed, the Phantasm falters. A Difficult Willpower Test must be passed immediately, or the character fails entirely, and all the Essence used in the process is lost. At the end of the process, as the new body lies on the ground, a final Task, using Spiritus and Willpower, transfers the character's soul into the new body.

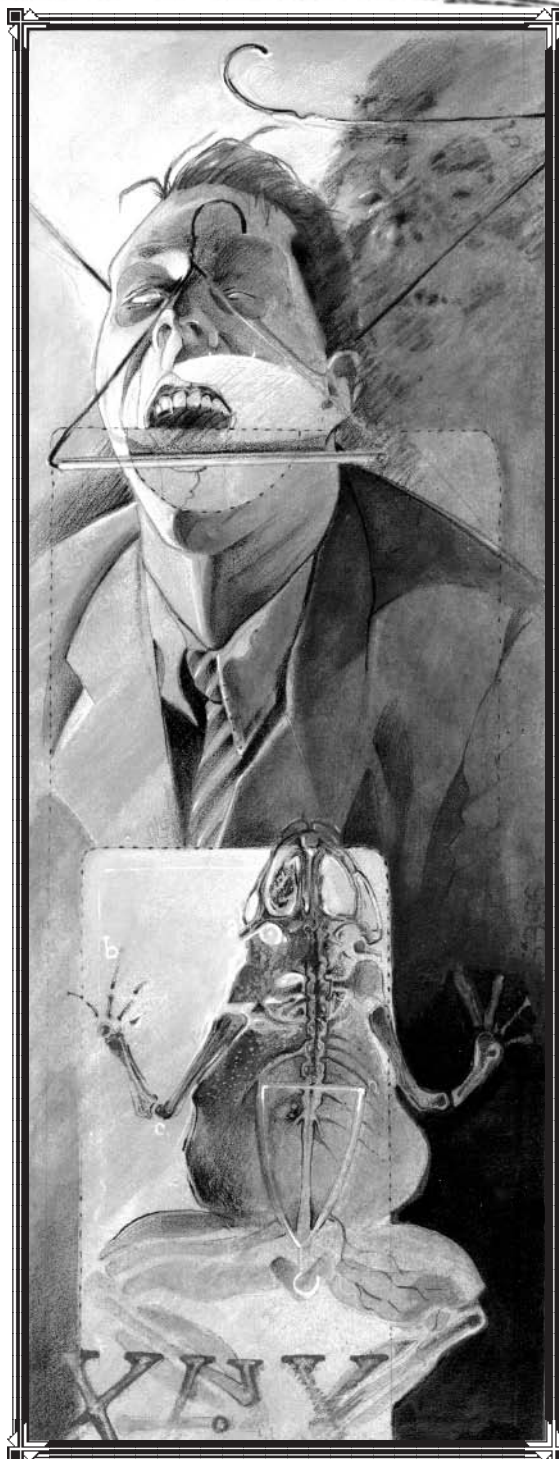
Being interrupted can be very dangerous, both for the Phantasm and the intruder. If the interruption occurs within the first fifteen minutes or so, the new body is still quite helpless. Inflicting more than 10 points of damage on it will destroy the body and drain the Phantasm of the 25 Essence points used in the Rebirth. Further, an additional 1D4 x 3(6) points

is lost from the Phantasm's Vital Essence (basically a painful injury as the Spirit's pattern is harmed, a situation akin to sending a jolt of electricity through a computer disk). After fifteen minutes, the body can withstand more damage (25 points), and the Phantasm can animate it. The half-created body instinctively and savagely attacks any intruders, or flees as best it can, striking with unfleshed limbs or running on skinless feet. These actions are much more painful than the normal Rebirth, however, and add a penalty of -4 to the last Willpower Test and to the Spiritus and Willpower Task. Such actions understandably unnerve the intruder, forcing him to make Fear Tests at -2 as well as suffer any damage inflicted by the half-formed body (treat as normal hand-to-hand damage).

Once the process is finally completed, the Phantasm remains Incarnate for one hour plus an additional hour per Success Level in the final Spiritus and Willpower Task (i.e., a minimum of two hours, with possibly as many as six or more hours). The Phantasm can prolong this period of time by spending Essence, but the enormous cost makes it difficult to do so for long. Fifteen Essence points are needed to extend the body's existence by one hour. As long as the Phantasm has enough Essence, she can keep the body alive, but since a Phantasm cannot regain the Essence spent in creating her body until she abandons it, sooner or later she must relinquish her physical existence. When that happens, the Phantasm once again experiences Death. The event is wrenching and painful, but, as long as the Phantasm remains in control of the process, it is not risky. If the body is destroyed by somebody else, the dangers are much greater.

Harming the Incarnate

Normal injuries have minimal effect on the Incarnate body. Only massive damage that results in dismemberment or total destruction will stop the Phantasm. The Phantasm's wounds bleed and severe injuries look gruesomely real, but the character can continue to function even after sustaining damage that would kill a mere mortal.



In game terms, the character's Life Points are equal to her Vital Essence Pool doubled (i.e., a Phantasm with 40 Vital Essence points has 80 Life Points when Incarnated). Also, injuries that inflict less than 10 points of base damage do not affect the Phantasm -- the wounds are clearly visible, but the Phantasm ignores their effect. All other injuries subtract from the Phantasm's basic Life Points normally, but the creature does not suffer any effects from injury or pain. Finally, no damage modifiers (such as the effect of slashing weapons, hit location modifiers, or the adjustments due to certain ammunition) are applied to the creature's body.

After being reduced to -10 Life Points, the Phantasm's Incarnated body looks barely human, but it is still functional. The Phantasm does not need to pass Survival Tests until reduced to -30 Life Points, with a penalty of -1 for every 10 points below -30.

For example, Luigi "The Fish" Grimaldi, Phantasm wise guy, has a Vital Essence Pool of 49 points. His Incarnation has 98 Life Points. Luigi runs afoul of a gang of thugs armed with AK-47s, and is riddled with bullets. The Phantasm can continue operating at no penalties or immediate risk until reduced to -30 points (requiring a total of 128 points of damage). At that point, he must pass an unmodified Survival Test. Once he is reduced below -40 points, the Test suffers a -1 penalty. At -50, the Test is at -2, and so forth.

This damage applies only to the Life Points Pool of the Phantasm, not to her Vital Essence Pool, which remains unaffected. Destroying the Incarnate body temporarily depletes the Phantasm's Energy Essence Pool, and inflicts 1D8 x 5(20) points of damage to her Vital Essence. This may Unravel her and remove her from the game for all intents and purposes.

The Phantasm can heal all physical injuries by re-Incarnating. Spending enough Essence to Incarnate once again (25 Essence points, which cannot be regained until the Phantasm becomes incorporeal) automatically heals any wounds (it will not fix damage to the character's clothing or possessions, however). Also, the process requires a minimum of 5 rounds of intense concentration, during which the Phantasm is all but helpless.

Incarnate Powers

Due to their dual nature as creatures of the spirit world and living, breathing beings, Phantasms can use most of their special abilities while in physical form. Powers like Animate, Spirit Glamour and Terror Leech, for example, can be activated by an Incarnated Phantasm. Only those Powers that would involve the Spirit's natural form (like Phantom Shape) cannot be performed while the Phantasm retains a physical form. Phantasms can also perform Magic, or any other Gifted powers they had in life while in this material state.

Common Phantasm Powers

In addition to Incarnation, Phantasms have a number of natural Powers. They are very similar to those of Ghosts and other spirit entities, with a few important exceptions. The following abilities are common among all Phantasms, and are gained by purchasing the Phantasm Quality. Individuals may also have one or more Special Phantasm Powers (described later in this chapter).

Immaterial and Invisible

Like Ghosts, Phantasms are beings of pure Essence, and as such, they are immaterial and invisible (see Common Ghost Powers). While Incarnated, Phantasms lose all the advantages and vulnerabilities resulting from these Powers.

Phantasms and Spiritus

Phantasms use Spiritus just like other Spirits. This Special Skill confers the same basic abilities and knowledge. The Powers available to Ghosts and Phantasms, while they overlap, are not the same, however. Phantasms, no matter how high their Spiritus level is, cannot gain certain Ghost Powers and Vulnerabilities, and vice versa.

Perceive Essence

Phantasms, by seeing the Essence matrix in all things, can tell a great deal about the spiritual and emotional state of anybody they meet. While in material form, Phantasms have access to all normal senses, and retain the ability to perceive a person's soul. This power is the same as the Ghost Power of the same name (See Common Ghost Powers).

Summoning

Like Ghosts, Phantasms are aware of when their name is being called (See Common Ghost Powers), but unlike their spirit brethren, they cannot be compelled to appear except through Necromancy or Magic. The efforts of Mundanes, no matter how devoted, do not work against these Spirits.

Tap Essence

This ability works just like the Ghost Power of the same name (See Common Ghost Powers). Tapping Essence is very important to Phantasms who have Incarnated, for they cannot regain Essence normally while in material form.

Travel Into and Out of the Death Realms

Again, this is the same as for Ghosts (see Common Ghost Powers), except Phantasms need only concentrate to travel from any other Death Realm to the Threshold. While Incarnate, however, the Phantasm is not only unable to travel into the Death Realms through the normal spiritual means, but cannot enter the Death Realms at all! If the character is somehow transported into any Death Realm while Incarnate, the physical body is automatically destroyed, and the Phantasm risks Unraveling. A Phantasm's Incarnation is a direct violation of the laws of the Planes of Death.

Special Phantasm Powers

These are unique abilities that vary from individual to individual. Most Phantasms have at least one of the following Powers; only the most powerful have more than five or six.

One of the major differences between Ghosts and Phantasms is that the latter cannot haunt an area or place. Phantasms cannot be Anchored nor can they become Haunts (see the Special Ghost Powers section for more information). Their special Powers protect them from being bound or enslaved, and also render them incapable of forging a mystical link to an object or place. Thus, they trade the possibility of great power for the right to remain free.

Ghost Powers Usable By Phantasms

The following Special Ghost Powers can also be acquired by Phantasms:
Animate, Banshee, Curse the Living,
Ghostsmith, Life Drain, Phantom
Shape, Purpose, Spirit Glamour,
Terror Leech.

Death Passage

4-point Power

Phantasms with this Power can act like a Gateway, through which passengers' souls (or, for the right amount of Essence, their very bodies) can travel into the Sphere of Geburah.

The easiest Death Passage works in a manner similar to Death Projection (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Six: Metaphysics). The people involved leave their bodies behind and travel in spirit with the Phantasm. If the human travelers are willing, all that is needed is the right expenditure of Essence (5 points per passenger), and a Spiritus and Intelligence Task on the part of the Phantasm. If the victims are not willing, then the Essence cost is 10 Essence points per person, and the Phantasm must overcome their resistance (Spiritus and Willpower against the victim's Simple Willpower Test). If the Phantasm is successful, she takes the person or persons into the Threshold (see Chapter Six: Supernatural). In addition to the Phantasm's Essence expenditure, the process costs each passenger 1 Essence point per hour, as the separation from their bodies takes its toll. As long as 5 Essence points remain in the body of the passenger, the link between her body and soul cannot be broken. Even if the traveler's spirit-form is destroyed, the victim returns to her body.

A second form of Death Passage takes the passengers' body and soul into the Death Realm. This process is more costly (12 Essence points per passenger), and unwilling victims get a +2 bonus to resist the effect. If the Phantasm is successful, however, the passengers are taken into the Death Realms as if they had traveled through a Gateway.

Once the travelers have been transported to the Death Realms, they remain there for one hour, at the end of which the Phantasm must spend an additional 5 Essence points per passenger to keep them there. If the Phantasm does not spend this extra Essence, the passengers find themselves back at their starting point.

Dream Visitation

5-point Power

Some Phantasms have the Power to haunt the dreams of the Living. The target must be somebody the Spirit knows and the Power only works when the victim is asleep and dreaming. Finally, Phantasms can only use this Power while they are in Spirit form. By spending 8 Essence points, the Phantasm enters the person's dreams, and can use any and all of her Powers to disrupt or alter the dream as she sees fit. The victim is likely to be terrified (which may lead to Fear Tests and Essence losses the Phantasm can absorb). This Power lasts for 30 minutes or until the sleeper stops dreaming (Chronicler's discretion), whichever comes first.

Dying of the Light

3-point Power

The invention of electricity banished the shadows in which Spirits and other creatures of the dark thrived. There are Phantasms who can weaken lights to terrorize their victims, however. By spending Essence, the Spirit can dim all lights in an area. The larger the area and the stronger the lights, the more energy the Spirit must spend. Using this Power first requires a successful Willpower and Spiritus Task. Darkening a candle-lit room costs only 1 Essence point; one lit by a fireplace or a gas lamp, 2 Essence points. Any common electric light (60-100 watts) costs 5 Essence points. Stronger light or multiple lamps cost 8 points, and very powerful lamps or spotlights cost 10 points. The area affected is the size of a room or a radius of about 5 meters (yards). Increasing the area affected costs double the base cost for each 5 meters (yards) added to the radius. This Power lasts 1 turn, plus an additional turn per Success Level. At the end of that period, a new Spiritus and Willpower Task is necessary to maintain the darkness.

E Pluribus Unum

6-points/level Power

Not all Phantasms suffer from the “reincarnation amnesia” which affects most spirits of the dead. Some Phantasms have awakened and integrated their soul’s previous incarnations. A few become, in effect, an army of one — a Spirit with multiple personalities, any one of which can be dominant at a given time. When the Dominant personality changes, the Phantasm’s shape and demeanor also changes. The 20th-century short college student might suddenly become a tall and skinny Egyptian warrior or a pudgy 18th-century English banker. Each incarnation has her own skills and knowledge, giving the character a wide range of abilities to choose from. The player also has the chance to roleplay different characters in the same game.

Each level in this Power gives the character control over one previous life. Each previous incarnation gets 18 points to distribute on 5-10 skills, limited by the historical period during which that incarnation lived (a man from the Middle Ages, for example, would know nothing about automobiles). When the character switches from one past life to another, the character’s shape and demeanor changes, and the character has access to that life’s skills but not to any other’s.

Switching from one life to another takes time and effort, so the character must be careful not to be “stuck” with the wrong persona at the wrong time. Switching from one life to another takes 10 minutes and costs 12 Essence points. There is no limit on how long a specific life can be in control. All previous lives have less in the way of skills, however, so a character most likely will want to keep the present day life in control.

Soul Link

4-points/level Power

Phantasms can take some possessions with them after death through the use of this Power. Typically, these objects had a great deal of emotional value for the character: a favorite set of clothes, or a much-loved tool or weapon. Sometimes the object was something that was buried alongside the character. Ancient funerary rites had a grain of truth to them -- under the right circumstances, possessions buried with a person would continue to be of service to her in the afterlife.

Each level in this Power allows the character to “take” into the Death Lands one object per level of Willpower. These objects work normally in those Otherworlds. A gun fires normally, for example, and its ammunition can be created out of Essence (see Ghost’s Ghostsmith Power earlier in this chapter). A set of clothing or tools count as one object. Large objects (like a car) count as two, three or more items, as determined by the Chronicler (a typical ghost car would count as two items, while an 18-wheeler or some huge vehicle would count as four or even more).

When a Phantasm Incarnates on Earth, she can elect to have a set of Soul Linked clothes (if she has one) appear with her at no cost. Any other items that materialize on Earth will cost an additional 10 Essence points (large objects will cost two or three times as much, depending on their size, as above).



Phantasm Researcher

As far as you are concerned, there is no "supernatural" -- the paranormal is a part of Nature that we haven't figured out yet, and your self-imposed duty is to figure it out. You were a ghost hunter, armed with motion detectors, thermal sights and unbridled enthusiasm. You learned a great deal -- and got much of it wrong. One stormy night, the "minor poltergeist" you were studying threw you headfirst off a fourth story building. The last thing you saw was the spiked iron fence you fell into, flashing evilly in the lightning.

After overcoming the shock of death, your first feeling was curiosity. Now that you were on the other side, you had a unique opportunity to learn more. Perhaps as a result of your previous profession, you found you were more capable than the average Ghost was. You could even manifest yourself in the world for brief periods of time. Able to work on this world and the next, you soon discovered many things.

You found there were groups that studied the interactions between Life and Death. Some of your former colleagues actually belonged to them but had not seen fit to reveal this -- until you returned from the grave. You are now a member of good standing with the House of Thanatos, and have many contacts with the Twilight Order. Unlike many members of both groups, you prefer to use a scientific approach to your research, and remain suspicious of the "mumbo jumbo" used by Necromancers. As far as you are concerned, rituals and mysticism are mere trappings, with the truth lying somewhere beneath them. Besides your research, you also want to curb those spirits who wish to harm the living. Your experience with the poltergeist taught you evil does not end with death.

Origins

You were killed by a malicious spirit, but turned away from transcendence. As far as you were concerned, there was too much to learn (and, you will admit to yourself but nobody else, you were too afraid to blithely walk into the light without knowing what lay at the other end). Over the last few years, you have learned a great deal about your condition, both by yourself and by contacting others who know the hidden truths of life after death. You have reluctantly agreed to keep this knowledge secret after being convinced the world is not ready for it, but if you make a major discovery you probably won't be able to prevent yourself from sharing it.

Allies and Enemies

You are a Thanatoi in good standing, with good contacts in the local Chapter. You consider yourself a member of the Savant faction, although you are less interested in the secret of immortality than in understanding the ultimate fate of the human soul. You also have contacts with the Twilight Order, including a couple of former colleagues who kept their association hidden from you when you were alive. In the course of your research, you have discovered that the Spirit that killed you is a powerful wandering Ghost. You are dedicated to finding your murderer and put a stop to his crimes.

Roleplaying the Character

In death as in life, you are driven by curiosity. You have a lot to learn, and you want to learn it as fast as possible. Strangely enough, however, being dead has taught you to value life a great deal more than you once did. You enjoy the brief times when you become corporeal and visit the physical world.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 15 skill levels must be dropped.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

House of Thanatos

Concept

Seeker of Knowledge

CHANNELING
LEVEL

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

2

INTELLIGENCE

5

DEXTERITY

2

PERCEPTION

3

CONSTITUTION

3

WILLPOWER

6

Secondary Attributes

VITAL ESSENCE

68

ENDURANCE POINTS

n/a

SPEED

10

ENERGY ESSENCE

47

DEFEAT

Qualities

Point

Phantasm

15

Increased Essence

8

Contacts: House of Thanatos

3

Contacts: Twilight Order

2

Photographic Memory

2

Skill/Power

Level

Driving (Car)

2

First Aid

2

Electronic Surveillance

3

Humanities (History)

4

Humanities (Psychology)

5

Instruction

4

Martial Arts (Judo)

2

Occult Knowledge (General)

3

Occult Knowledge (Ghost Speciality)

5

Research

4

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary: Hostile Spirit

2

Charisma (cold and pedantic)

2

Honorable (1 level)

1

Obsession:

2

Learn Secrets of Life After Death

Power/Vulnerability

Level

Spiritus

4

Common Phantasm Powers

Common Phantasm Vulnerabilities

Animate

Death Passage

Dying of the Light

Incarnate

Eternity waited for me in the club's back alley.

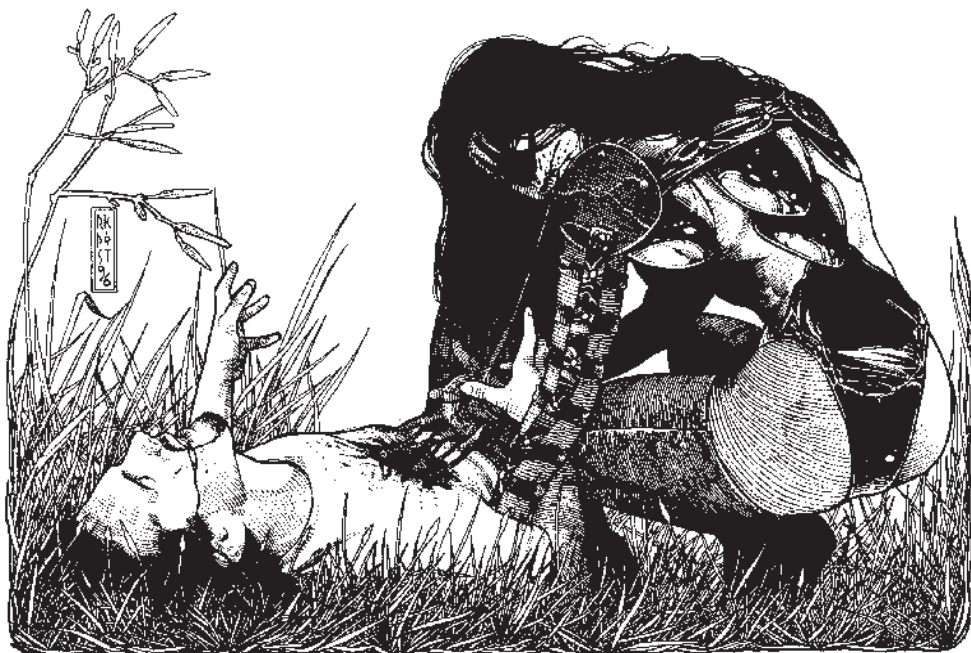
Did I go there to die? Sometimes I wonder.

I was headed towards a bad end. My parents, who had chosen to stop caring years ago, knew it. My so-called friends knew it. I knew it, and I didn't care. Or I thought I didn't.

When the pale boy I had followed into the alley bared his fangs in a grotesque smile, I was afraid. The Goth scene and the black clothing and the pale makeup hadn't done their work, I guess, because deep inside I didn't believe vampires existed. When the boy said "Come here, pretty girl," I tried to run. He was too fast. I tried to scream and fight, but he was too strong. It was painful and brutal. It didn't have to be that way, I know that now, but that's how he liked it. He took my dignity and my life and walked away laughing, my corpse a broken doll behind a garbage bin, gone and forgotten.

At the Threshold between life and death I decided I was not ready to go. So I came back. The broken doll started to move just before dawn. I knew enough to crawl into the shadows of a condemned building, away from the morning sun. The next evening, a wino tried to molest me. I took his life.

I've learned a lot since then. I do not kill if I can help it. There are so many pleasurable ways to get what I need, and nobody needs to get hurt. I am always in control now, and nobody can hurt me. If I ever meet the pale boy again, I'll thank him . . . before I tear his heart out.



Undead

"We shuffled off our mortal coil -- and then we put it back on. We are the haunters of the night, the bogeymen your mother warned you about. We have met Death face to face, and no longer fear it. We have traveled above and beyond Death, and relish in it. We are immortal."

Not all the dead come back in spirit. Some rise once again in their bodies, sustaining their flesh by a constant influx of Essence. They are often tormented or driven by inhuman hungers or obsessions. Like normal humans, some try to do the right thing, but many more seek only to gratify their needs at any cost. They are powerful and dangerous beings. They are the Undead, creatures of fear and darkness, destroyers and hunters.

The Undead can never hope to fit in among humanity without establishing an elaborate facade. Many of these beings do not even worry about it, concerned as they are by their obsessions and hungers. Those who wish to pass for humans must work hard at concealing their inhuman traits from those around them.

In the world of WitchCraft, the Undead are human beings who have broken free from the Cycle of Life and Death, but at a terrible price. They make for great adversaries and threats, and, in some games, they can be interesting characters to play. As usual, however, they may cause some game imbalance between characters, particularly the Mundanes.

Creating Undead

Undead are created by choosing the Undead Character Type during step two of character creation. Undead characters get 15 points to distribute among Attributes (additionally, many Undead receive special bonuses to certain Attributes), 15 points for Qualities (and can gain up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 25 points for Skills, and 25 points for Metaphysics.

All Undead must purchase a specific Quality using Quality or Metaphysics points (Vampyre -- 15 points; Relentless Dead -- 15 points). For example, a Vampyre player might want to spend her Quality points and no Metaphysics points to buy the Vampyre Quality, or she might split the cost evenly, spending 7 Quality points (leaving her with 8 points left) and 8 Metaphysics points (leaving her with 17 points in that category). The specific Quality purchased provides certain special Powers and Drawbacks (the point costs are included in the cost of the Quality), and grant access to a number of others (which must be bought separately). The special features of Vampyres and Relentless Dead are discussed separately later in this chapter.

Undead do not have to purchase the Gifted Quality; by their very nature, they are considered to be of the Gifted automatically.



Night Hunters: Vampyre Characters

The Nosferatu, the Drinkers of Blood and Stealers of Life, mentioned in the myths of almost every culture, are a major part of the occult underworld in WitchCraft. Even before the changes brought on by the approaching Reckoning, these Undead were the most numerous supernatural predators in the world, hiding in plain sight among the teeming populations of cities, striking carefully and leaving no traces. Despite what the legends say, most Vampyres do not have to gain their sustenance by draining mortals of their blood. They take life force from humans, and they can do so in many ways. Vampyres are, at best, benign parasites who do no lasting harm to their victims; at worst, they are sadistic predators who have no respect for life.

The Unbirth: Becoming a Vampyre

Vampyres break free from the embrace of Death in many different ways. Some are forced or guided into Undeath by another Vampyre. Others become Undead by their refusal to Move On to the next stage of the Cycle, be it reincarnation, life in the Death Realms, or transcendence into the higher

planes of existence. Some Vampyres are people who commit suicide and discover that Death offers no true escape for their troubles.

The Unbirth occurs at the Threshold, the Death Realm of choices and chaos. Vampyres can enter this realm at will, and they sometimes follow their victims there to further torment them or to drag them back to become new Undead. Other recently dead people see glimpses of their future in the Death Realms and are so horrified that they try to turn back and return to their bodies. Most fail in their attempts, but a few manage to leave the Threshold and reach their now dead bodies. This act of despair, or this forced violation of their soul in the case of those dragged back by Vampyres, causes a profound change in the basic Essence matrix of the person. The end result is a creature not quite alive, but no longer dead, cut off from the normal flows of Essence but able to replenish itself by stealing energy from others.

After the Unbirth, the Vampyre finds herself back in her corpse, wherever the body might be. Often this means the Undead will be buried in some graveyard, or stored in a morgue locker, and must somehow break free. If another Vampyre had a hand in the new Undead's creation, he may be close at hand to help release the creature and cover up any tracks or evidence that might remain.



Existence as a Vampyre

Vampyres soon discover that their new existence has a great many advantages, and just as many drawbacks. Most new Undead are afflicted by a feeling of hollowness and despair, the result of being cut off from the normal flow of life. Living beings are part of the currents of Essence that permeate reality; this connection creates a feeling of belonging that is intrinsic to even the most alienated person. Vampyres, first and foremost, are outsiders, alone even amidst a huge crowd, able to see -- and feed upon -- the emotions of people, but never able to fully partake in them. Vampyres still feel emotions, even noble feelings like love and compassion, but not in the same way as humans.

Some legends claim that Vampyres cannot experience the pleasures of the flesh, being little more than ambulatory corpses. This is not true. As long as they can fuel enough Essence to maintain the semblance of life, these Undead can and do feel pleasure and pain like normal humans. In some ways, they can experience them with even more intensity than normal people, perhaps because of their unique perspective as someone returned from the dead. Further, their senses are supernaturally amplified, and they enjoy music, the arts and all sensual experiences like no mortal can. Vampyres cannot become intoxicated; drugs and alcohol have no effect on them, although many Undead consume them in a vain attempt to dull their senses. Most Vampyres feel a sense of intoxication as they feed on others' life forces.

Hunger is the other eternal part of a Vampyre's existence. Unlike normal humans or even Ghosts, Vampyres cannot renew their Essence by themselves. Furthermore, maintaining the semblance of life is a constant drain on their Essence, and so they must constantly replenish their energies. Some power can be taken from ambient Essence but only in minute amounts. Most of the Essence needed to sustain a Vampyre must come from living beings. Willingly or unwillingly, with or without their knowledge, mortals must give the Vampyre some

of their life force in order for the Undead to survive. This Essence loss need not be permanent, or even life-threatening, but many Vampyres become greedy and take more than they need.

Creating a Vampyre Character

Use the Undead Character Type to distribute character points among the different categories. Vampyres receive special bonuses and abilities; their value is included in the cost of the Vampyre Quality, which costs 15 points.

Attributes: Vampyres have bonuses to all their physical Attributes. After purchasing Attributes normally, add +3 to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution. These bonuses may raise the Vampyre's Attributes beyond the normal human limit of 6. To figure out the cost of buying an Attribute, do so before adding in the bonuses. For example, buying a Strength of 7 costs only 4 points; 4 points for the base Strength of 4, plus the +3 bonus for being a Vampyre. Furthermore, all physical Attributes must never be below a 4, including bonuses; this means that a minimum of 1 point must be spent on each of the three Attributes.

Secondary Attributes: Vampyres add +20 to their Essence Pool. More Essence can be purchased normally. Vampyres are not subject to fatigue and have no Endurance Points.

Qualities: Qualities and Drawbacks vary, depending on the Vampyre's background. Some Vampyres have very high Resources, while others will be dirt-poor. Many Vampyres look exceedingly attractive (most Undead tend to choose good-looking humans as their progeny). On the other hand, Life as an Undead is not good for a person's mental balance or state of mind and many Vampyres were suicides or people with emotional problems before their death and resurrection. Mental Drawbacks like Addictions, Cruel, Delusions, Emotional Problems, and Paranoia are very common. Like most supernatural characters, Vampyres are considered to have the Gift, and do not have to acquire that Quality.



Association: Most Vampyres tend to be Solitaires, although there are two Covenants, the Fellowship of Judas and the House of Thanatos, in which Vampyres have a strong presence. A Vampyre might be a member (or she might have been a member before her transformation) of one of the human-oriented Covenants, but most such organizations are afraid and suspicious of the Undead. Some of the more liberal Wicce Covens have accepted Vampyres who control their urges and live by the precepts of harmony practiced by the Covenant, but those groups are exceptions to the general rule. The Sentinels will never have any truck with Vampyres, at least knowingly; a few Vampyres manage to hide their nature and have some dealings with Sentinels teams. Other “secret” Vampyres operate among several Covenants, either serving the Covenant or pursuing a hidden (or treacherous) agenda of their own.

Metaphysics: Vampyres have a number of inherent powers, some of which are developed with time, and others that are innate. They can also use Magic, Necromancy, and Tao-Chi. Essence drain is the biggest drawback of using these powers, however, since the Vampyre will have trouble replenishing it. The Disciplines of the Flesh, the Sight and Inspired Powers cannot be acquired by Vampyres, and a character who had those abilities in life will lose them after the transformation process. It appears that only beings in perfect harmony between the realm of flesh and spirit (which Vampyres definitely are not) can attain those abilities.

Common Vampyre Powers and Vulnerabilities

All Vampyres have these special abilities, the result of their status between the worlds of the flesh and the spirit. They are included in the cost of the Vampyre Quality.

Creatures of Essence and Flesh

Vampyres, even more so than other Undead, mix the attributes of Spirits with those of living beings. Vampyres have large Essence Pools (typically with no less than 30 points), but they are constantly being drained of Essence to keep their bodies going. Unlike living beings, Vampyres do not regain Essence normally; they must take it from living beings. Ambient Essence can be tapped, but each 5 points used in this manner only restores 1 Essence point to the Vampire (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Times of Power).

Enter the Threshold

Vampyres cannot easily enter most Death Realms, but they have a unique link to the Threshold, the place where they were created. After a few seconds of concentration, Vampyres can project their minds into the Threshold in a manner similar to Soul Projection (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Five: Metaphysics), but limited only to the Threshold. Once there, the Vampyre can communicate with the souls of the recently dead. The most common use of this Power is to follow a recent victim of the Vampyre to the Threshold, and then to enslave the victim's soul and bring it back to its body, creating a new Vampyre that is almost always subservient to its "creator."

Essence Depletion

The biggest weakness of Vampyres is their dependency on living beings for Essence. If a Vampyre's Essence Pool is reduced to -10 points or below, the Vampyre's body decomposes rapidly, and her soul is released, typically to an unhappy end in one of the Otherworlds. In other cases, the

Undead's Essence matrix becomes Unraveled. After decades or centuries of rebuilding, the soul may put itself back together, but it will have lost its Undead status and will be no more powerful than any common Ghost or reincarnated spirit. If a character is destroyed in this manner, she is removed from the game permanently, or, at best, may be rescued by her companions after a lengthy quest, and even then she will no longer be Undead.

Essence Vampirism

Vampyres have the power to drain Essence from the living. Humans (especially the Gifted) are the richest sources of Essence, although Vampyres can also drain Essence from other supernatural beings, including other Vampyres.

Taking Essence from a victim requires the Vampyre to elicit a strong emotion. The easiest such emotion is fear. Anyone who fails a Fear Test in the presence of a Vampyre unconsciously releases D6(3) Essence Points every Turn (ignore Essence losses detailed in the Fear Table, if used). The Undead absorbs these losses automatically and all at once as long as he is within a meter (yard). This process can be repeated until the human is reduced to -10 Essence points, at which point the human will probably die. The Manipulations of the Flesh Power (see next page) is often used to modify Fear Tests. Also, the Chronicler can apply Fear Test modifiers depending on the circumstances (say, the Vampyre tears someone's limb off).

Pain is a slightly more effective means of gaining Essence. Each Turn a Vampyre tortures someone, the victim loses D8(4) Essence Points, which may be fully absorbed as detailed above.

The emotions need not be negative. Vampyres can feed as easily on the pleasure of humans. Some Vampyres specialize in the arts of seduction and sensual pleasure. A human brought to ecstasy through any combination of sensations is drained of 1D10(5) Essence Points. Draining a human below -10 Essence Points will still kill, but sybaritic Vampyres rarely resort to such crude methods.

When drained for the Vampire's Essence Pool, the victim's Essence replenishes normally (see WitchCraft, Chapter Three: Rules, Regaining Essence Points). When drained for Evolution purposes, Essence is regained at one point, or the victim's Essence Channelling level, per week.

Evolution

Vampyres can increase their Essence Pools over time by absorbing large amounts of Essence. This works in the same manner as Spirit Evolution (see Spirits and Essence earlier in this chapter), but 50 Essence Points must be gathered and only the Vampire's Essence Pool is affected. The oldest Vampyres have hundreds of Essence Points.

Inulnerability

Conventional weapons can only slow down Vampyres. Their bodies recover from any type of injury given time, although they can feel pain and shock from their injuries. Leaving a Vampire for dead is often a tragic mistake; not only will the creature recover but she will harbor an intense hatred for those who made her suffer. Any damage sustained by a Vampire is recovered at the rate of 1 Life Point for every level of Willpower at the end

of each turn. Damage inflicted on the Vampire's Essence Pool is much harder to replenish, however. Contrary to popular belief, stakes through the heart are no more or less effective against Vampyres than any other weapon, unless the weapon is somehow empowered through the expenditure of Essence (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Holy Symbols and the Mundane). Likewise, religious symbols will only affect Vampyres if they are held by the truly faithful -- and then only if the Vampire has been guilty of serious crimes.

Manipulations of the Flesh

Vampyres can use their Essence to manipulate their bodies. The creatures can make their bodies more attractive and life-like. Also, fangs and claws can be grown to inhuman lengths, the better to terrify and slay victims. Most physical changes, like growing claws, reshaping the face, or sprouting fangs, cost 1 Essence Point, and the changes can be undone without spending any energy. The size and damage inflicted by these claws and fangs, or the level of attractiveness attainable, is determined by Willpower (see Manipulation Effects sidebar).

Manipulation Effects

Vampyres with a strong Willpower can change their bodies into lethal killing machines, or take on exotically beautiful forms. The following table offers guidelines to those changes. The Damage column applies to modifications like claws or fangs. The Charisma/Horror column shows how beautiful or repulsive the Vampire can make herself in appearance. This modifier, depending on the shape, can be used either for social rolls (from Seduction to Intimidation), or for Fear Tests.

Willpower	Damage	Charisma/Horror
1	+1 point of damage	+1/-1
2	1D4(2) x (Strength-1) slashing damage	+2/-2
3	1D4(2) x Strength slashing damage	+4/-5
4	1D6(3) x Strength slashing damage	+5/-6
5	1D8(4) x (Strength) slashing damage	+6/-7
6	1D8(4) x (Strength+1) slashing damage	+6/-8



Semblance of Life

Vampyres can counterfeit life at the cost of Essence. Giving a body the full semblance of life (including such signs as a pulse, warmth and a healthy skin color) costs 2 Essence points per day. Maintaining the ability to move, but abandoning any pretense of being alive costs only 1 Essence point every other day. Anybody touching or performing a medical exam on the Vampyre in this state will realize something is terribly wrong (the Vampyre lacks a pulse and her flesh is at room temperature). Furthermore, if her Essence Pool is reduced to 10 points or less for a period of more than twelve hours, her body starts showing signs of deterioration. The skin becomes pale and increasingly discolored and distended, and the Vampyre starts smelling of decay.

If a Vampyre cannot or does not want to spend at least 1 Essence point every other day, she enters a state of suspended animation. She cannot move or act in any way, and appears corpse-like but does not degenerate (no smell, no rot, etc.). A Vampyre can spend as long as she desires in this state, and time has little meaning for her as she does so. It costs 2 Essence points to awake from such a state, but these points may be gathered during the stupor from ambient Essence (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Times of Power).

Vulnerability to Daylight

Sunlight is a major threat to the Undead. The Essence released by the sun and stars is a force of Life, and as such it reacts badly with beings that violate the normal order of Life. Contrary to myth, Vampyres can be active during the daylight hours, but the Essence cost is enormous. One Essence point is drained for each minute of exposure to daylight, or for every minute of activity during the daylight hours, even in the shade or underground. Sunlight also feels uncomfortable and painful, imposing a -1 penalty to all tasks. To minimize Essence losses, most Vampyres slumber during those times; waking up during the day is very difficult, requiring a Difficult Willpower Test at a base -2 penalty.

Holy Burial

Religious burial rites, developed to combat Vampyres, usually include beheading the monster. This may sever the link between the creature's body and soul. If such a rite is performed (typically on a slumbering Vampyre), she must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, with a -1 penalty per Success Level of a Theology and Intelligence Task by the leader of those doing the burying. Occult Knowledge (Vampyres) or Rituals (Vampyres) may also be used by the leader. If the Vampyre loses, she is drained of 1D10 x 10(50) Essence points when the rite is completed (time to complete varies), which may destroy her. If the body is burned or exposed to sunlight as part of a rite, the Vampyre loses 1D8(4) Essence points per minute until rescued or destroyed.

Special Vampyre Powers and

Vulnerabilities

Each Vampyre has her own special abilities, often determined by the Undead's own lusts and personality. Some Powers are known only by the oldest and more powerful Vampyres, while others are simply rare. During character creation, players may buy these Powers, using Metaphysics character points.

Bard

9-point Quality

The power to absorb the Essence released by an adoring audience is known as Bard. The oldest Undead to have this Power were traveling minstrels who only performed at night, leaving behind contented but strangely exhausted audiences. This Power requires that the Vampyre be an accomplished artist. They can only feed on the Essence releases triggered by the emotions their performance inspires. Bard Vampyres cannot tap the Essence of a huge crowd of people. Only relatively small groups of less than thirty or so people, in relative proximity to the Undead, actually provide nourishment, and any excess Essence is lost. As a result, most Vampyre performers with Bard avoid large venues and concentrate on small nightclubs or coffeehouses.

In game terms, the Vampyre must perform for the crowd or audience, using the appropriate skill. For every three Success Levels in the performance Task (round up), the Vampyre causes each audience member to lose 1 Essence point (this is an average, as some people are more affected than others). The Vampyre can take that Essence from up to 30 people as long as they are within 20 meters (yards). Bard can only be used once every other day.

For example, Violent Vaughn, lead singer of Nemesis Lipstick, is a Vampyre with Bard. She performs at the Cellar, a cozy Gothic club. The house is relatively full, and all of the hundred-plus audience members are within 20 meters (yards). Violent gives a great performance, for a total Task result of 19 (five Success Levels). This translates to 2 Essence points per audience member in range (up to the limit of 30 members). Violent maxes out and absorbs 60 Essence points.

Vampyres with Bard and the talent to make it work for them rarely use any other means of acquiring Essence except in an emergency. Most Bards become intoxicated by the feelings they inspire. Their vampiric senses can share in the emotions of the audience, allowing the Undead to actually feel like part of Humanity, a very rare experience that Vampyres treasure.

Bloodthirst

4-point Drawback

Blood is considered by many cultures to be the basic component of life, and Vampyres are often depicted in legends as blood drinkers or cannibals. Undead with this Drawback are, in fact, only capable of absorbing the Essence of humans by drinking their blood. It is not known whether this dependency is psychological (many modern occultists hold to this belief) or applies to some sub-species of Vampyre. For whatever reasons, some Vampyres need the blood of the living; their senses are attuned to the sight, scent and sound (i.e., heartbeats) of blood, and they will hunt down victims and drain them of the precious fluid.

