

D Penny dreadful

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KEEP OUT

— NORTHERN —
AGGRESSION

THROUGH THE BREACH

Through the Breach books:

The Fated Almanac
The Fatemaster's Almanac
Into the Steam

Through the Breach adventures:

In Defense of Innocence
Northern Aggression



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NORTHERN AGGRESSION

D Penny Dreadful

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4	COMPLICATIONS.....	90
Contents	5	Act I	90
A Guide.....	6	Act II.....	94
ADVENTURE.....	8	Act III	96
Act I	9	Act IV.....	98
Act II.....	24	APPENDICES.....	102
Act III	33		
Act IV.....	44		
PEOPLE.....	65		
Major.....	66		
Minor	78		
Enemies	84		



INTRODUCTION

Northern Aggression is a Penny Dreadful adventure supplement for the *Through the Breach RPG*. It is set up to provide enough material for four to five gaming sessions and should provide a good challenge for three to five players.

Each session, referred to as an Act, is broken down into individual Scenes, each with all the information a Fatemaster will need to run that part of the adventure. If the players need a bit more of a challenge, we've also provided a "Complications" chapter that comes with a few interesting wrenches you can throw at their characters to make things more interesting.

This entire adventure takes place in the Northern Hills. It serves as an introduction to the new options and locations presented in *Into the Steam*. In addition to taking advantage of some of the new mechanics and creatures introduced in that book, *Northern Aggression* introduces players to a variety of locations across the Northern Hills.

Although *Northern Aggression* is intended as a companion piece, it is possible to run the adventure without access to *Into the Steam*. The rules and stats you need to run this adventure are included in this book, so although they are largely building on concepts presented in *Into the Steam*, the only book you truly need to use this supplement is the *Fated Almanac*.

Northern Aggression shows off many of the interesting locales and people you might find in the North while weaving an epic story that focuses on the dangers of life outside the borders of Malifaux City.

As this is a Penny Dreadful, if you are not a Fatemaster who plans on running this adventure, read no further. You wouldn't want to spoil the surprise!

CONTENTS

This book is divided into four chapters. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of the multipart adventure.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the current chapter. It provides some information on this supplement, how to best use it, and an overall summary of the adventure.

It also sets up the main antagonist of *Northern Aggression*, whose allegiance can be determined with a random card flip.

CHAPTER 2: ADVENTURE

The adventure makes up the bulk of *Northern Aggression*. It is broken up into four Acts, each with three main Scenes. Each Act is intended to be played over a single game session (though Act IV can easily be broken into multiple sessions if the Fatemaster wishes).

CHAPTER 3: PEOPLE

This chapter details the various people the Fated will meet over the course of their journey. It contains descriptions and backgrounds for every such character as well as stat blocks for those characters the Fated might face in combat.

CHAPTER 4: COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes, an adventure takes so long that it makes more sense to split it into two sessions. Other times, the Fated breeze through the story and need a bit more content to fill out a full session. In either case, the "Complications" chapter provides alternative plot hooks that can be used to present additional challenges to the players or to add a bit more action or political intrigue to the session.

APPENDICES

These appendices provide Tarot Tie-ins, special equipment information, and a new Advanced Pursuit option for the players.

----- CALL OUT BOXES -----

There are many call out boxes like this one scattered throughout the adventure.

These boxes have two main functions. Boxes like this one highlight rules or special notes for the Fatemaster.

Boxes like the box on the right are used to show dialogue or description. They are intended to be read by the Fatemaster aloud to the players. Be careful, though; some are only intended to be read if the Fated take certain actions or are successful at certain challenges.



"Yeah, I was there." The drifter sighs, his shoulders slumping at the admission. "It only lasted a moment, and I still don't know how I lived through it. There was only the one Ortega, but she was so fast with that gun of hers..." He shakes his head. "Two of the bandits were dead before they even realized she had drawn on them."

His gaze becomes distant as the memory comes back to him. "It was a ballet of death."



A GUIDE

If you are new to Fatemastering or new to adventure supplements, you may be intimidated by the amount of information contained in this book. That's understandable, but fear not!

It is important to keep in mind that all the information contained within this book is intended to be an aid to you, as the Fatemaster, in the story you wish to tell with your players. If there are portions of this adventure that don't work for you, just skip them and pick up the adventure at the next Act.

As you make your way through the adventure, if you're finding yourself wanting a bit more tension in a scene, you can find options for doing that in the "Complications" chapter. Or, if your players seem to be moving too quickly through the action, you can use the "Complications" chapter to throw a wrench in their plans.

After the adventure we have the People section. Nothing makes a game come alive more than complex Fatemaster characters. While there is plenty of information contained in this chapter (and you may find yourself referencing it regularly), feel free to change the backgrounds and stats of each character to suit the needs of your story.

The appendix provides some additional information for the Fatemaster. It includes information that may come up for some groups but isn't likely to come up for most. It also includes a new Advanced Pursuit available to Fated who are playing through *Northern Aggression*.

SUMMARY

The story starts out in the boomtown of Ridley. As the major population hub of the North, all the region's railways run through the town. There have been a number of murders recently, and the Fated will be brought in to help investigate the deaths and identify the culprit.

These investigations lead the Fated to a Guild Contract Town called #34, a place too small and insignificant to have a proper name. Here, the players will hear rumors of something dangerous within the mines. Further investigation reveals that the source of the problems can be found atop the mountain that looms over the Contract Town. As the Fated journey up the mountain, they will discover a large cathedral defended by strange people. Inside the cathedral they learn of a plan to wipe Ridley off the map.

Rushing back to Ridley, the Fated find a large population of refugees fleeing to Ridley to escape the insanity plaguing their neighbors. The town is concerned about the influx of so many refugees, however, and when word reaches the town council of the sudden bouts of madness the refugees have brought with them, the people of Ridley take drastic steps to wipe out the refugees and keep their town safe.

Northern Aggression is set up so that the main antagonist can vary depending on the group that is playing. It can easily be tailored so that a long-time enemy of the Fated is the mastermind behind the plan. A more dastardly Fatemaster might even make the villain one who is aligned with the Fated's interests.

By default, the primary antagonist of this adventure is George Blank. The Fatemaster should flip a card to determine the identity of Blank's patron, which affects his motivation and a number of other elements of this adventure (see page on the right). As you go through the adventure, you'll see call-out boxes that reference these suits and the ways that a specific villain changes the overall flow of the adventure.

It is also possible to use aspects from the different choices with one another. It could be that a Guild spellcaster has learned to harness the power of an Insidious Madness to conduct his work, for example.

George Blank only plays a passing part in this adventure, but he will feature much more prominently in *Northern Sedition*, the continuation of Ridley's story.

GEORGE BLANK'S PATRON

Before you begin running the first Act, flip a card.

The overarching antagonist in *Northern Aggression* is determined by your flip, as below.

MARCUS

The Beastmaster is always running experiments and tests on nature in the North. The Molemen that now plague the region are his creations, as are the Sabertooth Cerberuses that sometimes prey upon lone travelers in the mountains.

In this adventure, Marcus is testing out a new type of magic on the population in an attempt to draw out their primal natures. He needs an appropriate sample size to ensure enough data points to draw valid conclusions, and he's "volunteered" Ridley to assist him in his research.

The Cursed throughout the adventure have bestial appearances and act like feral creatures, and the Wrath Fetish takes the appearance of a necklace carved from human bones.

SONNIA CRID

The Guild has been trying to get a larger foothold in the Northern Hills for some time, and the first step to that is controlling Ridley.

By creating panic and danger throughout the North, Sonnia hopes to drive the population to Ridley, where the Guild will escalate the situation before stepping back and allowing the Northerners to kill each other. Once enough Union leaders have been killed, the Guild will swoop in to save the day (from a problem their operative created).

The Cursed throughout the adventure remain human but are clearly unhinged. The Wrath Fetish is a brand of six claws pointing downward in a semi-circle. It is also represented by a branding iron with a similar design.

PANDORA

The Death of Hope has trapped the essence of an Insidious Madness, a creature of nightmare and insanity, inside each of the Wrath Fetishes. The Fetishes have become a conduit for insanity, and Pandora is scattering them across the Northern Hills in an attempt to drive people out of the scattered northern towns and toward Ridley.

Once the tensions between the refugees and the town are close to the breaking point, she'll give them a little shove and then sit back, hugging her box to her chest as she watches the beautiful chaos unfold in front of her.

The Cursed throughout the adventure remain human but are clearly insane. The Wrath Fetish takes the appearance of a small rag doll with a hemp loop, allowing it to be worn like a necklace.

JACK DAW

Jack Daw has been hanging around the Northern Hills recently, and his very presence has brought out the worst in its people. The Wrath Fetishes are being used to attract Daw's attention. People's guilt is driving them to madness and bouts of uncontrolled, self-destructive rage.

In a way, Jack Daw is an elemental force in this adventure. He is drawn to acts of betrayal - such as Aines' betrayal of Ambrose or Blank's betrayal of Ridley - and has given Blank the tools he needs to purge the guilty from the city. But everyone is guilty of something...

The Cursed throughout the adventure ramble insanely about their various crimes, and the Wrath Fetishes are each unique items that played some part in their owner's crimes.



ADVENTURE

The adventure for *Northern Aggression* is comprised of four Acts, each divided out into its own section. Each Act is designed as a single session but can be lengthened to create a longer campaign in the North. For example, Act IV can easily be divided into multiple sessions.

Fatemasters are encouraged to read the "Adventure" and "Complications" chapters in advance to get the feel of the adventure. In this way, they'll be better able to adapt the story if the Fated are having an easier or harder time of things (or if they start taking actions that are not anticipated by the adventure, which always seems to happen sooner or later).

Keep in mind that all the information provided here is a guide, and Fatemasters are encouraged to change whatever facts, details, and values they wish in order to make the most compelling story.

Grab a seat and get ready to experience an epic adventure that will take you from the streets of Ridley to the frozen mountains of the Ten Peaks and back again!

TAROT TIE INS

There are different Tarot Tie-In options for the Fatemaster in the Appendix (page 103). These can be used (or not) at your discretion and are provided mainly as an inspiration for tying the destiny steps of the Fated into the story.

Each Tarot option provided is linked to a specific Act and references the events that unfold during that part of the adventure.

Because this adventure is linked to *Into the Steam*, it provides Tarot Tie-Ins from the Assembly Line Tarot in addition to the Cross Roads Tarot.

ACT I

Act I begins in Ridley. Ridley is a major population center in the North, second only to Malifaux City itself. The boomtown is run by a local government and is not under direct Guild control, though the Guild does have significant oversight when it comes to keeping its people safe. A train line connects Ridley to Malifaux City, allowing safe passage across the desolate Footprints, an arid region of deep canyons.

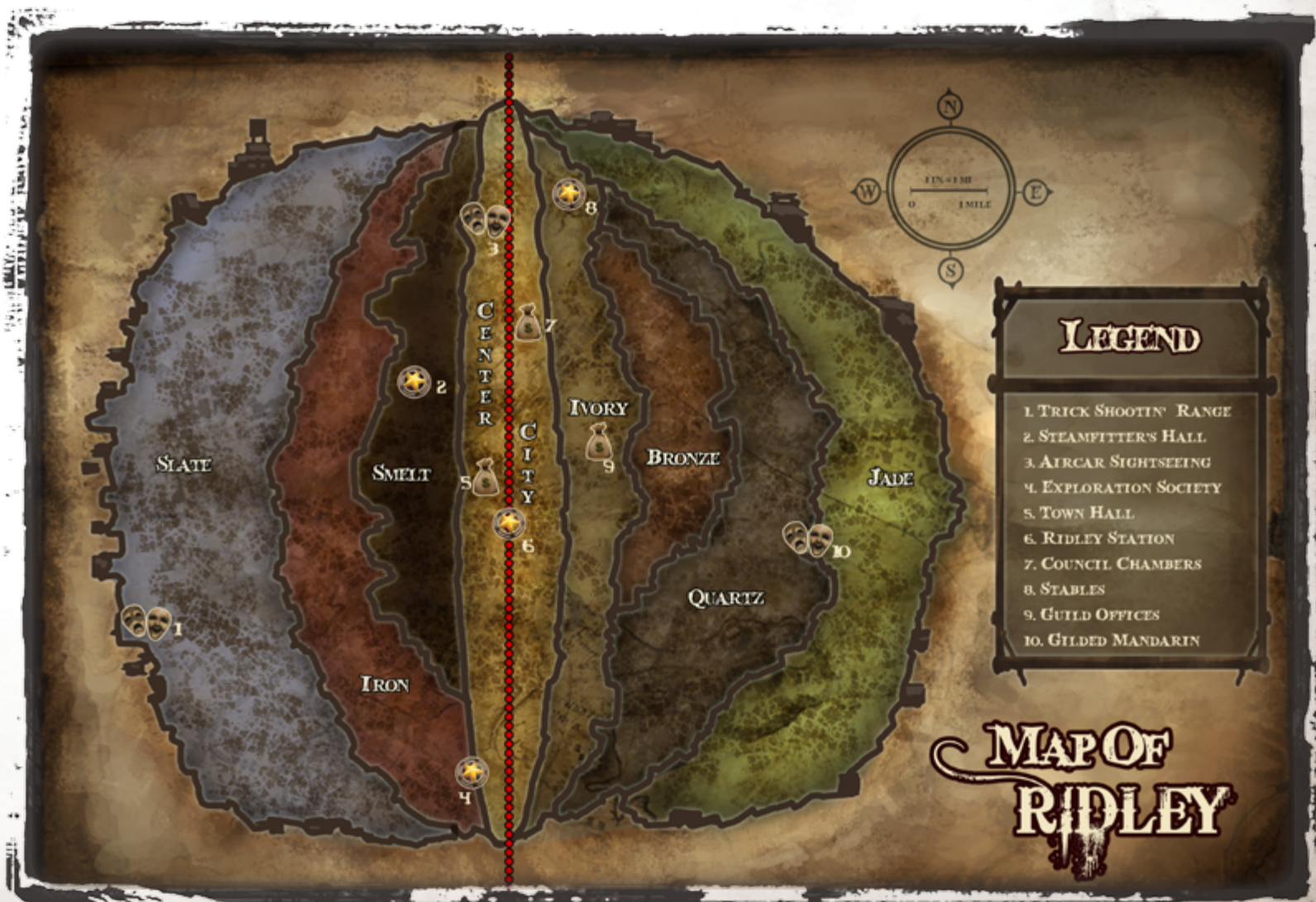
The Guild is responsible for enforcing the law inside Ridley, but the local government (which tends to be filled with members of the M&SU) creates the legal code. Should the government create a law that the Guild doesn't like, the Guild simply doesn't enforce it, and if the Guild tries to take the law into its own hands, the government just refuses to prosecute. It is a precarious balance of power, and both sides are eager to tip the scales in their favor.

It is between these two powers that the Fated begin their adventure. There have been a series of brutal and shocking deaths in Ridley, and both the Guild and the local government are worried. They're trying to keep the murders a secret; Ridley doesn't need rumors about a deranged madman roaming its streets.

Since this is the first Act, it is important that the Fated begin the game connected to the storyline. If you are using *Northern Aggression* as the start of a new campaign, you can easily work the Fated's different allegiances into the story to create that investment.

Regardless, you can find some quick and easy tie-ins on page 10 that can help get the players involved in the adventure.

Before you begin this Act, it may be useful to reread the section on Ridley in *Into the Steam* (page 18 of that book). The details presented there will help prepare you for running a session set inside the town's walls.



ACT I, PROLOGUE

Northern Aggression begins with the inconvenient deaths of two M&SU laborers in the town of Ridley. These deaths are due to an unsanctioned, though not illegal, underground boxing match in the Quartz District.

Both the Guild and the M&SU want to make sure these deaths are quietly investigated. If the people of Ridley start to think that a serial killer is on the loose, it could create panic or even inspire copycat killers. For once, both factions are in agreement: they want the murderer found and put away quietly, without it becoming a public spectacle.

Because of the nature of the crimes (and the political climate of Ridley), certain groups in Ridley have decided to reach out to find external assistance for the problems. That's where the Fated come in.

For everyone in Ridley, using investigators not directly tied to them is about saving face and, if it comes to it, having a scapegoat. The balance of power in the biggest population center outside of Malifaux City is tenuous, and no one wants to give anyone else any more power, however fleeting.

Of course, if the Fated are successful, any faction sponsoring them will be able to claim the Fated's success as their own, so there are also many reasons why the Fated might be directly tied to one group or another.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Many of the connections presented on this page won't make a lot of sense unless you've already read the entire adventure.

If this is your first time reading through this Penny Dreadful, don't be concerned if you don't understand these connections. They'll start to make more sense as you read the rest of the adventure and check out all the characters presented in the "People" chapter (page 65).

THAT PERSONAL CONNECTION

To really hook the Fated in this adventure, you should try to give them some personal stakes in the events that are unfolding.

FOR FATED INTERESTED IN POLITICS

The political situation in Ridley is defined by the antagonism between the Guild and the M&SU. Fated that belong to either organization can easily be brought in to assist in the investigation. Both the Guild and the Union need trustworthy members to investigate the deaths without drawing much attention, and the Fated are the best they have in the area. Fated that don't belong to either faction could be neutral (but trusted) third parties.

FOR FATED CURRENTLY PLAYING IN AN ONGOING CAMPAIGN

Consider adding the following key players to an adventure that will take place before the start of *Northern Aggression*:

Piter Gigani (Guild): At the start of *Northern Aggression*, Piter is a rising rapidly through the ranks of the Guild. Prior to this, the Fated might encounter him serving as a guard or other specialist, but they should generally come away with the opinion that he is trustworthy and a career soldier (which should make seeing him in the position of a politician a bit of a double-take). See page 70 for more information on Piter.

Amina Naidu (M&SU): Amina is a bureaucrat and legal counsel for the Union and could end up representing Union-aligned Fated in court. She should come across as very competent and no-nonsense but still sympathetic towards their plight. If the Fated make a good impression, she might even be the one that recommends them at the start of the adventure. See page 68 for more information on Amina.

Miriah Bahur-Garrot (Outcasts): The Fated might have met Miriah at any Northern Hills town or in Malifaux City. She should come across as serious and unfettered, with an anger that seems to be just held in check. When she becomes the fiery leader of the refugees urging them to attack Ridley, none of the players should be surprised. See page 74 for more information on Miriah.

FOR FATED WITH THE CRIMINAL, DRUDGE, SCRAPPER, OR WASTREL PURSUITS

The Fated might not only know of the underground boxing matches, they might have been among the audience or even participated in the fights! They would know about the local aristocrat, Wesley Aines, who runs the circuit out of the Gilded Mandarin, an old theater in the Quartz District. Some Asian thugs handle the actual betting. The Union tolerates the boxing so long as the participants don't lose work hours, but the Guild would definitely try to shut the matches down if it knew about them.

The "You Do Not Talk About Pugilist's Theater" section in the "Complications" chapter (page 92) might be useful if you wish to run the Fated through some fights before the adventure begins in earnest. In order to preserve the investigation elements of Act I, the Fated should not be present for any deaths that might result from the fights.

FOR FATED WITH A WEALTHY BACKGROUND OR THOSE WITH THE DRUDGE OR WASTREL PURSUITS

The characters know someone who has been scammed out of money by Wesley Aines, the man who runs the boxing circuit. Perhaps he even owes the Fated some money. You can use this information to encourage the players to pursue Aines in Act I, Scene 3: Loose Ends.