In game terms, the Vampyre needs to injure her victim with a slashing attack (which can be made by a weapon or any fangs or claws she creates through manipulations of her flesh), and then drink the blood as it pours out. Every 2 Life Points the victim loses in the process cause her to lose 1 Essence point, which is in turn absorbed by the Vampyre. A shallow wound bleeds slowly, at the rate 1 Life Point per minute. A slashed carotid artery, on the other hand, inflicts 1D4 x 4(8) points of damage every turn! If the Vampyre drains all the Essence points from the victim in this way the victim dies. By the same token, the damage may be enough to kill the target through simple blood loss. A person killed in this way is a prime candidate for conversion to Vampirism. Note that Bloodthirst precludes many special Powers, like Bard, Magus and Muse, which are nothing more than unique methods of absorbing Essence. Blood drinkers cannot gain power through any of those methods; they must hunt or seduce victims and steal their blood directly to gain Essence.

Greater Shifting

5-point Power; 2 points per additional shape

By spending enough Essence, Vampyres can take on the shape of animals. Birds, bats, rats and wolves are the most common shapes assumed.

The larger the animal, the more costly the transformation. Transforming into a small animal like a bird or a rat costs 2 Essence points per hour. In such a form, the Vampyre's Life Points and Strength (for damage and lifting purposes) are halved (still far better than a normal animal). Rats and other vermin can crawl through holes and small openings, however, and have a natural Stealth skill of 5 (or add 3 to the Vampyre's Stealth skill, whichever is better). Birds and bats can fly; both small forms are very useful for moving around unobserved. A large creature like a wolf or dog costs 5 Essence points per hour. In this form, the Vampyre's Strength and Life Points are unaffected, but she is not able to use most tools or vehicles. On the other hand, her Speed (assuming the animal is a quadruped) is

increased by +10, and she can make biting attacks, inflicting 1D6(3) x Strength points of slashing damage. Very large animals (like horses, tigers and any animal that masses more than a human) cost 10 Essence points per hour. The Vampyre gains +10 extra Life Points, +2 to Strength, +10 to Speed, and bite or clawing attacks inflicting 1D6(3) x Strength points of slashing damage, or, in the case of a horse, a kicking or stomping attack of 1D6(3) x Strength points of blunt damage.

This Power gives the Vampyre two basic animal forms, one small and one large animal, selected by the player or Chronicler at the time of creation. Some Vampyres can assume many different forms; each additional form costs 2 character points, except very large animals, which cost double.

Magus

15-point Power

This very rare and feared Power allows Vampyres to absorb the Essence released in the use of magic! Very few Vampyres have this ability; most of them were people slain -- or who committed suicide -- through arcane means, and somehow developed an affinity to the Essence energies. Known as the Witch Killers or Mage Hunters, Vampyres with Magus are among the worst nemesis the Gifted can face. Such Vampyres often make it a point to find and feed on them.

Whenever an Invocation is cast at a Vampyre, she can try to absorb the power of the spell before it affects her. A Resisted Simple Willpower Test between the Vampyre and the Magician is first resolved (if the Invocation is being cast as Group Magic, the leader makes the Resisted Test). If the Magician wins, the Invocation works normally. If the Vampyre wins, the Invocation fails and the creature absorbs the Essence used in the Invocation. The only good news for the Magician is that he does not have to worry about Dismissing the energies of the failed spell -- they have been devoured by the Undead.

Additionally, a Vampyre who overpowers a Magician can drain his Essence by tapping into his Channeling powers. The Undead must be in physical contact with the victim. A Resisted Task pitting the Strength and Willpower of both combatants is performed every turn the two are touching. During this intense psychic duel, both the mage and the Vampyre are quite helpless and cannot defend against outside attacks. Every turn the Vampyre wins, the victim loses as much Essence as he can Channel in one turn. If the victim wins or ties, nothing happens. If the Magician wins three consecutive Tests, the psychic connection is broken -- the Vampyre is knocked away by the mystical backlash, and cannot try to feed on that Magician for one day.

Although they primarily feed upon Magicians, Vampyres with Magus can hunt any human being with Essence Channeling, including other Gifted like Necromancers and Tao-Chi practitioners.

Manipulate Emotions

2-point Power

Some Vampyres are able to manipulate the Essence of others in such a way that their emotional state is altered. This Power is particularly useful against Mundanes; with enough power and dedication, a Vampyre can effectively enslave a person.

Activating this Power costs 1 Essence point per Willpower level of the victim. The Vampyre does not know how strong the victim's mind is until she tries to use the Power, however, so the Undead is not aware of how much Essence must be spent beforehand. The Vampyre must win a Resisted Test. The Vampyre and a Gifted or Supernatural victim use a Simple Willpower Test; a Mundane must use a Difficult Willpower Test. The Vampyre can use Seduction or other appropriate skills (Intimidation, for example, if she is trying to inspire fear) to enhance her powers. Every level of success adds a +1 to the Vampyre's Willpower Test.

If the Vampyre is successful, she can make the victim feel any emotion, from fear to love. The emotion will last for 5 minutes per Success Level in the Test. By repeated uses of this Power, the Vampyre can extend her influence; each time this ability is used successfully on the same person, the duration of the power is doubled (i.e., 10 minutes per Success Level the second time, 20 minutes on the third, and so forth). If applied long enough, and supplemented by the appropriate behavior, the victim may come to truly feel the desired emotion without needing further uses of the Power.

As is the case with the Affect the Psyche Invocation (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics), the emotional state of the victim influences but not determine his behavior. A suddenly love-struck person might shy away from the Vampyre instead of rushing into her arms, depending on the victim's personality. By the same token, a terrified street tough might lash out instead of running away.

Mirage

7-point Power

Vampyres with this Power can use their Essence to create illusions around themselves. Vampyres can only affect their own person and their immediate surroundings with this illusionary Power. Common tricks performed by Vampyres with Mirage include assuming the appearance of other people, to camouflage themselves and hide from their intended victims, and enhances their appearance beyond their basic shape-shifting abilities. This Power requires the expenditure of 5 Essence points and a Simple Willpower Test. Once created, the illusion lasts for one hour per Success Level in the Test, or until the Vampyre does something to shatter the illusion.

To ensure that the false shape is close enough to the real thing to fool most onlookers, the Vampyre makes an Intelligence and Perception Test. Each level of success subtracts from the chances that somebody will discover that something is wrong

with the illusion. Anyone who sees the illusion may notice it if they succeed on a Perception Test (a Difficult Test for Mundanes, a Simple one for the Gifted), with a penalty equal to the Success Level(s) of the Vampyre's Intelligence and Perception Test. Even if the onlookers' Perception Tests are successful, they only notice that something is wrong, but do not know exactly what.

Mirages affect only sight. All other senses are unaffected. Also, these illusions do not work against Spirits, Undead, Fey and other supernatural beings that can see Essence patterns.

Muse

3-point Power

Muses are Vampyres who are fascinated with the artistic process. Most of them are not themselves very talented or creative, although they want desperately to be part of creative activities, from painting to writing to the performance arts. Muses associate with artists, typically latching onto an individual. Depending on their wealth and influence, Muses can take on the role of groupies, lovers or patrons of the artist.

A Muse's influence on her object of fascination is not one-sided. The Vampyre can enhance the artist's creativity in return for power. Artists around Muses find themselves able to transcend their limits and outdo themselves. Their work combines bursts of frenetic creativity followed by periods of exhaustion. This is the result of the Vampyre's enhancement of the artist's natural talent, which in turn causes a release of Essence that feeds the Muse. The Muse stimulates artistic creativity in a person, and feeds on the person's Essence as he works. Several renowned but short-lived artists were blessed and cursed by the presence of a Vampyre with this Power. In effect, the Vampyre is jump-starting the person's talents at the expense of the artist's life energy.

At first glance this would seem like an ideal symbiotic relationship — after all, the Vampyre does not need to drain the artist to dangerous levels. While this is not necessarily fatal, however, it is easy for both the Vampyre and the artist to be swept away by the creative process and carry on beyond safe limits. The Muse Power operates on a highly emotional level. The Vampyre is not only acquiring sustenance from the process, but is also experiencing the joys and passion of creation. There is always the risk that both parties insist on pushing on at all costs, which may lead to death. Some evil Muses actually destroy the artist on purpose, moving on after their previous victims have been drained away. Most Muses who kill their partners do so by accident, unable to restrain themselves, more like tragic junkies than serial killers.

A few Muses bring their partners back from the dead as Vampyres. The Muse Power can be used on a Vampyre artist in a similar manner as a live artist, but the danger is even greater, since Vampyres cannot renew their Essence Pool naturally, and can be destroyed more quickly in this manner.

In game terms, the Muse Power requires a person with artistic skills (Muses also prefer to find subjects with Artistic Talent, but this is not always possible). The Muse needs to be in close proximity (arm's length if possible) to the artist while he is engaged in his work. The Vampyre must pass a Simple Willpower Test to activate the Muse. As long as the ability is activated, the artist performs as if he had the Artistic Talent Quality (see Chapter Two: Rules; artists who already have Artistic Talent double all bonuses). Every hour the Muse is active, the artist loses 1D8(4) Essence points, which are absorbed by the Vampyre.

Turning off the Power is not easy. Both the Vampyre and the Artist must pass Simple Willpower Tests to stop when exhaustion reaches dangerous levels. Otherwise, they continue the work (and the Essence Drain) for another 1D4(2) hours, risking the artist's life and sanity.

Nightmare

6-point Power

A Nightmare Vampyre drains the Essence of dreamers through fear or ecstasy. These dream predators are capable of entering the subject's Panorama, the inner world of one's subconscious, and influencing the course of a dream, turning it into a seductive scenario or terrifying experience. Some Vampyres (known as the Phobi) feed on fear and terror; others (the Succubi and Incubi of legend) prefer to make the subject's darkest sexual fantasies come to life. A third group, the Harrowers, makes their victims relive the most painful, humiliating and sorrowful moments of their lives, draining them as they suffer. In all cases, the victim can be killed. Although Nightmares usually prefer not to go to such extremes, the occasional death can be attributed to their activities. Some Vampyres use Nightmare to influence a victim and then eventually contact him personally, establishing a relationship of servitude -- or climaxing the long hunt with the kill.

The Nightmare Power sends the Vampyre's body and soul into the Panorama of the dreamer. There, the Nosferatu can manipulate the course and events of the dream to her advantage by plucking scenes, characters and settings from the victim's memories and weaving them into the dream. Also, the Vampyre can use any and all of her other Powers, affecting dream constructs as if they were real.

Gifted characters with Soul Projection or similar abilities can also enter the dreams of a person. Confrontations in a dream Panorama play out as do conflicts in the physical world, but the Vampyre has the advantage of being able to warp the "dreamscape" to suit her needs.

Activating this Power costs 4 Essence and requires a Simple Willpower Test. The subject must be dreaming, and within 100 meters (yards) of the Vampyre for the ability to work. The range of the Power can be increased by 100 meters (yards) per additional Essence point spent on the activation.

Sade's Curse

3-point Vulnerability

Some Vampyres develop a taste for Essence with a particular flavoring — the “flavor” of agony, especially dying agonies. These monsters can feed on Essence released by other emotions, but they crave the flavor of terror and pain. They often take insane risks to satisfy their craven urges. As a result, these Undead are the primary targets of such organizations as the Sentinels, and they make enemies even among their own kind. This addiction can be combined with Bloodthirst. Vampyres who have both disabilities are the worst killers among the Undead, sadistic predators who will take their victims’ dignity along with their lives.

Vampyres with Sade’s Curse cannot take Essence from willing or unwitting victims. Their targets must always be terrorized and hurt. The amount of Essence released from terrified or tortured victims is presented in the Fear Table (see Appendix).

Wither

9 or 18-point Power

A few Vampyres have the ability to drain Essence instantly from unwilling victims. Some do it by simply touching their target and stealing his life force so quickly that the target appears to age rapidly. The more powerful among these beings can affect targets at a distance by merely focusing their Will on them. Witherers are very rare among the Undead, and they usually hide their powers even from other Vampyres. Their abilities make them very dangerous and some Vampyres prefer to pre-empt such dangers by destroying them as soon as they learn of their existence.

This Power has two levels. The first one requires the Vampyre to touch the victim’s bare skin. Every turn this physical contact is maintained (the Vampyre must hold on for several seconds; punching or light touches do not count), the Vampyre drains 1 Essence point per level of her Willpower Attribute. This process is terribly painful. The vic-

tim feels a wrenching, burning sensation where the Vampyre is touching him, and will try to break free unless restrained in some way. If the victim is drained to below 0 Essence Points, he appears to age rapidly, losing hair and skin tone, and becoming weak and frail. Every Essence point below 0 that the Vampyre steals from the victim appears to age the victim by 5 years (in addition to the regular effects of such an Essence loss, see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Four: Rules, Essence Point Loss). If drained to -30 Essence, the victim dies, and the corpse looks like a withered mummy.

At the second level of this Power, the Witherer can affect people at a distance. As long as the Vampyre can keep the victim in sight, and the target is within 10 meters (yards) per level of the Vampyre’s Willpower Attribute, the Vampyre can drain the target every turn as above. This requires a Simple Willpower Test to focus the Vampyre’s will, and the target resists with a Difficult Willpower Test. The victim feels the same horrible pain, and if he spots the Vampyre he intuitively knows the creature is responsible.

A number of Gifted and supernatural abilities can resist this power. Magical Shields block Witherers completely, as does the Necromantic Power Soul Armor.



Vampyre Conspiracy Theorist

"They" are everywhere. People go about their everyday lives in blissful ignorance of the Secret Masters that manipulate history. The newspapers and television are nothing more than scripts designed to fool the masses. But you know better. You can see Them. Maybe, just maybe, you can stop Them.

You watch Their plans, and when you get the chance, you hinder them. You can't do it all alone, of course, but your allies don't understand what they are up against. Even your fellow Iscariots don't quite get it. They still talk about the Combine, and see only a monolithic enemy. You know that there are many different conspiracies, each vying for control over the world.

Sometimes your friends stare at you strangely when you make a connection between a plane crash in Milwaukee, a drought in South America, and a Presidential fact-finding tour, but you only smile knowingly. They are all pieces of the same puzzle, and only you can piece it together.

Origins

In the Gulf War, you were a communications specialist. Your unit was ordered to take a heavily fortified base that was manned by a small army of international mercenaries, not Iraqis. The battle was one of the most intense engagements of the war, but it is not detailed in any military report or history book. Your platoon suffered losses, but you won and then helped load a number of boxes -- with U.S. Navy markings -- into a fleet of unmarked black helicopters. Something fishy was going on, but orders were orders.

Maybe They didn't trust you to remain quiet; maybe They planned it all along. In the end, all the members of your unit died before the war was over. Some died from "friendly fire." Others simply disappeared. You were not spared; during a routine patrol, your armored vehicle was hit by multiple rockets. You managed to crawl away from the burning wreck. A black helicopter landed and the same officer who ordered your unit to attack the base came out, looked at you, and put a bullet between your eyes.

You came back from the dead burning for vengeance, and needing to understand why. In the years that followed, you have learned many things. You even discovered that the "officer" who killed you was actually not in the military at all, but worked in a covert government agency which in turn was a front for a much larger conspiracy. Since then, you have been trying to unwrap the enigmas around the mysteries.

Allies and Enemies

You joined the Fellowship of Judas fairly recently, when you saved a couple of Iscariots from a Combine trap. You are currently on detached duty, working on your own and tracking down any leads that may unearth more conspiratorial plots. Your main enemy, of course, is the Combine, but there are others out there who may or may not be part of the Combine, and are just as evil.

Roleplaying the Character

You trust no one. Even when you appear to confide in someone, you are actually testing your new "friend," feeding him tidbits of useless information and seeing what he does with them. You like to plan ahead, and never go anywhere without having at least one or two escape plans. Nothing is accepted at face value. You will run a background check on a Girl Scout if she knocks on your door, and anybody who tries breaking into your current dwelling does so at the risk of his own life.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 9 skill levels must be dropped.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Fellowship of Judas

Concept

Warrior

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

5

INTELLIGENCE

3

DEXTERITY

6

PERCEPTION

2

CONSTITUTION

5

WILLPOWER

3

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

50

ENDURANCE POINTS

n/a

SPEED

22

ESSENCE POOL

109

WITCHCRAFT

Qualities

Point

Vampyre

15

Increased Essence

13

Situational Awareness

2

Skill/Power

Level

Brawling

3

Computer Hacking

4

Demolitions

3

Dodge

1

Electronic Surveillance

3

Guns (Handgun)

3

Guns (Rifle)

3

Notice

2

Stealth

2

Surveillance

2

Traps

3

Drawbacks

Point

Adversary: Combine

6

Delusion: Conspiracies Everywhere

2

Paranoid

2

Power/Vulnerability

Level

Common Vampyre Powers

Common Vampyre Vulnerabilities

Greater Shifting (2 extra shapes)

(shapes: dog, bat, rat, pigeon)

Manipulate Emotions

Wither (9 points)

Unliving Vengeance: Relentless Dead Characters

The Relentless Dead were once human beings, until they fell prey to tragedy, madness, or both. Most Relentless Dead were murdered in some gruesome or shocking manner, often after witnessing the deaths of loved ones. Many were abused for years before their deaths. Others are psychotic killers who continue to follow their insane urges even after being executed for their crimes. Invariably, Relentless Dead are consumed by anger, be it righteous indignation, cold, calculating fury, or rabid, mindless rage. Many are Unborn in a fit of convulsive fury, go on a mindless rampage, and are destroyed or fulfill their self-appointed mission in a matter of days or hours. Others are more calculating and patient, and have remained on this world for several lifetimes, pursuing their goals with great determination.

The Relentless Dead are powerful but tragic. Their existence is consumed by their obsessions, and they cannot survive the completion of their

quest. Although they are almost impossible to stop, let alone destroy, by conventional means, Gifted enemies can sever their link to their bodies and send their souls spiraling into the Death Realms.

These Undead are becoming more numerous in the chaotic world of WitchCraft. Some of their self-appointed missions are too grandiose to be completed in less than a lifetime, or even a dozen lifetimes.

Not all the Relentless Dead are insane berserkers; many methodically and cold-bloodedly implement their plans of revenge and destruction.

Players who wish to play these characters should keep in mind that the Relentless Dead do not have to be stereotypical killing machines.

Although loners by nature, some Relentless Dead are willing to work with others to achieve their goals. Relentless

Dead rarely join a Covenant, but may forge alliances with Gifted or supernatural groups. Sometimes, the purposes of the Relentless Dead are so similar to the goals of a Covenant, that the Undead will work closely beside its members, sometimes without their knowledge.



Rising From the Grave

Most Relentless Dead were victims of violent crimes, although a few died in accidents or committed suicide. Whatever the cause of their demise, their deaths occurred while they were in a state of rage against real or imagined tormentors. This wrath was so intense that it transformed the soul, altering its Essence matrix to the point that it was no longer subject to the Cycle of Life and Death.

The transformed soul does not leave the physical world. Instead, it hovers over the corpse, gathering power by feeding on its rage. When it has accumulated enough power (a process that may take as little as a few hours or as long as several years), the soul re-enters its body, restoring it to life. The newly-risen Undead, after a brief period of disorientation, soon remembers her demise and sets out to avenge it.

Playing the Relentless Dead

At a glance, the Relentless Dead appear to be somewhat one-dimensional. Even if true, playing a straightforward, uncomplicated character can be fun sometimes, especially if done with gusto. Additionally, revenge as a motive can have many different facets and not all of them are grim and serious. Some Relentless Dead bring a twisted sense of humor to their mission and start out by humiliating and ridiculing their targets before destroying them. Others might see their cause as a complex game and be as attracted to the conflict itself as to the idea of winning it.

But anger and the thirst for vengeance need not be all there is to the Relentless Dead. For all their obsessions, they were once human, and are capable of friendship and compassion, even if they are not as strong as their primary motives. Sadness is also a part of the Relentless Dead's existence. They have had their lives stolen from them, and all they have left is the quest to punish those responsible.

Creating a Relentless Dead Character

Relentless Dead characters can be used in some WitchCraft games at the Chronicler's discretion. When creating these characters, players should try to remember that, even under the best of circumstances, it can be tricky to bring a rage-filled Undead into a game where the other players are human Gifted or even other types of supernatural creatures. The Undead should at least have some motive for working with some of the other characters. Relentless Dead characters need not be easy-going, friendly people (there are precious few such Undead anyway), but some cooperation, even if motivated by a hidden agenda, is necessary or the game may degenerate into endless bickering and backstabbing (which can make a good Story for some gaming groups, of course).

When creating a Relentless Dead character, the player must purchase the Relentless Dead Quality. The value of this Quality takes into account the unique Powers and limitations of this type of Undead. This Supernatural Quality costs 15 character points, and can only be purchased with points from either the Quality or Metaphysics categories.

Attributes: The Relentless Dead have superhuman physical Attributes; their bodies have been enhanced by their rage-filled souls. Add +3 levels to any two physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Constitution) and +4 levels to the remaining one. To figure out the cost of an Attribute, purchase the level first and then add the Relentless Dead bonus. For example, if the player wanted a Strength of 8, he would buy up to level 4 (4 points), and add the bonus to that. Relentless Dead can have Attributes well above the maximum human level of 6.

Secondary Attributes: Except for Endurance points, these attributes are determined normally. Relentless Dead are not subject to fatigue and have no Endurance Points.

Qualities: Common Qualities and Drawbacks among the Relentless Dead include Obsessions (usually for revenge), Emotional Problems and even Delusions. Most social Qualities and Drawbacks cease to have meaning for the Undead -- Relentless Dead characters do not get any bonus points for such Drawbacks as low Resources or Social Level.

Association: The Relentless Dead are almost always Solitaires. A few belong to the Order of Thanatos and the Fellowship of Judas (see Chapter Four: Associations), and the occasional Relentless Dead masquerading as a human can be found among such Covenants as the Sentinels, but such extraordinary individuals are very rare.

Metaphysics: The Relentless Dead have a number of special Powers. Beyond those Powers, however, they are basically human, and have no access to Gifted powers. No other Gifted powers can be acquired by the Relentless Dead; even those who were magicians or psychics in life lose those abilities, or replace them with the closest equivalent Relentless Power.

The Relentless and Essence

Most Undead, like Vampyres, need to continually replenish their Essence, usually by stealing it from others. The Relentless Dead are different in that their driving purpose sustains them, while at the same time, cuts them off from all other sources of power. The Relentless Dead do not lose Essence normally, and they regain lost Essence at a very high rate. They cannot tap into ambient Essence, however, nor can they steal it from others. The source of their power is purely internal.

Some of the special Powers of the Relentless Dead are activated with Essence points, and the Undead may lose Essence through mystical attacks. These losses are regained at the rate of 1 Essence point per minute. This makes the Undead somewhat more vulnerable to direct Essence attacks than to physical attacks, but only through a combination of both can the Relentless Dead be truly destroyed.

Wrath

The Relentless Dead have a special ability, called Wrath. This is a measure of their drive and will to carry on with their mission of vengeance. There are two types of Wrath: Noble and Dark. Noble Wrath is righteous indignation, aimed at the people or group that brought harm to the Relentless or her loved ones. Dark Wrath is pure mindless rage, focused against not only the rightful target but also anybody who gets in the Undead's way or even towards all living beings.

Note that despite its name, Noble Wrath does not mean the Undead is a pure, moral being. The name simply means that the Relentless Dead focuses her obsession against a particular individual or group. Depending on their morality, Relentless Dead with Noble Wrath may or may not injure the innocent as well as the guilty; some believe their end justifies any means, while others show great self-restraint. Adversaries with Noble Wrath are devious and calculating enemies.

Dark Wrath is not appropriate for Cast Members because Undead afflicted by it are not in control of themselves. Their actions are not constrained by morality or even self-interest. These Undead carry out their murderous impulses even when they endanger their own existence. Although capable of cunning, these Relentless Dead ultimately fall prey to their dark desires. They are rarely able to work with others, and invariably turn against any allies, often before their usefulness is at an end. Even as villains, Relentless Dead with Dark Wrath are little more than murderous berserkers, dangerous but not hard to outwit.

Whatever its orientation, Wrath provides the Undead with a number of special abilities. It adds +4 Life and Essence points to the character per level; furthermore, it is used to activate some unique Powers. Wrath can also be used to resist any magical or psychic attack that tries to control or destroy the Undead. Add the Wrath rating to any Task or Test used to resist magic, the Sight or other Gifted powers.

Wrath is purchased during character creation, using points from the Metaphysics characteristic. Each level of Wrath costs 4 character points per level from levels 1 to 5, and 8 points per level thereafter. After character creation, this cost goes up to 6 and 10 character points respectively.

Common Relentless Dead Powers

These are characteristics shared by all the Relentless Dead, and are part of the Relentless Dead Quality. Powered by their Wrath, and no longer limited by the weaknesses of the living, the Relentless Dead are nearly unstoppable warriors.

Inhuman Strength and Vitality

The Relentless Dead have re-created their bodies and made them into supreme instruments of vengeance, unhampered by the frailties of living flesh. These superhuman Attributes are reflected in the bonuses that Relentless Dead characters gain during character creation (see above).

Invulnerability

It is impossible to destroy the Relentless Dead with Mundane weapons, although massive damage temporarily slows them down. All damage inflicted through conventional means (from bullets to fists to explosions) is regenerated. The regeneration rate varies, but is never less than 1 Life Point per minute. If the Relentless Dead is reduced to below -20 Life Points, she collapses, seemingly dead, until she regenerates back to -20 points or higher. The most common mistake victims make around the Relentless Dead is to approach their apparently lifeless corpses . . .

Essence depletion also slows down the Undead. If the Relentless Dead is reduced to below -20 Essence points, she collapses and appears to die. Until her natural regenerative powers restore her Essence back to at least -20 points, the creature is essentially helpless.

Although the Undead cannot be destroyed by either physical or Essence attacks, resourceful enemies can disable and then imprison or restrain them. Some Covenants have a number of Relentless Dead imprisoned in remote, well-guarded places, either because they lack the means to destroy them, or because they might find a use for them some day. One story tells of a Wicce Coven that cast a Relentless Dead into a live volcano. To this day, the Coven's descendants watch the now-dormant volcano, making sure the Relentless Dead does not surface and return to the world.

The only way to permanently destroy a Relentless Dead is to reduce the creature's Essence and Life Point Pools to -20 each, and then perform a magical or Necromantic Invocation such as Spirit Mastery (using the Dismiss Spirit rules; see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics) or Death Lordship. These rituals are resisted by the Undead's Willpower and Wrath Task. Only if that Task is overcome is the link between the raging spirit and her body severed.

Semblance of Life

Many Relentless Dead rebuild their bodies and look, act and feel wholly alive. Their wounds bleed normally, and even a cursory medical examination shows nothing unusual. This happens even if the Undead's body has been dissected or embalmed after death and despite any mutilation or dismemberment suffered on or after the Undead's demise. A number of Relentless Dead rise bearing the wounds and disfigurements they had in life, but this difference appears to be psychological. Some Undead seem to relish looking like something that crawled out of a grave, while others look totally human, making their seeming invulnerability all the more shocking. The Stigmata Special Power (see later in this chapter) is shared by those Undead who truly look the part.

Special Relentless Dead Powers and Vulnerabilities

The Relentless Dead do not have a lot of special abilities. Their nature is such that these beings rarely have Powers other than the common ones. Nonetheless, a few Relentless Dead do possess special abilities, often determined by the nature of the Undead's demise.

Nemesis

5-point Power

Relentless Dead with this ability are not hindered by distance or physical barriers in their effort to reach their targets. Their victims may run, but they cannot hide. No matter how far they travel, or how well they defend themselves, the Undead will find them.

Nemesis transports the Relentless Dead to the vicinity of her victim. This Power works like teleportation, crossing distance and barriers without hindrance, but it has a number of limitations. First of all, the target of the Power must be an enemy the Undead knows personally and someone the Relentless Dead has a good, driving reason to find. Secondly, the Power does not work if the Relentless Dead can be seen by any creature or being. The Relentless Dead must always disappear and reappear unseen and unnoticed. Even if the Undead herself is looking at her image in a mirror, the ability will not work. Typically, the Undead appears in a closet, a dark street alley, or some place where nobody can see her. If the target is in a crowded area, the Relentless Dead appears in the nearest unwatched place. This may be less than helpful if the target is in the middle of a crowded concert, for example.

To the Relentless Dead, the Power does not feel like teleportation but more akin to a dream-like run at incredible speeds through city streets, forests, or on the surface of the ocean (once the Nemesis is activated, the Relentless Dead becomes invisible and intangible).

Activating the Nemesis Power costs 15 Essence points and requires a successful Perception and Wrath Task. If the Task fails, the Essence is lost and the character cannot try again for an hour. If the Task is successful, the Relentless Dead disappears for about one minute, reappearing at the closest unwatched location near the target. The place needs to be somewhere out of sight. Right behind the target would not do, but the next room in a hotel or the closet in that room would, provided the closet door was not open at the time.

Regeneration

Variable Power

All Relentless Dead regenerate any physical damage inflicted, and they cannot be killed by normal means. Their common regeneration Powers are relatively slow, however -- 1 Life Point per minute. Quicker regeneration can be purchased as a special Power. Some Undead can heal massive amounts of damage in a matter of seconds, while others may lie in a death-like state for hours before recovering from crippling wounds.

For 2 points, the character can regenerate 1 Life Point per level of Constitution per minute. For 5 points, the Undead can regenerate 1 Life Point per turn. Each additional point after 5 increases the regeneration rate by 1 Life Point. For example, to create a Relentless Dead character who regenerates 6 Life Points per turn would cost 10 points. At these rates, the healing is clearly visible. A gunshot wound closes (after the bullet is expelled) in a few seconds, for example.

Spirit Bane

6-point Power

Relentless Dead with this Power can harm Spirit beings with hand-to-hand attacks. This Power usually manifests among those Relentless Dead who were killed or victimized by a Spirit. Often, they target all Spirits for revenge, not just the one who victimized them. In game terms, the Relentless Dead can inflict normal hand-to-hand damage as Essence point damage on any creature with a Vital Essence Pool.

Stigmata

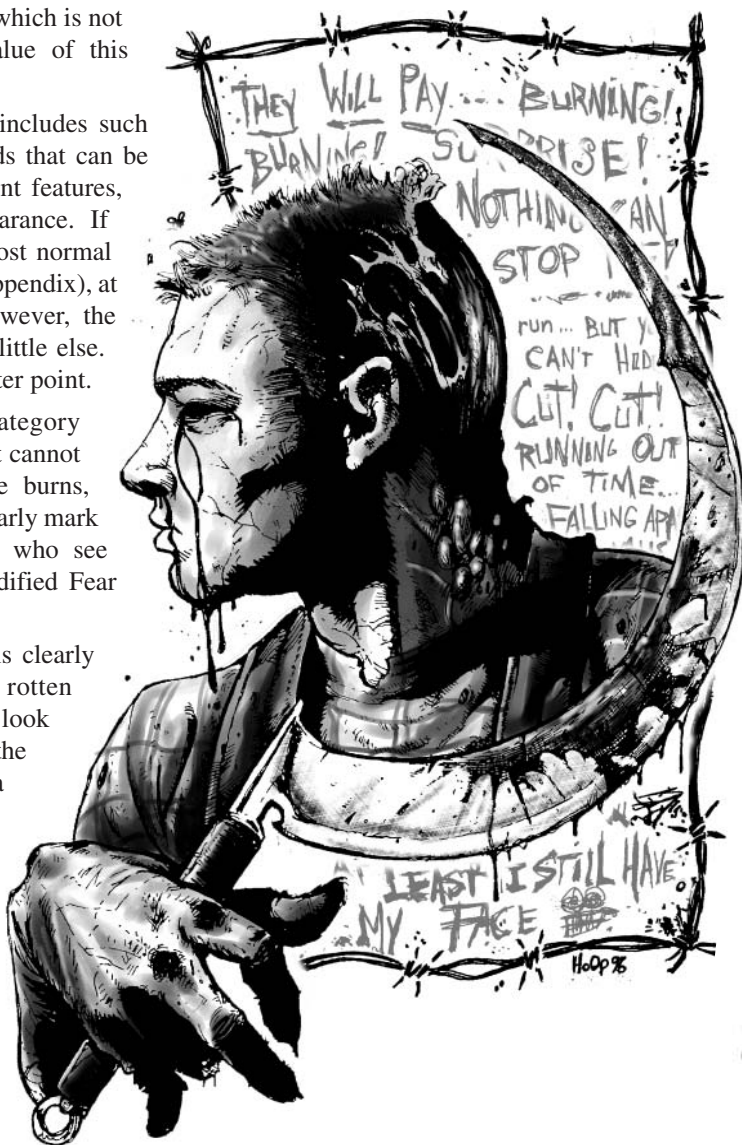
Variable Vulnerability

Some Relentless Dead bear the marks of their demise. These Stigmata range from easily concealable wounds to signs of death and decay that make it impossible to appear as normal humans. The more noticeable and hideous the wound or characteristic is, the higher the value of this Vulnerability. Note that Stigmata also make the character more terrifying, which is not altogether a bad thing, so the value of this Vulnerability is not very high.

Minor Stigmata: This category includes such things as open but bloodless wounds that can be concealed under clothing, pale, gaunt features, and a vaguely “corpse-like” appearance. If exposed, these marks may cause most normal people to undergo a Fear Test (see Appendix), at a +2 bonus. Most of the time, however, the character attracts strange looks but little else. This Vulnerability is worth 1 character point.

Common Stigmata: This category includes large, bleeding wounds that cannot be easily concealed, such as large burns, scars or other disfigurements that clearly mark the character as abnormal. People who see these Stigmata must pass an unmodified Fear Test. This is worth 2 points.

Major Stigmata: The character is clearly not alive. She may resemble a rotten corpse, bear horrendous wounds, or look like a burn victim. Anybody seeing the creature must pass a Fear Test with a -2 penalty. The Relentless Dead cannot pass for a normal human under most circumstances, and she must hide from the sight of people or she will be discovered. This Vulnerability is worth 3 points.



Relentless Vampyre Hunter

The Vampyres believe they own the night. Those who have met you know better, if only for the brief time before you destroy them. A former victim of a predatory Vampyre, you returned from the grave with a burning hatred for the creature and all of its kind. During your calmer moments, you see yourself as a divine champion on a holy mission. When you finally confront your prey, however, you succumb to your unending rage and turn into a brutal killing machine. For over two hundred years, you have tracked down and destroyed Vampyres wherever you could find them. It is not an easy task, and sooner or later one of the creatures may get the best of you, but you don't care. As long as your will keeps your body alive, you will kill the beings that killed you.

Origins

You and your family set out for the American West in the mid 1800s, driven by dreams of free land and new beginnings. As you approached the edge of civilization, you made the tragic mistake of accepting the hospitality of a farmer -- a farmer with a quiet, pale family and a poorly tended field. That night, the true nature of your host was revealed. He and his "family" were a nest of Vampyres, and for the next several days you were exposed to horrors and humiliations unlike anything you had ever imagined. You saw your family killed in front of you, and died to the sound of your tormentors' laughter.

The next night, you arose from the shallow grave meant to be your eternal rest. It's been two centuries since your rebirth, and in that time you have killed almost as many Vampyres. You've stalked them in the battlefields of two world wars and in the palaces of the rich and powerful. You have found them in the sewers or cities and in countryside castles. You have traveled the world by means fair or foul, and you have always found more of the beings. You will not give up until they are all gone.

Allies and Enemies

Most of the time you work alone, but through the years you have discovered that you are not the only hunter of the supernatural. You know of the Sentinels, and they know of you. There is an unspoken truce between you and that Covenant, and they will not actively hunt you as long as you refrain from harming the innocent. A number of Vampyres are aware of your quest, and they have tried to lure you into traps and ambushes. So far they have failed, and lost their Unlives in the bargain. On a number of occasions you have worked with other enemies of the Undead, including Wicce and Rosicrucian magicians. More recently, you have found yourself the target of several Vampyres acting as a team. You realize you will need allies if you are to survive and carry on your fight.

Roleplaying the Character

You live for the times when you can corner a predatory Undead and destroy it. You have developed several methods for the destruction of Vampyres. Your favorite technique consists of battering the Vampyre into unconsciousness and then exposing the body to sunlight. Most of the time, you are fairly collected and rational. When faced with a Vampyre, any Vampyre, your Wrath comes to the fore, and you do everything in your power to destroy the Undead. You are no berserker, however. You will bide your time if you must, and such waiting serves your purpose of eliminating the Vampyre. You do not want to die trying to kill the Vampyre; you want to succeed.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 12 skill levels must be dropped.

**Name****Association****Concept****CHARACTER
POINTS****SPENT****UNSPENT****CHANNELING
LEVEL**

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH**7****INTELLIGENCE****3****DEXTERITY****5****PERCEPTION****2****CONSTITUTION****5****WILLPOWER****3**

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS**76****ENDURANCE POINTS****n/a****SPEED****20****ESSENCE POINTS****73****RELENTLESS DEAD**

Qualities

Point

Skill/Power

Level

Drawbacks

Point

Power/Vulnerability

Level

Chapter Four: Associations



He hung out by the bus station, waiting for new prey like a lion haunting a watering hole. Even now, after three decades of warnings and cautionary tales, young fresh faces hailing from places like Idaho and Maine and Indiana still came, drawn to the mysteries of New York like moths to a flame. They thought themselves wiser and more worldly than those that came before them, and truth to tell, the old methods were not as effective as they once had been. He knew how to talk to the kids, how to gain their trust. The process was a complex dance, a game of give and take, slowly breaking down their initial wariness and distrust, while subtly and smilingly sinking his hooks into them.

There. A girl, maybe fourteen, pale blonde, smoking a cigarette in a clumsy attempt at appearing more sophisticated. Her delicate face and haunted eyes reminded him of somebody else. But no — she'd been dead almost two years now, one of his occasional failures. He had dealt with her harshly when she tried to run away. Her corpse should be buried with all the other garbage at some landfill. He preferred not to use violence, but when he did, he made sure his message got across. The rest of the stable had seen her body before he disposed of it, and he'd had no problems from them after that.

This one looked a bit like her, about the same age. Then again, after a while (he'd only been doing this for four years but they sometimes felt like fourteen) their faces and bodies and voices all seemed to blur into one pathetic individual. He shrugged off the memories and moved in. He offered to help, warning her about the dangers of the city, mentioning how he had once run away from home and gotten into more trouble than he could handle, and how he didn't want others to go through what he had gone through. The girl remained cool and suspicious, but she did not run away. She allowed him to follow her as she left the station and wandered the streets. That was part of the plan, not to offer to take them anywhere, to just let them roam for a while, until the enormity of the city and sheer loneliness broke them down, made them ask him for help. Sometimes he would even guide them to a runaway shelter, let them get a taste of the system first before coming back and offering something better, safer, nicer. Eight times out of ten after that experience, they would accept his offer.

As they walked, he remained alert. He had a reputation on the streets, but no rep would deter a crazed crack-head, and it was late at night. The girl's aimless wanderings were taking them into a really bad part of town. When she finally turned into a dead end alley, he decided he needed to put his foot down. "You're lost, honey," he said soothingly. "This is not a safe place to be."

She smiled at him, a beautiful, joyous smile that for a second made her look less pale and more alive. "I know."

Before he could reply, he heard a noise behind him. He turned.

Half a dozen figures were closing off the end of the alley.

The girl's smile widened, and he could see inhumanly long fangs, gleaming in the weak streetlights. Suddenly, she didn't just look familiar. Except for the fangs, she was the girl he had killed and dumped like so much trash.

"I died but I got better," she said. "But me and my friends are so very hungry . . ."

His struggle was brief. They were very hungry indeed.

Introduction

Many shadow societies and underground organizations operate without the knowledge of the Mundanes. Through the ages, mystical Covenants have been formed for self-defense, to gather together like-minded Gifted, or to carry out some mysterious purpose. Some of the largest and most important groups, like the Wicce, Rosicrucians and the Twilight Order, were depicted in the main WitchCraft book. This book describes several others, including organizations dominated by supernatural beings, be they Spirits or Undead.

Alliances and Conflicts

The signs of the Reckoning have forced many Covenants to abandon their complacent ways. For centuries, the Covenants rarely came into contact with other groups of Gifted. The need for hiding, while real enough, also contributed to members of one group knowing little or nothing about other organizations. Some cults and Orders had wildly exaggerated or plainly wrong notions about their counterparts in other regions or other cultures. Fear and distrust characterized any meetings between Associations. Others negotiated elaborate treaties and pacts in which both sides swore to leave the other alone.

In the last century, however, things started to change. As travel and communications became faster and easier, and as populations grew, the world became a smaller place. Members from different Covenants started coming into contact with each other more often. Hiding places, even in remote areas, became more conspicuous -- more easily discovered by those who knew what they were looking for. As the number of Gifted men and women increased and grew into their powers, some Covenants became greedy, trying to snatch would-be pupils from under the noses of rival organizations. Conflict became almost inevitable, and age-old enmities sparked anew.