Alternatively, you can begin the adventure with Kantor's assault on Aines at the Gilded Mandarin (perhaps after everyone but the Fated have gone home), then have them chase Clementine Hayes (who has their money), only to encounter Piter Gigani and Amina Naidu in the middle of their investigation. This setup requires a bit of work but can be very effective with Fated that prefer to start off their adventures with some action.

If you wish to do this, Act I should start with the end of Scene 2 and work backward to the beginning. Once that is complete, the Fated can jump forward to Scene 3, thus completing the whole Act, albeit a little out of order.

FOR FATED WITH THE ACADEMIC, DABBLER, MAGE, ILLUSIONIST OR PERFORMER PURSUIT

The Fated might have been friends with Ester Ambrose, a theater manager, writer, and actress. She had been

researching ancient Malifaux cultures as background for a new play but has since gone missing. She might have asked the Fated to gather some information for her, but then failed to show up at the arranged meeting. If they begin asking around, they find settlers who have returned to Ridley with stories of haunted mines and dead miners walking the passages. Perhaps Ester ran afoul of some bad luck?

If you go this route, the Fated may skip Act I entirely, instead choosing to head north and find their friend. This should work fine but might require a bit of work from the Fatemaster when events come back around to Ridley, as the players will not have encountered some of the characters introduced in Act I.

FOR FATED WITH THE MERCENARY PURSUIT OR INFILTRATORS ALLIED WITH THE UNION

Amina Naidu can offer a 20 Scrip retainer fee if the Fated act as "neutral third parties" in the investigation, with the caveat that they give important information only to her. She will offer them a bonus upon the capture of the murderer (provided they also find enough evidence to convict them). Naidu will insist on discretion, so the Fated will have no official support from the government.

FOR FATED WITH THE ACADEMIC, CRIMINAL, DABBLER, OR TINKERER PURSUIT

The Fated might be brought on by George Blank to help examine the body. He is a criminal under contract to avoid a prison sentence, so those with either criminal or investigative backgrounds might know him. Blank would want the Fated to siphon information about their investigation back to him, in return for a small payment for each report.

FOR FATED WITH THE PERFORMER PURSUIT

Fated Performers might have moved to Ridley in hopes of working at the Gilded Mandarin, only to find out that its construction is behind schedule. They might have known Ester Ambrose well enough to know that she and Aines had a falling out. If the character chooses to investigate the Gilded Mandarin, she could witness Kantor's assault on Aines and become involved in the adventure that way.

ACT I, SCENE 1:

DEAD MEN TELL TALES

The Fated are invited to meet with representatives of the Guild and the M&SU to discuss a delicate matter. They are asked to come to a secure location late at night with instructions not inform anyone of the appointment. If the Fated aren't discreet and decide to tell others about the appointment, this won't have any immediate repercussions, but it might affect Ridley's preparations when Act IV begins.

When the Fated arrive at the secure location, some plainclothes guards will verify their identity with some brief but inconsequential questions (such as "What's your name, citizen?" or "What's your business here, friend?"). The guards are expecting the Fated but are visibly nervous. Something big is happening, and they just want to make certain that they're letting the right people into the meeting. There's no need for any duels to take place, but a bit of dialogue here should show the tension of those involved.

Once the identities of the Fated have been verified, one of the guards will escort the Fated inside. The building seems to have been in recent use, but it also doesn't seem to be in regular use. There is a decent level of disarray as if the place had once been a mess but was recently cleaned up.

THE SECURE LOCATION

If George Blank's Patron is Sonnia or Jack Daw, the secure location is a library in the Ivory District. The library is not open to the public, and many of the books have been left sitting out. If the Fated attempt to look through the collection, the guards will remind them that they are here for more important matters.

If his Patron is Marcus or Pandora, the secure location is an artisan's foundry in the Smelt District. Many tools have been left about haphazardly, giving the impression that the artisan who owns it vacated quickly and has not come back.

Read the following as the Fated enter the room:



Three individuals look up from their conversation, but your eyes are immediately drawn to the bodies laid out on two tables in the middle of the room.

The first cadaver is a bearded man dressed in miner's clothing, with a hastily etched placard reading "Cole Reed" set in front of him. His body is covered in bruises, some of them a disturbing purple and red. The second body is also that of a man, but it lies in two pieces. Entrails are piled neatly between the two halves in a large bucket. A placard near the body identifies it as belonging to "Gilly Wells."

As the grisly sight sinks in, you begin to notice the accompanying stench. The three individuals in the room are using handkerchiefs doused with perfume to overcome the smell, and they hand one to each of you. The perfume helps with the rot-stench, but it does nothing to hide the sight.



At this makeshift morgue, the Fated meet many of the key players in this adventure.

The Guild is represented by Piter Gigani, a "true believer" in the faction's fight for law and order. A trained soldier rising rapidly through the ranks, he deals with politics earnestly and transparently, which will either garner him support or destroy him by the time this adventure ends. Those with martial backgrounds recognize the stance of a soldier; Gigani is unphased by the corpses in the room. Piter Gigani's stats can be found on page 70.

Representing the Union is Amina Naidu, a government bureaucrat who also serves as legal counsel for the M&SU. Ambitious and serious, she constantly balances the priorities of the Union with the plight of the miners. It's clear that Naidu is putting up a strong front; the bodies, the stench, or the situation (or perhaps a combination of all of these) are distressing her greatly. Naidu's stats can be found on page 68.

The third member of the room is the tattooed ex-con George Blank. Unbeknownst to either Gigani or Naidu, Blank is the primary antagonist of this adventure and has been brought into the investigation for one of a number of reasons, as described in his motivation (see Blank's stats on page 66).

Blank works for either the Guild or the Union as a contracted "learned expert." He has been handling the bodies, and anyone taking a closer inspection will notice unpleasantness on his hands. Blank takes great care not to touch anything other than the corpses and his instruments until they have been washed. He remains polite and deferential, never speaking out of turn.

Amina Naidu will introduce all three of them with a short description of their rank, station, or profession. She will then say the following:



"Thank you, everyone, for coming on such short notice," Naidu says, covering her mouth with the handkerchief. "I want everyone to understand that this meeting is to be kept confidential. Likewise, our conversation will be kept off the books."

Naidu nods to the Guild Captain, and Gigani begins his briefing. "These two men were found at the outskirts of Ridley in a wagon. The driver intended to throw the bodies over the plateau edge but was interrupted by a Guild patrol before that could happen. She unleashed the horse from the cart and escaped on horseback. We currently have patrols searching for the driver and her horse, but the wagon is out back if you want to take a look at it when we're done here."

Naidu speaks up as he finishes. "Ridley is growing quickly, but we're still a small town," she says. "We can't have a murderer running loose on our streets. We have no idea how many other people have been murdered, if any, but we want to end this quietly. Ridley doesn't need a Redchapel Killer on its hands."



The Redchapel Killer that Naidu references is a serial killer who stalks the slums of Malifaux City. Neither Naidu nor Gigani want to see this investigation gain the sort of notoriety that surrounds that murderer; Ridley makes a point of advertising itself as a safer alternative to Malifaux City.

At this point, the Fated may attempt TN 12 Scrutiny Challenges. On a success, they notice that Gigani tenses up when Naidu mentions that they have no idea how many other people have been murdered, as if deliberately steeling himself to take a punch.

If the Fated confront him about this, they need to succeed on a TN 10 Convince Challenge to get him to come clean. Gigani is reluctant to give information but is conflicted by his ethical nature.

If the Fated succeed, read the following:



Gigani clears his throat and gives Naidu an apologetic look. "We...have proof of other murders."

Naidu loses her disciplined visage and practically snaps at him. "This is the first I've heard of this! Are you withholding information from me, Captain?"

He shakes his head and holds up a hand to allay her fears. "My superiors wanted to do a thorough investigation to be certain that the incidents were related. We didn't want to cause panic or raise false suspicions." Gigani sighs softly. "But, in retrospect, that was a mistake. There have been two other deaths, each with similar bruising patterns as Mr. Reed. They were discovered in their homes over the course of the prior week. From our investigation, we determined that they had each suffered a beating, returned to their homes, and expired."

Naidu sends a withering glare at Gigani. "We need to have a private discussion after this, Captain."



If the Fated ask for more information, Gigani can produce the official reports, but they don't offer much help other than confirming that the patterns of bruising are consistent with "someone being slugged really, really hard, over and over again." The reports are signed by Ridley's Guild Coroner.

If the Fated fail, Gigani says that it is "Guild policy. I cannot speak of it, and it is unimportant to this investigation."

EXAMINATION

If they wish to examine the bodies, George Blank will assist in doing so by manipulating the bodies at their direction. The Fated may attempt a TN 11 Doctor, Notice, or Pugilism Challenge with a  for George Blank's assistance.

If the Fated succeed, read the following:



Both men have bruising only on the front of their chests and faces, as well as on their knuckles. From this, you can deduce that they were both in a fistfight. Furthermore, from the lack of bruising elsewhere on their bodies, you can assume that it was likely a sanctioned fight with defined rules of engagement. It was probably some form of boxing match.

Considering the decay, you would guess that Mr. Reed has been dead for a few days, while Mr. Wells was killed earlier today. Both men seemed to be physically fit and in good condition, and the dirt beneath their fingernails has the distinctive glitter of Soulstone dust, which would suggest that they were both miners.

As you inspect the corpses, you notice that the assistant, George Blank, remains very passive throughout. He doesn't wear gloves, and as he manipulates the corpses you can't help but notice the ram tattoos on the backs of his hands, marking him as a convicted criminal.



If the Fated score at least one Margin of Success on this Challenge, read this additional text as well:



As Mr. Blank turns the body of Mr. Wells, you notice some faint scratches on his skin, almost like claw marks. They are shallow, unlike that of an animal, and the spacing matches that of a human hand. Someone with incredible strength gouged out skin in several places.

As for the dismemberment, there are no claw or teeth marks to be found near the edges, not even the cut of a knife to make the tearing easier. The only conclusion is that someone with supernatural strength beat Gilly Wells into submission and then killed him by tearing him in half.



If the Fated ask George Blank for his opinion, he claims that he does not have one, stating "I don't want to rule out any possibilities. I have been... sanctioned in the past for being wrong."

There is not much more information that can be gleaned from the corpses or Blank's opinion. There are some valuable clues so far but nothing much to go on from the bodies themselves.

When the Fated are satisfied, Blank will cover the bodies up with what was once a white sheet. Naidu will guide everyone out of the room and into a more comfortable area to talk. Blank takes a little longer to join them as he pauses to wash his hands clean after handling the bodies.

The side room is barely large enough to comfortably hold everyone. It is by far the most organized room in the building, and the desk is stacked with neat piles of paperwork pertaining to the investigation, primarily reports detailing all the evidence that has been gathered thus far.

If the Fated are working for the Guild or the Union, that faction is the one heading up the investigation, which explains why the Fated have been assigned to the case. If they are an independent third party, then they are given control of the investigation out of mutual distrust between the Guild and the Union.

Read the following text (adjusting as necessary if the players are working for either the Guild or Union):



Gigani clears his throat and begins speaking. "As you can see, these murders are quite brutal. You can imagine why we're be worried about this becoming our very own version of the Redchapel Killer."

"Unfortunately, mobilizing a larger investigation comes with certain challenges in Ridley." He shoots a glance a Naidu, who rolls her eyes. "It seemed easiest to get some independent parties involved who could move quickly and avoid all the blue tape."

Naidu cuts in before he can say any more. "We all want the streets to be safe from this killer. It was deemed in *everyone's* best interests to bring in some outside investigators."

She pauses, and when Gigani fails to comment further, she continues, "We have the wagon used to dispose of the bodies on site, but the driver might be a bit trickier to find."

Gigani nods in agreement. "We have some resources we can put at your disposal, but for the most part you're on your own. Report back to us with your findings, and above all else, keep this quiet. We don't need to cause a panic."

With that, Gigani motions to Blank. "He'll take you to the wagon so you can give it a once over."

Blank gestures for you to follow him and heads out of the room toward the building's exit.



Once the Fated have identified the murderer and gathered enough evidence for a conviction, they are to bring the evidence to Gigani and Naidu, at which point the Guild will make the necessary arrest. Neither Gigani nor Naidu is interested in vigilante justice (as it would only draw more attention to the investigation).



ACT I, SCENE 2:

FACADE

This scene focuses on the investigation of the murders of Cole Reed and Gilly Wells. Depending upon the clues the Fated managed to discover during the examination of their bodies, there are a number of ways that this Scene could play out.

LEADS

The Fated have a few leads, but the best ones are the wagon, its driver, and the horse she escaped on.

Depending upon how the Fated were linked to the adventure, they might already know of the underground boxing rings or Wesley Aines' connection to them. They might even choose to investigate the Gilded Mandarin, skipping over Clementine Hayes entirely.

A WAGON WITHOUT A DRIVER

The Guild brought the corpses to the secure location in the same wagon they found them in, and it is parked right around the back (with a new workhorse to pull it). The wagon is old and run-down, and there's nothing much in the back other than some discarded rope, a shovel, and a dusty tarp. A more careful examination (TN 9 Notice Challenge) reveals a shattered mason jar. From the smell of it, the jar recently contained moonshine.

Though jar is shattered, the metal lid is still intact, and the initials "D.L." are carved in the top. Asking around any of the local bars and saloons reveals the existence a moonshiner by the name of Dimitri Liakos (see page 82).

Dimitri cooks his mash out on the edges of town in the Bronze District. If the Fated go to question him, he's busy cooking. He's also visibly agitated and waving his shotgun around. In short, Liakos is an old coot.

With a TN 11 Bewitch duel (or by simply buying a jar of his moonshine for .10 scrip), the Fated can get Liakos to complain about a thief by the name of Clementine Hayes. She was hanging around his shack and bothering him about letting her drink the dregs of his next batch for free, at least until he chased her away. He never suspected that she'd be fast (or brave) enough to steal a bottle of his 'shine.

HORSING AROUND

If the Fated go back to the edge of town where the Guild spotted the cart (way beyond the Quartz District), they might be able to follow the horse's trail with a TN 12 Track duel. Once they find the horse, they'll need to make a TN 8 Husbandry duel to calm it down and take it back to Ridley. On a failure, it flees over the edge of the plateau, making a daring leap for freedom...which ends in a surprised whinny and loud crunch.

The brown quarter horse is pretty unremarkable (and not too bright), but it is branded with a "Lazy S Crazy 4" ("lazy" means that the S turned 90 degrees on its side and "crazy" means that the 4 is upside down). If the Fated ask around, they're told that the brand belongs to a horse rancher by the name of Anne Seely (see page 82).

Seely has her own stable of horses in the Ivory district and also does a brisk business training other horses. If the Fated bring back the quarter horse, she is delighted and even offers them a reward of 3 scrip (a TN 10 Barter duel can get the reward up to 5 scrip).

She gladly explains that a layabout by the name of Clementine Hayes startled this very horse, causing it to rear up, break a fence, and gallop free. ("She and this horse have about the same level of intelligence.") Then again, she never thought Hayes would be able to track down the horse and get it tied to a wagon, so perhaps neither are quite as dumb as she thought. If the Fated express any further interest in Hayes, Seely asks the Fated to get Hayes to pay her the .50 Scrip it cost to fix the broken fence, if they could be so kind.

THE DRIVER

The Fated's final lead is the driver of the wagon, Clementine Hayes (see page 78). Attempts to locate her are difficult, requiring a TN 13 Leadership or Carouse Challenge and a few hours of asking around about the wagon and the driver. If the Fated know Hayes' name, they gain a  to their flip. If the Fated succeed, they find Clementine Hayes drowning her sorrows with some stolen whiskey in an alleyway. Sadly for her, she's too drunk to run away.

If the Fated fail, they don't have any luck in locating Hayes. The next day, however, they are contacted by Gigani and informed that the Guild has her in custody. Because of the delay, when the Fated go to look for Aines, he has already been killed by Kantor.

THE INTERROGATION

Whether the Fated bring Hayes in for arrest or the Guild takes her into custody, Naidu immediately brings the law into effect; Hayes is a card-carrying union member (surprisingly) and has a legal right to a Union representative, which will take several hours to acquire. For Gigani, this is unacceptable. Any delay in the interrogation allows the murderer more time to escape, and he believes that Hayes has critical information (at no point does he believe that she might be the murderer).

The Fated can side with either Gigani or Naidu on this issue. Convincing Naidu to bend the law (via an emergency clause) requires a TN 12 Bureaucracy or Convince duel. Naidu demands to be present in the interrogation, however, to prevent any violation of Hayes' rights. She worries that the Guild will resort to "extreme methods" to make Hayes talk, but it ends up being an empty concern; no torture or persuasion is needed.

Siding with Naidu and delaying the interrogation simply means dealing with downtime (and a cranky Gigani) for several hours until a Union representative arrives. This doesn't hinder the investigation; the Fated still encounter Kantor as normal, but Wesley Aines is dead when the Fated reach the Gilded Mandarin. Thus are the consequences of delays.

Regardless of how the Fated find her or whether or not she has a representative, it won't take much to get Hayes to talk. She's shaken up about what happened and is looking to confess (or at least to get a little sympathy for what she's been through).

When it's time for Hayes to confess, read the call-out box in the next column.



Clementine Hayes' hands shake but not from whiskey. She rambles on for awhile about being down on her luck but eventually comes around to the topic of the dead boxers.

"I ain't no killer, understand? I was told to take those men and toss them off the plateau, to just let the vultures an' hyenas take 'em apart, but it weren't right. I was gonna do the right thing, give 'em a proper burial out in the ground, but then the guard seen me."

She gives you a wretched look. "I ran an' left 'em. Of course I ran! You know what the Guild does to people they catch with bodies? Can you blame me?"

Clementine makes a half-hearted attempt to pull herself up straight, and when she talks, you get the feeling that she's trying to convince herself just as much as she's trying to convince you.

"I'm a good worker, an' I follow orders. I do what I'm told. Mister Aines tells me to get the bodies out of the Gilded Mandarin, I get them out. But I ain't gonna just dump 'em in the wilds like no bandit, neither. I still got to live with ma'self afterwards, no matter how much he pays me. I ain't a bad person."



The confession's main clue is the mention of Wesley Aines and the Gilded Mandarin. If Hayes was arrested, Gigani holds her a few days, but Naidu eventually has her charges reduced to a small fine (which the Union pays on her behalf).

Gigani calls in some Guild Guards to help stake out the theater, but both he and Naidu want the Fated to enter the Mandarin and look around before they launch an official raid (which is sure to draw plenty of unwanted attention to their investigation). Neither completely trusts Hayes, and they want to be certain that Aines is involved before they move on him.

THE GILDED MANDARIN

The Gilded Mandarin is an ugly building on the border between the Jade and Quartz districts. Wesley Aines (see page 80) used his family's money and hired workers from the Jade District to gussy up an old theater into a garish, exotified faux-Chinese facade. Nobody in either district likes the theater's new look, but it serves as the perfect mirror of Aines' personality: overblown, showy, and expensive for the sake of being expensive.

The theater is still under construction. Fated that stake the building out during the day will see Asian workers carrying supplies into the building or applying garish red and black paint to the exterior. Aines pays these workers by the day but made the mistake of hiring the foreman and workers all from the Jade district. They have been deliberately working slowly since the first day of the project in order to drag out the length of the remodeling (and thus, increase how much he pays them).

The Fated may attempt TN 11 Scrutiny Challenges; on a success, they notice that while the workers are indeed making progress, they are dragging their feet and seem in no particular hurry to finish their current task. If questioned about this, the workers feign an inability to speak English. Persistent Fated will eventually learn that the workers are just trying to make the job last as long as possible since Aines has "plenty of scrip to spare."