Some of these antagonisms are discussed under the individual Association sections in this chapter.

Conflict was not universal, however. Some Associations found common goals, methods or enemies as their contacts increased. These groups formed loose relationships, and even began to exchange knowledge. Such allies are also detailed in later sections of this chapter.

At present, almost all Covenants recognize that inter-Covenant fighting is counterproductive. The chaotic forces being released by the approaching Reckoning are a far worse threat. Nobody is in a rush to make new alliances with former rivals or suspicious strangers, but sooner or later, the Gifted of the world must abandon their prejudices and fears and try to work together. This process, fraught with setbacks, betrayals and troubles, can be a major element of many Stories.

The Associations and Armageddon

The Associations discussed in WitchCraft are, for the most part, active in the future setting described in the Armageddon RPG. Sidebars have been placed throughout this text detailing background information for those who wish to use these Associations in an Armageddon campaign.



Fellowship of Judas

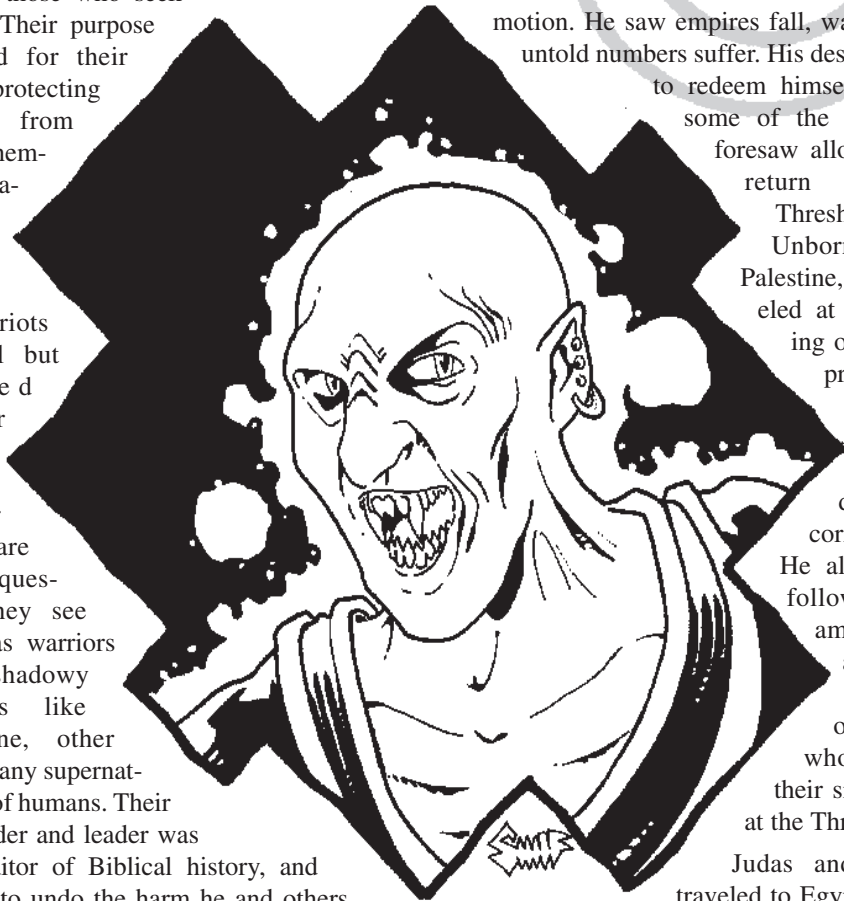
Vampyres are driven by many passions. Many are people who tried to escape the burdens of life and yet could not deal with life after death. Others are former victims who turned into predators or were predators in life and now pursue their unnatural lusts after death. The Fellowship of Judas is made up of those who seek redemption. Their purpose is to amend for their crimes by protecting humans from beings like themselves, predators both human and supernatural.

The Iscariots are a small but dedicated group. Their goals are selfless, but their methods are somewhat questionable. They see themselves as warriors fighting shadowy organizations like the Combine, other Undead, and any supernatural hunters of humans. Their alleged founder and leader was the great traitor of Biblical history, and their goal is to undo the harm he and others like him have inflicted on the world.

History

The traditions of the Fellowship speak of Judas Iscariot, the great betrayer who in remorse hung himself. At the Threshold between Life and Death (see Chapter Six: Supernatural), Judas had a vision of the future -- of the events he had helped set in motion. He saw empires fall, wars rage, and untold numbers suffer. His desperate desire to redeem himself and undo some of the disasters he foresaw allowed him to return from the Threshold and be Unborn. Fleeing Palestine, Judas traveled at night, preying on those who preyed on others -- bandits, brutal soldiers and corrupt priests. He also collected followers from among them, all former criminals or exploiters who repented their sins in life or at the Threshold.

Judas and his band traveled to Egypt, establishing a network of Undead and mortal followers as they went. Never daring to show themselves to Christians, out of shame and fear, the Iscariots nevertheless helped the new



movement. Even though Judas and his followers could not stop the most savage persecutions, their actions saved thousands of Christians. Eventually, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and other religious groups were in turn persecuted. As a result of their powers and long life, the Iscariots became aware of a hidden force behind the crimes and persecutions. Beneath the corruption in the Roman and Persian Empires, the Vampyres discovered a secret group of manipulators who helped turn a religion of peace and love into a force for persecution and genocide. The excesses of emperors and the atrocities of barbarians all were pieces of a larger pattern, one designed to keep humans ignorant and enslaved.

The legends of the Covenant claim that soon after Judas and his chief followers discovered this hidden force, it discovered them. A furious secret war ensued, a conflict between the Compact of Constantine, as the Combine was then known, and the Iscariots. The Fellowship of Judas was too small to achieve any lasting victories. For centuries, the Covenant has been a thorn in the side of the Combine, but little more. The Fellowship has been successful in destroying a number of lesser threats, such as certain Dark Covenants and Mad God Cults, however.

Beliefs

To the Fellowship, Unlife is a time of testing and choices. They believe that those who return to the world as Vampyres do not have to surrender to their hunger and lusts, but can do good works to justify their unnatural existence. The Iscariots worship the concept of Free Will. Living or Undead, it is in the power of everyone to choose to do the right thing.

In their case, “doing the right thing” is opposing the forces that conspire to keep humankind mired in ignorance and brutality. The Fellowship knows of the shadowy organization known as the Combine. Covenant traditions claim that the Combine was behind many important and crucial events in the world, from the Crucifixion to the

Inquisition, from acts of genocide and class warfare to the manipulation of economies and governments, drug trafficking, and the corruption of the media. Most Iscariots become Undead conspiracy theorists, finding links between disparate events, suspecting hidden forces are behind all or most major happenings.

Fighting the Combine (or, more accurately, identifying the actions of the Combine and then fighting it) is the main goal of the organization. If they can uncover the secrets of this shadowy organization, the Iscariots may help humankind take control over its own destiny. Only then can the Iscariots rest in peace (or so they believe).

Organization

The Leaders of the Fellowship are called Followers. It is said that Judas Iscariot recruited the First Twelve in imitation of his Teacher, and that the First Twelve then went on to create a network of Undead and other undesirables. The Followers all bear a tattoo on their wrist -- a stylized letter J, surrounded by mystical symbols. These tattoos have a unique magical “signature” that Undead, Gifted humans and others can perceive, and they cannot be counterfeited. There are less than a hundred Followers worldwide. They are all powerful Undead, at least two hundred years of age. Their knowledge of the hidden forces in the world is vast and deep, and rarely shared with others.

The rank-and-file are the Iscariots, recruited by the Followers into the Fellowship. The Iscariots take an oath never to refuse a request for aid from another member, to accept the missions given to them by a Follower, and to never harm an innocent. About one half of the Iscariots are Vampyres; the rest are human (both Gifted and Mundane) or other Supernatural beings, including some Relentless Dead and Phantoms.

Recruiting Undead members occurs in the Threshold, the realm just between the world of the Living and the lands of the Dead. Many Iscariots prowls this world, looking for tormented and

damned souls to rescue. The spirit of recently deceased humans, most of them suicides or criminals, are approached by an Iscariot and forced to face the consequences of their actions, of the cowardice inherent in taking one's own life, of the harm inflicted on others by one's carelessness, greed or cruelty. Those who show no sign of repentance are attacked, their souls mauled, and if possible dispatched to the Pit, the hellish realm where demons torment the spirits of the wicked. The ones who wish to redeem themselves undergo the Unbirth, and are admitted into the Covenant.

Undead are not the only ones given a chance to make up for their actions through service. The Iscariots also approach living humans who are also guilty of grave sins, and they are given a similar choice. Many of these humans become dedicated members and are as knowledgeable and effective as the Undead. A few eventually undergo Death and the Unbirth and continue their work as Vampyres.

Allies and Enemies

The Fellowship prefers to operate on its own, but members often find it necessary to collaborate with other Covenants. For the most part, the Iscariots keep such cooperation to a minimum, and do their best to prevent their "allies" from learning any information that could later put them at risk. For example, if the Iscariots met with a band of Pariahs in a safehouse, they would never use that safehouse again -- to them, it would be "compromised."

The Wicce and the Rosicrucians: The Magical covenants are generally distrusted, especially the Rosicrucians, which some Iscariots consider to be a branch of the Combine. If a Wicce Coven runs afoul of the Combine, the Fellowship might lend it a hand -- or it might watch the struggle from a distance to try and gauge the opponents' relative strengths, methods and weaknesses.

The Sentinels and the Storm Dragons: The Iscariots know a great deal about these two groups, but prefer to avoid them. Vampyres, no matter how well-intentioned, do not mix well with Vampyre hunters, and both the Sentinels and Storm Dragons are monster-hunters. Only in the most extreme of circumstances would an Iscariot work with the Sentinels; the Storm Dragons are considered a bit better, but not much.

The Cabal of Psyche: The mind masters are watched carefully by the Fellowship, and any psychics who show signs of manipulating Mundane affairs are likely to be targeted by the Iscariots. The Cabal suspects the existence of the Iscariots, but there is no direct contact with between the two.

The Pariahs: These urban shapeshifters are considered to be kindred souls to the Iscariots. The Fellowship often volunteers aid and information to help the Pariahs, although never in ways that would endanger themselves.

The Twilight Order and the House of Thanatos: Contact with these Covenants is minimal at best. Iscariots care little about the Lands of the Dead -- they seek redemption in this world, not the next.

Fellowship Stories

Paranoia and redemption are the two major themes behind most Iscariot Stories. All members have done loathsome things in their previous existence. Many of them are still not very nice people, even though they are trying to do the right thing. The burden they have chosen to bear is a tremendous one, as they are facing a vastly more powerful and resourceful foe. Iscariots operate in small groups, hunting for scraps of information, checking newspapers and the Internet for hints of Combine involvement, and then using more direct means, such as espionage, intimidation or violence to confirm their suspicion. When possible, they deny their enemies their objectives. In

The Iscariots in Armageddon

In the years preceding the Reckoning, the Iscariots discovered that a mysterious supernatural force had infiltrated parts of the Combine. The Cult of Revelations was recruiting members among the rich and powerful, as well as among the dregs of society. Some members of this cult had powerful magical abilities, and they were ruthless in their dealings with enemies.

The Fellowship's discoveries, however, were not made in time to prevent the birth of the Dark Apostle and the rise of the Church.

After the Church of Revelations went public, many Iscariots joined the underground forces fighting it in the Conquered Territories. The Iscariots remain suspicious of any government, even those from the so-called "free" nations. They also don't trust angels or demons, which they suspect of being behind some of the factions of the Combine. The Iscariots operate independently from such groups. Their main ally is the Watchers and the two groups have sometimes worked together in the past. The Knights Templar have also fought the Combine for twenty centuries, but the two groups have rarely openly collaborated. In the time of Armageddon, members of these Covenants have been forced to share information and resources for survival's sake.

Iscariot Sample Character

A sample Iscariot character, the Vampire Conspiracy Theorist is located in Chapter Three: Inhumans.

In addition to fighting the Combine, the Iscariots will also attack any supernatural predators they come in contact with, although they do not go out of their way to find them, preferring to concentrate on "the bigger fish."

Some Story ideas involving the Iscariots as either Cast Members or possible allies or enemies for other characters are described below.

Electoral Woes: A team of Iscariots has been dispatched to the Democratic National Convention. Their mission: to locate and eliminate any major Combine agents. They are not interested in the candidates (all of whom are considered to be little more than puppets), but the "puppet-masters" -- the campaign managers, advisors and lobbyists who are the true servants of the Combine. In the course of their mission, the characters discover that some sort of power struggle is going on at the convention, either among two factions of the Combine, or between the Combine and a mysterious third party. Another team of assassins is loose in the convention, and, once they learn of the Iscariots, they will have two targets.

Drug Wars: A new drug, called Passion, is being released on the streets of several major cities. Passion is a supernatural drug, with no apparent chemical agents, but whose effects work directly on the souls of those who take it. The Iscariots suspect the Combine is involved, and are trying to trace the drug back to its source. To complicate things, it appears that the drug dealers are backed by a gang of renegade Pariahs, who act as enforcers in return for money. The Cast Members could be either Iscariots, Pariahs seeking to sub-

House of Thanatos

due the renegades, or members of another Covenant also trying to stop the traffic of Passion.

Like the Twilight Order, the House of Thanatos wishes to study and uncover the mysteries of Death. Unlike the Mediums, however, most Thanatoi have first-hand experience in those secrets, being Ghosts or Undead themselves. The House is also more involved in the politics of the Death Realms, and their influence extends to both worlds. The Thanatoi, as the core House members call themselves, are a motley crew of Undead, Spirits, Necromancers, Mages and Seers.

History

Some members of the House claim their origins lie in the legendary times of Lemuria and Atlantis. The Lemurians were the first Necromancers, who trafficked with the spirits of the dead tens of thousands of years ago. The Undying Caste of Lemuria were a special type of Undead, with characteristics of Vampyres, Phantasms and living beings mixed together with powerful necromantic abilities. They were the rivals of the Immortals of Atlantis (who are also considered to be "lesser immortals" by Thanatoi scholars), and ruled over a powerful civilization in what is now the Indian Ocean. The Lemurians were all but destroyed in the Flood, and the Undying Caste was obliterated, but a few surviving disciples preserved some fragments of the Lore of the Dead. Many contemporary members dismiss these tales as mere fantasy, however.

For most of human history, the Thanatoi have lived as scholars on Earth, and as explorers and adventurers in the Death Realms. They have generally not involved themselves in the affairs of the living. The Thanatoi were not kingmakers or world-rulers -- at least not in the Lands of the Living. As with many things, however, the approaching Reckoning is changing this. The barriers between the Lands of the Living and the Dead are becoming thinner, with dire consequences for both Realms, and none realize this better than the Thanatoi.



Beliefs and Goals

According to the Doctrines of Thanatos, the Death Realms are way stations, stages of existence not too different from life on Earth, but with their own rules. The separation between Life and Death is not necessary and may one day be overcome, allowing all humans to transcend mortality. This, of course, will not happen overnight, nor to everyone at the same time. The requisites for true immortality, the Thanatoi believe, include a maturity of both soul and mind. This maturity can be achieved either through a lengthy cycle of death and reincarnation or by living for centuries or millennia as one of the “lesser immortals” -- beings like the Undead, Phantasms or Gifted humans who somehow learn to cheat death. Enlightenment and longevity often do not go hand in hand, however, so neither a long life nor multiple reincarnations may be enough for a large proportion of humankind. Some people may never learn the right lessons to transcend their limited state of being.

Some Thanatoi believe that there may be shortcuts to gain true immortality, secret rituals or mystic processes hidden somewhere in the Death Realms. If found, Vampyres might be able to lose their weaknesses and become living and still undying, while humans would lose the frailties of the flesh and become god-like beings. So far, these secrets remain undiscovered.

Organization

The Thanatoi are the full members of the House. Many of them have returned from Death for one reason or another. They are Vampyres, Phantasms, and a few Relentless Dead (most of these latter Undead are too driven by their passions to give their loyalty to any large organization). About a third of the group are humans, mostly Necromancers, Seers or Magicians with an interest in life after death. Rank among the Thanatoi is not strictly regimented and is based largely on one's

deeds and reputation. The older and more active members eventually become well-known within the organization, and their influence is informal but quite real.

Beneath the Thanatoi are the Companions. They include both human dupes and servants who know little or nothing about the true goals of their masters, as well as lesser Ghosts and Spirits who serve the Thanatoi in return for protection or mystical teachings. Human Companions know they work for mysterious and very wealthy patrons, but few suspect the truth. Common Ghosts often offer their services to the House of Thanatos in return for greater power and maybe even advancement to the status of a Phantasm. Some seek only a release from the burden of their incorporeal existence as their reward.

The Covenant is broken down into Chapters, which are organized somewhat like Mundane gentlemen's clubs. Most Chapters can be found in the largest cities and world capitals, although a significant minority are located in the country and other remote areas. A large building in a city or its outskirts is chosen by the Chapter to serve as a meeting place and also to provide lodgings for any member who needs it. The taste of the local members of the Chapter determines the location and quality of the meeting house. They range from expensive brownstones in the best neighborhoods to condemned properties and abandoned graveyards. Some of the wealthier Chapters own several properties in one city. Almost all these Chapter houses have extensive libraries on the occult, especially the fields of Necromancy and the Death Realms (a character allowed to conduct research in one of these libraries would gain a +1 to +3 bonus on all Occult Knowledge Tasks related to those subjects). Additionally, all Chapter houses have at least one permanent Gateway leading into the Death Realms, mostly the Twilight World. Many houses are located in Places of Power.

In all other respects, the House of Thanatos is very loosely organized, and some members have very different views on what the goals and purposes of the Covenant truly are. There is no central leadership setting policy for all, or exerting control over the various members.

New members are inducted, after being sponsored by an existing member, by the consensus of a Chapter. In some Chapters, this means that a new member only needs to be introduced to the local half-dozen Thanatoi, while in others the members will be far more picky and discriminating. This also means that Thanatoi from one city may find a less-than-friendly reception in another one.

Once inducted into the society, members are taught secret passwords and handshakes and given a silver ring with the emblem of the House. Ownership of those rings, and the use of the right passwords and hand signals, gives anybody entrance to the public areas of any Chapter House in the world. To gain more access, however, outsiders must have references from high-ranking members of the society. Security is not airtight, and over the years a number of outsiders have acquired the passwords and rings. Among others, some members of the Twilight Order have successfully infiltrated the House of Thanatos. Also, some of the more powerful members have tried to use the organization for their own purposes, with varying degrees of success.

Beyond a few broad parameters that most members agree on, factions within the House have their own agendas. The most common groups are known as the Savants, the Paladins, and the Sybarites.

Savants are the scholars of the Covenant. They are fascinated with the rules and limits of the Cycle of Life and Death, although they labor to break them down and eventually achieve immortality. Savants tend to be more bookish and less flamboyant than the typical member (although they still favor dark styles and appearance).

Paladins believe that the House's main purpose is to protect Earth and the Death Realms from incursions from other dimensions. They are particularly concerned about the Beyonders (their name for the Mad Gods), who threaten all of Reality with their machinations. Most of the time, Paladins search through the cultural underground, looking for strange cults that might be controlled by the Beyonders or their minions. The Paladins also include a sub-group known as the Death-Dealers, members selected for their proficiency in combat and assassination. The Death-Dealers are the most dangerous and feared Thanatoi, for they are experts at destroying not only the living, but also Undead and Spirits.

Sybarites rarely identify themselves by that title, which is usually given to them by contemptuous Thanatoi from other groups. For the most part, these members concentrate on enjoying the pleasures of Life or Unlife, or both. They are mainly performers and artists for whom the Death Realms are places to explore and enjoy.

Most Chapters have members of all three factions, but generally one of the three is dominant in each locale, or two will have some degree of parity while the third is somewhat small and marginalized. The New York Chapter, for example, is dominated by Sybarites and Savants; only a handful of its members consider themselves to be Paladins.

Allies and Enemies

The Wicce and the Rosicrucians: The Thanatoi include a number of practitioners of Magic, both Living and Undead. Some of them are former members or contacts of these Magic Covenants. Most Wicce and Rosicrucians do not know of the existence of the House of Thanatos, however, and that is just how the Thanatoi like it. Whatever information exchange or cooperation exists between those groups is informal and limited.



The Sentinels and the Storm Dragons:

The House of Thanatos avoids those groups like the plague, for obvious reasons. The Sentinels know of a “monster-controlled Death Cult” that operates undercover in some cities -- and they often blame crimes committed by lone predatory Vampyres or Dark Covenants like the Lords of Pain (see Chapter Six: Supernatural) on the Thanatoi.

The Cabal of Psyche: Psychics rarely become involved in the affairs of the House, although the odd Seer Thanatoi does exist. The two Covenants know very little about each other, and what knowledge they have is tainted with misunderstanding and prejudice. The Cabal believes the Thanatoi study death for some nefarious purpose, while the House suspects the psychics wish to control the world and all those in it.

The Twilight Order: These organizations are almost mirror images of one another, and there are several individuals who belong to both Covenants, although both groups frown on such divided loyalties. The Thanatoi believe their tradition is far older and more advanced, but the Twilight Order has more members and Mundane influence. Also, the Twilight Order rarely accepts Undead into their ranks, and regard Ghosts and Spirits more as patients in need of attention than as peers. These disagreements make the relationship between the two groups strained at best, although actual violence is rare. Most often, a Thanatoi may try to trick or deceive a Medium, and vice versa.

The Fellowship of Judas: Since the Fellowship and the Thanatoi have a lot of Undead members, the two groups have dealings with each other. Some Thanatoi feel the Fellowship “poaches” in what they consider their territory, namely the Threshold (see Chapter Six: Supernatural), whereas the Iscariots often search for possible recruits to

bring back to the world. Beyond the Threshold, however, the Fellowship has little interest in the Death Realms, and by and large leaves the Thanatoi to live in their own little world.

The Pariahs: To the Thanatoi, the Disciples of the Flesh are people with warped souls and bodies, and no enlightenment can be gained from them. Members rarely deal with them.

Thanatoi Stories

Most adventures based around the House of Thanatos focus on the interaction between the world of the Living and the lands of the Dead.

Under Siege: A Chapter House has been put under siege by a host of angry ghosts, endowed with very powerful abilities, and directed by an unknown third party. The battle is being waged both in the physical realm and in the House's location in the Twilight World. Not content with attacking the House itself, the ghosts are also haunting its surroundings, bringing chaos to the rest of the city. The characters can be members of the local Chapter, defending their turf against the invasion. Alternatively, they can be hastily dispatched reinforcement from another Chapter, or members of other Covenants attracted by the devastating mystical battle being waged there.

Who is stirring the ghosts? Some possible suspects include: a powerful Necromancer seeking to take over the House, because it is located in a place of Power; a minion of a Mad God, who is using the unwitting ghosts and the mystical chaos of the battle to weaken the barriers keeping its master from manifesting in this reality; or a renegade Grim Reaper, intent on avenging a past wrong by

destroying the Chapter House and the Necromancer who injured him (who could be a Cast Member).

And the Dead Shall Be Raised: The Dead are walking on a city. Anybody who dies on the hour of noon or midnight, or during a full moon, rises within 24 hours, as a mindless zombie (normal physical Attributes as in life, but with one half the normal Speed, mindless and driven to attack people and eat their flesh), or in some cases as Vampyres or Relentless Dead! Several dozen of the creatures have been spotted and destroyed (fortunately, the zombies can be destroyed by inflicting enough damage to reduce them to -10 Life Points), and the police and press are blaming the incidents on some new street drug. If nothing is done, however, the situation may become worse. The Thanatoi know that some dark necromantic ritual is involved, and wish to put a stop to it. They may run afoul of other Covenants seeking the same thing, and misunderstandings are almost guaranteed to happen.

Thanatoi Sample Character

A sample Thanatoi character, the Phantasm Researcher is located in Chapter Three: Inhumans.

The Thanatoi in Armageddon

The Last War is waged in the realms of the Unliving as well as on this Earth. Monstrous Sheol and Shaitan creatures appear in the Twilight World and other Death Realms, and force the souls of the dead to worship Leviathan. The Thanatoi have to defend their holdings against these invaders, even as dozens of Chapters in Europe and Asia are overrun and destroyed by the conquering Army of Revelations. Furthermore, the Old Death Gods become far more active, venturing outside their tiny Realms and challenging the new invaders while trying to expand their dominions once again. This is a time of struggle and survival for the House, as the Covenant seeks new allies and battles new enemies.

Pariahs

In the world of WitchCraft, the dispossessed and forsaken of the world have developed a unique mythology. Their tales, recounted in back alleys over metal barrel fires, speak of a small group of people who are no longer human, whose power and ferocity is awesome, and who reserve their worst brutalities for those who would prey on and abuse the weak. These urban myths are not far from the truth. In the largest cities, hidden amidst the unwitting masses, the Pariahs make their home. They can be anywhere. The old man pushing a shopping cart mumbling to himself, the young kid ripping off car stereos, the quiet volunteer at a soup kitchen -- any and all of them could be Pariahs, able to remake their bodies into living weapons. The survivors of terrible ordeals, they live apart from humankind, only stepping in to rescue others like them and to punish the worst victimizers.

History

The Pariahs can trace their history back to Biblical times, when they were called the Tsara'ath, or the Defiled. They were considered to be suffering from a variety of leprosy (the word "leprosy" comes from the word lepros, which means defilement), one that turned its sufferers into inhuman monsters. Both true lepers and Pariahs (and sufferers of many other diseases) were lumped into the same category, and shunned by their communities. Persecuted as monsters and demons and filled with self-hatred, many Pariahs retreated into the wilderness and died there. Others hid amongst beggars, street urchins and other outcasts, living in the worst hovels on the outskirts of cities or villages. A few traveled the length of the world by foot, encountering others of their kind. Pariahs marched with Alexander's army all the way to India. Others went North, among the Celtic tribes, while others visited the kingdoms in the deepest regions of Africa.

At the height of the Roman Empire, the Pariahs became more organized, adopting many of the traits of the Mystery Religions that started appearing in Southern Europe and the Middle East of that time. The Pariahs made their headquarters in the city of Rome, and there they remain to this day, having survived centuries of sackings, destruction and rebuilding. The network suffered a great deal during the Middle Ages and the Reformation, and many Pariahs were burned as witches, or thought to be harbingers of the plague and stoned to death. The Beggar Kings (see later in this section) remained almost completely independent, and only the influence of the Purveyors, many of whom were very long-lived, kept the society from completely disintegrating.

As cities and the numbers of humankind grew, so did the Pariahs. Wars, refugee camps and the cycle of abuse created more and more of them. When the Black Plagues decimated Europe, the Pariahs stalked empty towns and cities. During World War II, Pariahs fought during the siege of the Warsaw ghetto and Stalingrad, bringing terror to the monsters of both armies. And in modern times they have become part of the underground lore of the slums -- another urban legend that in the world of WitchCraft contains more than a kernel of truth.

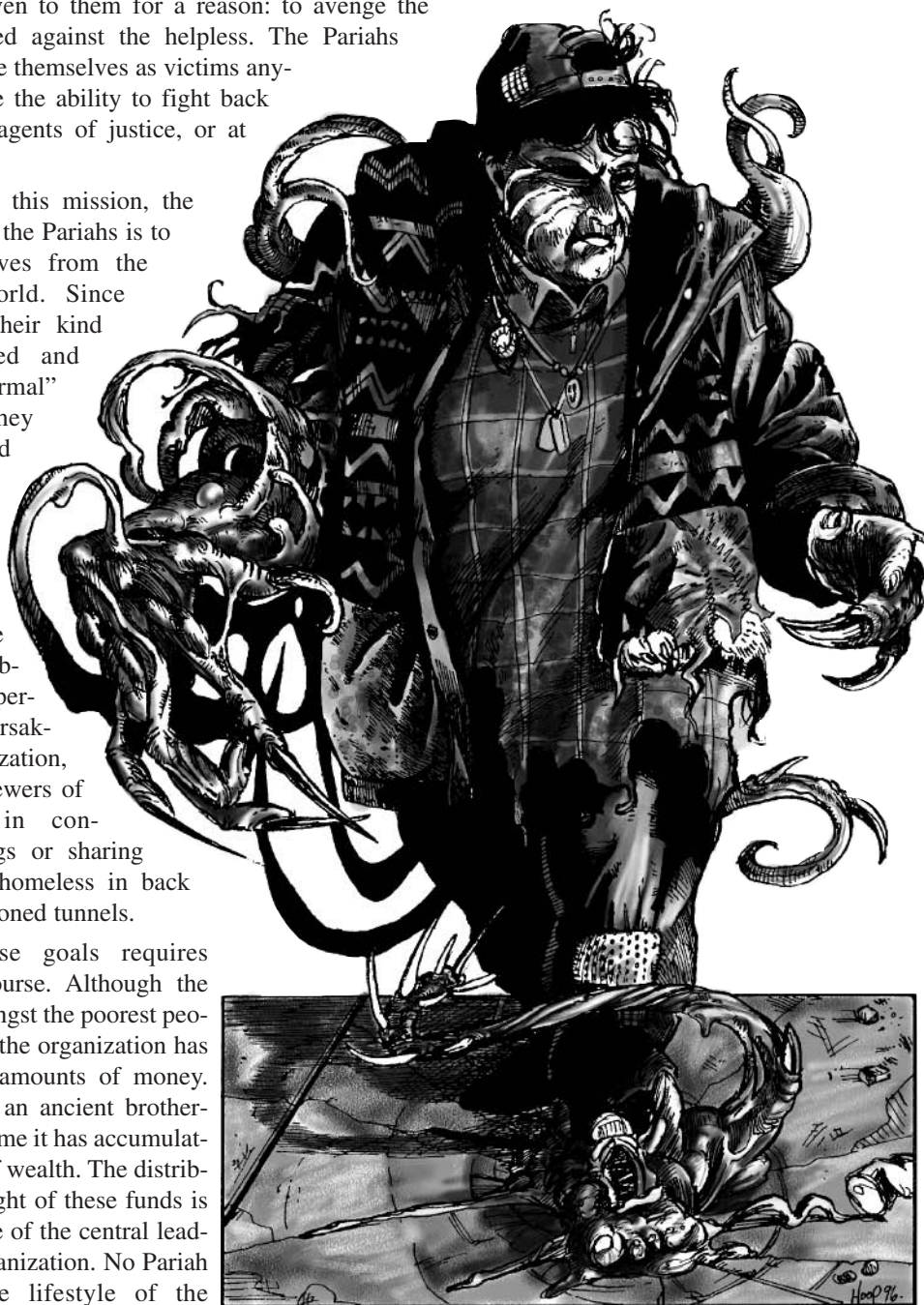
Beliefs and Goals

The world is full of monsters, but most of them do not have claws or slink around in the shadows. The Pariahs' main enemies are those who destroy innocence -- child molesters, purveyors of kiddie porn, serial killers, and the worst pimps and drug dealers. Their enemies also include supernatural creatures and organizations, including all kinds of predators, practitioners of Black Magic (like the Cult of Pain, see Chapter Six: Supernatural), and Mundane exploiters. The Pariahs believe that their

powers were given to them for a reason: to avenge the crimes committed against the helpless. The Pariahs refuse to perceive themselves as victims anymore. They have the ability to fight back and to become agents of justice, or at least vengeance.

In addition to this mission, the other purpose of the Pariahs is to protect themselves from the rest of the world. Since ancient times, their kind has been feared and loathed by "normal" humans, and they have been exiled or killed when they publicly used their powers. To prevent further persecution, the Pariahs avoid public notice and operate in the most forsaken parts of civilization, the slums and sewers of cities, living in condemned buildings or sharing space with the homeless in back alleys and abandoned tunnels.

Pursuing those goals requires resources, of course. Although the Pariahs live amongst the poorest people of the cities, the organization has access to large amounts of money. The Pariahs are an ancient brotherhood, and over time it has accumulated a great deal of wealth. The distribution and oversight of these funds is the main purpose of the central leadership of the organization. No Pariah ever enjoys the lifestyle of the



wealthy, but some of their underground safehouses are surprisingly comfortable and well-equipped, and no member lacks food or basic necessities. In fact, in some cities the Pariahs own several derelict buildings, which are secretly rebuilt. The boarded up, fenced facade remains intact, but the inside is transformed into high-quality housing. Some of the organization's money also goes to help the community at large and is anonymously donated to soup kitchens, runaway counseling centers, and shelters. Most of the Pariahs' funds are administered by foundations or dummy corporations, the largest of which is the Chimera Investment Group, based in New York City.

Besides money, information is the major resource needed to achieve the Pariahs' purposes. While many Pariahs live on the streets and have no official job or occupation, a significant percentage (about one fourth of the members) work in the occupations that straddle the "normal" world and the shadow universe of urban decay, poverty and despair. These are mostly social workers, parole officers, volunteers and even the occasional police officer. They help to discover new Pariahs and to locate possible targets for termination. Many an abusive spouse or parent who laughed in the face of a social worker has been later visited by the Pariahs. Members who live on the street also develop their own informal network of informants among prostitutes, the homeless, petty criminals and runaways.

Of course, the avowed purposes of the organization are not always followed in real life. The victims of abuse are no more virtuous than anyone else, and many Pariahs have turned their local Kingdoms into criminal organizations. They use their powers to extort protection money from local merchants or participate in the drug trade. The worst offenders are eventually stamped out by the Purveyors, but corruption and the abuse of power are common in many places, even while the leaders pay lip service to the goals of the secret society. Even worse, some Pariahs have, due to their

mental problems, turned to the worship of the Mad Gods. These renegades continue thinking of themselves as victims, and betray all of Reality to gain a measure of revenge against the world.

Organization

The ranks of the Pariahs are not highly organized or stratified. Outcasts all, many of them suffering emotional or mental problems, organization is not a strong point. In most places, the Pariahs have a Beggar King who is the nominal leader of his community. The power of a Beggar King varies. In some places, they are only in charge of providing money and assistance to their fellows, who otherwise do as they please. In others, their word is absolute law. A few cities even have more than one Beggar King (New York City, for example, is divided into several kingdoms, roughly corresponding to the boroughs of the city). These leaders are in contact with the Roman Pariahs, who serves as a central source for funds and material assistance to local communities.

Beggar Kings are usually selected through a rough form of democracy. They tend to be the older and tougher Pariahs, but they must have the support of the majority of the local population (which seldom numbers more than a couple dozen individuals, although this is changing in the larger cities). A challenger must prove himself better than the incumbent, usually through a number of tests and challenges determined by the group. Trial by combat is common among some groups, although the most frequent tests involve puzzles, riddles or contests to achieve something before one's opponent. Sometimes, a local supernatural danger is made the "prize," and the two rivals must devise a way to destroy the threat without help from any others.

The Purveyors are Pariahs in charge of finding and assisting members of the organization. They have access to the money hoarded by the Pariahs over the generations, but they are no mere accountants. They also act as troubleshooters, preventing Beggar Kings from violating the basic rules of the

Pariahs and providing help when a community is threatened. The Purveyors answer to the Roman Pariahs, who are the nominal leaders of the organization. The Roman Pariahs, some of whom are hundreds of years old, are selected from the ranks of the Purveyors and Beggar Kings, with the occasional talented or heroic common Pariah thrown in. The Roman Pariahs rarely intervene in the affairs of any community except in case of emergency. Their main concern is to protect the Covenant from the Mundanes and dealing with rogues or traitors who have turned to crime or the worship of the Mad Gods.

The rank and file Pariahs include the Disciples of the Flesh, a special kind of Gifted human. The Disciples gain their abilities when latent Essence Channeling powers are awakened through some unspeakable act, usually some form of torture or child abuse. Nobody willingly becomes a Disciple. They are victims of dehumanizing acts. Their souls have been broken and then haphazardly put back together. When the world ceases making any sense, when the ultimate acts of betrayal have been inflicted, a Disciple may be born. Out of thousands of unfortunates, a few emerge with the ability to turn their bodies inside out, to mold the flesh of their hated bodies like a sculptor reshapes clay.

The Disciples also have the ability to recognize one another on sight. Their Essence senses allow them to "see" the tortured aura of their kind. This allows them to band together. The Pariahs are the largest such group, but not the only one.

The group's membership is not limited to the Disciples of the Flesh, however. In fact, the Disciples only comprise about half of the organization, although the actual proportion varies from place to place. Other former victims can also join the group. About a third of the Pariahs are normal humans, or Gifted with other abilities (the Second Sight being the most common) who underwent ordeals similar to those suffered by the Disciples. The remaining members are other Supernatural beings, including Phantasms, Vampyres, Ferals and

the Relentless Dead. In the case of Undead or Ghosts, these Pariahs died as a result of abuse and have come back looking for revenge. In a "typical" group of five to six Pariahs, one would find three Disciples of the Flesh, one or two Mundanes, and a Gifted human or some type of Undead.

Allies and Enemies

The Pariahs often come into contact with other supernatural organizations. Many Pariahs only wish to be left alone, but they seldom are -- by their mere existence, they attract the attention of other beings and powers in their vicinity. Also, many Pariahs are driven by revenge and rage, which often leads them into conflict with foes both Gifted and Mundane. Most Pariahs know little of the other Covenants. The Beggar Kings and the Purveyors are more knowledgeable, however, and their followers take most of their cues from their leaders' opinions and feelings towards those groups.

The Wicce and the Rosicrucians: The Pariahs have little to do with the main Covenants of Magic, except on the rare occasions when members of both groups find themselves battling a common foe. Wicce Covens tend to be more sympathetic and helpful towards the Pariahs, while the Rosicrucians find them distasteful at best or utterly repugnant at worst. Urban Wicce often exchange information and aid the local Pariah bands. The Pariahs themselves have no strong feelings for those groups one way or another.

The Sentinels: The Society of Sentinels considers the Pariahs to be a "dark cult," with supernatural members and dubious goals and affiliations. In many places, the Sentinels hunt down the local Pariahs just as they would any supernatural infestation. A small faction within the Covenant considers the Disciples of the Flesh to be suffering innocents whose powers are compared to the Stigmata of holy men and women, but their views hold little sway. To the Pariahs, the Sentinels are hypocrites who claim to be defending humankind while often ignoring hor-

rible crimes committed right under their noses. For the most part, the Sentinels and Pariahs are in a state of hostilities just short of outright war, each new casualty exacerbating the hatred between the two groups.

The Cabal of Psyche: This Seer Covenant has long known that severe psychological trauma can often trigger latent psionic powers, so they often watch the victims of such abuse. The Seers consider the Disciplines of the Flesh to be a special type of psychic Power, the ability to reshape one's body with the power of the mind. Close study of this power has proven impossible, however. To date, no Disciple of the Flesh has joined the Cabal, and the Pariahs will not have their members studied or prodded by anybody, no matter how well-meaning they might be. Although some Pariahs have the Second Sight, the Cabal has (wisely) refrained from interfering with this group, fearing its savagery. Most Pariahs have little knowledge or interest in this organization.

The Twilight Order and the House of Thanatos: These Covenants study the Spirits and Realms of the Dead, and the Pariahs have a number of Ghosts and Undead among their members. As a group, however, the Pariahs have little interest in what occurs after death, or in the groups who study such arcane subjects. Occasionally, a Twilight Order team investigating poltergeist or haunting activities discovers that the Ghosts in question were being backed up by all-too-material Disciples of the Flesh. Those encounters usually ended with the Mediums either dropping the case or actually assisting the Pariahs, especially when their targets were child abusers or other criminals. The Thanatoi, on the other hand, rarely interfere with the Pariahs and vice versa. Most members of the House of Thanatos are unaware that such a group as the Pariahs exists.

The Storm Dragons: Some Storm Dragon bands have come across the Pariahs in the urban jungles of the modern world. These encounters have ranged from tentative alliances to savage battles. By and large, the Pariahs respect the Dragons' physical prowess, but consider their Eastern Wisdom to be little more than "fortune cookie psychology" and quite useless to people who have had to confront real horror and tragedy.

The Fellowship of Judas: The few Pariahs who know of this secret society respect its goals. Most Purveyors have contacts with the Fellowship, and collaborate with them on occasion. The goals of the Iscariots are more ambitious and far-reaching than what most Pariahs are willing to pursue, however.

Pariah Stories

Some Story ideas involving the Pariahs as either Cast Members or possible allies or enemies for other characters are described below.

Fighting the Mad Gods: Dark cults sometimes recruit Pariahs into their ranks, especially the Disciples of the Flesh, whose anguish makes them easy prey for the forces of dissolution. In some cities, all or most Pariahs have succumbed to the allure of the Mad Gods. The Cast Members could be the few who have refused to worship these alien beings, or members of another Covenant whose battle against the cult leads to an encounter with the Pariahs -- for good or ill.

Urban Survival: The Cast Members should all be Pariahs or other people living in the harsh streets of the largest cities. They have to deal with Mundane gangs, supernatural predators, and the atmosphere of decay and despair that afflicts the poor and the outcasts of the post-industrial world. Will the characters only add to the violence and chaos around them, or will they try to make a difference and bring a measure of hope or redemption to this dark world?

The Purveyors: The Cast Members are Purveyors, a team of troubleshooters who travel from city to city stamping out signs of trouble. This type of Story allows the characters to see a lot of the dark world of WitchCraft. In their missions, they encounter much of the horror and strangeness that pervades this world. Typical teams of Purveyors have a nominal leader, are two and five members strong, and are in contact with the Roman Pariahs via secure phone lines and e-mail addresses. They will uproot tyrannical Beggar Kings, destroy cults of the Mad Gods, work to hide the existence of the Pariahs from the world, and occa-

sionally become embroiled with the machinations of the Combine or other supernatural conspiracies.

City Wars: Gang warfare is wracking a large city. A number of supernatural beings, who have instigated the conflict for their own ends, are pulling the strings of the diverse human gangs. Perhaps a Mad God worshipper is trying to use the victims of the war to raise some being from Beyond, or an evil Vampyre coven is taking advantage of the carnage to feed as they please. The Pariahs will be forced to take sides in this war, as will other local Covenants.

Pariahs in Armageddon

The Pariahs of the early 21st century are in desperate straits. In the United States, the Matthews Riots led to the deaths of many Pariahs. As the number of Gifted humans increased, so did the Pariahs; many of them were labeled monsters and shunned or persecuted. Then came the Great War and the rise of the Cult of Revelations.

In 2015, Rome fell to the Army of Revelations. Many Pariah leaders died in the event. In the Conquered Territories, Pariahs are hunted down or, if they submit, are allowed to join the ranks of the Believers. In the United States, many Pariahs are trapped in the Safety Zones where America has fenced in its poor and destitute.

Many Pariahs think the war is no concern of theirs. They concentrate on protecting their own small corner of the

world, and care little for the cosmic conflict being fought around them. Others feel that Leviathan's triumph will be the ultimate violation of innocence, and they have joined the Alliance or the Armed Forces, and openly fight the greater evil. Most Pariahs dislike the angels and demons that walk the world of Armageddon, and their often haughty attitude towards mere mortals. A few, however, are in awe of the Seraphim, and follow them blindly.

Finally, a significant portion of this Covenant has been seduced by Leviathan, lured by the promise that their suffering will end when the Mad God triumphs.

These traitors are part of the Mendicant Knights of Leviathan, and they often work covertly in areas of the free world. It is rumored that even some Beggar Kings have been seduced to Leviathan's side.

Pariah Sample Character

A sample Pariah character, the Jack-Of-All-Trades, is located in the Appendix.

Storm Dragons

The Storm Dragons are a secret society dedicated to fighting supernatural evil. Although similar to the Sentinels in this respect, the Dragons depend on their inner strength to confront inhuman entities. They are the descendants of an ancient order of martial artists, masters of Chi (their word for Essence), who use their powers in an eons-long secret war. Said to be the disciples of an ancient dragon, the members of this organization come from all over the world and all walks of life. Their only common denominator is extraordinary physical and mental abilities and a willingness to confront mind-boggling creatures and conspiracies.

History

The traditions of the Storm Dragons, as taught to members of the Society, claim that their origins predate the oldest Chinese dynasty (circa 2000 B.C.E.). These legends tell of an ancient dragon who chose a number of worthy humans throughout Asia to instruct in the ways of Chi. The Celestial Dragon taught his disciples that the potential for god-like power resides in every human and showed them how to develop this power. The teachings imparted to these disciples are known as the Truths, which are the most dearly held secrets of the Society. It is believed that among those secrets are the true origins of the universe and the causes behind the Reckoning. Since only the highest ranked Adepts have access to the Truths, few are privy to this information.

The students eventually became teachers and were sent out into the world, going as far west as India in search of promising students. Schools were founded in small monasteries, removed from all other habitations to avoid interference. Total isolation was never encouraged, however. Adepts often went on long sojourns, often lasting years, into the wider world outside. Some, now called Renegades, chose not to return.

In time, remote uninhabited areas became harder to find. New schools were built in villages and cities, but their true purpose was kept hidden from the population. The new learning centers were disguised as stores, plantations, or temples of any appropriate religion. When the first large groups of Asian emigrants arrived in the U.S. in the 19th Century, a number of Storm Dragons traveled with them. The first school in the New World appeared in San Francisco's Chinatown, built beneath a general store. Others soon followed suit.

In China, the Storm Dragons or former students were active among many secret societies. Known by such colorful names as the Yellow Turbans, the Harmonious Fists, or the Red Spears, these organizations often protected peasants from abusive landlords, attacked bandits ravaging the countryside, and sometimes started rebellions against oppressive governments. The Storm Dragons are suspected to have played an important role in the Boxer Rebellion in 1899-1900, which led to the fall of the Chinese imperial government, although Dragon historians blame the disastrous uprising on the Red Lotus adepts, who had long tried to bring down the Manchu Dynasty. Members of the Storm Dragons tried to bring order to the chaotic state of early 20th century China, and later fought the Japanese invaders, who brought their own secret mystic martial artists along with their troops. Today, the Chinese Communist regime persecutes and hounds the Dragons and all other secret societies. Nonetheless, the Dragons have managed to survive and continue to work secretly throughout the country.

In more recent times, the Dragons have encouraged the spread of the martial arts in the West, hoping to enlighten more people. Unfortunately, many people (and not only those in the West) have concentrated exclusively on the physical and combative aspects of the martial arts, eschewing the philo-

sophical side. These people are unsuitable recruits for the Dragons. Even so, the Dragons' promotion efforts have increased the pool of possible candidates for recruitment.

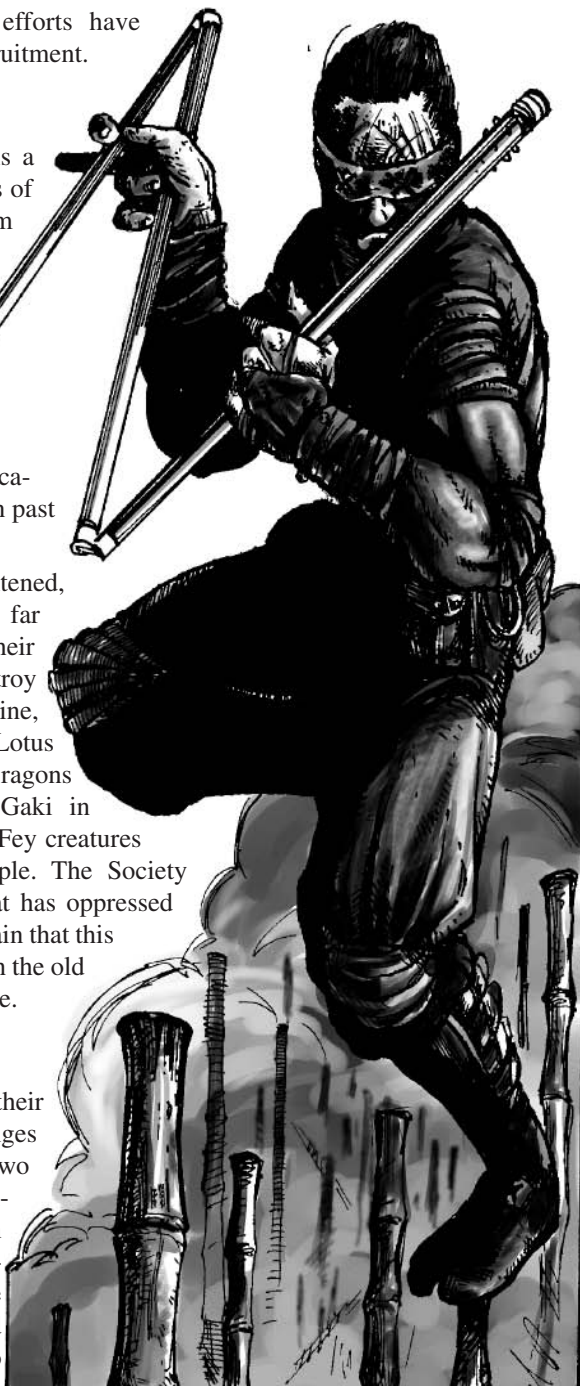
Beliefs and Goals

Humankind, the Storm Dragons are taught, is a young and immature species. Even after millions of years of evolution, humans are very far from developing their spiritual and intellectual potential. The Storm Dragons consider themselves to be on the path of advancement and enlightenment. By developing their bodies and minds, they try to reach wisdom and strength. The process is believed to take several lifetimes. Reincarnation is a major tenet in the Society's philosophy-religion, and occasionally people believed to have been members in past lives are actively sought out and recruited.

The Storm Dragons seek to help the Unenlightened, the teeming masses of humankind who are still far from attaining the perfection the Dragons seek. Their enemies are those who would enslave or destroy them, and they include such groups as the Combine, the Followers of the Mad Gods, and the Red Lotus Society (see sidebar later in this section). The Dragons often hunt Vampyres (commonly known as Gaki in Japan), evil ghosts and spirits, and a number of Fey creatures such as Fox Spirits and the Tengu Bird People. The Society believes the Combine is behind the tyranny that has oppressed China throughout most of its history. They maintain that this shadow organization has pulled the strings of both the old Emperors and the more recent Communist regime.

Organization

The Storm Dragons are ranked according to their level of enlightenment and skill. Rank changes require the permission of a member at least two ranks higher than the desired level (so, for example, only a Third Level Adept can promote an Acolyte to First Level Adept rank). Also, promotion depends as much on the disposition of the Dragon as on reaching the prerequisite Skills and Powers. Many powerful and skilled Dragons do



not rise above First or Second Level for years because they are believed to lack the wisdom necessary for the additional responsibilities. When a group of Dragons assembles, the highest ranked Adept in the group assumes leadership. Generally, missions are assigned and planned by Second to Fourth Level Adepts.

To determine the rank of a character, use the minimum prerequisites listed below.

Acolyte: No prerequisites. Acolytes are those deemed worthy of joining the secret society. Likely candidates include dedicated martial artists, people with quick minds and wits, and accomplished and dedicated artists -- all signs of people with the potential for development. The students are taught the Storm Fist martial arts style, although Acolytes are encouraged to explore other combat styles, both from Asia and the West. They are also taught the basic principles of meditation, breathing techniques, and the philosophy necessary to advance to higher levels of knowledge. Students are also taught discipline, not through force or punishment, but by example and by developing the Acolyte's own common sense.

Some Acolytes are not martial artists but are Gifted and may have other supernatural abilities, such as Magic and the Second Sight. These students are encouraged to develop those skills in addition to the normal training given the Dragons. As a result of this divided attention, however, these students advance in rank very slowly, although in some cases their special abilities confer them an effective rank one or even two levels higher than their prerequisites would indicate.

First Level Adept: Martial Arts (Storm Fist) 3, Trance 3, Philosophy (Storm Dragons) 3, Occult Knowledge 3, and one Lesser Tao-Chi skill. To become a First Level Adept, the student must demonstrate ability in physical skills by undergoing a number of mock combat trials, followed by a philosophical dissertation on the principles of the Storm Dragons, and culminating with the success-

ful use of the Tao Chi skill he knows. Since only the Gifted can learn Tao Chi, this level and those beyond are restricted to those characters; Mundanes can never rise to the First Level. On the other hand, the rigorous training of the Storm Dragons almost ensures that most students become Gifted after a number of years of training (see Chapter Two: Rules, Becoming Gifted After Character Creation).

Second Level Adept: Martial Arts 4, Philosophy and Occult Knowledge 3, and three Lesser Tao-Chi skills. The tests are similar, but far more difficult. Most Adepts never go past the First Level.

Third Level Adept: As Second Level, but with four Lesser Tao-Chi skills.

Fourth Level Adept: As Second Level, but Martial Arts, Philosophy and Occult Knowledge must all be at level 5 or higher, and four Lesser and one Greater Tao-Chi skills.

FOURTH Level Adepts and higher all require the knowledge of at least one Greater Tao-Chi skill. As space limitations prevent any discussion of these skills in this volume, for the time being, Cast Members are restricted to Third Level Adept status. Greater Tao-Chi skills will be explored in future Witchcraft supplements. In the meantime, Chroniclers should present advanced Storm Dragons as mysterious and powerful beings, with significant physical and mental abilities.

Fifth Level Adept: As Fourth Level, but Martial Arts, Philosophy or Occult Knowledge must be at level 6 or higher.

Teacher: This rank is only granted by the Superiors in the hidden main temples of the Dragons. Teachers are taught the Truths, and they know many Tao-Chi powers.

Master: Masters know all Lesser Tao-Chi abilities and several Greater ones. They have superhuman levels in all related skills. It is believed that there are less than fifty Masters in all the world, and most of them stay at the hidden temples.

Superior: These are the leaders of the Covenant. They are rarely seen in the outside world, and their skills and powers are legendary. They have transcended the limits of the Cycle itself, and are said to be immortal.

Allies and Enemies

The Storm Dragons have often come into contact with other supernatural societies or organizations. The Covenant is willing to work with anybody to protect Humankind from its true enemies.

The Wicce, the Rosicrucians and the Cabal of Psyche: Magic and Seer Powers are viewed by the Storm Dragons as legitimate paths of enlightenment, so long as the Gifted does not become a slave to the spirits and elementals he deals with, or obsessed with accumulating more power. In earlier times, most contact with European Magicians was through Rosicrucians who traveled to remote parts of Asia seeking enlightenment. A few were enthralled enough to join the Storm Dragons, leaving behind their former affiliations. Others offended the Asian mystics with their arrogance and racism. Currently, while there are no formal treaties between these Covenants, Storm Dragons in a city or county are usually in contact with local Wicce and Rosicrucians, and will offer or accept aid during a crisis. The Cabal of Psyche has a similar relationship with the Dragons. There is even an informal "student exchange" program where psychics discovered by the Dragons are sent to be trained in Cabal schools, and vice versa.

The Sentinels: The Storm Dragons and the Society of Sentinels share many goals, but have some major philosophical differences. The Sentinels' relentless monotheism puts off many Storm Dragons, who prefer to rely on their own

inner strength instead of faith in a greater power. The Sentinels are in turn suspicious of the "pagan" practices of the Storm Dragons. As a result, the two groups rarely work together, and often interfere with each other.

The Twilight Order and the House of Thanatos: The Dragons have little interest in the Death Realms, which they see as a mere staging area to further incarnations and enlightenment. As a result, they have limited dealings with these two death-obsessed Covenants.

The Pariahs: The two groups rarely interact. The Storm Dragons view the Disciples of the Flesh with a mixture of pity, contempt and suspicion.

The Fellowship of Judas: The Storm Dragons do not know of this organization. Iscariots are assumed to belong to some manner of Undead cult and are considered very dangerous.



The Red Lotus Society

The old stories speak of renegade Storm Dragons who became discontented or too ambitious. These malcontents were banished or left of their own accord. Some were mere students with little knowledge or power; others were wise and skilled Adepts. Some of the more arrogant members claim that every prominent thinker or philosopher in Asia, from Gautama to Lao-Tzu, was either a former Storm Dragon or was taught by one of the renegades. All martial arts styles and powers, including such legendary schools as the Shaolin Temple, are likewise said to be the result of the teachings of those "half-Orangons."

A large band of these renegades is known to have founded a rival school, and spread its teachings throughout Korea, China, and Japan. Mercenaries interested only in gathering wealth and power, they have become legendary in those lands as assassins and spies, and are the truth behind the legends of Ninjas and other shadow warriors. They call themselves the Red Lotus, and they are very dangerous enemies. The Red Lotus operates through a number of fronts,

from the Triads and Tongs (Asian criminal networks) to the so-called Ninja clans. More recently, these dark warriors have begun to act behind large multinational corporations specializing in security and industrial espionage. The group may have some connection with the Combine. It is believed that they are occasionally hired to eliminate targets that cannot be touched by the Combine's own operatives.

The Storm Dragons have tried to locate and stamp out this band of renegades. Many wars throughout Asia have served as the backdrop for smaller, but equally savage conflicts. One of the more recent of these episodes occurred during the Vietnam War, when Storm Dragons masquerading as either South or North Vietnamese commandos (and sometimes with the unwitting support of the U.S. Army) located and destroyed several Red Lotus schools throughout Indochina. Members of both sides also participated in the much bloodier slaughters in Cambodia, using the chaos in the area to find and destroy their enemies with impunity.

Storm Dragon Stories

A Storm Dragon campaign can focus on a number of things. Most Storm Dragon characters are involved in the "mainstream" martial arts community, so tales involving sporting events and competition, rivalries with other schools or athletes, and even underground bloodsports can be used. Chroniclers should try to avoid the worst clichés of the genre, unless the game is meant to be played somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Stories can also revolve around the struggle with the supernatural forces threatening the world. Plots from martial arts movies and fiction can be combined with the supernatural backdrop of the WitchCraft game

world. For example, a secret martial arts tournament could be a sham designed by a cult to provide worthy sacrifices for a Mad God.

Some Story ideas involving the Storm Dragons as either Cast Members or possible allies or enemies for other characters are described below.

The Dark Ronin: A serial killer, calling herself the Dark Ronin, is at work in the streets, and she is using Tao-Chi arts to murder her victims. Is she a renegade Storm Dragon, a member of the Red Lotus, or someone -- or something -- else altogether? The characters have to find and neutralize the murderer. To make things more complicated, the Red Lotus can be looking for the serial killer, or perhaps a team of Sentinels is hot on the trail of the

Dark Ronin. For a really complicated Story, both groups are involved, resulting in conflict among them, the characters, and the elusive killer.

To Rule Chinatown: This Story would be set in an Asian community in a large city (perhaps called Chinatown, but very likely comprising people from several different national and ethnic groups). A new gang, the Jade Serpents, has pushed aside the traditional Tongs of the area and is taking control of the neighborhoods, dominating the traditional rackets (gambling, prostitution, protection and drugs). Rumors about the invincibility of the gang abound. They are said to be able to kill people without touching them and to control ghosts and evil spirits. In truth, the Jade Serpents are a front for a powerful Black Magic Coven comprised of evil sorcerers and Necromancers who, in addition to mortal gangsters, command a small army of enslaved Spirits. The characters must try to stop the Jade Serpents, for if the gang is successful, the entire neighborhood will become a giant sacrificial ground for the Coven.

The Storm Dragons in Armageddon

The Storm Dragons are full members of the Alliance. In America, many Dragons work side by side with Nephelim, Inheritors and other supernatural beings. In Asia, the society is operating openly for the first time in centuries and has become a major pillar for the resistance movements in the continent. Often, Dragons make risky incursions into the Conquered Territories, staging out of Thailand, to bring weapons and medicine to guerrilla movements elsewhere. In this war-torn future setting, the Dragons' role as protectors is the dominant theme.

There is a rumor that the legendary Celestial Dragon who founded the society has been awakened by the chaos of the War and that has joined the fray, together with a brood of half-human, half-dragon mystics. Whether this rumor and the tales of other dragons appearing in places in Europe and South America are true remains to be seen.

Storm Dragon Sample Character

A sample Storm Dragon character, the Courier, is located in the Appendix.

Chapter Five: Metaphysics



"Er, maybe we should contact the Tribune," Manuel said dubiously.

"Shut up. I can handle it. I know I can handle it!" Karl replied shrilly. The Squire had reason to be upset. If the Tribune was alerted about the illegal summoning ritual, Karl, Manuel and Isobel would all be in deep trouble. On the other hand, if Karl couldn't handle the Invocation, the Tribune's wrath would be the least of their problems. Manuel looked at Isobel; the female Rosicrucian did not look anywhere near as confident as she had been when they talked Manuel into performing the invocation. "Nothing to it," Isobel had said, her smile giving Manuel a hint of unspoken promise, more than enough to make him act against his better judgment. She wasn't a beauty by any means, but Manuel, no Brad Pitt himself, had been yearning for her for quite some time. Maybe if he went along, she would look at him in a new light.

But not now. He had been the first to chicken out. Isobel would never let him live it down. At the moment, he discovered he didn't care much about that.

The summoning was supposed to have been a simple magico-necromantic incantation to trap a minor ghost and gain a glimpse of the future. Karl wanted to know the questions on the next theoretical exam. Isobel wanted a couple of stock tips. Manuel was just killing time.

Karl had been the Circle Leader, after convincing them that he had the Invocation down pat. He had certainly seemed sure of himself when he drew the pentagram and started the ritual. Manuel had felt somewhat uneasy during the casting, though. Karl wasn't being careful enough with his pronunciation — always a problem when using archaic rituals — and the pulsing energy that had appeared inside the pentagram had not looked right.

Sweat was running down Karl's forehead now. It had become obvious that whatever they were summoning was not a minor ghost, and he wanted to stop the process. He concentrated for several seconds. "Need more power," he gasped. "I can't close the doorway!"

Manuel closed his eyes and channeled what little he had left into the Circle. His fear became muted, replaced by the numb feeling of nearly depleted Essence. Isobel's eyes were rolling in her head, showing the whites. Karl's eyes were bulging in panic. "Call the Tribune!" he said weakly.

Manuel stepped away from the Circle to do just that — and a flash of light flooded the basement, blinding him. A gust of wind, almost explosive in force, knocked him to the ground. Manuel groped blindly in the dark, whimpering in pure terror. He couldn't see, but he could smell something burning fiercely. Had one of his friends knocked over the ritual candles? He blinked furiously, and his vision started to clear.

To his left, Isobel screamed an animal, mindless shriek that was abruptly cut off.

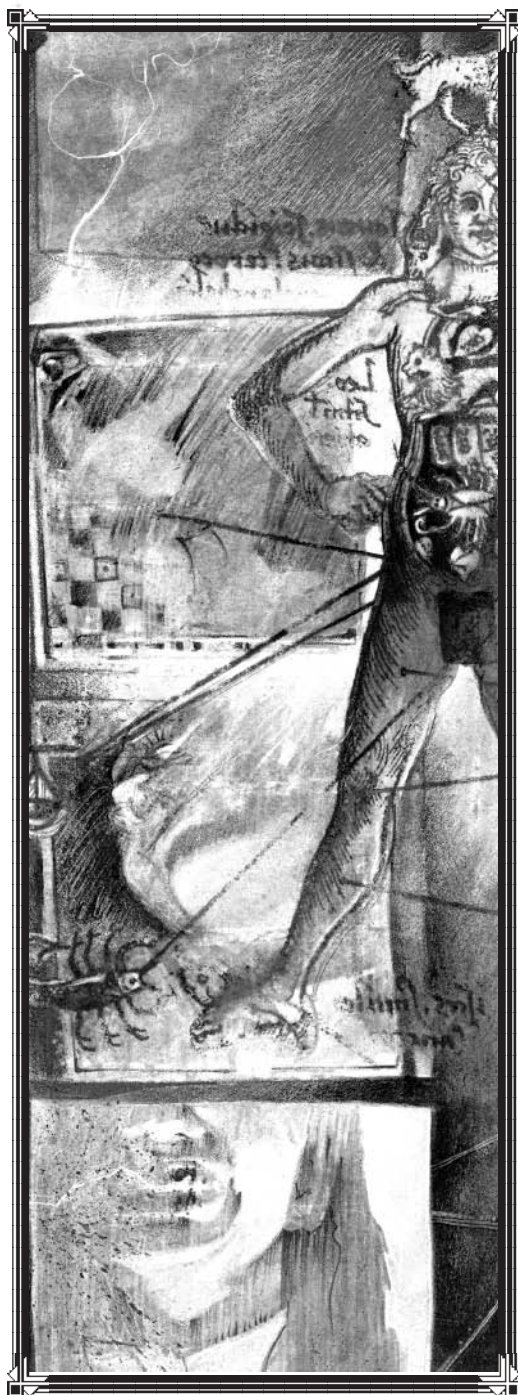
Manuel's mind spun, *Don't want to look . . . don't wanna . . . don't wanna . . .*

But he had to look.

Isobel was struggling feebly. Karl was standing over her, one hand wrapped around her throat. Except it wasn't Karl anymore. Half of his face had been seared away, as if somebody had turned a blowtorch on him. His eyes had been burned away and replaced with shining orbs of black light.

"YOU CALLED. I AM HERE." The voice was an inhuman growl not meant to form human words.

Manuel had just enough time for a pathetic whimper.



Introduction

In the world of WitchCraft, myth and fantasy are as real as the laws of physics and the facts of life. Every human being has the potential to develop great, perhaps even god-like power, but the Gifted are closer to reaching that potential than most. This inner power manifests itself in myriad forms. Magic, Necromancy, Divine Inspiration and the Sight are only some of them.

This chapter begins with several modifications to the Unisystem Metaphysics rules. The changes are presented in revisions text boxes to highlight them from the additional or optional material. These alterations clarify and simplify the use of Invocations and Powers, and generally smooth game play. The new rules are part of Second Edition WitchCraft, and future supplements will be based on them. (Of course, if you prefer the old rules, it will be relatively easy to maintain them in your campaign.)

The chapter moves on to new Invocations and Powers for Magicians and Necromancers. It reveals several greater Powers -- those available to only the most powerful Gifted. The chapter also includes two new Arts: the Disciplines of the Flesh and Tao-Chi.

A brief discussion of immortality, and the Immortals appears after the material on the Arts. New Items of Power conclude the chapter.

Magical Signatures

Each person's Essence is as unique as his DNA code. Thus, any Metaphysical abilities powered by that person's Essence (i.e., not cast wholly through ambient Essence) bear the person's "imprint." A Gifted or Inhuman character must pass a Difficult Perception Test to detect this signature. If she has seen it before, a Simple Intelligence Test would bring the memory to mind.



Casting Invocations



Many of those using First Edition WitchCraft complained that the Essence Control Table rules rendered the casting of Invocations costing more than 20 Essence points all but impossible. Others found the rules slowed game play. For those who feel similarly, this modification eliminates that table.

To cast an Invocation, the Magician simply accumulates the necessary amount of Essence and makes an unmodified Task attempt, using the Invocation level and the appropriate Attribute (unless otherwise indicated, assume that Attribute to be Willpower).

To further simplify spellcasting, Dismissal attempts are only necessary when a Focus Task is failed, when the Magician wants to prematurely end an Invocation effect, or when a destructive Invocation is cast, especially one cast in anger. The penalty for the Dismissal Task is equal to -1 per every 5 Essence points spent (rounded up), plus an additional -1 to -5 penalty based on the intent and emotional state of the Magician (see WitchCraft, Chapter Five: Metaphysics, Intent and Magic).

The Process of Casting Invocations

Most Invocations require at least a few spoken words or quick gestures to help the Magician focus her mind on the process. If the Magician is restrained in such a way that neither words nor gestures are possible, the process requires more time (at least one additional turn) and incurs a -2 penalty. If the Magician is blinded or blindfolded, any Invocation that has a specific target is not possible unless the Magician can touch him or can sense the target in some way (a Difficult Perception Test with a penalty determined by the Chronicler may be required). Any



Invocation that only affects the caster can be performed as long as the Magician's mind is functional. Even a blind and paraplegic sorcerer could use such Invocations as Spirit Projection, for example.

Using Ambient Essence


There has been some confusion about the use of the extra Essence available during the Times of Power (such as midnight, during a full moon, etc.), as well as the Essence available for Group Magic. This Essence can be used on several Invocations, but when it is used up, it is no longer available. For example, during the hour of midnight, the extra 5 points of Essence can be divvied up among as many Invocations as the Magician wants (to a maximum of five Invocations with one free Essence point each). Similarly, a group of three Magicians can use the extra 45 Essence points on as many Invocations as they care to cast (dividing up the 45 points among them), but once the 45 points are used up, they do not get any extra Essence for a period of 24 hours.

Time to Cast Invocations

Most Invocations can be cast as soon as enough Essence is summoned and channeled to do so. Those that involve infusing Essence into a place or location, like Wards and Consecration, take more time, somewhere between 5-10 minutes depending on the circumstances.

Seer Strength Costs

Although presented in the Character Creation Table in the back of First Edition WitchCraft, the cost of purchasing Seer Powers Strength levels was omitted from the text in Chapter Five: The Wise Crafts. The cost is 3 points per level up to level 5, and 6 points per level after that.



Magic

The most flexible of the Arts, Magic can perform almost any feat, modified only by the knowledge and willpower of the sorcerer and the amount of Essence she may control. Listed below are a number of new Invocations, including Greater Invocations, as well as new Items of Power.

Each entry includes a brief description of the Invocation's characteristics, followed by a list of possible effects and their Essence cost. The effects list for each Invocation covers some basic examples. Creative players will probably come up with other effects. The Chronicler can use the examples provided to figure out comparable Essence costs for player-created effects.

New Lesser Invocations

The following Invocations may be learned by any Magician, and do not have pre-requisites.

Hideaway

Magicians with this Invocation can hide their presence or that of other people or objects (the target), effectively rendering them invisible. The Hideaway Invocation works on many different levels. Some of the Essence used twists light in such a way as to obscure the target's presence. Even cameras and infrared sensors only register a faint glimmer where the target is located. Spotting the glimmer requires a Difficult Perception Test; characters with occult experience (in the GM's discretion) can use a Notice and Perception Task instead. More importantly, the Invocation works on the minds of anybody in sight of the target. People are subtly manipulated not to look in the target's direction and to unconsciously avoid the spot where the caster stands. Crowds will part seemingly naturally as a target person or being moves through them, unnoticed and unmolested. Objects and areas protected in this manner similarly avoid the interest of those who pass near them. Note that this Invocation is considered to "target" a crowd when used in populous public places, and the Crowd Effect rules may require additional Essence to be expended.

If the Invocation is cast while the target is in plain sight of others, there is a chance that some people will be unaffected. A Willpower and Invocation Task by the Magician is resisted by a Perception and Notice Task or a Difficult Perception Test on the part of those that are looking at the target of the Invocation. Gifted characters get a +2 bonus to resist; Supernatural beings who can see through illusions gain a +3 bonus. Anyone who successfully resists sees the target's shape become blurry and semi-transparent, but the target remains visible, especially in good light (shadows and darkness may allow the semi-invisible character or object to hide from even those who resisted the magic).

Attacking or otherwise attracting the attention of people reduces the effectiveness of the Invocation. The mental component of the Hideaway dissipates, and people may be able to spot the Magician's or target's glimmering outline. In that case, a successful Perception and Notice Task with a -1 modifier will be enough to locate the outline of the character. Even so, attacking the invisible character is a difficult undertaking -- hand-to-hand attacks are at a -1 penalty, ranged attacks are at -4.

Places can also be made invisible with Hideaway. The effect basically hides the location from anyone who might be searching for it; only the caster can find it without problems. The Invocation can only be cast on places that do not get a lot of traffic. If enough people are passing by the area, someone will eventually stumble onto the hidden location, dispelling the illusion. Once the Hideaway is in place, Mundanes do not get a chance to see the hidden place; it is as if it wasn't there. The Gifted may sense the magic on a Difficult Perception Test with a -3 penalty; Ghosts and other Supernatural beings who can see Essence constructs can locate the place on a Difficult Perception Test with no modifiers. In either case, no one can see the location unless they spend a great deal of time and effort searching for it (half an hour or more, at the Chronicler's discretion).

Invisibility Effect

The Magician can make herself and others invisible, as described above. The Essence cost varies with the size of the target. A man-sized or smaller target costs 6 Essence points per ten-minute period of invisibility. The sorcerer may spend additional Essence to increase this duration during the initial Invocation, gaining ten more minutes per 6 Essence points spent. Otherwise, she may recast the Invocation before its duration is over, but this requires a new Focus Task (and if that fails, a Dismissal Task). Larger objects (up to the size of a car) cost 8 Essence points per 10 minutes. Anything larger (a bus, an airplane) cost 24 Essence points per 10 minutes.



Hideaway Effect

A location can be made invisible. People passing by cannot "see" the hidden place and anyone within it. It is as if the location blends perfectly into the surrounding landscape. An entire house could be hidden in this way. To outsiders, the place may look like a vacant lot, a lot that their eyes slide over and then forget without much thought. The cost of this Invocation depends on the size of the place and the length of time that the Magician wishes to hide it. Since the location never moves, it costs less Essence to hide it than to make a person or moving object invisible. The base cost is 1 Essence point per meter (yard) of radius. This lasts for 1 hour; the same base cost must be paid per additional hour.

Constant Hideaway Effect

This effect hides a place for a long period of time. It requires multiple castings, each imbuing the area with 20 Essence points. These castings must all succeed; on a failure, the Magician must start over. At the end of six such rituals, a total of 120 Essence are invested into the place. Such investment hides the location for one month per Success Level of the Invocation Task (use the Success Level of the best roll or draw). If 240 Essence points (or 12 castings) are spent, the location will be hidden for one year per Success Level in the Invocation Task (use the Success Level of the best roll or draw). If the illusion is broken (see above), the Hideaway reasserts itself in 1D4(2) hours. Those who saw the location while it was visible know that something is going on, however, and have a much greater chance of breaking the illusion again (+4 to all Resisted Tests or Tasks to see through the illusion).

Levitate

This Invocation allows the Magician to float or slide on a cushion of Essence. Movement is usually limited to a walking speed; faster speeds are possible but at a greater Essence cost. Floating over a crowd or populated area is very risky. If a number of people see the character, she must overcome their disbelief (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, The Crowd Effect) or the Invocation will fail -- not a good thing while floating in the air.

Float Effect

The Magician can make herself hover and/or float at a slow pace in the direction she desires. The base speed is five miles per hour, which also allows the Magician to move up or down some 5 to 10 meters (yards) per turn (note that most people can run much faster than that). Once the Magician is up in the air, wind currents may propel her at greater speeds (but not necessarily in the direction she wants, unless she is controlling the wind somehow). In fact, the Magician may need to fight or maneuver against the wind to get where she wants to go, especially in open areas.

This effect costs 10 Essence points and lasts 1 minute per Success Level in the Focus Task. Making someone else float costs 15 Essence points, and the target's movement will be controlled by the Magician. Unwilling targets resist with a Simple Willpower Test.

Increasing the speed of the Levitation is possible, but very costly. Each additional mile per hour of speed costs 3 Essence points.

Locate

Magicians with this Invocation can try to find anything or anyone by zeroing in on the Essence "signature" of an object, person or creature. The

process is time consuming and expensive, however, and it can be blocked in a variety of ways by other Magicians. If the caster does not care about the Essence expense, she will eventually be able to find almost anyone or anything, anywhere in the world. Only the barriers separating Earth from the Otherworlds can protect someone from the reach of this Invocation.

Search Effect

The Magician can look for anybody or anything that she has seen at least once before. The Invocation works as a "spiral search," with the Magician spending more and more Essence as she widens her search radius. The basic Invocation takes one hour to perform, during which the Magician visualizes the target. At the end of the hour, the Magician must perform the first Perception and Locate Task and spend 10 Essence points. This will attempt to find the target within 100 meters (yards) of the Magician. If the subject is not in the area, the Magician must spend another hour of concentration, and spend an additional 15 Essence points, which will widen the radius to one mile. The next increase (which will take an additional hour) will cost 20 more Essence points, and increases the radius to 5 miles. Each additional increase costs the previous amount of Essence spent, plus 5 (i.e., 25 Essence, 30 Essence, 35 Essence, and so forth), and doubles the radius from the previous level (i.e., 10, 20, and 40 miles). Each new increment requires a separate Focus Task (and if that fails, a Dismissal Task). If a Focus Task fails, the Invocation must be started from scratch.

Mundanes cannot help themselves from being located in this manner, unless they are in a protected location. Wards, Shielding and any Essence barrier will foil the Search, but the Magician will know that the target is in the area, although not his exact location.

Sending

Sendings are magical communications. Only Gifted characters can see them. The Magician sends an image of her head or face (for more Essence, the image can look like anything the Magician wishes).

Although a Sending can reach the intended target anywhere in the world, the Invocation does not reveal to the sender the location of the subject of the message. The message works much like a radio signal tuned to a unique frequency -- the "frequency" being the individual's Essence matrix. Therefore, the Invocation only works on people the Magician has seen before. In effect, the visualization needed for the magic to work requires some memory of the target.

The Sending usually consists of both a visual and auditory component. Only the target can see and hear the Sending. Most sorcerers send an image of their face or head to better identify themselves. Others disguise their features or make themselves look like strange creatures. Such disguise changes require one or more successful Intelligence and Disguise Tasks (in the Chronicler's discretion). Once contact is established, the Magician can speak with the target and "hear" his responses for the duration of the Invocation.

Sending Effect

If successful, the Magician makes contact with the target anywhere on the planet. This contact allows for conversation but very little else; magic cannot be cast by or against either the Magician or the subject. An accomplished Seer might be able to use the connection to establish a telepathic link between the two with Mindtalk or Mindsight, but it will be very difficult, with a penalty of -6 to all related Tasks.

This effect costs 15 Essence points, regardless of range. Contact takes between ten minutes and two hours, depending on how far away the target is (this gives the Magician an indication of the distance between them, but there is no hard-and-fast ratio between the distance and time). Once it is established, the Sending lasts until the caster stops it. No other actions can be taken while the Sending is being maintained, however. If the Sending is dropped, the Magician must repeat the process from scratch to re-establish contact.

Spirit Limbs

This Invocation allows the Magician to manipulate objects at a distance. It is similar to the Seer Power Mindhands, but not quite as versatile or powerful. The range and strength of the Spirit Limbs are determined by the Essence spent by the Magician, and the Power cannot be used defensively like the Seer Power. In all other regards, the Power works much like the Mindhands ability (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics).

Spirit Limbs Effects

This effect costs 2 Essence points per Strength level of the limbs. It also costs 1 Essence point for every 5 meters (yards) of range (this is the maximum distance from the Magician that the power can be used, unlike Mindhands, which has a range of line of sight). When successful, the Focus Task powers the Spirit Limbs for 1 turn plus 1 turn per Success Level. Continuing the duration requires a new Focus Task, and more Essence to be spent.

Greater Invocations

Some of the more powerful magical effects, the Greater Invocations, require the mastery of one or more other Invocations. These Invocations are harder to learn and develop; it isn't easy to find a teacher who knows more than one or two of them. Learning these Invocations may be a quest unto itself, especially if the character does not have good contacts with a magical Covenant. All Greater Invocations also have prerequisites -- Lesser Invocations that must be learned before the student knows enough about the nature of reality to progress further.

Learning Greater Invocations

Greater Invocations are identical to the "lesser" Invocations except in two respects: they have prerequisites, and they are not widely taught. Beginning characters may learn Greater Invocations, subject to the approval of the Chronicler. If nothing else, the character must be in good standing with his Covenant, or must have access to a knowledgeable teacher or teachers. Further, the level of the Greater Invocation cannot exceed the level of any of the prerequisites. For example, if the character has Healing at 4 and Lesser Curse at 3, the Death Curse Invocation cannot be higher than 3, and cannot be raised to 4 until Lesser Curse is increased to that level.

After character creation, Greater Invocations follow the same rules as any other Invocations, restricted by the need for the pre-requisite Invocations and access to a teacher. These teachers will be powerful witches and sorcerers, and may require a period of servitude, a high financial or mystical payment, or some other favor from the would-be student. The search for a teacher and meeting his price can be woven into the Story for additional subplots, or might even be the main plot.

Bilocation

Prerequisites: Gateway, Soul Projection

Many legends speak of powerful Magicians that could be in more than one place at the same time. While most were simply the result of clever tricks or lesser magical effects, some of the Gifted can and do possess the power to bilocate -- to be in two places at the same time. The basic mechanism of this Invocation involves dimension shifting and (some believe) breaking down the laws of time and space. The Magician apparently splits her soul in two (the Essence Pool of the character is evenly divided among the two bodies) and recreates her body in a new location. The Essence cost for this feat is considerable, however.

This Invocation causes the Magician to duplicate herself, with the "double" appearing in any location within fifty miles of the caster. The Magician can then operate in both places, while being aware of what occurs in either location. Being in two places at once can be very disorienting and confusing, especially if the Magician is asked to do two things at the same time. Most of the time, the Magician concentrates on one of the two bodies, with the counterpart remaining at rest. Normal tasks (walking or listening to two conversations at the same time) require the character to pass a Difficult Intelligence Test at -3. Fighting in two different places (or performing two tasks that require concentration and precision) at the same time is nearly impossible; all actions have a -5 penalty.

For example, Jason has pressing business in two places at the same time. He creates two bodies using Bilocation. One remains at home monitoring a magical experiment. The other scouts out a possible nest of Mad God cultists with several friends. Jason places most of his concentration in the scouting body, as the one at home merely needs to react if something goes wrong. Naturally, as soon as Jason's group gets into a firefight with some of the cultists, the experiment takes a turn for the worse. At one point, one Jason must cast an Invocation at a threatening cultist while the other Jason works to contain the problem with the experiment. Each action suffers a base -5 penalty, plus a -1 for multiple actions.

Any injuries or fatigue experienced by either form is transmitted to the other. Essence expenditures, on the other hand, are not shared. If one of the two duplicates is killed, the other dies at the exact same time. If the two forms ever touch one another, they recombine into one and the Invocation ends.