Aines holds regular underground boxing matches in the basement of the theater. He's bribed the local Guild guards to look the other way and brought on Union workers to participate in the fights for prize money. Bookies and loan sharks run the betting pools and pocket a take of the losing bets before handing the rest to Aines. He doesn't know (or doesn't care) that they are cheating him out of his cut; he's too busy living the life of a decadent raconteur.

The fights attract a mixed crowd consisting primarily of gamblers (looking to make money on the fights) and the idle rich (looking to get a little illicit thrill).

When the Fated head out to the Gilded Mandarin, read the following (adjusting as appropriate if the Fated arrive at night):



The Quartz District is silent and peaceful, but the Gilded Mandarin stands out from the other buildings like a brightly colored red, black, and golden boil. None of the workers stop you or even look up from their tasks as you enter the building.

The ground floor of the Mandarin is a mess of support beams, unfinished walls, and dust-covered canvases. The theater isn't much better and is little more than a sea of wooden chairs, most of them missing their velvet cushions.

There are stairs leading up to the backstage and offices and a door leading down into the basement. Surprisingly, both sets of stairs have been swept clean of dust and debris.



The Fated won't find anything interesting in the theater area. If they head upstairs to the offices, they are dark and empty (unless Aines has been killed due to the inaction of the Fated, in which case Aines' bookie, Albert Jennings, is going through the office in search of anything that might link him to the dead playboy; see the Took Too Long section on page 21 for details).

The stone floor of the basement is crudely marked with a chalk line, forming a circle roughly 16 feet in diameter. It's been doused with water in a hasty attempt to clean up, but the red tint of bloodstains still remains in multiple places. Scraps of betting papers, some discarded food, and the occasional broken bottle litter the floor.

If Aines is still alive, at some point during their search of the Gilded Mandarin they discover Gabriel Kantor and Wesley Aines having an argument.

The exact location of the argument isn't important, but the Fated should get the impression that they have stumbled across an event already in progress. Fatemasters are encouraged to change the look and mannerisms of Kantor based on Blank's patron (i.e., more bestial for Marcus, self-inflicted cuts for Daw, etc.).

When the Fated discover the argument, read the following:



You come across two men in the middle of a violent argument. The first man is large, all hard muscle and grit, and dressed in the garb of a miner. He's holding the smaller man up off the ground by his shirt as if it were the easiest thing in the world. The smaller man is delicate and beautiful in the way that ancient Greek statues are beautiful, but his face is battered and contorted with fear and confusion.

The smaller man pushes against the other's chest, struggling to free himself from the vise-like grip. "Kantor...why? We had an agreement..."

The larger man - Kantor - laughs bitterly. "Why, Aines? You take the blood and sweat of honest workers and spend them like they were scrip in your bank account. I'm just a bloody dog to you, aren't I?" He backhands Aines across the face, hard enough that you hear bone crack.

Aines whimpers as he paws ineffectually at the larger Kantor. "If you w-want my share..."

"I don't want your blood money!" Kantor pulls Aines closer, shouting the words in his face. You can see a ghostly yellow aura start to form around Kantor as he becomes more upset. "You want someone to play the villain in your little fights?"

Kantor raises his meaty fist for one final strike. "I'll be that villain, Aines."



At this point, the Fated can plainly see the Wrath Fetish on Kantor. The exact appearance of the Wrath Fetish varies depending upon the identity of George Blank's patron. See the Patron callout boxes on page 7 for more details.

THE FIGHT

Find the stats for Kantor on page 79.

If the Fated don't intervene, the next blow snaps Aines' neck, killing him. Kantor will then turn his attention on the Fated. If the Fated do move in, Kantor tosses Aines aside and fights against them instead, screaming as he falls deeper into his madness. By the start of the third round, he's frothing at the mouth, glassy-eyed and rabid.

At the start of Kantor's turn, his Wrath Fetish pulses with power and attempts to infect anyone near him with its anger (as per his Fetish Talent). Characters that fail the Centering duel are overcome with rage and lash out at the nearest character with whatever weapon is at hand. If the Fated are unarmed, they resort to Pugilism attacks in order to do as much damage as they are able.

If the Fated ask further questions about the Wrath Fetish, encourage them to take a (1) Evaluate Action as described in the Wrath Fetishes callout box on page 20.

If the Fated brought some Guild backup with them, the Fatemaster could choose to have the waiting Guild guards storm the theater at this time. They arrive three rounds after the first gunshot and can either assist the Fated (perhaps a guard gets off a lucky shot that hits the Wrath Fetish, destroying it) or get close enough to become possessed by the Wrath Fetish as well (which makes for a more difficult fight).

See page 88 for stats on the Guild Guards.

A VERY ANGRY FIREBALL

The Enraged Condition forces the Fated to attack those around them. Clever players might choose to take this opportunity to Cheat Fate with their low cards in order to miss their friends, and this is perfectly fine (and probably a good idea).

However, if the Fated attempts to cast a spell, the Fatemaster might have to step in to prevent her from adding Immuto so the spell becomes impossible to cast. In general, non-damaging spells and those that require a flipped 8+ to succeed shouldn't be allowed on this attack.

WRATH FETISHES

Some of the characters in this adventure (Kantor, the Cursed, Ambrose, and the Transformed), have the Fetish Talent, which has the potential to grant characters the Enraged Condition. This is a result of the rage curse that is contained within that character's Wrath Fetish; if the Fetish is destroyed, the character loses the Fetish Talent.

In order to destroy a Wrath Fetish, the Fated need to know what the Fetish looks like. This can be done with the (1) Evaluate Action, which requires the Fated to succeed on a TN 8 Notice Challenge. Once the characters have identified a Wrath Fetish, they can easily identify all further Wrath Fetishes in this adventure without having to take the Evaluate Action again.

JACK DAW: If Jack Daw is Blank's Patron, the form of the Wrath Fetishes varies greatly from one character to the next; the characters must Evaluate each character with the Fetish Talent separately in order to identify their Wrath Fetish. Kantor's Fetish, for instance, is

a length of chain he wears wrapped around his arm; it came from a mine pulley that snapped and injured two workers, and it represents Kantor's anger at the Union and their unsafe working conditions.

Once a Wrath Fetish has been identified, characters may target it with their attacks (treat its Defense as 12). Damage inflicted against the Wrath Fetish does not affect its wielder. At least two points of damage destroys the Fetish and removes the character's Fetish Talent.

SONNIA: If Sonmia is Blank's patron, the Fetishes possessed by characters with the Fetish Talent are actually brands upon their skin; the Fated may not attempt to destroy these Wrath Fetishes in the manner above.

This might not be the end of the Wrath Fetish's influence. At the end of the session, each character that gained the Enraged Condition should be given the opportunity to take the Rampager Advanced Pursuit (see page 106).

KANTOR DEFEATED

If Gigani knows about the Fated investigating the Gilded Mandarin and the guards have not already arrived, they'll arrive at the end of the fight to "help out."

If the Fated kill Kantor (he fights to the death), they can find a few scrip on his body, along with a Union membership card belonging to Johan Oster. If the Fated do not search his body, one of the Guild guards does so and brings the membership card to Gigani's (and the Fated's) attention. If there are no guards present at the theater, the membership card is discovered during Kantor's autopsy. See the Unanswered Questions section (page 22) for more details.

If the Fated manage to capture Kantor, he rages and shouts nonsense whenever he's conscious - it's clear that he's completely insane, little more than a raging

animal. If brought to Gigani's attention, he wants to "put the man out of his misery" with a bullet to "give the rest of us some peace." Naidu reluctantly concurs, though it's clearly a hard decision for her. How can they prosecute someone who is no longer human? Regardless, Kantor plays no more part in this adventure.

The guards quickly escort Aines, if still alive, off the premises. Gigani spends some time debriefing the Fated and letting them know they are welcome to be a part of Aines' questioning.

If the Fetish is destroyed, it can still be examined, but its mystical energy has departed. If the Fetish is not destroyed, it no longer seems to hold any magical properties. See the Unanswered Questions section (page 22) for information on examining the Fetish.

TOOK TOO LONG

If the Fated spend too long in their investigation, it is entirely likely that Aines is killed by Kantor. In this case, when the Fated arrive at the Gilded Mandarin they don't encounter Kantor and Aines but instead run into a scoundrel by the name of Albert Jennings.

Albert Jennings is Wesley Aines' bookie. Aines loved to gamble with his friends, and their simple game of cards quickly turned into a regular boxing match between Union workers. Jennings saw Wesley Aines as a way to line his own pockets and started skimming money off the top of Aines' winnings.

When Jennings saw Kantor tear Gilly Wells in half, the bookie realized that things had crossed a line. Deciding that he was done, he went to the office in hopes of clearing out the safe (Aines had already done so), removing any evidence that might link him to Aines, and then leaving Ridley for Malifaux.

When the Fated arrive, Jennings is in the office, tearing it apart, looking for any additional money stashed in the usual hiding places. Jennings spills the same information about Kantor and the boxing matches as Aines but in a much more forthright manner. He has nothing to lose and is spooked by what he saw.

Jennings mentions that Aines was planning to set up a traveling boxing exhibition, although the bookie didn't think there was much profit to be found in the dusty Northern Hills. He's able to give the Fated the address to Kantor's squalid apartment.

If the Fated somehow missed the clues pointing towards the Gilded Mandarin, Gigani waits one day before pressure from his superiors forces him to organize a manhunt. By the end of the day, they discover Aines' body, track down

Jennings, and convince the bookie to give testimony implicating Kantor for the murders. The Fated are invited to participate in the raid on Kantor's apartment (by Naidu's request, as she trusts them more than Gigani), along with a half dozen Guild Guards.

Regardless of how the Fated arrive at Kantor's apartment, the fight plays out as described previously. Read the following text:



Kantor's apartment is a disorganized hovel. All the furniture has been torn up, broken, and scattered all across the floor, leaving little room to walk.

Inside the room, Kantor is standing still as a statue by a window, blood dripping from his hands. There is a mangled body at his feet.