Bilocate Effect

This effect costs 20 Essence points and lasts one hour per Success Level in the Focus Task. The Essence Pool of the Magician is evenly divided among the two bodies (rounded up). The new physical body, which appears in any location known to the character within a fifty mile radius, is identical to the original, and wears the exact same clothing and any equipment the character was holding. The second form is essentially the same; it is believed that there is no actual duplication, but that the character is simply existing in two separate points in space at the same time. At the end of the Invocation's duration, the character once again becomes one, at the location of the body (duplicate or original) closest to where the Invocation was cast. Increasing the range is possible, but costly; 10 Essence points must be spent for each additional 25 miles of range.



Death Curse

Prerequisites: Healing, Lesser Curse

This Invocation is never used lightly, for it often attracts the attention of the Grim Reapers (see Chapter Six: Supernatural). When successfully cast on a victim, the Death Curse slowly but surely dooms him. A succession of health problems weaken and ultimately kill the target of this Invocation. Only powerful magic, Necromancy or the removal of the curse can save the victim; any other measures only postpones the inevitable for a brief time. Even killing the Magician responsible will not do the trick; the sorcerer must be convinced or coerced into removing the curse.

Death Curse Effect

The cost of this effect is equal to the Essence Pool of the victim. This means cursing Gifted characters is much harder than cursing those who are Mundane. This Invocation requires a lengthy ritual that lasts ten minutes per Essence point spent. When the ritual is finished, the Focus Task is performed, and the Essence of the Invocation is wrapped around the caster (in the case of a group Invocation, the leader of the Circle takes the Essence of the curse). Gifted characters senses the malevolent energies coursing through the curse-carrier. The Magician must then go to the victim, and be within sight of him, to release the curse. The target can resist with a Willpower and Constitution Test against the Focus Task. If the Magician wins, the victim is struck by the curse.

The Death Curse starts to weaken the victim, who immediately loses 1D12(6) Life Points and 1D10(5) Endurance Points. This damage and fatigue cannot be healed normally. Even Magic and other Gifted Powers will not work as usual -- every 5 Life Points healed through any healing Power only restores 1 Life Point to the victim of the Death Curse. Things soon get worse. Every 2 hours, the victim loses a like amount of Life and

Endurance points. The process goes on until death or the curse is lifted or dispelled.

Removing the curse without having the original caster lift it is not easy or cheap. A Necromancer with Death Mastery 5 might be able to break the hold of the curse on the victim. The Necromancer must spend twice as much Essence as was devoted to the original Death Curse, and use Necromancy and Willpower against the Focus result of the curse. If the Necromancer wins the Resisted Task, the victim is saved. Divinely Inspired characters can use the Touch of Healing (again, twice as much Essence as originally spent must be used to break the curse). Magicians may cast Cleansing, but they must spend three times the original Essence used in the curse, and they suffer a -3 penalty in the Resisted Task.

On a failed attempt at removing the Death Curse, it strikes the Magician or someone close to her. The Magician can remove the curse, but only after it has affected her and reduced her Life and Endurance points as mentioned above.

Empowerment

Prerequisites: Consecration

Empowerment allows the Magician to create magical items -- objects that hold within their Essence matrix the ability to release specific Invocations. These magical items are also Consecrated (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Consecration Invocation). Creating an Empowered object is a costly and time-consuming operation, best done by a group or at Times or Places of Power.

To create the object, the Magician (and any assistants) must know both the Empowerment and Consecration Invocations as well as the Invocation to be imbued into the object. Only one specific Invocation effect is "imprinted" on to the object. A ring empowered with the Elemental Fire

Invocation could be charged with one of the effects listed under that Invocation, at a set Essence cost, and nothing else. The ring could, for example, extinguish a pre-determined area of fire, or produce a jet of flame inflicting a pre-set amount of damage, but not both (unless the item was Empowered twice). The power level of the Invocation (i.e., how much Essence it spends) is also pre-determined during the Empowerment ceremony, and it cannot be altered by the wielder. So, if the ring is designed to extinguish a 3-meter (yard) radius of flames (at the cost of 9 Essence points), its wielder cannot increase or decrease that radius.

As the object is created, the Magician determines what action will trigger the Invocation. This "trigger" can be as vague or specific as the Magician wishes, but very commonplace events may result in the object being activated by accident. Common triggers include words (typically some obscure phrase or sentence, not likely to be used in a conversation), or actions (like pressing a button or moving a lever). Others can be highly specific, like "Usable only by me or my direct blood descendants by reciting the word 'Jonah' three times during a night of a full moon."

The great amounts of Essence required make it almost impossible for Magicians to quickly create these objects. Even creating a relatively weak magical item would cost 50 or more Essence points. More powerful ones might require ten times as much. Clearly, it would be impossible for most mortals to control such vast amounts of Essence at once. Instead, the process must be conducted over several days or even weeks. The creator decides how much of the total Essence points needed are imbued on the object that day. This total cannot be less than the amount to cast the Invocation being placed into the object (so, if the Invocation requires an Essence expenditure of 12 points, a minimum of 12 points must be placed into the object each day). This Essence cost can be divided into as many Invocation Tasks as desired (in the example above, up to 12 different Invocation Tasks, each imbuing 1

Essence point), but if any one of the rolls is a failure, all the Essence is lost and the Magician must start over.

The magical effect uses the Invocation and controlling Attribute levels of the original creator for what is commonly known as the Strength of the Empowered object. For example, if the creator of the object had a level of 5 in the imbued Invocation and her Willpower (or other appropriate Attribute) was a 4, the object would have a Strength of 9. This number would be used in all Tasks, such as casting the Invocation and performing Resisted Tests. In the example above, the wielder would roll or draw and add a 9 to the result to determine Success Levels or to overcome the resistance of the target.

Once Empowered, the enchanted object can be used by anyone who knows how to activate it, except as noted by the restrictions above. Even a Mundane wielder can make use of the Empowered item, but she is restricted to the Essence contained within the object. The item can use the Essence imbued into it through Consecration, or, if the wielder has Essence Channeling, she may choose to use her own energy to activate the Invocations contained in the item. Once the Consecrated Essence in the object is gone, it can be re-Consecrated or activated through the wielder's personal Essence, as above. Permanently enchanted objects (described below) recharge themselves.

An Empowered item, like a Consecrated one, drains the Magician of a set amount of Essence that cannot be regained until the object is destroyed. The creator of the object may choose to permanently sacrifice that Essence. This sacrifice will give the object a life of its own. Its magic continues to exist even after its creator's death. Furthermore, it will regain Essence on its own, at a rate equal to its creator's Willpower every hour.

Enchanted Item Effect

This costs 20 Essence points, plus enough Essence to activate the specific Invocation Effect imbued, and, finally, enough Consecrated Essence to activate the item at least once; this requires a separate Consecration Task. Empowered items drain their creator(s) of 5 Essence points that cannot be regained until the object is destroyed or the enchantment is voided.

Some Magicians choose to permanently sacrifice their power into the object they create. The Essence cost is the same as above, but the Magician permanently loses 7 Essence points. The object, however, can be used indefinitely, and its Essence Pool replenishes itself at the rate of 1 point per Willpower level of the Magician per hour.

Item of Power Effect

Using any material with affinity to magic, like crystals or silver (see Item of Power, later in this chapter), adds the power of the material to the Essence Pool of the magical object.

For example, Georgia, a Wiccan Magician, wants to create a ring that can extinguish fire in a 3-meter (yard) radius. She also wants to be able to use it three times before its Essence is depleted. Such an item would cost a minimum of 56 Essence points to produce: the base 20, the 9 Essence for the Invocation effect, and 27 points to activate the item three times. This total can be cast over as many as six days (a minimum of 9 Essence points must be imbued into the Enchanted object each day). Each day requires a separate Focus Task (and if that fails, a Dismissal Task). If any Focus Task is failed, the process must be started from scratch.

Greater Healing

Prerequisites: Lesser Healing

This more advanced healing Invocation can be used to cure crippling wounds, terminal diseases, and mortal injuries. The Magician re-weaves a person's Essence entirely, and can restore lost limbs, although at great energy cost. It is even possible to resuscitate the recently dead with this Invocation.

Cure Disease Effect

20 Essence Points must be spent in three separate castings (using Willpower and Greater Healing) conducted over a period of no more than two weeks. If any of the three Invocations fails, the Magician must start over. At the end of the process, the patient must succeed at a Difficult Constitution Task. Add a bonus of +1 for each Success Level accumulated during the three Invocations. If the roll is successful, the patient is healed. For example, Roger is dying of cancer. His friend Louis performs the three ceremonies, accumulating one, two and one levels of success respectively, for a total bonus of +4. Roger has a Constitution of 2. With the Success Levels bonus, he gets to add 6 to his recovery roll. Roger rolls a 5, for a total of 11 -- Roger recovers. The cancer goes into an unexplained remission, and a couple of weeks later he can leave the hospital!

Restore Limb Effect

A missing limb or organ (like an eye, for example) can be restored. This effect requires the expenditure of Essence equal to the character's base Life Points, plus 10. The regrowth process is very painful and exhausting. The patient may need to be held down (a Difficult Willpower Test allows the subject to bear the pain without resisting). She loses 1D10 x 4(20) Endurance points and 1D6 x 4(12) Essence points as her body's energy reserves are channeled into regrowing the missing limb or body part. If either the patient's Essence or

Endurance Pools are reduced below 0 as a result, both of those Secondary Attributes will be permanently reduced by one level.

Resuscitate Effect

A character whose heart has stopped can be resuscitated if attended to quickly enough. Resuscitation can be attempted up to one hour per Constitution point of the victim after the victim's

heart has stopped. Enough Essence must be spent to heal all the wounds or damage suffered (as per the Lesser Healing Invocation) plus an additional 15 Essence points. If the Invocation is successful, the subject needs to pass a Survival Test, with a +1 bonus for every Success Level on the Invocation Task. If the Test is passed, the subject is revived; otherwise, the victim remains dead, and no further attempts to resuscitate will work.

Essence Mastery

Prerequisites: Blessing and Insight

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Second Edition Witchcraft does away with the Essence Control Table. For those who wish to preserve the table, a special Greater Invocation, Essence Mastery, is discussed here. This Invocation smoothes out the rough edges of the Essence Control Table.

Most powerful Magicians know Essence Mastery, the key to controlling great amounts of power. Like its name indicates, this Invocation is designed to control and focus large amounts of Essence, such as what is available during Group Magic. The Essence used by this Invocation helps "bind" the power used in other Invocations, greatly reducing the difficulties in controlling powerful magicks. It works like a set of channels or funnels that make it easier to shape the flows of Essence. To a Gifted Magician who can see magical energies, the use of this Invocation is obvious, and takes the form of highly complex geometrical shapes surrounding the normally swirling and chaotic energies of magic.

Essence Mastery reduces or even eliminates the penalties to Focus and Dismissal Tasks incurred by using large amounts of

power at once. Magicians with this Invocation can safely perform Invocations that would doom most lesser sorcerers. Most Covenants of magic only pass this knowledge to veteran and loyal members, while keeping it from the hands of neophytes until they have proven themselves.

Control Essence Effect

Every Essence point spent in this Invocation reduces the penalties for Focus and Dismissal Tasks by two levels. For example, a Magician who spent 4 Essence points on this Invocation would reduce the penalties for Focus and Dismissal Tasks by 8. This would allow the Magician to control up to 20 Essence points without any penalties. One cannot use Control Essence on another Control Essence Invocation, however, so Magicians are limited as to how much power they can put into this Invocation.

On a failed Dismissal Task, the Essence used in this Invocation will, at some point over the next twenty-four hours, cancel out any Essence put into another magical effect, effectively neutralizing the magic. This event occurs randomly but appears to be triggered by feelings of urgency on the part of the Magician, so a casually-cast Invocation will not be affected.

Greater Illusion

Prerequisite: Lesser Illusion

Some occultists refer to this Invocation as “Lesser Creation,” and that name may be more appropriate. Unlike the Lesser Illusion, which only affects the non-tactile senses, this Invocation creates things that can be felt, touched, or tasted. Still, they are not “real” in any lasting sense. An illusory hamburger tastes as good as the real thing but provides no nourishment, nor does it assuage hunger past the duration of the Invocation. An illusory knife can produce painful slashes, but it can neither kill nor disable.

The biggest limitation of this Invocation is the fact that most Gifted characters will be able to identify illusions as creations of Essence. On a successful Simple Perception Test, any character with the Gift notices a faint supernatural glow around the illusory object(s) or panorama, while masters of the unreal like the Sidhe automatically identify the illusions as what they are.

Once illusions are engaged in combat their unreality is very likely to be realized. Wounds inflicted hurt, but they do not impair the character beyond the momentary shock. Regardless of how deep the wound looks, only 1 point of “damage” is inflicted on the target. The wounded victim may need to pass a Simple Willpower Test to keep her cool (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules, Oh God -- I’ve Been Shot sidebar). For one turn -- a couple of seconds -- the character is unable to attack, but may defend normally. A new Test is required every turn until the character passes it, with a cumulative +1 bonus. After two or three such incidents, the targets will realize that the illusory bullets or blades or claws just do not seem to be very effective. This allows them a new Perception Test (Simple for Gifted and Supernatural characters, Difficult for Mundanes) to see through the illusion.

All illusion effects last 5 minutes, plus one minute for each Success Level on the Focus Task. At the end of that time period, a new Focus Task is required, with a renewed expenditure of Essence. Unless properly Dismissed, a failed Greater Illusion Focus Task creates illusory images of the appropriate size (see below) that haunt the Magician one to four times (the Chronicler can roll a D4(2) or determine the number of apparitions arbitrarily). The length of these effects are left to the Chronicler’s discretion.

Create an Illusion Effect

This effect creates an illusory object or person. Any creature or item that the character knows well can be recreated exactly as the character remembers it. For highly complex or detailed objects, or to create an illusion of a person, the Magician must pass a Simple Intelligence Test. The higher the Success Level, the more realistic the illusion (even one Success Level will fool most people, but fully convincing those who are very familiar with the subject may require three or more Success Levels). The Essence cost of these illusions is determined by their size: 3 Essence points per third of a meter (one foot) cubed in size. Add 5 Essence points to the total cost if the illusion can be moved around (with a range of line of sight).

Illusory Disguise Effect

The Magician can create an illusion around herself or others. This illusion feels as solid as the real thing, and can transform the person’s size (although it cannot be smaller than she is in reality), gender and appearance. The illusion’s movements will follow the subject’s perfectly. This effect costs 5 points plus an additional Essence expenditure equal to the size of the illusion, as noted in the Create an Illusion effect (a human-sized facial disguise costs 8 Essence points).

Panorama Effect

This is an entire illusionary landscape -- an environment that fools all the senses. The illusions do not support any weight, however. Illusionary ladders or staircases feels deceptively solid -- until somebody steps right through them. Magicians usually organize their illusions so that they match the contours of the real surroundings, saving a few spots as traps for the unwary. The cost of these complex illusions is high: 6 Essence points per third of a meter (one foot) cubed.

Tap Emotions

Prerequisites: Affect the Psyche

Magicians with this Invocation can actually absorb the Essence of those around them, provided the people involved are experiencing strong, positive emotions. Some Wicce and Rosicrucian performers use this Invocation to tap into the power of their audience, much like Vampyres with the Bard Power do. As long as no one is being hurt (the Essence taken was released naturally by the emotions the crowd feels), the use of this Invocation is condoned by most Covenants. Groups like the Sentinels, however, find it objectionable under any circumstances.

Normal Gifted Magicians can only tap onto positive emotions like love, glee or excitement. Black Magic practitioners have an equivalent Invocation (not taught by the Wicce or the Rosicrucians) that allows them to absorb Essence released by any emotion, including anger, hatred or terror. Some of these sorcerers become hatemongers, inciting crowds into a frenzy to feed on their dark emotions. The main drawback of this dark version of the magic is that the negative emotions affect the Magician's personality, turning her into a bitter creature, unable to experience happiness.

Absorb Power Effect

This effect requires that the Magician be surrounded by a crowd and that its attention be wholly focused on her. Most Magicians "hide" their Invocation as part of the performance itself, thus avoiding the problems of having to overcome the disbelief of the crowd (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, The Crowd Effect). The people in the crowd must be feeling positive emotions towards the Magician; this is usually achieved through mundane means, using performance skills. If the crowd is not pleased by the performance, this Invocation will be ineffective.

To tap into the Essence of the crowd, the Magician must first spend her own Essence. The larger the crowd, the more expensive the process is. Use the nearby Crowd Essence Effect Table. For example, tapping into the energy of a crowd of 70 people would cost 8 Essence points. The number of people involved also makes the Invocation more difficult. The Task must achieve an additional Success Level for each 20 people above 40 (rounded up). In the example above, the Invocation Task attempt must achieve three Success Levels to work. Most magical performers prefer to work crowds of under a hundred, or focus the Invocation only on a portion of the audience.

Crowd Essence Cost Table	
Number of People Involved	Amount of Essence Required (round down)
10-20	1/5 per person
21-50	4 plus 1 per 25 people
51-100	6 plus 1 per 50 people

If the Invocation is successful, the Magician collects 1 Essence point per person in the affected crowd. This Essence can be used to power other rituals, replenish the Magician's Essence Pool, or be held until needed (although holding onto a lot of Essence can be dangerous, see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, The Summoning for more information). Most of the time, the Magician will only be able to tap into a fraction of the Essence released by the performance.

Walkgate

Prerequisites: Gateway, Levitate, Locate

Some of the more powerful Magicians can travel from place to place in little or no time. Unlike the teleportation of science fiction stories, however, Walkgates are more like doorways that connect two separate points in space. The mechanics of the Power baffle magical theorists. Some believe that the Magician somehow "bends" or "wrinkles" space between two points using her will. Others think that the Invocation opens two doorways in a separate dimension; one takes the mage out of our world, the other returns her from that dimension to a different place on Earth.

When the Invocation is successfully cast, a glowing circle appears right next to the Magician and she is "sucked" into it. The process happens so quickly that to most onlookers it appears as if the Magician has vanished in a flash of light. The flash of light always accompanies the Walkgate Invocation, unless hidden through illusions or other mystical effects.

Unless properly Dismissed, a failed Walkgate Invocation triggers the effect at a random later date, teleporting the Magician in a random direction and distance (not to exceed the original range of the Invocation). The Magician can resist with a Difficult Willpower Test, but the sudden strain drains the character of 1D8 x 2(8) Essence points regardless of the outcome.

Teleport Effect

The more Essence the Magician has available, the further away the Magician can transport herself. To travel great distances, massive amounts of power are needed. To teleport up to 5 meters (yards) costs 5 Essence points. To teleport up to 25 meters (yards) costs 10 Essence points. For 15 Essence points, the Magician can "jump" up to 100 meters (yards). Teleporting over a distance of up to three kilometers (two mile) costs 25 Essence points. Each additional kilometer (two-thirds of a mile) costs an additional 5 Essence points. Teleporting more than one person costs an additional 10 Essence points per person.

Walkgate can be used on people against their will, but only if the Magician physically drags them through the "doorway." This requires that the sorcerer also arrive wherever she is sending her victim. Thus, trying to teleport someone a mile below the ocean surface requires the Magician to go there as well, with the same fatal consequences. In addition, if the victim grabs hold of the Magician and does not let go, the Magician cannot use the Walkgate to leave without also carrying the target along. These situations should be resolved as Resisted Tasks using the Strength and Dexterity of the Magician and the victim.

Weather Lordship

Prerequisites: All four Elemental Invocations

Through this Invocation, the Magician can control and manipulate the weather. Upsetting the balance of the weather is often tricky, however, leading to unexpected consequences. Even minor changes in one place may lead to major upheavals somewhere else. For instance, a Magician's rain making in Arizona could create a devastating hurricane in Florida. The karma cost of such upheavals eventually comes back upon the Magician. Unless properly Dismissed, failing a Weather Lordship

Focus Task causes a great deal of chaos and anguish. Many freak storms, tornadoes and worse have been triggered by careless Magicians. These clumsy practitioners are almost always tracked down and punished accordingly.

A sorcerer can minimize the effects of her use of this Power by a careful balancing act, restoring conditions to their previous state after she no longer needs the weather effect she has created. This is costly and time-consuming, but the price of not doing so is often catastrophically high.

Alter Weather Effect

The Essence cost of this Power depends on the area affected by the weather change and how extreme the change is. Causing a tiny downpour to drench a victim in the middle of a cloudy, overcast afternoon is a lot cheaper than causing a monsoon in the middle of Death Valley. Affecting anything larger than a few hundred meters (yards) in area costs so much Essence that only a large group of sorcerers can hope to do so.

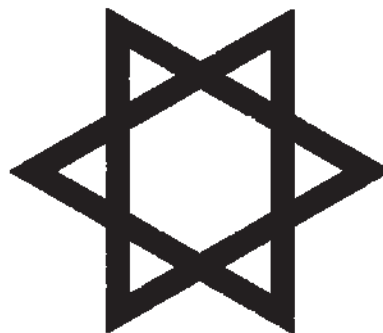
An area with a radius of 1 meter (yard) per level of Willpower of the sorcerer can be affected for a base cost of 4 Essence points (modified by the degree of the weather change). A larger area (10 meters [yards] per level of Willpower) has a base cost of 8 Essence points. A significantly large locale (100 meters [yards] per level of Willpower) has a base cost of 16 Essence Points. A huge area (one mile per level of Willpower) cost a base 32 Essence points. Each additional mile adds 8 Essence points to the base point cost.

Small, imperceptible changes in weather (causing a cloud to temporarily cover the sun) halve the base cost given above, rounded down. A small but definite change (causing a light drizzle to stop, starting a light rain in the middle of an overcast day, or reducing the intensity of rain or a storm by one level) uses the base cost. A significant change (starting a good hard rain during a clear day, changing a storm into a mild rain) costs double the base

cost. A great change (starting rainfall during the dry season in a normally temperate climate, stopping or starting a thunderstorm from scratch) costs triple the base cost. An extraordinary change (starting a downpour in an arid desert, stopping a hurricane in its tracks) costs quadruple the base cost. The effects are felt only in the area affected; outside that area, weather conditions continue to operate normally.

This Invocation will last 5 minutes per Success Level or until Dismissed, whichever comes first. However the spell ends, the Magician has the choice of trying to restore the natural weather she has disrupted before it does so. This requires an Essence expenditure equal to one third the cost of the initial upheaval, rounded down. Thus, if the Magician spent 60 Essence points altering the weather, 20 points are needed to bring it back to normal. The Magician then makes a Willpower and Weather Lordship Task attempt. If the Magician cannot restore the situation to normal, penalties of -1 to -4 (depending on how extreme the change in the normal weather was and how large an area was effected), are applied to the Dismissal Task.

Messing with the weather of a large area may be noticed. Any Magician within ten miles of the affected area who knows any Elemental Invocation or Weather Lordship can sense the disturbance on a Perception and Invocation Task. The source of the disturbance can be tracked down by a series of these Tasks, and careless or destructive mages will be challenged by their peers (or their superiors).



New Necromantic Powers

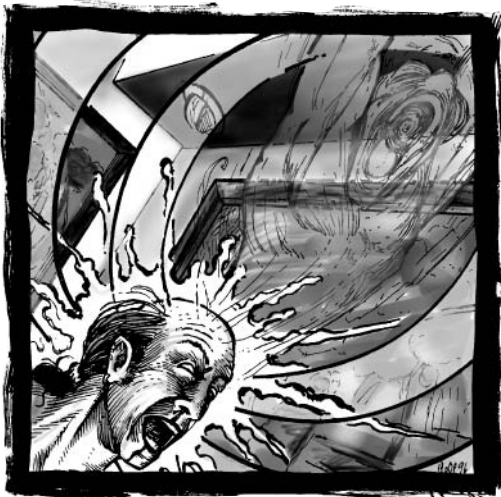
Necromantic Powers progress beyond the five levels described in the WitchCraft book. These advanced Arts are rare among beginning Mediums, but talented youngsters might have one or two. Once a Necromancer has reached these levels, however, she is likely to get noticed by some of the Powers of Death. Such notice is rarely benevolent, and is sometimes very dangerous. Many veteran Adepts of the Twilight Order or necromantically-inclined members of the House of Thanatos have achieved these levels of power.

Unless otherwise indicated, all these Powers require a successful Willpower and Necromancy Task.

Death Speech

Level 6 – Spirit Shout

The Medium can produce a psychic “scream” that hurts any nearby Ghosts or Phantasms, although it has no effect on any material beings (including Incarnate Phantasms). In the Death Realms, however, this attack affects anybody present. Spirit Shout inflicts 1 point of damage per Willpower level of the Necromancer to any Spirit or astral travelers within 5 meters (yards) per Necromancy level. The Power does not distinguish between friend and enemies, however, so Necromancers working with Spirits must be careful about where they use it. Using the Spirit Shout costs 6 Essence points.



Level 7 – Greater Summoning

At this level, the Necromancer can communicate with any Spirit that has not entered the unknown Sephiroth of Kether (see Chapter Six: Supernatural). Even reincarnated souls or those imprisoned in other Death Realms can be contacted by the Medium. The Spirit will talk, but cannot be forced to reveal any knowledge against its will. The name the soul bore in life is needed to summon its spirit.

If the Spirit has been incarnated in the body of a living person, the Necromancer learns the identity of its current incarnation. This information comes in the form of a vision revealing the person's appearance, name and general location (within a city or county area). Other means, either mystical or mundane, are needed to locate the reincarnated person more precisely. Once found, the person may be brought into the presence of the Medium, and put in a trance (identical to the hypnotic past life regression used by some therapists). The Medium can then call the Spirit of the past life to come out and communicate. An unwilling person must be drugged or otherwise subdued, however.

Greater Summonings cost 6 Essence to contact the Spirit. A further 8 Essence points must be “fed” to the Spirit to keep it talking. 10 Essence is required to force the Spirit to speak; this does not guarantee the Spirit will tell the truth or reveal information, however -- the talk can be meaningless gabble, outrageous lies, or anything the spirit wishes to say.

Death Lordship

Level 6 – Soul Armor

The Medium can weave a protective Essence structure around herself. This armor is invisible to the naked eye, but Gifted characters can sense the Essence matrix around the character. Those who can channel Essence see it as a construct of spirit energy. The protection the armor provides is determined by the success of the construction process. The Necromancer attempts a Willpower and Necromancy Task and spends 10 Essence points. Each Success Level provides the character with 1D8(4) points of protection against any Spirit or Essence attacks (including magicks like Soulfire). The armor also counters any forced Essence drain inflicted by Supernatural creatures, including Vampyres. Reduce the amount of Essence drain by the Armor Value of the construct. This ability can also be used by characters traveling in spirit form using Death Projection or similar astral travel abilities. While in spirit form or traveling through the Death Realms, the armor is clearly visible as a vest, suit of armor, or force field (the actual shape is the creator's choice) and it protects against any attacks that may affect the character. The armor lasts until dispelled at the Medium's desire, but the Essence points spent on it cannot be regained until it has been dispelled.

Level 7 – Spirit Bond

The Necromancer can forge a long-lasting bond with a Spirit. This bond can be mutually beneficial, or it can be nothing more than forced servitude, although the latter is forbidden and persecuted by the Twilight Order. To create the bond, the Necromancer must spend 24 hours in contact with the Spirit. If unwilling, the Spirit must be forced to remain in place as per Death

Lordship, level 4. During this time period, the Medium and the Spirit establish a psychic connection, and learn a great deal about each other's life and personality. At the end of the 24 hours, the Magician must spend 20 Essence (in addition to any other Essence spent keeping the Spirit in place) and pass a Willpower and Necromancy Task. If the Spirit is not willing to participate, it resists with a Simple Willpower Test.

Death Vessel

Level 6 – Possess the Dead

This gruesome and rarely-used ability allows the Necromancer to take control over a recently dead body. In effect, the Medium takes the place of the recently departed soul and uses her force of will to keep the corpse going. The body needs to be in a reasonably good condition for this Power to function effectively. It does not heal wounds or restore missing or crippled limbs. Victims of poisoning or natural deaths are preferred as they have relatively intact bodies.

This ability does not stop the process of decomposition -- in a few hours, the body starts to grow stiff and eventually rots like a normal corpse. The Necromancer can keep using the body until the corruption breaks down all semblance of motor control, typically within a week of the time of death (less in hot and humid climates, more in colder climates). If the body is well-embalmed, however, it may remain usable for twice as long.

The Necromancer cannot be in two places at once, however. Whenever her consciousness inhabits the corpse, her body is in a state of trance, similar to that of the Death Projection Power. The Medium can shift control back and forth between the two bodies, but the process

requires a turn of concentration and costs 2 Essence points for each shift (this Essence, unlike the amount spent animating the corpse, can be regained normally).

Possessing the dead costs 15 Essence points and requires a successful Task attempt using Willpower and Necromancy. The Essence spent is not regained until the Medium relinquishes control over the body. The corpse is effectively a lesser form of Undead; it has the physical Attributes it had in life (reduce Dexterity by 1 level for every three days after death), and it has double the amount of Life Points it had in life. The body does not heal from injuries, however, and if reduced to -10 Life Points, it will be too broken to be useful. If the corpse is destroyed while the Medium is inhabiting it, the character must pass a Simple Survival Test with a +2 bonus, or the sudden shock of the corpse's destruction kills her. Additionally, no other Gifted Powers can be used through the corpse, which must rely only on Mundane abilities.

Level 7 – Transincarnation

This rare Power allows the Medium to actually become the person whose soul she is invoking. By summoning enough of the Spirit's Essence matrix, the Necromancer causes her body to transform into the shape of the deceased.

The conversion process can be partial (taking on the face of the Spirit, for example), or total (completely assuming the size, gender and body build the Spirit had in life). Although the Necromancer is usually in control of her transformed body, there are some risks in totally assuming the identity of a Spirit. There is a chance that some of the deceased's personality and character traits will manifest themselves. If adopting the body of an alcoholic, for example, the Necromancer could be seized by a craving for strong drink. Whenever such a situation presents itself, the Medium must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, or succumb to the instincts of her new body.

The reshaped body has all the physical Attributes the Spirit had in life. If used in conjunction with Communion with the Dead, the Medium gains access to all the knowledge of the Spirit as well, becoming in effect a perfect double.

Transincarnation costs 15 Essence points and lasts for 15 minutes, at the end of which time more Essence must be spent. A Necromancy and Willpower Task is needed to activate the Power. If the roll or draw is a 1, however, the Medium has to pass a Difficult Willpower Test or the Spirit will completely take over her body for the duration of the Power!

Death Mastery

Level 6 – Ectoplasm

The Necromancer can transform some of her Essence into a semi-solid substance that straddles both the material and spiritual worlds. This substance, called Ectoplasm by occultists, can be used to allow spirits to partially materialize in the physical realm, to create ghostly apparitions, and even to affect the physical world to a limited degree. Ectoplasm usually manifests itself as a glowing vapor that emanates from the Medium's mouth, eyes or hands. This vapor can become more solid and defined if the Necromancer so wills it. A Ghost in contact with the Medium can use the ectoplasm to become partially material. The vapor assumes the shape of the face of the Spirit, which can then speak directly to the Necromancer or anyone in the area (the Spirit must spend 2 Essence points from its Energy Essence Pool to do this).

Creating Ectoplasm requires an Intelligence and Necromancy Task. To simply generate Ectoplasm as a thin cloud of vapor costs the Necromancer 1 Essence point for every meter (yard) cubed. Making the Ectoplasm thick enough to obscure sight costs 1 more Essence per meter (yard) cubed. The Ectoplasm can also be made into a thick ten-

dril, condensing each meter (yard) cubed into a ghostly tentacle 1 meter (yard) long, able to manipulate objects (although anything requiring fine control is beyond this ghostly limb). This costs an additional 3 Essence per meter (yard) of length (for a total of 4 Essence per meter [yard]). The limb has an effective Strength of 2. Once summoned, Ectoplasm lingers in the physical plane for 1 minute, then rapidly dissipates. A further expenditure of Essence, at the same cost, is required to maintain its existence.

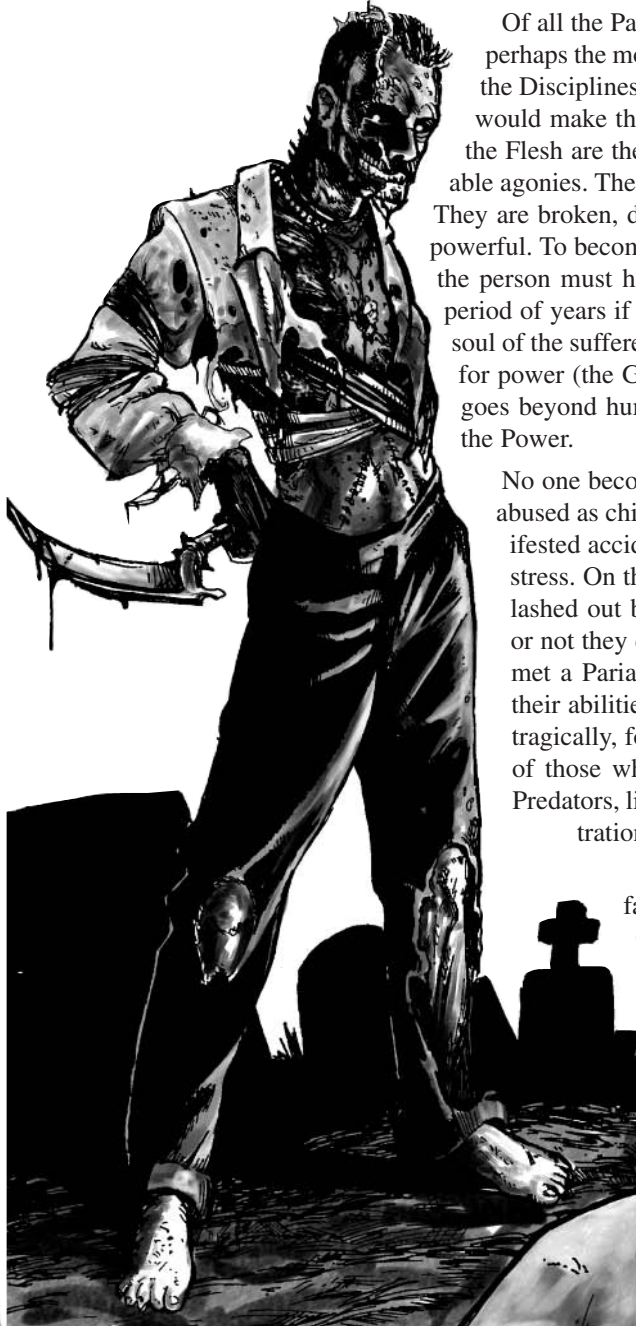
Level 7 – Create Sanctuary

At this level, the Necromancer can make an area secure from unwanted spiritual visitations. It is often the Medium's curse that Spirits hover around her, demanding communion or even attempting to seize her body by force. By creating a Sanctuary,

the Necromancer can protect her home or workplace from these intrusions. This process requires a ritual lasting 1D10(5) minutes and costing 1 Essence per meter (yard) squared protected; this Task uses Willpower and Necromancy. The Sanctuary lasts for 1 day, plus an additional day per Success Level in the Task. During that period of time, no unbidden Spirit can enter the area. Each attempt is rebuffed painfully, draining the intruder of 1D6(3) Energy Essence and 1 point of Vital Essence. Phantasms in physical form and Undead creatures can penetrate the Sanctuary, but they also suffer Essence drain. These beings suffer 1D8(4) points of Essence loss every time they cross the boundaries of the Sanctuary (entering or leaving it), as well as a jolt of pain that causes a -1 penalty to all Tasks or Tests for the next two turns.



Disciplines of the Flesh



Of all the Paths of Power, the Disciplines of the Flesh are perhaps the most twisted and least favored of all. To acquire the Disciplines, one must undergo ordeals and torments that would make the strictest ascetics quail. All the Disciples of the Flesh are the victims of torture, child abuse, and unbearable agonies. Their spirits have been shattered more than once. They are broken, dysfunctional people, and they are incredibly powerful. To become a Disciple, two elements are needed. First, the person must have suffered. This pain was inflicted over a period of years if not decades, enough to permanently scar the soul of the sufferer. Second, the person must have the potential for power (the Gift). There are many people whose suffering goes beyond human endurance; only a few of them develop the Power.

No one becomes a Disciple willingly. Most of them were abused as children or young adults, and their Powers manifested accidentally, during a moment of ultimate pain or stress. On the day they acquired their Powers, they often lashed out blindly and hurt those around them, whether or not they deserved it. If they were fortunate, they soon met a Pariah who helped them understand and develop their abilities. If they weren't, they most likely ended up tragically, forced into hiding if not killed outright. Many of those who do not find a teacher or mentor become Predators, living in the shadows and taking out their frustrations on their victims.

Whatever their origins or their ultimate fate, the Disciples are extremely powerful Gifted. Theirs is the power to reshape their bodies into any form they choose, typically into twisted, inhuman shapes. This reshaping ability goes all the way down to the molecular level. It allows them to heal wounds rapidly, become larger and stronger, and turn their limbs into weapons and their internal organs into limbs. Although in theory the Disciples could use their Powers to assume beautiful or "perfect" shapes, no one ever does so. The reason is simple: to

activate their Powers, the Disciples must relive their worst traumas and memories. While in the throes of such psychic agony, their physical creations are hideous reflections of their inner turmoil.

Some Chroniclers and players may find this Art too sensitive or controversial for their game. The elements of abuse and suffering should be handled in a mature manner, and if the Chronicler feels that they are not appropriate for her game, she should disallow them.

.Anguish

The Disciplines of the Flesh are activated through Anguish, the reliving of a person's most terrible experiences. Anger, humiliation and helplessness, as well as the pain of abuse and betrayal, are all components of this Anguish. Whenever the Disciple is threatened, or for some reason needs to use her powers, she must use Anguish to put herself in the right psychic frame of mind and pitch. Triggered by this flare of pain, the Disciplines are activated and the character can channel her Essence into her body. In this manner, her body becomes a fluid, malleable thing that can assume almost any shape.

Anguish costs 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter, and must be purchased with Metaphysics character points. The experience point costs for improvement during game play are the same. Typically, Anguish is used in Tasks involving Willpower. If successful, the character relives a traumatic event in her past, and is granted access to her powers.

The Disciplines cost Essence to use. Characters using Anguish can channel 1 point of Essence per level of their Perception Attribute every Turn. If they have Essence Channeling, they can add its level to their Perception for this purpose. Disciplines regain Essence normally (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules, Regaining Essence Points).

Anguish can also be used defensively. If a Disciple becomes aware that she is being targeted by a mental probe of some sort (this requires a Difficult Perception Test), she can project her agony outwards, overwhelming the mental intruder with flashbacks of traumatic events from the Disciple's past. The intruder must pass a Difficult Willpower Test, or the horror of those events causes a massive psychic backlash, draining him of D10 x 2(10) Essence Points and leaving him stunned for a minute (during which all actions are at a -2 penalty).

Characters with Anguish can sense the pain of those similarly afflicted. A Pariah may detect the presence of those of her kind by succeeding at a Perception and Anguish Task. This ability is not always certain, however. A Mundane in great pain (physical or emotional) can be "detected" as a Disciple, only if the character gains more than two Success Level in the Task.

The Disciplines

Each Discipline costs 4 Metaphysics character points to acquire during character generation. This cost doubles (8 experience points each) after character creation. They are not used as skills. Instead, Anguish is added to Willpower for power Tasks.

All Disciples of the Flesh must purchase the Reshape Discipline (see later in this chapter). This is the basic Power, and is a prerequisite for all the other abilities.

Beast Skin

Some Disciples have the Power to assume the form of an animal. Their Anguish ensures that the animal form assumed is always loathsome and repulsive. The most common Beast Skins among Disciples are rabid dogs, rats, cockroaches, bats, spiders, snakes and even the occasional alligator. While "wearing" the Beast Skin, the character becomes a supernatural version of the creature in question. These are not real animals, and most of the Attributes (particularly Strength) of the Disciple remain the same while in the altered form.

In the case of small vermin like insects or spiders, the Disciple becomes either a gigantic version of the creature (up to one meter [yard] long), or a swarm of the creatures. In the case of a swarm, the individual creatures must remain within a third of a meter (one foot) of each other or they die off.

In animal form, the Disciple can bite or claw with any natural weapons that are part of the shape taken on. If the form is that of a large animal (dog-sized or larger), the attacks inflict 1D4(2) to 1D6(3) points of slashing/stabbing damage per Strength level of the character, depending on the type of animal. Smaller animals (rats or large insects) or swarms of vermin do 1 point of slashing/stabbing damage per Strength level. When in the shape of an animal, or the form of a collective swarm of insects, the character has as many Life Points as she normally does.

Activating the Beast Skin costs 5 Essence points, and it lasts for 1 minute per level of Willpower.