As he notices you, Kantor turns, revealing that he is spattered with blood. Despite the rage in his eyes, he seems tired and worn out. A yellow glow begins to surround him as his weight shifts, and then that weariness is gone, replaced with anger and taut muscles.

It's been only a moment, but he is about to leap into action.



If there are any Guild Guards present (as a result of the Guild storming the building), they might fall under the influence of the Wrath Fetish; if so, the resulting combat is a bloodbath. Gigani is heavily chastised for his lack of leadership and terrible planning, and he resolves to be more careful from that moment on. If the Fated had a friendship with him prior to this disaster, it cools noticeably.

ACT I, SCENE 3:

LOOSE ENDS

Once the matter at the Gilded Mandarin is settled, both Gigani and Naidu will want to interrogate Aines (if he survived). Surprisingly, Aines thinks of his interrogation more as dinner theater with himself as the star performer.

He spills his guts not only willingly but with flourish. Read the following text to the players:



Somehow, despite the bruises, blood and cuts, Wesley Aines' hair remains perfectly coiffed. He produces a cigar and some matches. "I'm caught, correct?" He lights the cigar and takes a few short puffs, amusement evident in his eyes. "Should I be in shackles?"

"I started the Pugilist's Theater. That's true. It's all fun and games. Everyone is in on it. The Guild, the Union...I even have a few fans in Ridley's government. They always have some scrip to spend."

He inhales a drag from his cigar, his expression becoming thoughtful. "Kantor... poor Gabe was a terrible wretch when I found him. Riding on the back of a transport cart like a pig! Ha! The man made an excellent heel, grumbling and angry all the time. And a face even a mother couldn't love.

"I was doing him a favor. It was good money, and he could put his talents to use." Aines waves his hand, dismissing an unspoken thought. "No, not the boxing. The *ugliness*. That man was born to be a villain. And why not make money off that? People were getting bored of the fights. Too straightforward. They needed some... theatricality." He chuckles. "A bit less murder, perhaps, but Kantor was always a brute."



Telling his story helps Aines regain his composure, and when it is finished he starts requesting cigars, whiskey, and perhaps a lovely person to tend to his injuries.

If Gigani and Naidu are involved in the interrogation, they remark that this will probably be the end of the investigation; Kantor is dead (or captured) and Aines will be tried as an accomplice to the murders. Both Gigani and Naidu deny that the Guild or Union were involved in the fights (which is true; Aines only had a few people on his payroll).

The boxing matches are shut down, and Aines attempts to lessen his sentence by fingering his accomplices in the Guild and Union (all of whom end up having alibis). The Guild seizes the Gilded Mandarin for its own purposes, and the Union extorts Aines out of his family fortune through a series of lawsuits on behalf of the families of the dead miners.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Even though the investigation is over, there are still a few loose ends for the Fated to investigate.

UNION CARD

Kantor had an M&SU union card on him, but it belongs to someone else, a man named Johan Oster. Naidu (or any Union official) can check their records and inform the Fated that Johan is currently employed at Guild Contract Town #34.

WRATH FETISH

No one is able to identify the Wrath Fetish. If it was preserved, a TN 12 Enchanting Challenge can reveal that it is was under a powerful Enchantment. No other skills will reveal anything of note about the Wrath Fetish. If the Fated show an interest in the Wrath Fetish, Gigani or Naidu might ask them to retrace Kantor's steps in order to make sure that there aren't any more of these strange items out there.

NEXT ASSIGNMENT

After the dust has settled, either Gigani or Naidu (whoever the Fated favor more) pull the Fated to one side. Read the following text:

[Gigani/Naidu] looks around to make sure no one is nearby.

"There are a lot of things about this investigation that just don't add up. Strange little bits like Kantor's Union card or his superhuman strength. I don't like it."

"Officially, the investigation is over, but since it was never on the books anyway... think you might be able to look into things a bit further for me? I'm sure I can have you appropriately compensated, and we need to make sure this doesn't come back to bite us."

[He/She] takes a deep breath and tries to gauge your feelings.

"I think the next step is to find this Johan Oster, and find out why Kantor had his Union card. According to our records, he's in a mining town up north, the #34. If this Oster is somehow involved in this mess..." [Gigani/Naidu] unconsciously glances back toward the makeshift morgue, "...well, I'd rather not have this sort of thing happening elsewhere. We can't leave anything to chance."

Fatemasters can offer reasonable compensation or influence in exchange for helping Gigani or Naidu. Many Fated will be interested in forming a deeper connection to either faction, while others will be happy just to help.

Try to properly entice them here: you know your group best. The adventure works easiest if you get them to come along willingly.

Gigani or Naidu want the Fated to head up to the #34 and speak with Oster to find out if he's somehow involved with what happened to Kantor. If his transformation was an accident, so be it, but if the change was deliberate then they need to discover the problem before anyone else is affected.

It is possible that the Fated won't want to leave Ridley to pursue the investigation further. If this happens, there are a few other hooks you can use to get them up into Act II.

SURVEYING

Wesley Aines was pretty impressed with the Fated and their handling of the situation (assuming he's alive to be impressed). In gratitude for saving his life, he offers them a job as surveyors in the Northern Hills. He wants them to travel around and check out different towns and mines that he might be able to invest in (although he's really just looking for new fighters and new places to have fights). They are to pay particular attention to the health and quality of the miners in each town.

If they are interested in money, he'll promise them some cash. In this case, the next part of the adventure will need some changes so that it's not #34 the Fated eventually arrive at, but a different mining town (in order to keep the players from feeling railroaded).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FETISH

A more heavy-handed approach is to, over the next several days, have a strange yellow aura surround one of the players that gained the Enraged Condition from the Wrath Fetish. It is likely that this push will drive the Fated into the Northern Hills in search of answers...and a cure.



ACT II

Act II takes the Fated to Guild Contract Town #34, one of the many mining towns sprinkled across the Northern Hills. The town, so small that it doesn't have a name, houses less than fifty souls, all desperately hoping to unearth a rich vein of Soulstones to turn their fortunes around.

Like the rest of the Guild Contract Towns, the miners of #34 paid a fee to the Guild for the right to mine in the area. In exchange, the Guild is supposed to provide protection against claim jumpers and provide the town with regular supply shipments. To no one's surprise, the Guild tends to more aggressively protect the towns with lucrative Soulstone veins, and poor settlements like #34 are often overlooked by the Guild and left to their own devices.

Nestled at the base of a prominent mountain in the Ten Peaks, the miners of #34 have had nothing but bad luck. Poor Soulstone veins, frequent cave-ins and deaths, and now a strange curse haunt the dying town. In truth, #34 is a few heartbeats away from becoming a ghost town.

The townsfolk are spooked and hungry, the mines have been abandoned, and a number of homesteaders have already pulled up stakes and started to make their way back towards Ridley.

The townsfolk believe that Mineshaft #4 - the only mineshaft to produce any Soulstones at all - is haunted by the ghost of "the Bride," a miner who was buried alive in a cave-in shortly after the town was founded. Those tunnels are the source of #34's woes, and the Fated will have to enter Mineshaft #4 either to retrieve Johan Oster's body or to find out what drove Gabriel Kantor mad. Within the mine, the Fated won't discover any ghosts, only miners driven insane by Wrath Fetishes.

NUMBER SOUP

Some of the towns and places in this act have numbers instead of names. Contract Towns are created and die out so quickly in the Northern Hills that the Guild just gives them a number to keep track of them; it's easier for the accountants.

ACT II, PROLOGUE

The Fated have a few ways they can reach #34. The easiest option is to walk, though that will take about six days on foot, or half that if the Fated are mounted. While traveling, the Fated may encounter some homesteaders heading the opposite direction towards Ridley.

If the Fated appear trustworthy, the homesteaders offer to share their campfire for the night. Even if the Fated come across as a bit sketchy, the homesteaders still warn them away from #34. "That town's cursed," they say, shaking their heads sadly. "Folks say there's a lot of that going 'round these days, but #34 got it worst than most. I'd stay away if I were you."

Alternatively, the Fated may choose to find a stagecoach driver to take them to #34. The driver is on his way north to deliver mail and offers the Fated a ride if they agree to ride shotgun (literally). Read the following if they agree:



The ride is hard and the stagecoach's springs are old and rusty. Vagabond Shrubs tumble by as the coach rumbles on, and the red-brown dust in the air makes it difficult to tell the difference between ground and sky. The driver breaks the silence with some idle conversation.

"Ol' #34 was founded as a Soulstone mine, you know, but lately they only dig ore. Plenty of good people up in that town, but last I heard, they were givin' some thought to packing it all up and moving out." He shrugs his shoulders. "Can't really blame 'em, either. Mines are closing all over the North lately, and you gotta go where the work takes you."

The coach goes over a hard bump, and the driver grunts. "Then again, most towns don't got a haunted mountain glarin' down at 'em, either. Surprised they stayed as long as they did."



If the Fated express an interest in the "haunted mountain," the driver shakes his head. "I'm not one to speak ill of the dead," he says, "but when you get to #34, ask 'em 'bout the legend of the Widower Boyle. They know it better than anyone, I reckon."

The rest of the ride passes in relative peace. The dust is so thick that face coverings hardly help, but the landscape is still beautiful - like a well-preserved corpse. Every now and then, the Fated pass a few homesteaders heading south towards Ridley, abandoning their homes due to "troubles up north." The drive takes about three days, give or take.

Upon arrival, the Fated see a small town (a village really) consisting of about a dozen buildings along a dirt path. These include a Union lodge, some stables, a smithy (abandoned), and a general store (closed). Everything is run down, and nothing seems to be of value (not even the nails on the buildings). There are several more tiny shacks scattered about in a haphazard manner; barely fifty people call #34 their home, and that number is dwindling fast.

People head inside their homes or peer out at the Fated as they arrive. If they took the stagecoach to #34, the driver hands the mail (a couple of packages) to the Fated and asks them to deliver it to the noted recipients so that he can be on his way to the next stop along his route. He won't be back.