Fury

By reshaping her body, the Disciple can increase her physical Attributes to superhuman levels. The result always makes the character look utterly inhuman, however. If Strength is increased, the character's musculature becomes grossly exagger-

ated; Dexterity increases make the character assume a crouched, feline posture with abnormally long limbs; Constitution bonuses make the character wider and larger than normal. A combination of the three results in a body stretched and remolded by a diseased mind. All but the bulkiest or most limber clothes will be torn apart if any Attribute is raised more than three levels in this manner.

Activating the Fury effect requires a Willpower and Anguish Task and costs 5 Essence points. Each Success Level provides 3 points that can be distributed among the Disciple's physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Constitution; bonuses to Strength and Constitution increase the character's Life, Endurance and Speed normally), or a +15 bonus that can be distributed among Secondary Attributes (Life Points, Endurance Points or Speed). The Essence Pool is never affected by this power. The effects of the Fury last for ten minutes, before a new Anguish Task must be performed.

After the effects of Fury abate, losses to Life or Endurance Points above the normal level are ignored. For example, a Disciple with 26 Life Points sees that rise to 41 with Fury. If he suffered 12 points of damage, he would be entirely unharmed after Fury ran its course. If 35 Life Points were inflicted, he would have 6 left after Fury subsided.

Flesh Chitin

This is the Power to create thick, leathery or chitinous skin that acts as armor, protecting the Disciple from harm. This armor often looks like scar tissue, animal fur, scales or insectile chitin.

To create Flesh Chitin, the character must succeed at a Constitution and Anguish Task. The level of protection of this armor depends on the amount of Essence spent: every point of Essence provides an Armor Value of 1D6(3). By spending 5 points, the Disciple would have an Armor Value of 1D6 x

5(15). The thicker the armor, the more inhuman the character looks. An Armor Value of 1 appears as a relatively thin layer of hardened skin or leather. It can be easily concealed under clothing. An Armor Value of 3 or higher will be very hard to conceal except under very bulky clothes. Anything more than a casual glance at the character reveals something unusual. An Armor Value of 4 or greater adds a lot of bulk to the character, making him clearly inhuman, and covered with enormous layers of scales or bony plates.

Reshape

All Disciples have the Reshape Power. Using this ability, the character can grow claws, stretch her limbs beyond human limits, and even flatten her body to enable her to pass through narrow confines or escape bonds. Reshape can also be used to acquire a monstrous, terrifying visage (the better to scare victims with), and deadly natural weapons (as part of the character's body). The process is painful, however, combining both physical pain with the psychological agonies of using Anguish. Using this Discipline requires success in a Constitution and Anguish Task. The Essence cost is determined by the extent of the changes.

Minor Changes

Short clawed fingers or sharp teeth, inflicting 1D4(2) x (Strength-1) slashing damage; an ugly face, enough to startle a person and to give the character a +1 bonus in an Intimidation Task; an increase or decrease in height or limb reach by five centimeters (two inches). These changes cost 1 Essence point and last 1 minute per Success Level.

Noticeable Changes

Long claws or an enlarged, fang-filled mouth (1D6(3) x Strength slashing damage); an utterly inhuman form, which will require unprepared people to pass a Fear Test with a -3 penalty; enlarging the torso or limbs by a third of a meter (one foot) in

length, or flattening one's body enough to pass between narrow openings (10 centimeter [4 inches] wide or larger). These cost 2 Essence points and last for 6 turns (30 seconds) per Success Level.

Major Changes

Such changes include huge claws, or enormous tooth-filled mouths (1D8(4) x Strength slashing damage); a nightmarish form of inside-out internal organs or other horrors, enough to inspire Fear Tests with a -5 penalty; altering the length of any limb by up to one meter (yard); becoming malleable enough to contort out of any bonds, or to pass through a chimney or a drain pipe. These changes cost 5 Essence points and last for 6 turns (30 seconds) per Success Level.

Absolute Changes

The character's body becomes almost completely fluid. Damage from natural weapons is not increased, but the character can flow underneath a non-hermetically sealed door, pour herself down any pipe, and become something so alien and terrible as to inspire Fear Tests at a -6 penalty. These changes cost 10 Essence points, and last one turn per Success Level.

Salvage

This Discipline allows the character to heal injuries or disease. The Disciple's flesh expels foreign objects (like bullets or viruses), close slashes or knit broken bones, and recover from all but the most devastating wounds. The process is very painful, however, combining the normal agonies of Anguish with the pain of the wounds and the sudden, unnatural shifting of flesh and blood to close them. Using this Power requires an Intelligence and Anguish Task to assess the damage and repair it, and a simple Willpower Test to endure the pain of healing. If either fails, the Essence used is lost and the wounds or disease remain. To heal another, the Disciple must be touching

him. She experiences his pain during the healing process, so the Willpower Test must still be passed.

If successful, the character heals up to 1 Life Point per Willpower level multiplied by the Success Level of the Anguish Task. For example, a Pariah with a Willpower of 4 who gains four Success Levels on the Task can cure up to 16 Life Points. Healing wounds costs 4 Essence points.

Diseases can also be cured, but they require higher Essence expenditures and varying Success Levels. Relatively minor illnesses (a simple cold, a minor infection) require one Success Level. More virulent diseases (tuberculosis, most STDs, pneumonia) require two to three Success Levels. Most varieties of cancer require a minimum of four levels (for the smallest or incipient growths) or as many as ten levels (for widespread cancers). Other terminal diseases, such as AIDS, Leukemia, or Ebola require six to ten Success Levels, depending on the stage of the disease. The amount of Essence required is equal to four times the Success Level needed to perform the healing. For example, healing a disease that requires 3 Success Levels would cost 12 Essence points. Additional Essence can be spent to increase the character's Task total in order to gain the Success Level needed. For every 3 Essence points spent, the character's Task total is raised by 1. The unmodified Task must be successful, however; the bonuses are added only after the initial roll or draw is made.



Sorrow Skin

This Discipline produces no physical changes. It allows the character to use her Anguish as mystical body armor, hardening her aura against supernatural attacks by “clothing” herself with her pain and memories. Although the effect is not visible to the naked eye, the agony surrounding the character is felt even by the Mundanes. A character using Sorrow Skin makes everyone uneasy with a combination of sadness, anger and humiliation. People unconsciously seek to avoid the character, and small children will start crying if they come within a few meters (yards) of the Disciple. Those with any sort of empathy (Chronicler's discretion) are strongly affected, also being driven to tears for no apparent reason. Gifted characters can sense the source of the sorrow, however.

These are but side effects, however. The Sorrow Skin provides psychic armor against any Essence-based attack like Soulfire, Necromantic Bolts, Vampyre and Phantasm drain attacks, and similar Powers. The effective Armor Value of the Skin is equal to 1D10(5) per level of Anguish. Any sort of hostile magick, psychic or supernatural effect targeted on the character incurs a penalty equal to the Anguish of the character. For example, a Wicce casting Affect the Psyche against a Disciple with Sorrow Skin and an Anguish of 4 will have a -4 penalty to her Invocation, in addition to any other penalties that may be imposed.

To activate this power the character must succeed with a Willpower and Anguish Task. The Sorrow Skin will last one minute per Success Level in the Task. The Disciple continues to feel the psychic pain of her memories for as long as this armor is on, however. She incurs a -1 penalty to all intellectual pursuits and a -2 penalty to any Willpower Test in situations where the character might lose her temper and lash out. The character is in a constant state of simmering rage due to the raw emotions she has called up. This Power costs 4



Essence.

Tao-Chi: Mystical Martial Arts

The legends of Asia tell of men and women who could perform wondrous feats through the application of their inner strength, their Chi. These Powers have now become a common staple of movies and television. In the world of WitchCraft, these abilities are as real as the power of magic and of the mind. Adepts of Tao-Chi, the Way of the Soul, can use their Essence and channel it through their bodies to transcend the physical limits of Mundane humankind.

Tao-Chi is very difficult to learn. The student must be magically-oriented, with the ability to channel Essence. Furthermore, the apprentice must hone both her mind and her body. Only people with superb physical conditioning can attain mastery over their inner Essence flows. In game terms, only Gifted characters with Essence Channeling and a minimum Constitution score of 2 can learn Tao-Chi. Age and physical strength are less important than good health. Many Tao-Chi masters are old and frail, and even disabled in some way.

The Storm Dragons are the foremost masters of Tao-Chi, but they are not the only ones (much as they wish it were otherwise). A number of secret societies, primarily but not exclusively of Asian origin, have their own version of Tao-Chi Powers, although they often refer to these abilities by different names.

Chi Mastery

Chi Mastery is the measure of a character's development in the arts of Tao-Chi. Characters with this ability are deeply attuned to the flows of Essence in the world, even more so than the typical Gifted character. Chi Mastery is both a power and a way of looking at the world. Characters with Chi Mastery have developed a special rapport with the world, one that transcends physical and spiritual limits. At the highest levels, characters with Chi Mastery can match some of the most flamboyant magical or psychic effects of other Arts. In game terms, Chi Mastery is learned at the cost of 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. This cost does not change after character generation.

Chi Mastery affects the senses and psychic defenses of the character. Even without using their special Tao-Chi Powers, a Chi Master is very difficult to surprise, dominate or intimidate, due to her inner balance and harmony with reality. In the course of a game, Chi Mastery can be used with Perception to perceive the presence of Supernatural beings, and to forewarn the character about likely attacks and ambushes. The Success Level of the Task determines how much the character learns. One level of success indicates a hunch or "gut feeling." Actual knowledge may require three or more Success Levels. The Chronicler should tailor the amount of information the character can glean from Chi Mastery to the needs of the Story. Used with Willpower, Chi Mastery can be used to resist attempts to control or influence the character or to probe her mind. This works both against magical and supernatural abilities and against such Social Skills as Seduction and Intimidation.

Chi Mastery is also the primary requirement to learn any Tao-Chi Powers; the level in Chi Mastery also limits the level any Tao-Chi Power can reach (see below).

Learning Tao-Chi

Tao-Chi Powers are learned like skills. During character creation, they are purchased as Special Skills, costing 2 points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. After character creation, Tao-Chi Powers are much more expensive. The first level costs 6 points; further levels require 5 points per level until level 5, and 8 points per level thereafter.

Furthermore, the level of any Tao-Chi Power cannot exceed that of the character's Chi Mastery or Martial Arts. For example, a character with Chi Mastery and Martial Arts skills of 4 can raise any Tao-Chi Power to a maximum level 4, and cannot go any higher. Only after Chi Mastery is raised through experience can other Powers also go up in level (by paying their requisite costs). By the same token, if the same character's Martial Arts skill was only a 3, then no Tao-Chi Power could be acquired or developed past this limit.

These Powers are divided into two categories: Lesser and Greater Tao-Chi. Lesser Tao-Chi are more widely known and taught (although still exceedingly rare). Most martial arts Covenants, other than the Storm Dragons, only know these Lesser Powers. Greater Tao-Chi are very powerful, and very rare; for that reason they will appear in future WitchCraft supplements.

Lesser Tao-Chi

Chi Healing

By altering the flow of Essence through the body, the character can speed up healing and recovery abilities. Diseases can be cured in minutes, and wounds can be closed or even completely healed in a few seconds, depending on both the skill of the healer and the strength of the patient. Chi Healing takes one turn of meditation; the healer must “lay hands” the patient (or herself) during this time. A Willpower and Chi Healing Task must be performed successfully. Each Success Level heals 1 Life Point of damage for every Constitution level of the patient (minimum 1 per Success Level).

This task costs the healer 2 Essence points. Additionally, the patient is temporarily drained of 1 Essence point per Life Point restored (if the character is healing himself, the Essence cost and the loss are cumulative). This lost Essence is regained normally. If the character's Essence Pool is exhausted, no further healing is possible. For example, Hiroshi is trying to heal Doris, who has a Constitution of 3 and 12 Essence points, and who

has suffered 18 points of damage. Hiroshi gets five Success Levels, which can heal up to 15 Life Points (the five levels times Doris' Constitution of 3). Unfortunately, Doris only has 12 Essence Points, so she is healed for 12 points of damage, and her Essence Pool is reduced to 0.

Diseases can also be cured with this ability. The actual Essence cost (for both the Gifted and the patient) and difficulty of the Task depend on the seriousness of the disease. Use the costs given for Mindheal (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics) as guidelines.

Chi Strike

Martial Artists with this Power can disrupt a person's natural flow of Essence by striking specific pressure points. Chi Strike combines the “mundane” application of pressure point attacks with Essence manipulation. It is the basis of the dreaded Dim Mak, the devastating pressure point attacks that can tear internal organs, paralyze limbs or knock out opponents with light blows or even a touch.

This ability first requires a successful hit on an opponent using Dexterity and Chi Strike instead of the character's normal Martial Arts skill. If the attack hits and is not successfully defended against, a number of effects can be inflicted upon the foe (only one effect can be inflicted per attack, and the player must announce which one the character was attempting during the Intentions step). The most common Chi Strike effects are detailed below. All Chi Strikes cost 1 Essence point to activate.

Paralyze

Nerve clusters can be temporarily deadened, much like a "funny-bone" injury. The victim must pass a Difficult Constitution Test, and each Success Level in the Chi Strike Task subtracts one Success Level from this Test. The attack may target an arm or leg (incurring a -2 penalty to the attack Task). If the Test fails, the victim's targeted limb is paralyzed and useless for three turns. If the body is targeted, a hit on a body nerve cluster causes respiratory distress. The victim suffers -2 to all actions for the next three combat turns.

Extra Damage

By carefully positioning her blows, the Tao-Chi master can inflict internal injuries on her target, rupturing or tearing internal organs without breaking the skin. Each Success Level in the Chi Strike Task, does an additional +2 points of damage to the victim; this is cumulative to the normal damage bonuses on the Outcome Table, and to the damage bonuses for the Martial Arts skill. For example, Kung (Martial Arts and Chi Strike skill level 4) punches a Combine agent, using Chi Strike and Dexterity. His total roll is a 15 (4 Success Levels). Kung's punch does its normal 1D4(2) x Strength. The damage multiplier increases by one as a result of the Outcome Table. Then Kung adds 8 points of damage for the Chi Strike Success Levels, and 4 points for his Martial Arts skill.

Knock Out

The Martial Artist can shut down the flow of blood to the opponent's brain, knocking him out with one or two blows. The target areas are the base or side of the neck (this attack incurs a penalty of -3 to the strike Task). On a successful hit, the victim must pass a Simple Constitution Test, at -1 per Success Level in the Chi Strike Task. If she fails, her Endurance is automatically drained to 0 and she passes out (recovery is normal). Even if the victim passes the Test, she loses 1D4(2) Endurance points per Success Level in the Dexterity and Chi Strike Task.

Dragon Strike

When channeling her Chi into a punch or kick, the Martial Artist can inflict more damage than normal. The Dragon Strike is often accompanied by a shout (called kiai by the Japanese) to help focus the attacker's mind. Dragon Strikes can break bones and shatter bricks. Unless the Martial Artist is careful, however, she can injure herself.

In game terms, a Willpower and Dragon Strike Task must be performed, and 2 Essence points are used to concentrate the Martial Artist's Chi. If the Martial Artist tries to attack in the same turn she activates the Dragon Strike, both Tasks suffer a -1 penalty (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules, Multiple Actions in Hand-to-Hand Combat). If the concentration attempt was successful, the next hand-to-hand attack performed by the character gains a bonus of +2 to the damage multiplier per Success Level in the Dragon Strike Task, to a maximum bonus of +6. If the attack misses the target or is parried, however, there is a chance that the Martial Artist will get injured. A Simple Constitution Test is needed, at a -2 penalty per Success Level in the Dragon Strike Task. If the Test is failed, the attacker suffers 1D4(2) points of damage times the Success Levels of the Dragon Strike Task. No further damage bonuses are applied.

For example, Konrad is a Chi Master with a Strength of 3, Martial Arts 5, Dexterity 4, Dragon Strike 5 and Willpower 3. He launches a devastating Kick Move at a charging Relentless Dead. Since he is using both his Dragon Strike and Kick attack in the same round, both tasks are at -1. He succeeds with both, accumulating two Success Levels in the Dragon Strike Task. His Kick damage is now $1D4 \times 8(16)$, plus an additional 5 for his Martial Art skill -- an average damage of 21 points. If Konrad had missed the attack Task, he would have suffered $1D4(2) \times 2$ points damage because of his two Success Levels. His Martial Arts skill bonus is not applied because he screwed up.

Inner Strength

Chi practitioners can channel their Power through their bodies and greatly increase their physical strength and vitality. These masters can lift great weights and inflict and endure devastating blows. Inner Strength temporarily increases the character's Strength and, consequently, her Life Points. Activating this Power requires a turn of concentration (or more, if the character is channeling spending a lot of Essence), and a Willpower and Inner Strength Task. For every 3 Essence points spent, the character's Strength is raised by one level, which also adds 4 points to the character's Life Points. This additional strength and vitality lasts for one minute per Success Level in the Task. If the character sustains damage, it is first subtracted from the extra Life Points and then from her normal Life Points. Only damage which exceeds the extra Life Points continues to bother the character after the effect expires.



Spirit Strike

This ability charges the character's limbs with Essence, enabling her to harm incorporeal entities like Ghosts or Elementals and causing physical targets to lose Essence in addition to any normal injuries. As usual, Spirit Strike and Dexterity are used instead of the normal Martial Arts skill (damage bonuses still use the character's Martial Arts skill, however). If used against insubstantial beings (including Ghosts, Nature Spirits, or astral travelers), the normal hand to hand damage of the attack will apply to the target's Vital Essence Pool. If used against a corporeal being (including normal humans, Undead, and other material supernatural creatures), the attack does normal damage, and the victim loses 1 Essence point per Success Level in the Spirit Strike Task. Activating the Spirit Strike costs 2 Essence per turn.

Speed of the Tiger

This ability allows the Martial Artist to run at surprising speeds, to make multiple attacks and to have a huge initiative edge. Activation requires an Essence point expenditure, a minimum of 1 turn of concentration, and a successful Willpower and Speed of the Tiger Task. Each Essence point spent adds 1 to the character's Speed Attribute. Each 6 extra Speed levels give the character one free action per turn that can be performed at no penalty. Under most circumstances, the speeded-up character will be the first to act in a combat situation (Chroniclars should adjust this according to the circumstances and common sense, of course). The Speed of the Tiger effect lasts for one turn per Success Level in the Task.

Essence and Immortality

Many cultures, from the Gnostic heretics of early Christianity to the Taoists of China, believe in Immortals -- enlightened humans who have transcended the boundaries of Life and Death and are no longer subject to the ravages of age. In WitchCraft, some of these "immortals" are supernatural creatures, like Vampyres or Sidhe, whose lifespans are much greater than those of humans. Other Undying Ones are Gifted humans whose power and wisdom have neutralized the aging process. Those who know the occult truths refer to them as "Lesser" or "Common" Immortals.

Any Gifted character whose Essence Pool grows beyond certain limits starts aging more slowly. Characters with over 75 points in their Essence capacity age at a rate one-third as fast as normal people. Such a character would only age the equivalent of ten years over a period of three decades. Many Magicians reach their sixties and seventies while still appearing to be in their late thirties or early forties -- enough to be the envy of their contemporaries but not unprecedented in modern times, where plastic surgery and "clean living" can hide the effects of age. Gifted characters with over 100 points of Essence age at one-fifth the normal rate. These men and women can be over a hundred years old, but still appear to be fairly young. Such characters need to cover their tracks after a certain point, or their continued good health and youth will become suspicious to those around them. After exceeding 125 points of Essence, the aging process is reduced to one-tenth the normal rate, resulting in people living for over two centuries without appearing to be much older than forty years old. Some of the leaders of the Rosicrucians were alive during the American Revolution, for example. Upon reaching 150 Essence points, the aging process nearly stops, and the character ages at one-twentieth the normal rate. At 200 Essence and beyond, aging is reduced to one fiftieth of its normal rate.



TRUE IMMORTALS

Some Gifted Arts provide means to slow or even stop the aging process. Seers with Mindheal at high Strength levels can completely stop aging. Certain Invocations can rejuvenate characters, although at a high Essence cost. Some Necromantic Powers also allow the Magician to defy Death for great lengths of time. These effects are cumulative with those resulting from high Essence reservoirs.

Gifted who age more slowly than normal humans are not the only immortals. A group of special individuals exists in the world of WitchCraft -- men and women who have stopped the aging process completely, and who never age past their prime, regardless of how many centuries or even millennia have passed. These True Immortals are not only ageless but are extremely difficult to kill, unlike "Lesser" Immortals who remain as vulnerable to accidents or violence as normal men (except for any other Gifted Arts they might have, of course). There are very few True Immortals in the world, although, like all other Gifted, their numbers have been steadily rising. This is taken as yet another symptom of the approaching Reckoning.

The Powers, limitations and Covenants of True Immortals will be fully described in a future WitchCraft sourcebook.

Regardless of how much Essence the character had during her childhood, the slowdown in the aging process does not “kick in” until the person has reached full adulthood -- roughly the mid- to late twenties. Essence does not stop growth, but only the decay caused by age. Also, the slowed aging does not begin until the character has accumulated the requisite Essence. For example, a character who grew in power and reached 75 points of Essence at age forty would start aging at one-third the normal rate from that point on; at age seventy she would look like she was fifty years old.

How the Essence is accumulated is usually not relevant. Magicians, Martial Artists, Necromancers and practitioners of any of the Gifted Arts can increase their Essence Pool through experience. By focusing and refining their Powers, the characters strengthen their souls and begin to transcend the limits of age.

New Item of Power

The WitchCraft main rulebook discusses several materials that have inherent power over the flows of Essence, and which are favored by Magicians in the making of tools or magical items.

Silver

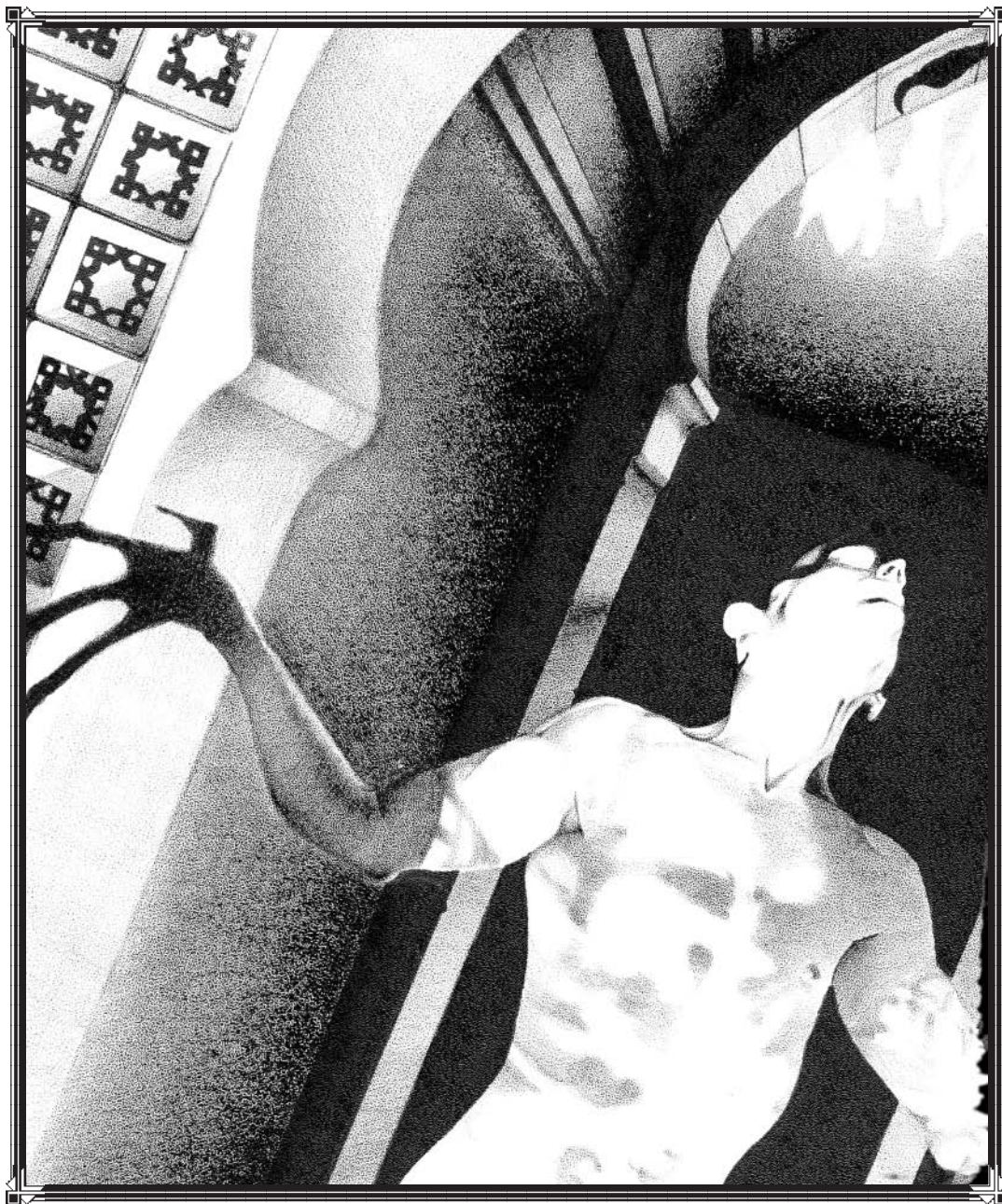
Silver appears to be “attractive” to pure Essence. Silver objects and weapons can be charged by both Gifted and Mundane owners. This can be good or bad, depending on whether the type of Essence that is absorbed by the silver object is good or bad. Negative emotions and the tainted Essence they release can, if imprinted on an object, bring bad luck to its owner.

A silver item that is Consecrated (see WitchCraft, Chapter Six: Metaphysics, Consecration Invocation) holds 10% more Essence points than a normal item (a minimum of 10 points of Essence must be infused into the object to gain this benefit). This makes silver the most favored material for the fashioning of magical items.

If a silver item is held by someone experiencing very strong emotions (a silver ring worn by somebody who saw her family massacred, for example), the item absorbs 1D4(2) to 1D12(6) Essence points. This Essence may be tapped by anyone with Essence Channeling. If the emotions are negative, however, any user of the object risks bad luck. Apply a Lesser Curse Invocation to the wielder, with each point of Essence counting as 1 point of Bad Luck.

Holy symbols made of silver, especially those used in devotional acts for several years, can be extremely powerful in the hands of a faithful person. The Essence contained in the object can be focused by the faithful against any Supernatural being who bears ill will against the wielder. The wielder must pass a Simple Willpower Test. Each Success Level in the Test releases 1 Essence point (up to the amount of Essence contained in the item), which in turn inflicts 1D8(4) points of damage to the Life Points or Vital Essence Points of the Supernatural being. These holy relics can hold as little as 1 (for a hastily blessed chalice or blade) to over 100 (for ancient relics that have been consecrated over and over for a period of centuries) Essence points.

Chapter Six: Supernatural



"Beam me up, Scotty," Graham said.

"Shut up, O'Grady," Sarah hissed.

Graham O'Grady ignored the magician as he looked down. The three of them -- Graham, Sarah and Varney -- were perched on one of the upper branches of a gigantic tree. For the first three days since he'd arrived here in the *The Twilight World*, Graham had been in awe. Now, all he wanted was to get the hell out of here.

Down below, dark shadows moved in the tree-blocked moonlight. The primitive spirits roared.

They were big and solid and they had axes and spears. No guns, thank God. Varney had killed their only gunman with one damn good shot of his .44 Automag, and apparently the other dozen or so were afraid of the weapon. They had done a nice job of throwing spears though, with enough close calls to make Graham feel like a poor man's version of *Indiana Jones*.

"I'm almost out of ammo," Varney said.

"Me too," Graham replied.

"If you can hold them off for a few minutes, I might be able to get us out of here," Sarah said. She started chanting.

The Ghosts gave up throwing spears. Two of the smaller ones scrambled atop two of the biggest, and then started to scale the tree. Varney put two bullets into one. This seemed to discourage the rest of them, and they trotted off into the forest. For a second, Graham hoped they might be gone. But then they reappeared behind several shields, each big enough to serve as a dinner table. Varney fired a couple of experimental shots at one of them. The shields were faced with metal and even the magnum rounds didn't penetrate. Satisfied, the Ghosts started to climb up, slowly because they kept the shields in front of them.

"There!" Sarah shouted, and a portal of light appeared near the end of the branch. She leaped through it. Graham followed, Varney right behind him.

They landed with a big splash.

Wherever they were, it was nighttime and a full moon. The moon looked different from the Earth's moon, however, and --

As far as the eye could see, there was only water. They were treading water on a huge ocean.

"Where the hell are we?"

"I don't know," Sarah said. "I was only moving us a few miles away. But this area of *The Wilderness* has no large lakes as far as I know. We should be seeing the shore."

"Maybe there was a screw up somewhere," Graham said helpfully.

A few yards ahead of them, something huge emerged from the water. For about a minute, they saw a long, serpentine body run past them, its wake buffeting them. Then it disappeared.

"There's something bigger beneath us," Varney said.

Graham barely resisted a powerful urge to start screaming hysterically. "Er, maybe you should try casting a new *Walkgate* before we start hearing the theme of *Jaws* . . . ?"

Introduction

This chapter provides further background on the world of WitchCraft and its more fantastic aspects. It is by no means exhaustive; only the surface of the subjects addressed is presented. Chroniclers should view this material simply as a core or basis upon which to weave their Stories and plotlines.

The discussion here begins with Sephiroths, those realms of reality beyond normal human experiences. Two important Realms of the Sephiroth of Geburah are detailed: the Threshold and the Twilight World. Additionally, new supernatural threats are included. A new Dark Covenant is discussed: the Lords of Pain, a group of sadistic blood-sorcerers. A new type of supernatural predator, the shape-shifting Ferals, rounds out the text.

Sephiroths

The world of WitchCraft is made up of many different layers or aspects of reality beyond the physical, so-called "real world." The world of the Mundanes is known as Malkuth, Midgard, or Middle Malkuth -- the place where Essence becomes flesh. In some ways, Malkuth is a place of stability, where a set of physical laws imposed by the Creator holds sway over most things and where only the powers and the will of the strongest humans (who were made in the Creator's image) can hope to exert fundamental changes. The existence of all living beings revolves around Malkuth most of the time. This is where we are born, experience life, and die. This is where many, perhaps most, souls come back to continue their cycle of reincarnation. It is also the site of evolution, the place where humans grow in mind and spirit.

Beyond Malkuth lie many other domains, however. Most magical practitioners, and the few Mundanes who know of them, call these domains Otherworlds. An enormous body of myth and legend has been passed down through the ages about the Otherworlds. To avoid ambiguities

and to standardize terms, many scholars and cosmologists who specialize in the Otherworlds have adopted the more precise terms Sephiroths or Spheres, named after the elements of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. For the same reasons, this chapter uses the terms Sephiroth and Sphere rather than Otherworld.

Some Sephiroths have counterparts in Norse and Germanic mythology, which recognizes a universal "tree" (called Ygdrassil) and several separate domains, some inhabited by gods, others by men or the spirits of men, and others by beings between humans and angels, such as the Fey races and the monstrous Giants. Other Sephiroths are reflected in tales from other mythologies. Some Sephiroths bear little relationship to Malkuth, and their alien atmosphere and concepts would drive even the most hardened human mad in moments.

THIS CHAPTER DETAILS INFORMATION KNOWN primarily by specialists who study these subjects. For that reason, the terms Sephiroth, Realms and Malkuth, rather than the more common Otherworlds and Earth, are used.

Each Sephiroth is a universe of its own, vast and composed of many lesser regions. Specialists have labeled these regions Realms. Some Realms are small, barely enough to accommodate a handful of people; others stretch across galaxies. All these places have their own physical laws. In some, the laws are different from Malkuth but stable. In others, they are erratic and ever-changing.

One Sephiroth is discussed in this chapter. It is called Geburah, and is also known as Hel or Hades. Therein lie the Death Realms, a collection of worlds inhabited by spirits of the dead who do not reincarnate or Pass On. Cruel demons torment the souls of sinners, war casualties relive their greatest battles, and powerful spirits carve their own kingdoms and domains.

Major Sephiroths

The Sephiroths are different "levels" of reality, dimensional areas that are connected and yet separate from one another, much like the layers of an onion. At the bottom is Malkuth, the physical world where we dwell. At the other extreme lies the nearly unreachable Kether, where the Creator is said to dwell.

It is said that there are ten Sephiroths, each with its own natural laws, all connected to the others through gates and roads that can be found by the wise and the powerful. Each Sephiroth is in turn the home to several (in some cases hundreds of) Realms, pocket dimensions with their own characteristics. The Sephiroth of Geburah, for example, holds dozens of Realms, all dealing with an aspect of Death.

The better-known Sephiroths are:

Kether: Little is known about this purported highest level of reality, except that none who venture there even return. The most powerful and wise entities in other realities believe that this is the region where the Creator dwells, a place of perfect happiness and balance. Some spirits of the dead feel irresistibly attracted to the lighted gateways leading to Kether. Those that pass through disappear. Theories about their fates abound among cosmologists. Is Kether Heaven, a place where the spirits of the dead make contact with -- and perhaps become part of -- God? Is it a world of pure potentiality where those who enter cease to exist altogether? Nobody seems to know.

Binah: Binah is a universe of raw energies and potentiality. The Realm of Elysium, the abode of angels, can be found here. Some occultists have identified this Sephiroth as Eden, the paradise humans were expelled from by the angels, while others claim that this is a higher plane of existence to which we will all eventually ascend. Binah also holds the Elemental Realms, where spirits embodying the primal forces of creation

dwell. Outsiders reach this Sephiroth only with the utmost difficulty. Unprotected humans who find themselves in Binah die in minutes unless protected by magic or the good will of one of the inhabitants. It is believed that a few worthy humans are granted access to Binah after their deaths, and that they join the ranks of the Heavenly Host in Elysium.

Geburah: Also known as Hades, and Hel, this is the land of the Dead. Here dwell the ghosts and phantasms who cannot or will not return to Malkuth to be reincarnated, or reach Kether to become one with the Creator. Some of the Realms of Geburah are dark, shadowy dimensions where ghosts have banded together to create their own kingdoms and nations, often distorted shadows of the lands of their past. Others are ruled by god-like entities that enslave or awe spirits into doing their bidding. Yet others are controlled by the Fallen Angels, who take out their anger on the luckless, sinful souls they snag for torment in the Dits of Gehenna.

Netzach: This is the abode of the gods, called Asgard, Olympus, and many other names. Netzach is where many descendants of the Sephyr and Naturas, particularly those who seek the adoration of mortals, make their home. The Sephiroth is divided into countless Realms where many so-called deities live in a mythical reality that reflects the beliefs of their human worshippers.

Yesod: This area has many names: Alfheim, Tir Na Nog, the Realm of Youth, the Moon-Realm, Avalon, Shamôhala, Agharti. These are the Realms of the Fey, of mythical utopias and strange worlds. The Seiteighe and Unseiteighe Courts can be found here along with dozens of other Realms. This Sphere is also said to contain the homes of some of the ancient Dragons, beings of immense power believed to be among the oldest living creatures anywhere.

Gateways

Gateways are places where the barriers between the worlds -- both between Realms in the same Sephiroth, or between Realms in two different Spheres of existence -- have been weakened enough to permit travelers to cross them. Most Gateways were built millennia ago, in the mythical age known to occultists as the time of the Elder Kingdoms. A few are more recent in origin, the creation of powerful sorcerers. In either case, Gateways are normally only used by Magicians with the right knowledge and enough power to activate them.

These powerful magical creations typically lead to one specific Realm in one specific Sephiroth. They are commonly (but not always) two-way openings, returning those who travel back through them to their point of origin. In theory, every Realm could have one Gateway leading to every other Realm in the Sephiroth. In practice, most Realms only connect to a handful of other places, and travelers often have to make several "connections" to reach a specific Realm. One prominent exception is Malkuth. This land is linked to almost every Realm, albeit most of the Gateways are hidden, dormant, or both.

Typically, Gateways are built near or on top of Places of Power, since in those areas the walls of reality are already thinner than elsewhere. The location of most Gateways are not commonly known. Select high-ranking members of the Covenants of Magic know where to find certain Gateways, but such information is rarely shared with outsiders, or even with other members of the same Covenant.

Opening and closing a Gateway normally requires use of the magical Invocation of the same name. The actual shape of the opening varies widely. Some look like portals of light, others seem to be stormy tears in the fabric of reality, and others appear like dark doorways with no clue as to

what lies beyond. Going through typically requires nothing more than walking through the entryway. In some cases, the opening actually sucks in those nearby, whether they intended to go or not (unwilling travelers must pass Difficult Strength Tests to resist the suction effect; powerful Gateways may impose a penalty to the Strength Test -- anywhere between -1 to -6).

The Reckoning is causing some Gateways to spontaneously manifest themselves, sometimes dragging off anything and anybody that happens to be in the vicinity. There are certain rituals that, if conducted during the right times at the appropriate places, may allow even Mundanes to open Gateways, although those rituals are very difficult to learn. The openings between worlds may also be accidentally activated by large outpourings of Essence, or by another dimensional-bending Invocation (like Walkgate or Bilocation).

The Chronicler should treat Gateways as story-line elements -- they can be found if the Story needs them to exist, and not otherwise. A dimension-hopping game is beyond the scope of Witchcraft (but not of future Unisystem games), so most Gateways in a game should link Malkuth with, at most, a few Realms.



Geburah -- The Death Realms

The Death Realms are collectively known as Geburah, the Sphere of Severity, where human souls often undergo harrowing experiences that may strengthen, scar or even destroy them. There are many "worlds" within Geburah, each with its own boundaries and physical laws. To completely depict the Sphere of Geburah in all its terrible magnificence would exhaust several tomes. The two best known Death Realms are described here: The Threshold and the Twilight World.

Chroniclers who wish to run Stories in the Death Realms should keep in mind that, unlike the physical world, the worlds of Geburah are always changing, and are never clearly defined. No maps can be drawn of those Realms, because they contract and expand in unfathomable rhythms, and shift to accommodate the millions of souls and alien spirits that dwell therein. The Chronicler can let her imagination run rampant, using scenes from books or movies for inspiration.

The Threshold

The Threshold is primarily a place between worlds, an entryway to the Death Realms. It is also much more: a place of infinite possibilities, unbound by the limitations of time and space that exist even in the worlds of the spirit. This is where the souls of all dying humans go after they die, or even when they are near death. This is also a place oft visited by dreamers and mystics, a world of prophetic visions and strange insights.

A place of choices, the Threshold is the staging point from which the spirits of the dead Move On to higher planes of existence, reincarnate back on Malkuth, or are dragged screaming to Hell. Many of the shapes and elements of the Threshold are formed by the minds of those who enter it. Some believe that the Threshold is a reflection of the collective unconscious of all humans, living or dead, a Realm of the mind and ancestral memories.

For all its dream-like appearance, what happens in the Threshold has a very real effect. The visions one experiences there do not only encompass the past, but the future as well. It appears that the Threshold is outside or beyond Time, enabling those who dwell there to see the flows of time without restrictions -- but with limited understanding.

Most visitors to the Threshold perceive it as a place of deep darkness, broken by small portals of light. These portals mostly lead to the other Death Realms or to the unknown land of Kether. While in the Threshold, the spirit may encounter old friends and acquaintances, or may find itself in places from its past. Some spirits remember all their past lives at once, an overwhelming experience that provides amazing insights. The dying sometimes see prophetic visions of possible futures. Sometimes, they see the future as it would be if they choose to Move On (and die). These visions may prompt the spirit to return to its body and be revived, or hurry its departure from our world. In a WitchCraft campaign, these visions can be used for powerful scenes: a character near death may experience visions of some tragedy that will happen if she is not alive to stop it, for example.

Traveling into the Threshold is usually done via astral travel, or by dying. The spirits of the dead can cross over from the Threshold back into the living world, but only a tiny minority does so. Most of the dead, by the force of their beliefs, suffer one of several fates. Some are drawn into the light portals leading to Kether (and whatever awaits them beyond). Many become reincarnated -- this process affects as many as nine-tenths of those souls that do not travel to Kether. Others are dragged into one of the many Death Realms where they are be punished or rewarded for their sins and virtues. The remaining, usually lost souls driven by some powerful need to return to the world of the living, can leave the Threshold by concentrating for a few seconds (1-4 turns).

At various points, this chapter refers to astral travel or astral travelers. These travelers separate their souls and consciousness from their bodies and move about. Such travel is accomplished by using the Soul Projection Invocation, the Oeath Projection Necromantic Power or another Metaphysical power or ability.

The Threshold is unaffected by distance. If one's will is strong enough, any place on Malkuth (but only Malkuth) can be observed from this realm, provided it is not mystically protected.

This realm is not only the domain of those near death or recently dead, however. Many beings stalk the Threshold, looking for prey. Vampyres, by their strange nature, are uniquely attuned to the Threshold. After killing somebody, the Vampire can follow his victim to the Threshold and convince or even force the soul back into her body, to be Unborn like her murderer.

Physical Laws of the Threshold

Physical Appearance: The recently dead or those near death usually look exactly as they do on Malkuth. Necromancers, Vampyres and other experienced travelers can alter their form as they wish.

Dying: All that enter the Threshold do so as spirit or astral entities. They can be destroyed and Unraveled in combat normally. The recently dead who linger here too long risk attracting the attention of astral predators in the area.

Healing and Injury: Healing a character's Vital Essence or Life Point Pools is done normally, except for Essence Channelers, who heal at the same rate that they recover Essence (Essence Channeling level per minute).

Sustenance: Eating or drinking is not necessary in the Threshold. Ghosts can stay in this plane indefinitely, but few do so, since flashes from their lives (some of them painful or disturbing) start haunting them after a short while.

Supernatural Abilities: Most supernatural abilities do not work in the Threshold. Ghosts and Phantasms cannot use most of their powers. Astral travelers cannot use Magic, Necromancy or similar Gifted abilities. Vampyres cannot drain victims of Essence; they can only seek to seduce or intimidate the souls of their victim into the existence of Undeath. Only in Sanctuaries (see below) can supernatural abilities be used with impunity.

All visitors in the Threshold can, however, see into other's memories and souls. By winning a Resisted Test (Simple Willpower Tests on both sides), anyone can cause a victim to relive episodes from their past, and watch those episodes play out. Events like traumatic childhood events, decisive moments in a character's life, and tragic or triumphant occasions can be awakened in this manner. The person instigating the memory does not need to know exactly what he is looking for; the visions answer any question about the target. These visions are seen from the perspective of the person who lived them, and all those around the person with those memories can share them. The length, number and detail of those visions are left to the Chronicler to decide. Depending on the circumstances, several Resisted Tests may be required to gain all the information desired (these visions should be dependent far more on the needs of the story and their roleplaying potential than on dice rolls). Those who enter the Threshold risk coming to grips with unsettling or repressed memories, and revealing intimate secrets to those around them. For that reason, many Threshold visitors prefer to travel alone, despite the risks.

For example, Roy and Grace, former lovers turned enemies, confront each other in the Threshold. Roy wishes to know why Grace turned into such a domineering person, and by winning a contest of wills, forces her hidden memories to surface. Both Roy and Grace relive several episodes of her childhood in which she felt helpless and powerless. Roy sees, in intimate detail, how Grace eventually acquired an iron-hard resolve always to be in control of her life.

Adventuring in the Threshold

For the most part, the Threshold is a place to visit briefly to gain insight or information, but little more. Exploring it is impossible, as the realm has no defined boundaries or locations.

Visions After Death: Any character who is severely injured can find himself in the Threshold. This is a good time to drop clues, hints or omens to suit the Chronicler's plans for the Story. The visions and omens should never be too clear or specific, however. Not only does the nature of the Threshold work against clarity, but the memories of the character should be jumbled and confused after the close brush with death.

Hunting the Soul Eaters: The Soul Eaters are a dangerous and mysterious class of spirits, inhuman beings with great power (see later in this chapter). They prowl the Threshold, hunting lone and unwary astral travelers or the souls of the dead. An intrepid group might try to do a little hunting of their own, maybe even trying to follow these creatures' tracks to their native realm. The quest might be for altruistic reasons, or simply to gain valuable information, as the Soul Eaters know much of the lore of the Death Realms.

Sanctuaries

Sanctuaries are areas created by powerful Gifted and Supernatural creatures inside the Threshold. They are little "bubbles" or "pockets" of normal reality that are built in the Threshold and connected to other realities by a link of Essence. These "pocket dimensions" are used as hideouts, resting places, or even permanent homes by those who create them. They require a permanent Essence sacrifice, however, and only the most powerful beings can build anything bigger than a large room or a small apartment. Sanctuaries are very hard to enter and locate for anybody other than their creators, making them the ideal safehouses. Furthermore, by spending enough Essence, the maker of a

Sanctuary can use the Threshold's independence from the boundaries of time to make time move faster or more slowly in their "home." This is often used to accelerate such activities as healing, long and difficult Invocations, and even learning new Gifted abilities.

To create a Sanctuary, the character must be either an Essence Channeler or a Supernatural being able to spend Essence freely, without need of a ritual (any Supernatural being that can empower his abilities with Essence without using Channeling, like the Fey or Vampyres, would qualify). The creation process requires a Simple Willpower Test and a permanent Essence point sacrifice. Each 2 points of Essence permanently spent on the Sanctuary creates a self-contained space of one third of a meter cubed (1 foot cubed) per Success Level in the Test (additional Tests and Essence sacrifices can be used to enlarge the Sanctuary). This room can be shaped in any form of the creator's choice. The process takes 2 hours per Essence point spent, during which time the creator must be constantly concentrating on the activity. If he is interrupted, he has to start over, but no Essence is lost.



The Sanctuary cannot be detected in the Threshold by anybody, Gifted or Supernatural, unless the creator allows it to happen (see below). The Sanctuary itself is a cube-shaped featureless gray room, although furniture and decorations can be brought in (anything that fits through the doorway, which is about 2 meters (6 feet) by 2 meters (6 feet)). The walls are solid and durable, but not indestructible; they have an Armor Value of 10. Inflicting 100 points of damage on a wall opens a small hole in it (about 15cm (6 inches) in diameter) that looks out into the Threshold. Doing more than 1,000 points of damage on any one wall causes the Sanctuary to collapse, throwing everybody out into the Threshold. On the other hand, the walls take nails and screws with no problem, and furniture, interior walls and even additional floors can be built into them.

Powers of the Sanctuary: The physical laws of Malkuth, or of the plane of existence linked to the Sanctuary, apply within it. This means that Gifted powers work normally inside it. Furthermore, the creator, by spending 5 Essence points per minute, can open a temporary window into the Threshold, enabling him to use the Thresholds' special powers. Doing this, however, reveals the Sanctuary to anybody in the Threshold who might be nearby (like Soul Eaters) and also permits outsiders to enter the pocket dimension.

The Sanctuary's doorway from Malkuth (or whatever Realm it is linked to) is fixed in place. Most creators pick an area that is secluded or under their control. Only the creator can activate the doorway, which is invisible when closed. When activated, it manifests as a dark hole in the air, about two meters (six feet) tall and two meters (six feet) wide. The manifestation is clearly visible, but noiseless. Opening the doorway costs 10 Essence points (regained normally) and takes a minimum of 2 turns or however many turns it takes to accumulate the required Essence (if the creator is an Essence Channeler), whichever is more. Once open, the creator can hold it open for up to a

minute (after which another 5 Essence must be spent to keep it open for another minute), or make it shut down as soon as he is through (useful if the creator is being pursued by somebody or he wants to attract little attention). Anybody or anything that can fit through the doorway can be brought into the Sanctuary. Getting out requires the creator to open a doorway leading back to the point of origin, for the same Essence cost. If the creator is killed, the Sanctuary disappears and all its contents "spill" out into the Threshold!

Time Differentials: By permanently sacrificing Essence, the character can make time move either faster or slower (one or the other must be chosen; a Sanctuary can either be "fast" or "slow" but not both) in the Sanctuary relative to the connecting world. Each 20% differential costs 1 Essence point, permanently sacrificed, on top of the cost of creating the sanctuary (doubling or halving the rate of time flow, which would be a 100% differential, would cost 5 Essence points).

For example, Joyce is a powerful Necromancer with Essence Channeling. She wants to create a Sanctuary, and spends 6 Essence points permanently on size. She gets four Success Levels in the Willpower Test, for a total area of four meters (12 feet) cubed. After a lot of work, she turns the room into a 2-floor dwelling and laboratory. Joyce sets the doorway in the basement of her own home, where nobody can see her go in or out. During the creation process, she also sacrifices 10 Essence points to triple the rate at which time flows in the area (+200%). If she spends a day in her Sanctuary, a mere 8 hours will have passed on Earth! Basically she can get things done three times as fast while in the Sanctuary, although that also means she will age faster, too.



The Twilight World

This is believed to be the “outermost” level of Geburah after the Threshold. It is a shadowy version of Malkuth, a world of whispering and howling winds, dark skies dominated by an ever-present full moon, and ominous locations. Despite the full moon, light is always weak in this Realm. Shapes and features can usually be seen, but colors are hard to perceive. The remarkable similarity between the Twilight World and Malkuth supports the theory that the latter Realm is continually created by the memories of the millions of Ghosts and Phantasms that dwell there.

Major Locations

The geography of the Twilight World does not correspond to the physical world. Instead, it is broken into a few major “regions.” One is known as the City, and appears to be an amalgam of every city of the world, past and present. In this seemingly endless urban jungle, paved and cobblestone streets are interspersed by the occasional dirt road, and looming versions of some of Malkuth’s most

famous buildings cast dark shadows on the dimly-lit streets. These buildings are fully functional: doors, elevators and escalators work, although lights always seem somewhat muted, and most offices and rooms are abandoned. Some places are open -- bars, meeting places, and temples are used to socialize, trade information or services, to worship old or new gods. Hidden beneath the buildings is a network of tunnels called the Catacombs or the Warrens. These tunnels lead to numerous Gateways to other Death Realms and even other planes of existence, but they are plagued by predatory Ghosts and stranger, more dangerous creatures.

Outside the City lies the Wilderness, a shadowy region of forests, jungles and mountains. The Spirits of primitive humans dwell there, hunting the Ghosts of all kinds of animals. Mixed tribes of nomads from all times and cultures can be found in the Wilderness, although their numbers have been dwindling steadily in the past two centuries. The Wilderness surrounds the City on all sides. Forbidding mountains surround the Wilderness.

Hidden within the wilds are the Ruins, strange, twisted remains of long-lost Malkuth civilizations. Some of these Ruins contain magical items and treasures that can be used both on Malkuth and the Death Realms; others have scrolls and stone tablets with secret knowledge. Finding the Ruins is not easy. Entering them and leaving unscathed is harder still, for they are guarded by angry Ghosts and deadly entities.

The last region is known as the Byways, a network of roads crisscrossing the mountain range that surrounds this realm, and leading to other Death Realms. These roads are one of the few alternatives to magical Gateways, but they are limited to realms inside Geburah.

In the mountains, most Byways are narrow, twisting trails. Travelers must be wary of attacks by bandits, Soul Eaters, and other creatures.

When these roads exit the Twilight World, the mountains start to level off and become a featureless plain. The Byways crisscross in every direction and lead into the distance. Some Byways are marked by signs indicating where they lead. Some of these signs are in archaic languages (Sumerian, Latin or Egyptian hieroglyphs), while others are enchanted so that any literate being can read them. The signs may be out-of-date or outright lies, however. Also in this plain, travelers may have to contend with the Grim Reapers (see Denizens of the Death Realms later in this chapter).

Essence in the Twilight World

The flows of Essence in this realm are weaker than most. Ambient Essence is very limited -- there are no Times of Power and very few Places of Power. As a result, the spirits that dwell here must find sustenance by consuming Essence. The easiest way to do this is by consuming the food and drink prepared by the Gatherers. Slightly more difficult is trapping and consuming the flesh of the animals that live in the Wilderness. At the most extreme, the dangerous practice of spirit cannibalism occurs. Consuming the Essence of an intelligent

being often leads to madness, as pieces of the memories and personalities of the victim become permanently imprinted in the cannibal.

In the Twilight World, Essence is used as the form of currency. Anybody can transform some of his Energy Essence into "marbles," glowing globules of condensed Essence. These globules come in "denominations" of 1 to 20 Marbles, depending on how many points of Essence they contain (one Marble is equal to one point of Essence; a 10-Marble piece contains 10 Essence points). Marbles can only be produced by an act of will and cannot be extracted forcibly (although people can be coerced or intimidated into doing so). Marbles can be used to replenish Essence, and to empower magic and other Essence-based powers. Vital Essence cannot be transformed into Marbles.

Ghosts and Phantasms can produce up to one Marble per Energy Essence point in their Pools, every week. Astral travelers, and any other supernatural being who manages to arrive to the Twilight World can create one Marble for every two points of their Essence Pool.

Hierarchies

The Twilight World has no organized government or leadership. A few groups have acquired a degree of influence, but none reign supreme. There are a number of gangs of Spirits that have banded together for diverse reasons. Some are small, with no more than half a dozen members, and are only concerned with their own survival. Others are far larger, and control entire sections of the City or Wilderness. Three gangs are particularly powerful. The Urchins are a vicious band of ghost-children who control several blocks of the City and a few tunnels in the Warrens, and who charge travelers a price in Essence Marbles for safe passage. The Cult of Kali is a group of ghostly assassins who worship the Indian goddess of Death, and whose services can be hired to Unravel the soul of any Spirit. Finally, the Wise Guys are a huge extended gang made up of the spirits of dead gangsters of all eras,



from 1920s mobsters to 1990s street gangstas. Several famous people, from organized crime kingpins to performers, are said to be leaders.

Two Covenants from Malkuth have a presence in this Realm. The Twilight Order maintains a small observation post in the City's version of the Empire State Building. A Gateway on the top floor is connected to half a dozen Gates on Malkuth. All of these locations are owned and guarded by the Order. From there, the Mediums venture forth to gather information, hunt down dangerous Phantasms, and deal with any perceived threat to the both lands of the Living and the Dead.

The House of Thanatos has three Chapter Houses in the Twilight World, two in the City and another in the Wilderness. One of the Chapter Houses in the City is led by a Gatherer, a 17th-century tavern owner named Josiah Raleigh. Raleigh is very influential in the area, which is controlled by the Wise Guys, and thanks to him the Thanatoi can operate in relative safety.

Outside the gangs and the Covenants, there are few other forms of authority. Beings of power like "gods," angels, or demons rarely venture into the Twilight World. The weak Essence flows in this realm mean that such beings are terribly vulnerable here, and they can be injured and even killed with far greater ease than in other realms. As a result, the Twilight World enjoys a remarkable measure of independence.

The Gatherers

The Gatherers are a special type of Ghost. Most of them are the Spirits of barmen, cooks, or innkeepers who, after death, decided to continue their professions. They have the power to create food and drink in the Twilight World. The process works in a manner similar to the Ghostsmith Power (see Chapter Three: Inhumans, Special Ghost Powers and Vulnerabilities). The Gatherers need not spend their Vital Essence; instead they use ambient Essence, plus that given to them in

payment to create the food and drink. The food is usually simple -- like that served in a medieval inn or a modern bar, although the City boasts a few real restaurants. Drink is often strong and intoxicating; the Gatherers' brews can make Ghosts drunk. Most Gatherers have a place of business where their word is law.

The importance of Gatherers is such that they are rarely bothered or threatened. Killing a Gatherer is one of the few crimes that is universally persecuted in this realm. Even the gangs that control areas of the City do not interfere in the affairs of the Gatherers. Due to this autonomy, many Gatherers have become informal magistrates of the Twilight World, acting as arbiters in disputes, or advising the community on a number of issues. The establishments run by the Gatherers are also great places to find information or conduct business. Violence is rarely tolerated there, and the Gatherers are usually able to hire enough bouncers and enforcers to maintain the peace.

Physical Laws of the Twilight World

Physical Appearance: All dwellers of the Twilight World have a solid form. Whether they are astral travelers, the ghosts of long-dead people, angels from Heaven or demons from Hell, as long as they are in the Twilight World they have physical bodies. They are dressed in whatever clothing they preferred to wear in life, if they are living beings or Phantasms, or whatever clothing they happened to be buried in, if they are other Spirits. Spirits have Life Points equivalent to their Vital Essence Pool; other visitors have as many Life Points as they have on Malkuth or their native Realm.

Dying: In the Twilight World, death is a relative concept. Even the Spirits of the dead can be slain, but this is not necessarily a permanent condition. If a living astral traveler is killed in the Twilight World, he must pass an unmodified Survival Test (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: The

Rules), or his body will also die. Somebody who has entered the Twilight World body and soul through a Gateway, on the other hand, dies just as if he had been killed on Malkuth. His spirit becomes Unraveled, and he will not be able to reincarnate or appear as a ghost for several years, at least. A Ghost or Phantasm who is killed here has a chance to avoid Unraveling, by passing a Difficult Willpower Test. If they can do so, they reappear in the Twilight World 1D4(2) "days" later, none the worse for wear.

Healing and Injury: Healing a character's Vital Essence or Life Point Pools is done normally, except for Essence Channelers, who regain damage at the same rate that they recover Essence (Essence Channeling level per minute).

Sustenance: The Dead must eat to survive in the Twilight World. This means paying Gatherers, hunting or Essence cannibalism. A Spirit who does not "eat" at least one meal a day is temporarily drained of one point of Vital Essence. Such shortages are filled completely upon eating.

Human travelers are advised not to eat anything in the Lands of the Dead. The Essence pattern of the food of the Dead intermingles with the Essence of the eater. Such intermingling makes it far more difficult to return to the world of the Living. In game terms, each meal consumed in the Twilight World gives the character a cumulative -3 penalty to return to Malkuth; even trying to cross a Gateway requires a Difficult Willpower Test at -3 per meal! These effects last for 1D4 days after consuming the meal.

Time: Time in the Twilight World passes at the same rate as on Malkuth.

Supernatural Powers: All Gifted abilities work in this realm. Ghosts and Phantasms who had Gifted powers in life can use them at will, as can human travelers. Spirit powers that require an immaterial body (like Phantom Spirit and Spirit Glamour) cannot be used here. Vampyres can use all their abilities, and can prey and feed on the Dead. There is one modification to the normal rules, however. Magical and Necromantic powers that drain Essence inflict Life Point damage when used in the Twilight World.

Adventuring in the Twilight World

The Twilight World is a dark echo of our own, and as such can be used for many types of adventures or entire Stories. Ghost-oriented Stories can use the Twilight World as their main setting, a place where the Spirit characters can go on quests, struggle for survival, or strive towards greatness or redemption. Games about the Order of Thanatos often lead to this realm.

Razor Jim: The Cast Members (who could belong to any Covenant) are on the trail of Razor Jim, a murderous Vampyre serial killer who has left a trail of bodies over six states. The characters eventually discover that Razor Jim is using Gateways between Malkuth and the Twilight World to travel from place to place. Furthermore, Razor Jim's depredations are not limited to the lands of the Living alone. He has destroyed several Ghosts in the City, including a Gatherer, and more than one lynch mob is hunting for him in that realm as well. There is a method to the Vampyre's madness, however. The creature is attempting to awaken a lesser Mad God, H'Iorgh the Hungry, which is imprisoned in the Catacombs beneath the City. Already, Razor Jim has summoned several minions of H'Iorgh by committing these ritualistic murders. Unless Razor Jim is found and stopped, H'Iorgh the Hungry will be awakened to prowl the Catacombs and beyond.

Other Death Realms

To describe all the different Realms of Geburah would take at least an entire book, or perhaps several books. Here is a brief rundown of some of the more notable realms. Chroniclers are encouraged to develop them using their imagination and creativity, or to create their own Realms. Keep in mind that all aspects of Death can be embodied in one of the many Realms of Geburah.

The Pit of Gehenna: The Pit is controlled by the fallen Seraphim, beings called Demons or Oevils. It is a place of punishment, where the souls of sinners and criminals are dragged from the Threshold and taken to a world of infernal heat, unbearable cold and terrible tortures. Escape from the Pit is possible, but difficult. Those who manage to renounce their former sins may manage to break free by performing some great labor or challenge. Such tasks are never easy for demons never release their captives willingly. The Pit is divided into several levels; the lower ones reserved for the worst living beings. Some say there are seven levels, while others maintain there are ten, in a mockery of the Ten Sephiroth of the Tree of Life.

The Pit is nominally ruled by Lucifer, the former Lord Archangel, king of the Hell-Realm within the Pit. He controls an army of demons and human slaves, and often plots to add to his Realm by conquering its neighbors in Gehenna, other Death Realms and Realms outside Geburah. Ideally, he would like to storm Binah and retake the Elysium, but that time has not come yet. The signs of the Reckoning, however, might indicate that the final battle is not far off.

The Plane of Battles: This chaotic realm is populated by the spirits of casualties of war, both military and civilian. Here, long-dead soldiers of a thousand battles continue to fight the old conflicts, sometimes changing their results, and sometimes repeating history. Sometimes completely new and anachronistic battles are created, such as Confederates storming World War One trenches or fighting Mongol cavalry, or Roman Legions battling Zulu warriors or the Iraqi Republican Guard. Those who die here are usually reborn in a few days, to carry on the struggle. Some of the generals of these armies have devised plans to take over the entire Realm, and even invade other Realms. So far, the most they have been able to accomplish is to conduct raids on other Realms and seize small stretches of territory. One faction, led by an uneasy Triumvirate of the ghosts of Julius Caesar, Napoleon and Edwin Rommel, seems to be ready to make a major move in the near future.

Valhalla: This realm is controlled by the Norse Gods, and is the domain of Odin. Here, the souls of devout Norse warriors who fell in battle get the chance to spend eternity fighting and celebrating. Every day, the warriors are released on a plain and do battle until sundown. At the end of that period, the "dead" are resurrected and a huge feast is served. Even visitors to the Realm do not die or unravel if they meet a fighting end here, but rise at the end of the day. The warriors are training for the final battle, Ragnarok. Some say that the Reckoning is this final battle, and that soon the Warriors of Valhalla will march to war, for real. The Valkyries, humanoid warrior-women, also live in this Realm, and they act as the agents of Odin in other Sephiroths and Realms.

The mythological Valhalla is connected to the Plane of War by several Gateways. On occasion, one of Odin's Avatars or another powerful Norse deity has led the warriors of Valhalla and the Valkyries in battle against one of the many ghost armies in the Plane of War. Valhalla is also connected to the Realm of Asgard (located in the Sephiroth of Netzach), and traffic between the two Realms is frequent.

The Land of Khem: This Realm is the result of powerful Egyptian magic and necromancy. The funerary rites of the ancient Egyptians did work, after a fashion, and their priests and sorcerers were able to break the old adage, "You cannot take it with you." The Pharaohs, in all their glory, were interred with wealth, servants and fortune. Some of them rose in Geburah with ghostly equivalents of those things. Not all the rites were successful, but over a dozen Pharaohs still live in the Khem, the Black Land, attended by small armies of ghostly servants and warriors. The Khemites are a troublesome force in the Death Realms. Many Dark Pharaohs are as power-hungry and militaristic as they were in life, and over the millennia have plotted to expand their Realm at the expense of others.

Hades: Hades is the name of this realm and its ruler, the Greek God of Death. Most of the souls trapped here wander about dazed, without direction or motivation. Those judged guilty of severe crimes are tormented just as badly as in the Pits of Gehenna. Hades has several important features, including the River Styx, the waters of which can be used as a powerful source of Essence, and the River Lethe, whose waters can bring total and permanent forgetfulness

to those who drink or even touch them. In addition to the dead, this Realm is inhabited by monstrous Cerberus Hounds, three-headed constructs of great ferocity, and by beings like the Ferryman who patrols the waters of the Styx. Hades is connected to Olympus by a heavily guarded Gateway. Only those with the permission of Hades himself are allowed to pass. Other Gateways connect Hades to Malkuth. They are in remote locations and are also well guarded. The ancient tales of heroes who ventured to Hades and then escaped are not wholly without foundation.

The Death Duchies: Each of these small Realms is controlled by a Death Lord, powerful Phantasms who have learned to take control over a piece of Geburah and isolate it from the rest of the Sephiroth. The Death Lords enslave other ghosts and create complex replicas of places that had meaning in their previous existences. Most Duchies look like manors, castles or houses, and some are of titanic proportions. Some of these Realms are linked to Malkuth through a haunted house or other Place of Power, from which the Death Lord draws strength and occasional victims. Many Death Lords have "lived" for centuries, and have accumulated huge stores of magical and occult knowledge. Some are able to use Magic and other Gifted powers while in their Realms, which gives them a tremendous edge when dealing with others of the Dead. The Grim Reapers and the Death Lords are mortal enemies. Once in a while, the Reapers manage to break through the barriers keeping them from a Duchy, and proceed to destroy it and its inhabitants.

Denizens of the Death Realms

The Commoners: The Twilight World is largely populated by the Ghosts of dead humans. Most of them lived and died during the last two hundred years. Older Ghosts exist, but are not common. It appears that the “life expectancy” of a Spirit is somewhat less than three centuries. At some point before then they are destroyed, or they finally find the sense of purpose or maturity needed to ascend to a higher plane of existence, or reincarnate back to Malkuth. Two typical Ghost types from the Twilight World are described nearby. They can be used by Chroniclers as models for their own campaigns.

Twilight World Ghost

Most of the Ghosts living in the Twilight World have no special abilities. They are the souls of dead Mundanes who have found the dark existence of that world preferable to the alternatives. After staying there for a while, most Ghosts pick up a couple of combat skills. With no law to protect them, they must learn to protect themselves.

Strength: 2 **Dexterity:** 2 **Constitution:** 2
Intelligence: 3 **Perception:** 1 **Willpower:** 2

Vital Essence: 24

Energy Essence: 12

Endurance Points: n/a.

Qualities and Drawbacks: One Mental Drawback worth 2-3 points.

Skills: Brawl or a Combat Skill of choice 2, Occult Knowledge (Twilight World) 1, two professional Skills of choice 3.

Powers: All Common Ghost Powers. About 70% do not have any special Ghost Powers, 20% have one or two minor Powers, and 10% have two or three minor Powers.

Attacks: Punch: 1D4 x 2(4)

Wise Guy Gang Member

The Wise Guys were hardened criminals in life who somehow managed to avoid being dragged to the Pit of Gehenna for their sins. They have not repented or reformed; they continue to steal, extort and enslave victims. The Wise Guys are tough, resourceful, and cunning. They have learned the hard way that magic and powers exist, and have developed tactics to deal with them. Also, thanks to the services of several Ghostsmiths and Gatherers, they have equipped themselves with weapons, usually knives, baseball bats or swords, although a few have handguns.

Strength: 4 **Dexterity:** 3 **Constitution:** 3
Intelligence: 2 **Perception:** 2 **Willpower:** 2

Vital Essence: 36

Energy Essence: 22

Endurance Points: n/a

Qualities and Drawbacks: One Mental Drawback worth 2-3 points

Skills: Brawl 3, two Weapon Skills 3, Occult Knowledge (Twilight World) 2, Running 2, Stealth 2

Powers: All Common Ghost Powers. About 50% do not have any special Ghost Powers, 30% have one or two minor Powers, and 20% have two or three minor Powers.

Attacks: Punch: 1D4 x 4(8) Kick: 1D4 x 5(10) Knife: 1D4 x 3(6), slashing damage

The Grim Reapers: The Reapers watch the byways leading in and out of Geburah. They act as a supernatural "Border Patrol" and their goal is to keep Spirits in whatever Realm they happen to find themselves. This can be problematic for Necromantic wanderers, because the Grim Reapers will try to prevent their return to Malkuth. On Malkuth, the Grim Reapers often appear near characters who commit murder casually and often. Those who have only killed in self-defense or in combat are rarely molested by these entities, but anybody who kills randomly or wantonly (especially if using Supernatural or Gifted powers) risks an encounter with these powerful beings. Vampyres and other Undead may also encounter the Grim Reapers.

The Grim Reapers are relatively few in number and not very effective at their job. Most of the time, travelers will not encounter them. Further, a group of determined Ghosts or spirit travelers may be able to overwhelm one or two of these creatures and continue on their way unmolested. The Reapers are becoming more numerous and active with every passing day, however, increasing the risks for those who would venture into the lands of the Dead.

Grim Reaper

Strength: 6 **Dexterity:** 4

Constitution: 5 **Intelligence:** 3

Perception: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Vital Essence: 100

Energy Essence: 75

Endurance Points: n/a

Qualities and Drawbacks:

Humorless, Nerves of Steel, Situational Awareness, Zealot

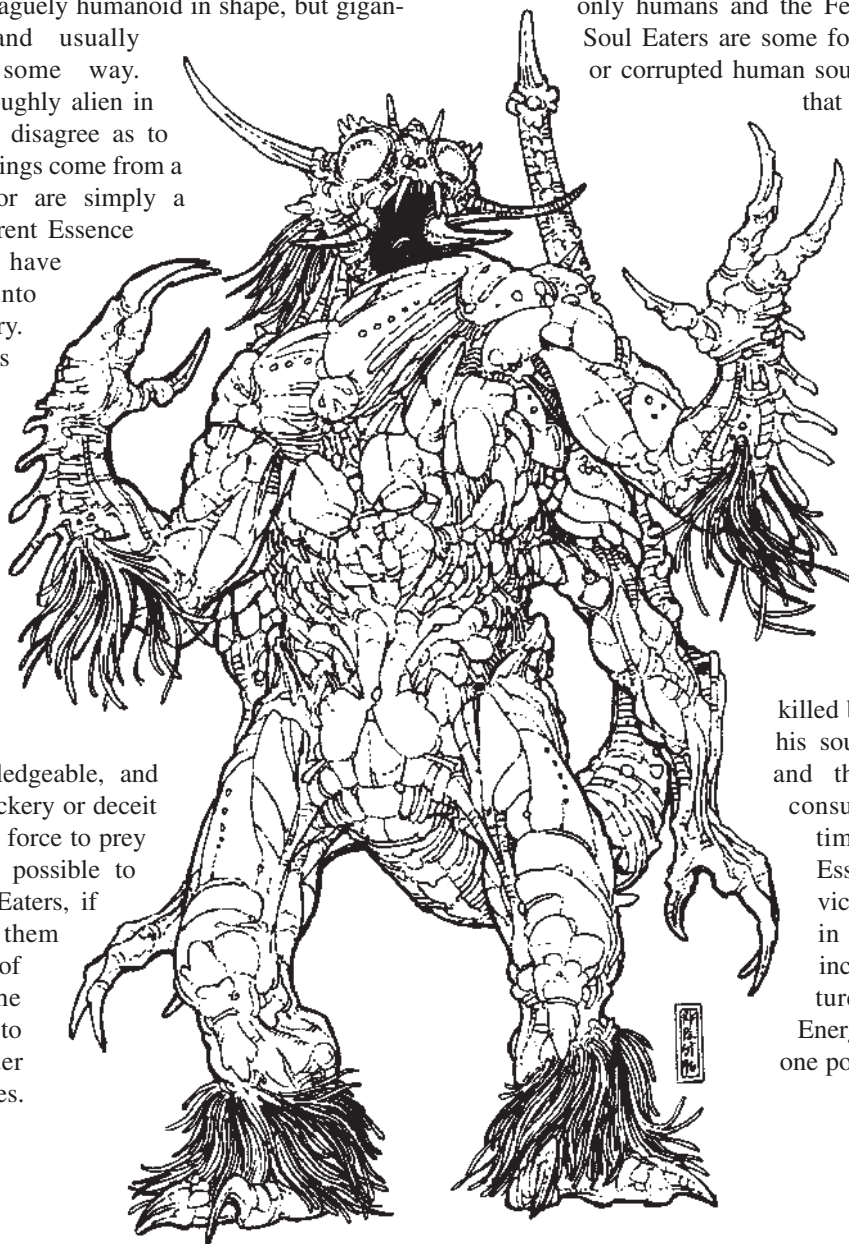
Skills: Scythe 4, Notice 4, Intimidation 4

Powers: Insubstantial (while on Malkuth), and all other common Ghost Powers. Their Scythes can inflict Life and Essence point damage both on Malkuth and the Death Realms.

Attacks: Scythe 1D8 x 6(24), slashing damage



Soul Eaters: These strange beings prowl the Death Realms. They consume the Essence of other spirits, and grow larger and stronger as they devour more victims. Most are vaguely humanoid in shape, but gigantic in size and usually deformed in some way. Others are thoroughly alien in form. Occultists disagree as to whether these beings come from a single species or are simply a number of different Essence predators who have been lumped into the same category. Some Soul Eaters seem to be mindless killing machines, attacking without warning and killing until destroyed or driven off. Others are highly intelligent and knowledgeable, and may resort to trickery or deceit rather than brute force to prey on others. It is possible to deal with Soul Eaters, if one comes at them from a position of strength, but the creatures are not to be trusted under any circumstances.



Soul Eaters can work magic, which makes them fairly unique (most Supernatural beings have their own, unique powers, but magic is usually the domain of only humans and the Fey). Perhaps the Soul Eaters are some form of devolved or corrupted human soul. It is rumored

that the Soul Eaters

were human sorcerers whose souls became Tainted by contact with a Mad God, or through the abuse of their magic. In any case, there is very little humanity left in them.

When someone is killed by a Soul Eater, his soul is Unraveled and the Soul Eater consumes the victim's Vital Essence. Every ten victims consumed in this manner increase the creature's Vital and Energy Essence by one point.

Minor Soul Eater

These Soul Eaters are humanoid creatures, larger than an average human being (about 2.5 meters (7 feet tall)), able to work magic and drain Essence. Their auras do not register as human, and their behavior will seem erratic and irrational. They can sometimes speak human languages, but they often use archaic tongues. If bound or overpowered, they may agree to provide information in exchange for their lives. They are likely to lie, however.

Strength: 5 **Dexterity:** 4 **Constitution:** 4
Intelligence: 3 **Perception:** 3 **Willpower:** 4

Vital Essence: 80

Energy Essence: 100

Endurance Points: n/a

Qualities and Drawbacks: Cruel

Skills: Brawl 5, Occult Knowledge (Death Realms) 5, Stealth 3, two human languages 2.

Powers: All common Ghost Powers, and able to exist in the Threshold indefinitely. They possess the Invocations Soulfire and Walkgate and have the equivalent of 4-8 levels of Essence Channeling for Invocation purposes.

Attacks: Limb/Claw attack: 1D4 x 5(10), slashing damage. This damage can be taken from either the victim's Life Points, Vital Essence, or Energy Essence pool. In the later case, this Essence taken will replenish the Soul Eater's Energy Essence pool.

Greater Soul Eater

These gigantic creatures, usually over four meters (twelve feet) tall, can be humanoid or monstrous as they wish. Indeed, their shape often fluctuates. These beings are highly intelligent and malicious. Some enjoy toying with their victims before killing them. Sometimes they choose to enslave rather than kill them outright. If faced with a superior force, or restrained somehow, the creature will try to bargain for its freedom or life, although it will only keep its word for as long as it is convenient to do so.

Strength: 10 **Dexterity:** 4 **Constitution:** 6
Intelligence: 6 **Perception:** 4 **Willpower:** 5

Vital Essence: 140

Energy Essence: 120

Endurance Points: n/a

Qualities and Drawbacks: Age (2-4 levels), Cruel, Nerves of Steel, Situational Awareness

Skills: Brawl 5, Occult Knowledge (General) 6, Occult Knowledge (Death Realms) 8

Powers: All common Ghost Powers, and able to exist in the Threshold indefinitely. They possess the following Invocations: Affect Psyche, one Elemental Invocation, Insight, Shielding, Soulfire, Walkgate, and the equivalent of 5-10 levels of Essence Channeling.

Attacks: Limb attack: 1D6 x 10(30). This damage can be taken from either the victim's Life Points, Vital Essence, or Energy Essence Pool. In the later case, this Essence taken will replenish the Soul Eater's Energy Essence pool.

New Dark Covenant

Dark Covenants gather together Gifted, Mundane and others who use their powers to serve their hatred, greed or lust. Given the nature of those attracted to these evil groups, Dark Covenants spend as much time fighting among themselves and against others. This section details one new Dark Covenant: the Cult of Pain.

The Cult of Pain

There is much suffering in the world. Everywhere, innocents are victimized, violated, scarred or destroyed to satisfy the depraved lusts of the powerful. Much of this violence is mindless, random and chaotic, a part of the dark side of human nature. In the world of WitchCraft, however, a secret society has learned to draw power from the horrors of torture and murder. The Cult of Pain is a decadent, black magic Covenant whose members have banded together to protect themselves from those who would expose and destroy them.

History

The Cult was created sometime in 18th Century France, by a group of debauched French noblemen led by a renegade Rosicrucian sorcerer. Some occultists believe their origins can be traced to much older groups, such as the child-sacrificing priesthood of Moloch or the worshipers of Xipetotec, the "Flayed Lord" of Aztec religion. In any case, the noblemen formed a pseudo-Masonic group that devoted itself to the torture and abuse of victims, most of them young peasants, in order to attain magical power. After the French Revolution, the Cult spread to the Americas. Many Cultists made their way to the West Indies, where they purchased plantations and committed all manner of atrocities on their slaves. Members of the Cult may have been accomplices in such crimes as the Inquisition and the Holocaust, although the evidence indicates that they simply took advantage of the situation rather than served as direct instigators.

Goals and Beliefs

The Covenant's purpose is twofold. First, it teaches members the secrets of Blood Magic, also known as Sadicas, a twisted form of sorcery which uses the Essence of victims of torture rather than that of the sorcerer to power its spells. Second, it uses its member's skills and influence to procure victims and to cover up all traces of their crimes. For at least two hundred years, the Cult has been able to accomplish these goals and operate successfully with minimal disruptions.

Organization

The Cult is a loosely-knit organization, with four ranks: Torturers, Executioners, Master Executioners, and Priests. Torturers are the lowest rank -- new members who are taught the secrets of the Craft by more experienced Executioners and Master Executioners, who form the bulk of the organization. The Priests are the leaders. Each Priest is in charge of overseeing a large area, usually a nation or a large state or province. Most of the Priests are very old, many over a hundred years old. Some are far older -- their Blood Magic abilities help slow down the aging process.

New members are inducted individually, when a local Master Executioner or Priest finds a worthy candidate. The Cult of Pain's favored recruits are serial killers, members of the most violent S&M underground circles, and other deviants and criminals. Most members are also wealthy professionals, with a large proportion of physicians, lawyers and programmers among them. They combine their mundane skills and their sorcerous abilities to achieve success. Many have become millionaires, elected officials, and important public servants, all the while torturing innocent victims to fuel their powers. Other members control prostitution, pornography and slavery rings through which they keep the Cult supplied with new sacrifices.

Allies and Enemies

There may be some relationship between the Cult and the Combine. In some instances, suspected members of the Combine have turned out to be Cultists. It appears that the Cult's role is minor, however. Like parasites on a larger, more dangerous beast, the Cult rides the Combine's coattails to commit their crimes and avoid public scrutiny.

The Pariahs, some of whom are survivors of the Cult's crimes, are aware of its existence and are always on the lookout for its members. The Dark Covenant has also unwittingly created many Vampyres, Relentless Dead and Phantasms, all sacrifices whose suffering was such that they now seek revenge from beyond the grave. More often than not, however, the Cult has successfully dealt with these would-be avengers.

Special Cult Powers

Sadicas: The Cultists of Pain do not use Essence Channeling to fuel their Invocations. Instead, they must perform ritual torture and abuse to drain victims of Essence, which they can then pool and use. This process is ruled by a special metaphysical ability called Sadicas.

Sadicas costs two character points per level up to level five, and five character points per level after that. Learning Sadicas after character creation costs 10 character points for the first level (the cost is normal after that).

The Sadicas level determines how much Essence the Blood Magician can channel in a turn. This level times 30 is the maximum Essence a Cultist can store in her Sadicas Pool. For example, a Cultist with a Sadicas level of 4 can store up to 120 Essence points. This Pool is used to empower Invocations. It lasts until used up, but is not renewed normally. It must be replenished through causing pain to new victims. A few Cultists keep one or two victims captive in their homes, and use them as needed. The Sadicas Pool is completely independent of the character's normal Essence Pool; it is used to empower Blood Magic Invocations and nothing else.

When a Cultist tortures somebody, or even if they are within a meter (a few feet) of somebody in great pain (a reason why some Cultists like to work in emergency rooms), they can absorb the Essence released by the victim. Most victims of torture/pain will lose 1D6(3) points of Essence per minute. Unspeakable acts of abuse or humiliation may raise this to 1D10 x 2(10) Essence per minute. A human being can be drained of all his normal Essence, and then reduced a further -30 Essence points, at which point they die (the average person, with an Essence pool of 10-15 points, can provide a Cultist of Pain with some 40-45 Essence points before dying).

Blood Magic: The Cult has access to most Invocations, both Greater and Lesser. The rituals are different from regular magic. A normal magic practitioner would have to learn the Blood Magic Invocations from scratch, even if he knew an equivalent normal Invocation, and vice versa.

Blood Magic has some advantages over regular magic. Dismissal Tasks (when necessary, or if using the original Invocation rules in the First Edition of Witchcraft) have a bonus equal to one half the magician's Sadicas level. Also, Cultists can tap into ambient Essence. Blood Magic can even extend a Cultist's life. The Sadicas Essence capacity governs a character's aging as discussed in the immortality rules (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics). For example, a Cultist with a Sadicas skill level of 4, and a capacity of 120 Essence points, ages at only one fifth the normal rate!

Other than being evil, Blood Magic has certain disadvantages. Blood Magicians do not benefit from Group Magic; they can pool their own Essence together, but do not gain any extra power. Also, the absorption of stolen Essence comes with a price. The Blood Magicians are haunted by false memories and flashbacks from their victims as long as they retain any of their victims' Essence. Their auras become tainted, terrible things, disturbing people around them and clearly damning them in the eyes of the Gifted. Only Essence barriers like magical Shields will hide the Cultist's true nature.