CONTRACT TOWN #26

If the Fated refused to go to #34 but still decide to travel north (likely on a job for Aines), then it's easy enough to replace what would have been #34 with #26. The town might look slightly different (perhaps the general store is still open), but otherwise Act II plays out as described.

The only real change that should be made is to change Ingrid and Johan Oster's names to Marie and Thomas Holt, and avoid any reference to Johan's Union card. In this case, Johan/Thomas was killed by his friend Rodolf Nifterick (who is now one of the Cursed within the Bloody #4).

ACT II, SCENE I:

#34

These townsfolk have fallen on hard times, and the community is in the process of falling apart.

If the Fated took the stagecoach and have packages to deliver, the locals thank them and hand out the contents (stale biscuits and some general supplies) evenly to the other townsfolk. They ask if the Fated have anything to sell or trade but will leave the Fated to their own devices if they do not. If they do have tradegoods, it quickly becomes apparent that the townsfolk have almost no money or worldly possessions to pay for them. Despite this, the townsfolk will not accept charity; they are hard-working people, and their dignity is just about the only thing they have left. They'll accept discounts but won't be happy about it.

For the most part, the townsfolk ignore the Fated and give monosyllabic answers to questions. The Fated should quickly get the impression that they are not wanted or needed.

Only one homesteader, Ingrid Oster (see page 81), has the time and interest to talk to the Fated; everyone else is either out surveying, drowning their sorrows, or packing up their things. She approaches the Fated cautiously but wants their help. Ingrid is quite frank about the fact that her son was murdered in the "Bloody #4."

MADNESS AND MURDER!

Ingrid explains that two or three weeks ago, a miner went mad. This happens sometimes in Soulstone mines, but usually not often enough to be worrisome (or at least, so the Union tells them). However, the town soon forgot about it, because her son Johan discovered a rich vein of Soulstones in Mineshaft #4.

The town was ecstatic and even threw a little celebration for her son ("the last good cheer this town knew, before things turned bad"). Within a few days, several more miners had gone mad and boiled out of the mines in a gibbering horde of crazy. The townsfolk fought them back into the mine, collapsed the mineshaft, and held a mass service.

Ingrid has been traveling to Mineshaft #4 every day since, slowly doing what she can to clear away the rubble.

If the Fated ask Ingrid about her son or show her Johan's Union card, she breaks down and begs them to help her. Read the following text:



Ingrid's eyes begin to water, but she fights back the tears with pure stubbornness. "I've buried plenty of sons and daughters with my own two hands. Too many...too many by far. Johan was my last, and this is the only time I've not had a body to put into the earth."

Her voice becomes angry as she glances up at the nearby mountain. "I can't have my son married to that damned mountain. I'm not foolish enough to believe he's still alive, but if I have to, I'll die digging him out from under that bastard."

The anger departs, leaving her a tired old woman again. "Please, help me bring back my boy."



If they ask about Gabriel Kantor, read aloud or paraphrase the following:



Ingrid's expression turns sour, as if you had just stepped on a sore nerve. "You'd better not give favor to rumors! Gabe loved my boy, and my boy loved him. They were brothers, not by blood, but by the mines. So you better not let me catch you talking about how Gabriel Kantor was a wicked man. He might not have been as good as most, but he did right by my son."



Prodding any further about either her son or Kantor will only bring tears to her eyes. You monster.

THE BLOODY #4

Ingrid Oster can give the Fated directions to Mineshaft #4, which lies at the base of the mountain the townsfolk call the Widower Boyle. It's about a twenty minute walk from town.

The entrance to the Bloody #4 has been collapsed. Ingrid gets right to work at the rubble, lifting rock by rock. If the whole town helps, the rubble might be cleared within a few days, but with only one old woman and the Fated, it could take weeks.

Nearby, the few miners who weren't lost in Bloody #4 - either from going crazy, being killed by their crazed fellows, or having a mine dropped on their heads - are hunting the base of the mountain in search of a good place to start a new mine. These miners are the last hope of getting #34 back on their feet, and they know it. They've sent letters to the M&SU in Ridley for help and have even petitioned the Guild for a loan, but they haven't received a response from either. They're angry, desperate, and a little hungry. Their plan is to take their last cache of explosives, blow a hole in the side of the mountain, and hope they get lucky.

The miners make an effort to keep Ingrid in sight, although they are clearly uncomfortable with her attempts to excavate Bloody #4. They know that she won't make much of a dent in the rubble, but they also don't have the heart to stop her. They all knew and liked Johan and are equally troubled by his death (not to mention the deaths of all their other friends and fellow miners).

The miners don't bother the Fated unless they make an attempt to get into the #4 tunnel. Then they confront the Fated, demanding that they stop "lest you bring the curse back down on us." If the Fated don't back off, they brawl bare-fisted (and perhaps use a shovel), but they won't go so far as to kill and back off the moment a real weapon is drawn (use the Miner stats on page 83).

The Fated can talk the miners into using their explosives to open the Bloody #4 with a TN 14 Convince Challenge. If they attempt to use the miners' guilt over Ingrid's situation to their advantage, the Fated gain a  on this Challenge. On a success, the miners sigh in resignation and agree to use their dynamite to blow open the mine.

Alternatively, the Fated can find the miners' cache of explosives and use it to blow open the rubble themselves. The explosives are back in town in the Union lodge, stored in a small, locked shed behind the building. The Fated can open the shed with a TN 12 Lockpicking Challenge. Breaking open the shed with melee weapons is possible but likely to attract a great deal of attention from the townsfolk and miners (none of whom take too kindly to the theft of heavy explosives).

Of course, the Fated could always try to shoot off the lock. If this happens, go ahead and flip a card off the top of the deck. If it's a Ram, the bullet strikes the dynamite, and the whole shed goes up in a huge explosion. Characters anywhere near the explosion must pass a TN 12 Toughness Challenge to avoid exploding along with it.

On a success, the character is knocked unconscious and wakes up a few hours later under the care of one of the townsfolk (likely with some permanent hearing loss). On a failure, they suffer 4/6/8 damage and lose one or more body parts as determined by a suit of their choice in their Final Duel Total - Rams affect the chest, Tomes the head, Crows the arms, and Masks the legs.

Note that this need not be a lethal accident; if the Fated is interested, they could use this opportunity to take the Augmented Pursuit at their next opportunity. In any case, the character is unconscious for the rest of the Act as the town's steamfitter works to save their life.

If the Fated have their own explosives, they can use them here. Keep in mind that most people are highly skeptical of anyone who travels with their own dynamite.

Once the Fated have the explosives, they need to properly set them at the entrance to the mine, which requires a TN 10 Explosives Challenge. A failure still opens the mine but requires TN 12 Toughness Challenges from anyone nearby (as described above).

The opening of the mine in this manner is the climax of Scene 1, and the Fatemaster should make certain to describe the preparations, the setting of the explosives, the wait as the fuse hisses down, and the eventual explosion in an epic manner. The explosion seems to shake the entire mountain, and when they peer through the settling dust and into the mineshaft, it resembles a yawning maw opening wide to swallow them whole.

If the Fated stole the dynamite, the explosion draws the attention of the remaining miners who are upset that the Fated not only reopened the cursed mine but also wasted #34's last chance at salvation in doing so. A fight is likely (use Miner stats on page 83).

Of course, the Fated could miss the dynamite or decide not to mess with it. In this case, their best bet is to go back into town, knock on doors, and try to talk the townsfolk into helping open Mineshaft #4. This requires the following Ongoing Challenge:

LET'S OPEN THE MINE!

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Convince, Leadership.
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 12
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

Ingrid is well-liked among the townsfolk; if the Fated use her son's body as the reasoning behind opening up the mine, the TN of this Ongoing Challenge drops down to 10.

On a success, the Fated manage to convince the townsfolk to help open up the Bloody #4. Everyone pitches in and convinces the miners to use their explosives to blow open the mine (assuming the explosives haven't already been used). Otherwise, it takes two days of back-breaking labor to get the mine back open; the Fated are exhausted after each day of work (treat this as the Dazed Condition that only goes away when they rest for 8 hours).

On a catastrophic failure, the townsfolk get spooked by the determination of the Fated to reopen the cursed mine and begin to abandon #34 in droves; nobody wants to be around when they finally manage to open the mine back up. Within a day, the Fated and Ingrid are the only people who remain in the North's newest ghost town.

Under no circumstances will the townsfolk enter the mine themselves. Even if the Fated do clear it out, the miners let it sit for several days before gathering the courage to enter its depths.

If the Fated bring back Johan's body from the mine, Ingrid promises to pay them what little money her son managed to save (5 Scrip).

ACT II, SCENE 2:

MINESHAFT "BLOODY" #4

This Scene revolves around the exploration of Mineshaft #4. The numbers in front of each area's description refer to the map on the following page.

Throughout the mine, wooden support beams cross the ceiling and occasionally form an "X" on the walls to support patches of weaker earth. The mine gradually slopes downward the deeper it goes into the mountain.

ENTRANCE

The removal of the debris, whether through explosives or backbreaking labor, reveals a long, horizontal mineshaft. A mine cart rail runs down the middle of the shaft, descending into the darkness; there is too much debris to use it effectively within the mine. The Fated need at least one lantern if they wish to have any chance of seeing within the mine.

There is nothing here other than a few broken tools and torn cloth. The Fated find scattered bones, dried and stripped of any flesh; these are the remains of the miners murdered before the collapse. A TN 9 Notice Challenge reveals teeth marks in the bones, and a TN 10 Doctor Challenge identifies them as human.

A hundred yards or so down this main shaft, the Fated find two side branches. The left branch leads to the miners' storage lockers, while the right leads to the building material storage room.

1. PERSONAL STORAGE

The storage lockers are unlocked and contain hooks to hang jackets and hats as well as a few pieces of personal mining equipment, such as pickaxes. The Fated can find some wallets containing a total of 3 Scrip. The only surviving piece of advanced equipment is a pneumatic water pump.