Using the Cult of Pain

The Cult of Pain is a typical Dark Covenant -- dangerous, thoroughly evil, and well-hidden. The characters are likely to investigate the crimes of one or two local Torturers or Executioners, and if they manage to discover and defeat them, may gain clues to other Cult members. Even a single Executioner can be a dangerous foe, especially if he has a few disciples and acolytes with him. Legally bringing down one of these murderers is very difficult, as all Cult members are extremely diligent in covering their tracks. If the investigators are getting too close, many Cultists will produce a convenient patsy, usually some mentally disturbed individual, possibly a real serial killer, who can be conveniently blamed for the crimes. The Cast Members may have to break the law and possibly deal with the dark sorcerer directly, which may get them into trouble with the authorities. Furthermore, if the characters are too successful in dealing with a Cultist, the Dark Covenant will pool its considerable resources to deal with them.

Cultist Characters

Most Cultists the characters will encounter are Torturers or Executioners. The real danger comes when the characters cross paths with a Master Executioner. These are all unique and powerful beings. One is detailed in this section. Priests will almost never be encountered. Finding and defeating one would be the basis for an extended campaign.



Dr. ("Lord") Torrence Wilson

Master Executioner

To the normal world, Dr. Wilson is a respectable, tenured history professor at a prestigious university. A tall, thin man with graying, receding hair, a charming British accent and a stiff, dignified demeanor, Wilson is "known" to lead a quiet, confirmed bachelor's life. He spends his free time in a small country house on the outskirts of the university. No connection would ever be made between the highly regarded professor and the dozen or so disappearances, suicides, assaults and accidental deaths that have plagued the campus, let alone the fifty-seven unsolved murders and nearly two hundred disappearances that have occurred in neighboring cities in the last decade. That is just the way Wilson likes to keep it.

The professor is far older than he looks, and some of his former identities are quite infamous. For several centuries, he operated in Germany, where he was famed as a witch hunter and torturer. Unknown to his devout followers, he was feeding on the agonies of his victims through rituals fouler than anything the Inquisition had dreamed of. Later, he played a part in Nazi Germany. As an officer in an extermination camp he was behind some of the worst atrocities of the Holocaust, most of which were never recorded. Fleeing after the collapse of the Third Reich, he settled in America, where he has been preying on the unsuspecting for decades.

Wilson's M.O. is simple. He seeks opportune victims, occasionally among the people on campus, but more often in the outlying areas. Using magic and his skills, he overpowers his victims and then brings them to his country house, where he keeps a well-stocked torture chamber in the basement. To get rid of the bodies, he often summons a nasty variety of Nature Spirit which enjoys eating human flesh. So far, he has avoided detection. In addition to his own crimes, Wilson has assisted two other Pain Cult Executioners. One is a transient who has been going back and forth in a five-state area, picking off victims at random for the last five years. The other is the madam of an exclusive and bizarre bordello, in which employees and customers sometimes vanish without a trace.

Strength: 2 Dexterity: 2 Constitution: 2 Intelligence: 5 Perception: 3 Willpower: 4

Life Points: 26

Essence Points: 34

Sadicas Essence Points: 40-120 average (180 maximum)

Endurance Points: 29

Qualities and Drawbacks: Aged (400 years), Charisma +2, Covetous (Power), Cruel (Second Level), Resources +3

Skills: Dodge 3, History (European) 5, Handgun 3, Martial Arts (Boxing) 4, Occult Knowledge 4, Rituals (Blood Magic) 4

Powers: Sadicas Skill 6. Knows the following Blood Magic Invocations: Affect the Psyche 5, Blessing 4, Farsight 4, Lesser Healing 4, Lesser Illusions 4, Shielding 4, Spirit Mastery (Flesh Eater) 5, and Warding 4

Attacks: Punch 1D4 x 2 + 4(8) .22 Pistol: 1D4 x 2(4)

Shapeshifters: Ferals

Every culture in the world has legends about lycanthropes and were-creatures, from the brutal werewolves that haunted European forests to the Viking Berserkers and the South American jaguar people. These legends owe their origins to Ferals, humans who have been endowed with the ability to assume bestial shapes.

Becoming Feral

Ferals are created when the soul of a living person becomes intertwined with an Animal Spirit. The Essence pattern of the unfortunate is completely altered, mixing bestial and human characteristics. As a result of their altered spiritual state, Ferals can assume a half-human, half-bestial shape, and have a number of powers over both animals and the spirit world.

This mystic link can occur in many ways. It can be the result of a magical curse, or can be inflicted on the person by angry or vengeful Spirits. Also, Ferals can “infect” other people with their spiritual malady. Although the curse cannot be transmitted with a mere bite or scratch, as some legends claim, victims who are nearly killed by a Feral are sometimes affected by the same curse. Occultists think that the near-death state allows other Animal Spirits, that tend to hover around Ferals, to enter the body of the victim while her soul visits the Threshold. In a few cases, a person who kills a Feral will be possessed by the Animal Spirit that afflicted the victim. Finally, the Feral curse can be transmitted along family lines; some Feral families have been producing lycanthropes for generations.

Characteristics

Ferals often succumb to the base instincts of their animal side. Although animals are not normally violent or brutal, their predatory urges (most Ferals are possessed by the spirits of predators) can overwhelm the victims of the curse. Anger,

jealousy or fear can trigger savage responses. When in their bestial form, many Ferals can go on murderous rampages, provoked by nothing more than a scream of terror or a sudden movement. A fortunate few are able to control their animal side, but only with difficulty.

Most of the time, Ferals can remain in human form unless they choose to transform by spending Essence. During certain Times of Power, including the nights of the full moon at midnight (see *WitchCraft*, Chapter Six: Metaphysics), enough “free” Essence is flowing around the lycanthrope to trigger a spontaneous transformation.

Using Ferals

Many Ferals are lone hunters, and their activities in bestial form are limited. Some have abandoned themselves to their urges and become very dangerous predators. Feral serial killers hunt both cities and wilderness areas. Their favored victims are the weak, the defenseless, the poor, and lone travelers. Their worst enemies among the Covenants are the Sentinels, who hunt them down as abominations, and the Pariahs, with whom they clash in the city slums and sewers that both groups frequent.

Other Ferals are said to travel in nomadic bands, in a manner similar to Gypsies, although the true Romany Gypsies avoid and fear the Ferals. These Nomads can be predatory, relatively harmless, or anywhere in between; their goals and purposes vary from band to band. A typical Nomad band numbers less than ten (more commonly five to seven), of which at least half are Ferals, the rest being human “groupies,” or even other supernatural creatures.

Ferals are very common in certain parts of the Otherworlds. Tribes of Ferals of all types dwell in some of the forests in the lands of Faerie. These Fey Ferals may sometimes be found in the service of one of the Sidhe Courts (although the Unseleighe are the most likely to accept these erratic and often dangerous creatures).

Powers and Vulnerabilities

Assailable: Unlike other Supernatural creatures, Ferals can be killed with conventional weapons. If reduced to -10 Life Points or below, Ferals must pass Survival Tests normally. Killing a Feral can be dangerous, however (see the Feral's Curse, below).

Attacks that normally drain Essence (like the Soulfire Invocation, for example) do Life Point damage to Ferals in bestial form. Also, silver has some of the properties against Ferals ascribed to it by legend. Silver weapons do double damage (after any modifiers for damage or bullet type are applied) to Ferals, but silver is soft and less effective than other metals as a weapon. Aside from rarity, this is the reason why iron, steel, lead and bronze are favored in the making of weapons. Any weapon (from knives to bullets) made of this metal has its damage reduced by 3 points (i.e., subtract 3 points from the total damage rolled to a minimum of 1). Furthermore, silver holy weapons (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics, New Items of Power) do double the damage they normally inflict against Supernatural beings when used against a Feral.

Feral's Curse: Some Ferals can transmit their condition to others. If a person is injured by a Feral below -1 Life Points, the victim (should he survive) must pass a Simple Willpower Test. Gifted characters have a bonus of +4 to this Test. On a failure, the victim will be "infected" and his Feral curse will manifest itself at the first appropriate Time of Power (see Spontaneous Transformation Vulnerability). Furthermore, if the Feral is killed in his semi-human form, the Animal Spirit may try to inflict the curse on the slayer. A similar Willpower Test is needed to avoid this fate, with an additional +2 bonus (cumulative with Gifted bonuses).

Regeneration: Ferals in non-human form are extremely hard to kill. Most types of damage suffered are rapidly healed, at the rate of one point per Constitution level every turn. In human form, Ferals are relatively normal, except that they do heal wounds more rapidly than Mundanes, regain-

ing lost Life Points at the rate of one per Constitution level every hour of rest, or every two hours of activity.

Injuries sustained in one form carry over to the other, however. If a severely injured Feral transforms into a human being, the sudden shock to the system is likely to kill him. So, for example, a Feral who suffered 50 points of damage and transformed into human form before regenerating will transfer the damage to his human (and far more frail) form. Crippling injuries (like lost limbs or eyes) carry over from bestial to human form, but not vice versa. This means that a Feral who is a paraplegic in human form could be perfectly active in bestial form, but if the creature lost a leg while rampaging in non-human shape, the human form would have that injury when it next transformed.

Spontaneous Transformation: If enough ambient Essence is available, the Feral transformation may be triggered involuntarily. The most dangerous times for a Feral are midnight during a full moon, the Solstices and Equinoxes, and the evening of the four major Days of Power. During those times, the Feral transforms into lycanthropic form unless he can pass a Difficult Willpower Test. Every 10 minutes after that, he can try to regain control by passing a Difficult Willpower Test.

During the time of a spontaneous transformation, the Animal Spirit form is very much in control of the creature. The Feral will tend to react to everything with "fight or flight" instincts, and often will ravenously eat any edible substances available -- or will hunt for food. Friends of the creature usually have nothing to fear from the Feral even under these circumstances. The animal mind will recognize and usually respect them. Any acquaintance who has offended or angered the Feral is likely to be attacked on sight, however. The Animal Spirit will have little self-restraint and will act on any urge the Feral might feel.

Superhuman Attributes: Ferals have bonuses to their physical Attributes ranging from +1 to +5, depending on the actual non-human

form. The larger, faster or hardier the animal, the higher the bonuses to Strength, Dexterity or Constitution, respectively. For example, a Wolf Feral has +3 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity and +2 to Constitution, while a Tiger Feral gets +6 to Strength, +3 to Dexterity and +4 to Constitution. All non-human forms also grant +2 to Perception.

Ferals have two sets of Life Points, one for the human form and one for the non-human form. A Feral's human form Life Points are calculated normally. In non-human form, add the Feral's non-human Constitution and Strength, multiply by five, and add 30 to the result. The Essence Pool of the Feral character is determined from the character's human Attributes, with a +10 to +20 bonus. A Feral with a large enough Essence Pool enjoys the same immortality benefits that humans do (see Chapter Five: Metaphysics). The remaining Secondary Attributes are determined normally, using the non-human Attributes.

Supernatural Senses: Ferals (in any shape) can see spirits, including Ghosts, Nature Spirits, and Elementals. They can also see through illusions (particularly those of the Fey), and can "smell" the presence of large amounts of Essence in people and places, which enables them to uncover probable Gifted characters.

Transformation: The Feral can alter its shape instantly, becoming more human or animal, depending on her needs or mood at the time. Characters facing a Feral should be struck by the fluid, dream-like "morphing" of the creature. A typical werewolf, for example, may shift from second to second between the form of a fully animalistic wolf to that of a vaguely wolf-like human. When running, the creatures often assume a highly animalistic shape and run on all fours. When fighting hand-to-hand, the creatures tend to become more human-like. In all manifestations, however, the Feral is covered in the fur of the animal, and her features remain consistently bestial, with sharp teeth, a snout instead of nose, and inhumanly-shaped ears.

Changing into non-human form costs 10 Essence points. The effect lasts an hour, during which the Feral can adjust the form from near human to fully bestial. Further lots of 10 Essence may be spent to maintain the "morphing" ability for each additional hour. This lost Essence is not regained until after the character assumes his human form once again.

Special Feral Powers

These abilities are known by the more experienced or unusual Ferals. These individuals are old or have connections with supernatural Covenants that provide this knowledge. Others become attuned to the Animal Spirits that possess them, and are able to perform their own brand of magic.

Camouflage: Some Ferals can make themselves all but invisible while in forested areas. This illusory power costs 5 Essence points per minute. It allows the creature, while in non-human form, to blend in with the local scenery.

Summon Animal Spirits: This ability works like an Invocation, except that it may only be learned by Ferals. It has a level just like an Invocation. The Feral can summon more Spirits of the same type as the one entwined with his soul. They cost 5 Essence points per Spirit summoned.

To summon the creatures, the character must succeed at a Willpower and Summon Animal Spirits Task. The maximum number of creatures the Feral can summon is limited to the Success Level of the Task (and how much Essence the Feral has available). Once summoned, the spirits serve the Feral for an hour or until their Energy Essence is depleted, whichever comes first.

Gifted Powers: By the very nature of the fusion between the human and animal souls, Ferals become something other than human, and as a result they lose much of the powers available to humans. Ferals cannot have any Gifted powers. If they were Gifted before their infection, they lose whatever Powers they used to have.

The Park Slasher

In the last two years, over two dozen people have disappeared in a number of national parks around the country. In one instance, the bodies of three of the victims were discovered, apparently mutilated by a large animal. Zoologists are uncertain about what kind of animal is responsible for the killings, although a few have suggested the incredible possibility that it was some sort of tiger. Two other bodies were found in the same general area several months later. These were slashed with a knife. Since the two sets of bodies were found in roughly the same area, they appear to be linked somehow, although the answer eludes normal investigators. Meanwhile, the killings and disappearances continue.

The Slasher is Matthew Cartwright, a quiet, unassuming British national who, in reality, is a tiger Feral, the descendant of a long line of lycanthropes. The Cartwright family was cursed by Tiger Spirits when one of Matthew's ancestors, a British officer in India, offended the local spirits. The elder Cartwright hunted several dozen Bengal tigers. The animal totem of one of the slain beasts possessed him, transforming him and his entire bloodline. Eight generations of Cartwrights have been afflicted by the shapeshifting curse, but most have learned to control their urges. Matthew is a psychotic renegade who fled to America to avoid his family's restrictions.

Cartwright travels around the country in an old pick-up truck, filled with camping equipment. He hunts in National Parks, preying on both humans and animals alike. He hunts both in human and bestial shape, depending on his mood or how much of a challenge he wants. His crimes have attracted the attention of a number of Wicce Covens, and a team of Sentinels is following his trail. Also, members of his family (themselves Ferals) are trying to find him and either return him to the family estate or, if necessary, put an end to his murder spree.

Two numbers are given for several of the Slasher's abilities. The number on the left is for his human form; the number on the right is for his non-human form.

Strength: 3/9 **Dexterity:** 2/5 **Constitution:** 2/6 **Intelligence:** 4 **Perception:** 3/5 **Willpower:** 4

Life Points: 30/105

Essence Points: 48

Endurance Points: 27/57

Speed: 8/22

Qualities and Drawbacks: Cruel (Second Level), Delusion ("I am the supreme predator," worth 3 points), Resources 3, Situational Awareness

Skills: Brawling 2, Gun (Rifle) 4, Knife 3, Occult Knowledge (Ferals) 3, Running (Dash) 2, Snares 4, Survival (Forest) 4, Tracking 3

Powers: All Feral powers, plus Summon Tiger Spirits 4

Attacks: Bite or Claw: 1D6 x 9(27) slashing

Equipment: Heavy hunting rifle, large skinning knife, pick-up truck, camping equipment

Animal Spirit Stats

All Animal Spirits have Acute Senses, and are able to track by passing a Simple Perception Test (plus Acute Senses bonuses). ;They attack or Dodge by making Simple Dexterity Tests. Animal Spirits fight until destroyed, never retreating or fleeing no matter how bad the odds are. These beings will take Life Point damage from Essence draining attacks like Soulfire, but they are no more or less affected by silver than any other non-Feral being. The creatures have neither Essence nor Endurance point.

Wolf

Strength: 3 Dexterity: 3 Constitution: 4 Perception: 3 Intelligence: 1 Willpower: 2

Life Points: 33

Speed: 25

Attacks: Bites for D4 x 3(6) slashing damage

Bear

Strength: 8 Dexterity: 3 Constitution: 5 Perception: 2 Intelligence: 1 Willpower: 3

Life Points: 60

Speed: 20

Attacks: Bites for D4 x 4(8) slashing damage; claws for D4 x 8(16) slashing damage

Jaguar/Panther/Leopard

Strength: 5 Dexterity: 4 Constitution: 5 Perception: 3 Intelligence: 1 Willpower: 3

Life Points: 30

Speed: 30

Attacks: Bites for D4 x 3(6) slashing damage, claws for D6 x 5(15) slashing damage

Tiger/Lion

Strength: 7 Dexterity: 4 Constitution: 5 Perception: 3 Intelligence: 1 Willpower: 3

Life Points: 60

Speed: 25

Attacks: Bites for D4 x 7(14) slashing damage, claws for D6 x 7(21) slashing damage

Appendix

Glossary

Adversaries: Supporting Cast characters who oppose the Cast Members' actions. Adversaries are enemies to be beaten, rivals that provide drama, and opponents that challenge the Cast Members.

Apparition: Weak or simple spirits able to do little more than make noise or visions during special times.

Art: A group of related Metaphysics abilities or Powers. Magic, the Sight, and Tao-Chi are all Arts.

Attribute: A physical or mental trait of the character. There are six Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Perception, Intelligence, Willpower.

Attribute Test: See Test.

Cast Members: Also known as player-controlled characters or player characters (PCs for short), Cast Members are characters whose actions, thoughts and responses are controlled by the players, who usually also create them. In a movie, they are the main roles, each played by a different actor.

Character Concept: The basic motives and focuses of a character's personality. Character Concepts are chosen or formed in the initial stages of the character creation process. Examples are Scoundrel and Wanderer.

Character Type: A character's classification. Currently, there are six Character Types: Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Mundane, Bast, Spirit and Undead. This number will expand as more WitchCraft supplements are released.

Chronicler: Also known as a Game Master or Referee, the Chronicler is the player who prepares the setting, guides the Story, roleplays the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and makes all the rules decisions.

Difficult Test: A Test in which only one Attribute applies and it is not doubled.

Drawback: A special negative aspect of a character that imposes limitations or hindrances. Drawbacks are chosen during character creation and provide extra Attribute, Quality, Skill or Metaphysical points as the player chooses. No character can take more than 10 points in Drawbacks.

Ghost: A subgroup of the Spirit Character Type. Ghosts are disembodied souls who refuse to leave the material plane.

Level of Success: See Success Levels.

Malkuth: Also known as Earth, Midgard or the material world, it is the place where Mundanes dwell.

Metaphysics: Any of a number of supernatural abilities used to manipulate the world. Most use Essence in some manner.

Otherworld: A generic term for Sephiroths and Realms used by non-specialists to refer to regions outside of Earth.

Outcome Table: Found in WitchCraft, Chapter Four: The Rules, the Outcome Table specifies the Test or Task results needed to achieve certain Success Levels and the general effects of those Success Levels.

Power: A special positive ability of a character that derives from the Supernatural or Metaphysical and grants certain capacities or benefits. Powers are purchased during character creation by using Metaphysics points, or granted when certain Qualities are purchased.

Quality: A special positive aspect of a character that grants abilities or benefits. Qualities are purchased by expending Quality points during character creation.

Realm: A world, land, region, or place located within a Sephiroth. The Threshold, Twilight World and the Death Realms are all Realms of the Geburah Sephiroth.

Secondary Attribute: A physical or metaphysical trait of a character calculated from Attributes. There are four Secondary Attributes: Life Points, Endurance Points, Essence Points, and Speed. For certain Character Types, some Secondary Attributes are replaced or missing. For example, Spirit characters have Vital Essence instead of Life Points; Vampyres have no Endurance Points.

Sephiroth: A group of Realms outside or beyond Malkuth or the material world. Kether, Binah, and Geburah are examples of major Sephiroth.

Phantasm: A subgroup of the Spirit Character Type. Phantasms are potent Ghosts, able to create a tangible shell that is able to interact fully with the material world.

Relentless Dead: A subgroup of the Undead Character Type. Relentless Dead arise from the dead to fulfill some overwhelming purpose.

Resisted Tasks or Tests: This rule applies to any situation where somebody or something is trying to perform a certain action and somebody or something else is trying to prevent it, as when two or more individuals are in some sort of competition. These Tasks or Tests are resolved normally for everyone involved, and then the results are compared. The character with the highest number of Success Levels wins. Ties go to the defender, if any. If both sides fail, it means neither won a significant advantage.

The Rule of 1: If a natural 1 is rolled or an ace is drawn, roll or draw again and subtract 5 from the new roll. If the result is greater than 1, consider the final result to be 1. If the result is below 0, use it as a negative modifier on the Task. If another 1 or ace is rolled/drawn, apply a -5 penalty, and roll/draw again, following the previous method.

The Rule of 10: If a natural 10 is rolled or drawn, roll or draw again, subtract 5 from the new roll and add the result, if greater than 1, to the total roll. If another 10 is rolled/drawn, add +5 to the result and roll again, following the previous method.

Simple Test: A Test in which the applicable Attribute is doubled (or two different Attributes added together).

Skill: A learned capability of the character. Skills are purchased during character creation using Skill points.

Story: Also known as a game or campaign. A series of plot-linked game sessions, like the episodes of a TV series or soap opera. A good Story is the final result and the ultimate objective of any WitchCraft game.

Success Level: A measure of how well a character performed a successful Task or Test. The higher the Task result, the higher the level of success. Success Levels are used as a bonus on other Tasks or Tests. The Outcome Table (see WitchCraft, Chapter Four: Rules) details Success Levels and their effects.

Supporting Cast: Also known as non-player characters (or NPCs). These are all the characters in a Story who are not Cast Members. These roles are played by the Chronicler.

Task: A Task is any activity that requires some training to accomplish, and whose outcome is in doubt. Tasks are resolved by rolling a ten-sided die (or drawing cards) and adding one of the character's Skills and one of his Attributes. The Chronicler determines which Skills and Attributes apply, and applies any modifiers. The result, adding the die roll or card draw to all other modifiers, Skills and Attributes, must be 9 or higher to indicate success. Results higher than 9 are referenced on the Outcome Table to determine Success Levels.

Tests/Attribute Tests: A Test is an activity or situation where the character's Attribute levels determine the outcome. Any activity that depends exclusively on the character's inborn talents (such as raw strength, pure intelligence and so on) use Tests. Tests can be Simple or Difficult. A Simple Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided dice (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate Attribute, doubled, or the sum of two Attributes. The result, after any modifiers, must be 9 or higher. A Difficult Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided dice (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate attribute, not doubled. Again, the result, after any modifiers, must be 9 or higher. Results higher than 9 are referenced under the Outcome Table to determine the Success Levels.

Vampire: A subgroup of the Undead Character Type. Vampyres require Essence to survive but can not generate it on their own. They must acquire it from other sources, usually humans.

Vulnerability: A special negative aspect of a character that derives from the Supernatural or Metaphysical and creates certain limitations or hindrances. Vulnerabilities are taken during character creation and grant additional Metaphysics points.

Character Type Reference Table

Type	Attr Pts	Qual/Draw Pts	Skill Pts	Meta Pts
Gifted	15	10/10	25	30
Traits: Must purchase The Gift Quality (5).				
Lesser Gifted	20	15/10	30	15
Traits: Must purchase The Gift Quality (5).				
Mundane	25	20/10	35	0
Traits: Cannot purchase any Supernatural Qualities or Metaphysics during character creation.				
Bast	15	10/10	30	25
Common or High Bast Traits: Can purchase High Bast Quality (5); Common Bast Powers.				
Spirit	20	20/10	20	20
Ghost Traits: Must purchase Ghost Quality (8); No Endurance Points; Common Ghost Powers and Vulnerabilities; Access to Spiritus and Special Ghost Powers and Vulnerabilities.				
Phantasm Traits: Must purchase Phantasm Quality (15); +1 Willpower; +10 to Vital and Energy Essence; No Endurance Points; Incarnate; Common Phantasm Powers and Vulnerabilities; Access to Spiritus and Special Phantasm Powers and Vulnerabilities.				
Undead	15	15/10	25	25
Vampyre Traits: Must purchase Vampire Quality (15); +3 Strength, Dexterity and Constitution; +20 to Essence Pool; No Endurance Points; Common Vampyre Powers and Vulnerabilities; Access to Special Vampyre Powers and Vulnerabilities.				
Relentless Dead Traits: Must purchase Relentless Dead Quality (15); +3 to two of Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, +4 to the remainder; No Endurance Points; Common Relentless Dead Powers and Vulnerabilities; Access to Wrath and Special Relentless Dead Powers and Vulnerabilities.				





Character Association Chart

Association

Special Features

Cabal of the Psyche

One free level in any Seer Power.

Fellowship of Judas (Isariots)

+3 to any Resisted Test or Task against an Inspired Miracle or prayer that directly affects or restrains a member while performing a task of redemption (Undead); +2 to any Resisted Test or Task against any Undead effect or Power (non-Undead).

House of Thanatos

+2 to any Resisted Test or Task against the powers of Ghosts, Phantasms and other spirits of the Dead.

Pariahs

One free level of Anguish (Disciples); +1 to Willpower (non-Disciples).

Rosicrucians Supernatural

+2 on all Invocation Tasks to restrain or banish Spirits or beings; must take Rituals (Rosicrucian) skill.

Sentinels

Prayer; +2 to all Resisted Tasks/Tests against magical or supernatural attacks (if Divine Inspiration).

Solitaires

+1 to all Tasks involving one Art (the character's strong suit).

Storm Dragons

+1 to any two of Strength, Dexterity or Constitution.

Twilight Order

+1 to all Tasks involving any Necromantic Powers.

Wicce

+2 on all Invocation Tasks involving defense; -2 to all Dismissal Tasks of those attacking Wicce; must take Rituals (Wicce) and Theology (Wicce) skills.

Qualities and Drawbacks Table

Name	Nature	Ref
Accursed	Variable Supernatural Drawback	WC
Acute Senses	2-point Physical Quality	WC
Addiction	Variable Mental Drawback	MC
Adversary	Variable Social Drawback	WC
Age	5-points/level Supernatural Quality	MC
Artistic Talent (Type)	3-point Mental Quality	MC
Attractiveness	Variable Physical Quality or Drawback	WC
Charisma	Variable Mental Quality or Drawback	WC
Clown	1-point Mental Drawback	WC
Contacts	Variable Social Quality	WC
Covetous	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	MC
Cowardly	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	MC
Cruel	1- or 3-point mental Drawback	WC
Delusions	Variable Mental Drawback	WC
Divine Inspiration	5-point Supernatural Quality	WC
Emotional Problems	Variable Mental Drawback	WC
Essence Channeling	Variable Supernatural Quality	WC
Fast Reaction Time	2-point Mental Quality	WC
Gift	5-point Supernatural Quality	WC
Ghost	8-point Supernatural Quality	MC
Good/Bad Luck	3-points/level Supernatural Quality or Drawback	MC
Hard to Kill	1- to 5-point Physical Quality	WC
Honorable	1- to 3-point Mental Drawback	WC
Humorless	1-point Mental Drawback	WC

Qualities and Drawbacks Table

Name	Nature	Ref
Impaired Senses	2-point Physical Drawback	WC
Increased Essence Pool	Variable Supernatural Quality	WC
Lazy	2-point Mental Drawback	WC
Minority	1-point Social Drawback	WC
Multiple Identities	2-point/Identity Social Quality	MC
Nerves of Steel	3-point Mental Quality	MC
Obsession	2-point Mental Drawback	WC
Old Soul	3-points/level Supernatural Quality	WC
Paranoid	2-point Mental Drawback	WC
Phantasm	15-point Supernatural Quality	MC
Photographic Memory	2-point Mental Quality	WC
Physical Disability	Variable Physical Drawback	WC
Reckless	2-point Mental Drawback	MC
Recurring Nightmare	1-point Mental Drawback	WC
Relentless Dead	15-point Supernatural Quality	MC
Resources	Variable Social Quality or Drawback	WC
Secret	Variable Social Drawback	WC
Showoff	2-point Mental Drawback	MC
Situational Awareness	2-point Mental Quality	WC
Social Level	Variable Social Quality or Drawback	WC
Talentless	2-point Mental Drawback	MC
Vampyre	15-point Supernatural Quality	MC
Zealot	3-point Mental Drawback	WC

Ref: Reference Book; **WC:** WitchCraft; **MC:** Mystery Codex

Skill List

Name	Type	Ref	Name	Type	Ref
Acrobatics	Normal	WC	Medicine (Type)	Special	WC
Acting	Normal	MC	Notice	Normal	WC
Beautician	Normal	WC	Occult Knowledge	Special	WC
Brawling	Normal	WC	Pick Pocket	Normal	WC
Bureaucracy	Normal	MC	Play Instrument (Type)	Normal	MC
Cheating	Normal	WC	Piloting (Type)	Normal	WC
Climbing	Normal	WC	Questioning	Normal	MC
Computers	Normal	WC	Research/Investigation	Normal	MC
Computer Hacking	Normal	WC	Riding (Type)	Normal	WC
Computer Programming	Normal	WC	Rituals (Type)	Normal	WC
Craft (Type)	Normal	MC	Running (Type)	Normal	WC
Demolitions	Normal	WC	Science (Type)	Normal	WC
Disguise	Normal	WC	Seduction	Normal	WC
Dodge	Normal	WC	Smooth Talking	Normal	WC
Driving (Type)	Normal	WC	Snares	Normal	WC
Electronic Surveillance	Normal	WC	Sport (Type)	Normal	WC
Gambling	Normal	WC	Stealth	Normal	WC
Guns (Type)	Normal	WC	Storytelling	Normal	MC
Haggling	Normal	MC	Streetwise	Normal	WC
Hand Weapon (Type)	Normal	WC	Surveillance	Normal	WC
Escapism	Normal	MC	Survival (Type)	Normal	WC
Electronics	Normal	MC	Swimming	Normal	MC
Engineer (Type)	Normal	MC	Tracking	Normal	WC
Fine Arts (Type)	Normal	MC	Trance	Special	MC
First Aid	Normal	WC	Traps	Normal	WC
Humanities (Type)	Normal	MC	Uncon. Medicine (Type)	Normal	WC
Instruction	Normal	MC	Vet. Medicine (Type)	Special	WC
Intimidation	Normal	WC	Weight Lifting	Normal	WC
Language (Type)	Normal	MC	Writing (Type)	Normal	MC
Lock Picking (Type)	Normal	WC			
Magic Theory	Normal	MC			
Martial Arts (Type)	Special	WC			
Mechanic	Normal	MC			

Ref: Reference; **WC:** WitchCraft; **MC:** Mystery Codex

Second Edition WitchCraft Revisions: Dancing, Drawing/Painting, Sculpture and Singing are subsumed in Fine Arts. Archeology, Law, Myth and Legend and Theology are subsumed in Humanities.

Fear Tests

When facing certain fearsome events, characters need to pass Fear Tests. Mundanes use Difficult Willpower Tests, Gifted and Supernatural creatures use Simple Willpower Tests. If the Test fails, consult the Fear Table below.

Fear Test Modifiers

Some Supernatural event descriptions designate a certain modifier to be applied to a Fear Test. Otherwise, Chroniclers should apply modifiers as they see fit.

Using the Fear Table

To use the Fear Table, roll a die (or draw a card), subtract the Willpower of the character, and apply any Fear Test modifiers (e.g., a -4 Fear Test modifier would become a +4 Fear Table modifier). If the result is 9 or greater, consult the Fear Table by cross-referencing the number of Success Levels. If the result is 9 or less, the character is simply scared for a few seconds and is able to recover quickly.

Fear Table

Success Level	Effect
1	Shakes: All the character's actions suffer a -2 penalty for 2 turns. Lose 1 Essence point.
2	Flight: Victim runs away screaming for 1 turn. If cornered, the victim may fight or react in a more rational way. Lose 2 Essence points.
3	Physical reaction: Fear causes a messy physical reaction (often involving bodily functions best left to the imagination). Not only is this embarrassing, but it imposes a -1 penalty to all actions for 1D4(2) turns. Lose 1D4(2) Essence points.
4	Paralyzed: Character cannot move for 1D4(2) turns. Only intervention by other characters (who may shake him, slap him or otherwise force him to act) will allow him to take any action. Lose 1D6(3) Essence points.
5	Faint: The shock and fear are so severe that the character collapses, unconscious. A Difficult Constitution Test is required to recover consciousness; this can be attempted every minute, or whenever somebody tries to stir the character. Lose 1D10 x 4 (20) Endurance points and 1D8(4) Essence points.
6	Total Hysterics: The character becomes a screaming, babbling, totally useless maniac for 1D8(4) turns. Lose 1D10(5) Essence points.
7+	It Gets Worse: Higher results are left to the Chronicler's imagination. They may include life-threatening effects like heart attacks or comas, or a bout of temporary insanity lasting hours, or worse. . .

Pariah Jack-Of-All-Trades

On your eleventh birthday, you discovered that life wasn't all that neat and tidy, even when it came to being sexually abused, and the blood flowed that night. You fled into the darkness of the Virginia wilderness, and haven't looked back since. One of the things that you've realized since leaving "home" is that there are a lot of other folks, like yourself, in the world. Some of them are good, some of them are evil, but all of them have scars that are not necessarily able to come to the surface like yours can.

Origins

Your childhood was blissful as could be -- at least you pretended it was. In truth, you had been subject to sexual abuse by your mother at a tender young age. Then your parents divorced. As you became her "little angel," you realized that the abuse you'd been subjected to earlier was nothing compared to the depredations you faced after moving with her to Virginia. You were all of eleven years old at the time, but that seems like a lifetime ago. One night, when your mother was "playing" with you and a couple of her good male friends, you discovered an inner strength that you didn't know you had. That night, two of her friends died and your mother was scarred for life. You fled into the darkness of a Virginia night, and never went home. Adopted by a couple of old men, you found a talent for repairing cars, for fighting and for sneaking. The bizarre abilities did not manifest again until you got to the big city. There, you were found by another Pariah, a young woman who introduced you to the Beggar King, found you a place to live, and gave you a different perspective on women.

Allies and Enemies

You can always count on the other Pariahs to help you out when it comes right down to it, of course, but the female Pariah who came to your aid in the city will always hold a soft spot in your heart. You have friends in the car repair trade, since you found a job relatively quickly when you first came to the city, but you have to be careful not to reveal your abilities to those who would not understand. While you don't have any real enemies in the city, you have crossed paths with a couple of Sentinels. They have interfered a couple of times in your business since then, but you have managed to work around them. You have a strong antipathy towards those who sexually abuse youngsters, and always interfere in those situations.

Roleplaying the Character

While you tend to be a somewhat forgiving person, given your life and abilities, you are very cruel to those who make children suffer, whatever the form it takes. The powers that allow you to manipulate your flesh have taken their toll -- you are not attractive. Your weakness of will at times gives you little force of personality, but you can be highly intimidating when the need arises. You have found that you do not like to stay with one job, so you wander as a jack-of-all-trades, washing dishes in a restaurant one week, repairing cars the next, and hauling away the trash the week after. You have a deep fear that your family is going to come looking for you, and keep one eye peeled to the side. In some ways, you hope they do find you -- because you'd like to teach them a lesson. You are fairly protective of your female Pariah friend, and have a deep respect for the three elder Pariahs in the city. Your work with some of the other groups in the city has made you aware of the occult forces at work in the world, and you oppose them almost as vigorously as you oppose those who would abuse children.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 3 skill levels must be dropped.



Pariah

Warrior

SPENT

UNSPENT

2

Secondary Attributes

2

2

3

5

3

5

33

35

12

35

Point

5

1

2

2

4

1

1

2

3

2

Level

3

2

3

2

2

3

2

2

3

2

2

2

3

3

Level

Anquish

Storm Dragon Courier

You have learned a lesson in humility in the process of becoming a Storm Dragon, and you are one of the Society's better spies and couriers. Your combat skills are formidable as well, and you serve the Society in whatever way is demanded of you. The Reckoning has to be prevented at all costs, and you have seen evidence of what will happen to those you care about if it is not. You are determined to do your part, and aid the Society in whatever way you can.

Origins

You were born on the west side of the city. Your parents had come to the city from China, and worked for the city's sanitation department. You lived a relatively comfortable life until that night -- the night your parents were gunned down in a typical moment of mob violence. They were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Having no other family in the city, you took to the streets when the Social Services people came looking for you. You learned the trade of a thief, and made just enough to get by. You were surviving in the moment, but you knew that there was something better ahead of you -- something that was waiting for you in your future.

Then you tried to rob the house owned by Ham Li Fung. Li Fung was connected with the Tong, although you did not know that at the time. He also had connections with several other occult groups -- one of whom worshiped a Mad God. The creature that came at you that night, no doubt summoned with black magic, would have killed you, if it hadn't been for Charles Sung, the actor. He showed up and turned out to be much more than he appeared in his movies. With his aid, you became part of the Storm Dragons, and have served them faithfully ever since. Still a novice, the Dragons use you primarily as a courier. They haven't forgotten your roots as a thief and a sneaky person, however, and they sometimes use you for jobs that require a "light touch."

Allies and Enemies

Much of the time, your natural abilities, combined with some of the Tao-Chi powers you know are enough to get you out of trouble. Charles Sung, your mentor, is also one of your best friends, and you trust him with your life. The evil martial artist Li Fung has proven to be a thorn in your side, and has vowed to make you regret your interference with his dark plans. In the meantime, you have also made an enemy of several members of the White Crane Society, whom you have clashed with on a couple of runs as a courier.

Roleplaying the Character

You have come to rely on yourself since the death of your parents. Having friends like the Storm Dragons is wonderful, and you think of Charles Sung as your foster parent (although you would never admit this to him). You enjoy your work as a courier, since it is quite challenging, but you long for the "carefree" days of your childhood. Your desire to rise in the ranks of the Order is tempered by your knowledge that you are still quite naive about some of the ways of the Society, not to mention the evils that are out there waiting to challenge your Order. You have recently developed an interest in finding out about your heritage, something that was denied you with the death of your parents. You have plans to travel to the Orient sometime in the near future, but this may not fit in with the Storm Dragons' plans for you.

* This character has been created using the Option Skill Point Calculation System (see Chapter Two: Rules, Skill Point Calculations). If using the basic system, 3 skill levels must be dropped.



WITCHCRAFT

Name

Association

Storm Dragon

Concept

Survivor

CHARACTER
POINTS

SPENT

UNSPENT

CHANNELING
LEVEL

2

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH

3

INTELLIGENCE

2

DEXTERITY

6

PERCEPTION

3

CONSTITUTION

5

WILLPOWER

3

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS

48

ENDURANCE POINTS

38

SPEED

22

ESSENCE POOL

32

Qualities

Gift

5

Situational Awareness

2

Essence Channeling (2 levels)

4

Hard to Kill

2

Increased Essence

2

Drawbacks

Adversary: White Crane Society

4

Honorable

2

Obsession: Defeat Li Fung

2

Resources

2

Skill

Acrobatics

3

Chi Mastery

3

Climbing

3

Dodge

3

Driving (Car)

2

Escapism

2

Hand Weapon (Sword)

3

Humanities (Philosophy)

1

Humanities (Storm Dragon Philosophy)

3

Language (Cantonese)

2

Martial Arts (Storm Fist)

3

Notice

3

Occult Knowledge

2

Skill

Play Instrument (Flute)

1

Stealth

3

Storm Fist Maneuvers: Arm Lock 3

Breakfall 3, Disarm 2, Judo Throw 2

Kick 3, Punch 3, Roll with Blow 2

Power

Chi Healing

3

Chi Strike

3

Speed of the Tiger

3



Concept

CHARACTER POINTS SPENT UNSPENT

CHANNELING LEVEL

Secondary Attributes

STRENGTH	<input type="text"/>	INTELLIGENCE	<input type="text"/>
DEXTERITY	<input type="text"/>	PERCEPTION	<input type="text"/>
CONSTITUTION	<input type="text"/>	WILLPOWER	<input type="text"/>

VITAL ESSENCE	<div></div>
ENDURANCE POINTS	<div></div>
SPEED	<div></div>
ENERGY ESSENCE	<div></div>

五五五五五

Qualities

Point Page

Drawbacks

Point Page

Skill/Power

Level	Page
-------	------

Power/Vulnerability

Level	Page
-------	------

[illegible]



CHARACTER POINTS SPENT UNSPENT

LEVEL

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤੀ

11

[illegible]



WITCHCRAFT

Sex

Age

Height

Weight

Hair

Eyes

Weapons/Hand to Hand

Type	Rate of Fire # of Attacks	Attack Bonus	Damage	Damage Bonus

Possessions

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Allies/Contacts

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Character History

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