2. BUILDING STORAGE

The miners kept the extra rails, ties, and fasteners to lay down additional tracks here. Equipment includes sledgehammers and railroad spikes as well as wheels, axles, and mine cart parts.

MAIN SHAFT, UPPER HALF

The main shaft continues for another two hundred and fifty yards before it reaches any additional side passages (Side Shaft A and Side Shaft B). The area looks relatively well maintained, though a couple of ceiling supports have cracked. A major earthquake or several months of time will probably bury this shaft completely.

At the end of this section, the ceiling has collapsed, cutting off the rest of the Main Shaft. Since the shaft has a slight angle downward angle, two mine carts are here at the collapsed section. Human bones, stripped of flesh in the same manner as those at the entrance, lie scattered amongst the debris. Torn clothing lies tossed about, and the Fated can find 2 Scrip mixed in with the clothing if they care to search.

EMPTY CHAMBERS

The mine contains several unremarkable and empty chambers. Signs of work include hammers, pickaxes, wooden supports haphazardly leaning against weak rock, initials carved in the stone for claims, and painted "X's" marking areas where the miners are forbidden to dig (due to structural instability).

ABANDONED SHAFTS

There are several abandoned shafts where the miners hit strong rock. They decided to make these sections emergency stores in case of cave-ins. In the event of earthquake, these are the mine's "safe spots." A few shafts still have spare lanterns, dried jerky, and water. The rest have been torn apart.

3. BOARDED UP PASSAGES

These are exploratory shafts that the miners discontinued after hitting soft rock. They threw up some extra support beams (to keep them from collapsing and taking out the main shafts), boarded the passages up, and posted various "Keep Out" and "Danger" signs on the front.

Any sort of fighting in these rooms could cause a cave-in. The Fatemaster should consider using the Cave-In Activated Hazard rules from *Into the Steam* during any combat in these areas.

One of these passages leads deeper into the "weird" caverns. A steady trickle of muddy water flows from here to the Small Sump. The boards over these passages have been broken down with remarkable force.

MINESHAFT 4

Up the Mountain

Mine Entrance

20 ft. to Sump

30 ft. to Overhead

Map Key Elements

- 1 - Worker's storage.
- 2 - Mine and building equipment.
- 3 - Bounded up exploratory tunnel.
- 4 - End of Shaft A. Johan's body here, small soulstone vein.
- 5 - "Wend" cavern: faces carved into rock.
- 6 - "Wend" cavern: bones ossuary, ceiling collapsed.
- 7 - "Wend" cavern: bloody... breathing like a heart?
- 8 - "Wend" cavern: stone is "fleshy", fetish of Rage is here.



LARGE SUMP

Black, murky, warm water trickles down into this chamber and has pooled to a depth of a few feet. The scent of rotten flesh fills the air, which disguises a more dangerous threat; a heavy gas has settled in this chamber that can be toxic if inhaled. Any Living Fated that enter this room must pass a TN 10 Toughness duel or gain the Dazed Condition until they spend 30 minutes recovering in fresh air (i.e., outside the mine).

MAIN SHAFT, LOWER HALF

The rest of the Main Shaft goes deeper into the mountain and leads to the “weird” caverns.

SIDE SHAFT A

In this older shaft, the miners attempted to expand the mine in their desperate search for Soulstones. After the collapse of the Main Shaft, the miners decided to make this the new main mine shaft. They widened the shaft, added more supports, and put down a rail track. The shaft curves inward toward the mountain.

A carved wooden sign with the letter “A” etched onto its surface is nailed to a support beam at the entrance to this shaft.

A trickle of muddy water flows from a boarded up side passage (see Room 3) toward the Small Sump.

SMALL SUMP

To handle water runoff and any dangerous heavy gasses, the miners dug a wide hole about 10 yards deep, the bottom 4 yards of which is filled with murky, brackish water. The remains of a broken wooden fence line the pit.

Because of how quickly this hole was dug and how poorly the miners were able to reinforce it before it filled with water, any characters walking near the edges of the hole must attempt a TN 10 Acrobatics Challenge. On a failure, some of the ground gives way beneath the Fated, and they fall into the hole, right onto the floating, rotting body of a miner.

SIDE SHAFT B

This shaft is relatively new; it doesn’t even have track laid out yet. A wooden sign nailed to a support beam at the entrance has the letter “B” scrawled on it.

WEAK SECTION IN SHAFT B

The miners hadn’t had time to properly brace Shaft B before the Cursed went on their rampage. Some preliminary supports are up, but a Notice Challenge (TN 8) reveals that they are already starting to bend and crack under the pressure.

Any sort of fighting in these rooms could cause a cave-in. The Fatemaster should consider using the Cave-In Activated Hazard rules from *Into the Steam* during any combat in these areas.

WINCH ELEVATOR AND SIDE SHAFT C

Branching out from Side Shaft A, the miners dug down about 10 yards to create a vertical shaft. The walls are braced with wooden crossbeams, and a winch elevator allows the Fated to move up and down between the two levels. At the top of the shaft, a handwritten sign with a “C” on it has been nailed to one of the support beams.

The smell of rotten flesh is particularly strong here. The Cursed brought the remains of the dead here to serve as food. There isn’t much left, but the guts and offal have pooled into multiple stank, rotting piles. Two Cursed (see page 84) are here, tearing apart the remains of one of their own. They are starving and savage enough to kill each other for sustenance, but the arrival of the Fated gives them a chance to vent their rage on better targets...and to get some fresh meat in the process.

One of the Cursed uses a hardback book as a bludgeoning weapon. The book, covered in blood and gore, is a collection of love sonnets. If opened, the Fated find that someone (Ester Ambrose) has written in the margins. Phrases such as “the Mountain speaks to me,” “the Furies on the peak have given me strength,” “this madness is truer than any love,” and “Aines will pay for what he did” are scattered all throughout the book in increasingly incoherent handwriting.

4. JOHAN’S VEIN

At the far end of Side Shaft A lies Johan Oster’s body. His corpse rests behind an overturned mine cart and is badly decayed but otherwise untouched by the Cursed. What remains of his face bears a clear resemblance to Ingrid Oster; he is undoubtedly her son. A crumpled map peeks out from the front of his torn shirt.

When the Wrath Fetish first took hold of Kantor, he pummeled Johan, broke his back, and stalked off to find something more mobile to assault. Johan clung to life for a little while longer, drifting in and out of consciousness. As he was near death, Ester Ambrose approached him and offered aid but only if he promised to seek revenge upon the man who had beaten him. Despite what he had done, Johan still loved Kantor like a brother and resisted the temptation. Ambrose began monologuing, and Johan eventually passed out.

When he awoke, Ambrose was gone, and Johan was able to scribble a few notes onto the back of his map. When he heard her approaching again, he hid the map inside his shirt and refused her offer. In return, Ambrose snapped his neck and began gathering up Soulstones from the vein.

At this point, the Cursed stormed out of the mine and descended on #34. Never one to turn down a good distraction, Ambrose gathered up her Soulstones and retreated back up the mountain, confident that her experiments with the Wrath Fetishes had been a success.

The Soulstone vein rests a few feet away from Johan's body. Only two charges of Soulstone dust (Lade 1) remain, but with some work, the Fated could manage to pry a small Soulstone out of the vein. Doing so requires a TN 14 Labor Challenge as well as the proper tools and time. On a success, the Fated manage to find a single Soulstone about the size of a small coin (Size 2, Quality 0, Total Lade 2). Further attempts at mining produce one charge of Soulstone dust per success (to a maximum of five charges, when the vein finally goes dry).

"WEIRD" CAVERNS

While the Fated are in the "weird" sections of the mine, all of their lamplight takes on a distinct red glow. This doesn't affect or obstruct their vision though it might be disorientating. They can also hear some off-tune singing coming from the direction of the Screaming Chamber (see Act II, Scene 3).

5. FACES OF THE DAMNED

This cavern's walls, ceilings, and floors are carved with hundreds of near-humanoid faces, each with varying numbers of eyes and mouths. No matter where the Fated happen to be, the faces appear to look directly at them. All of the faces seem to be contorted into angry expressions.

6. OSSUARY

An alarming number of bones line the walls of this chamber. Nooks carved into the stone hold these skeletons in a macabre display. A TN 10 Doctor Challenge reveals that none of the bones are human; they can only be the remains of dead Neverborn. There may have once been more to this chamber, but an ancient cave-in has buried the rest.

7. HEART CHAMBER

The air is thick, oppressive, and warm in this chamber. Worse yet, the stone beats rapidly like an excited heart. Condensation flows down the walls like sweat; this is the source of the water that trickles down into the Sumps.

LUNG CHAMBER

The air here pulses in and out, thick and warm, in a rhythm that seems reminiscent of breathing.

8. THE SCREAMING CHAMBER

See Act II, Scene 3: The Screaming Chamber.

JOHAN'S LAST WORDS

Johan has scribbled his last words on the back of a map of the mine, which he has hidden in his shirt. He has also drawn an inverted triangle - a mountain - and drawn an arrow pointing towards its peak, which is circled. The letter is as follows:

"Mamma and Gabe -

I dun have much tyme now. I can feel my body getting culd. The Boyle Bride kame to me. She wants my sul in ekschange for more life. I want to see yu tu agin but I dun want to hurt anywun.

She sayed she lerned how to make men mad at the top of the Mountun. I figure if the curse is up dere den the cure is up dere tu. Please find the cure for Gabe. I dun hate him. Hes my bruther. I dun want him to be sad about what he did. It werent his fault.

The Bride is commin bak. She wont get my sul. Take care of momma Gabe.

Goodby and luv, Johan"

ACT II, SCENE 3: THE SCREAMING CHAMBER

This Scene begins when the Fated enter the Screaming Chamber. Several columns of rock connect the floor to the ceiling here, and each has the color and texture of pale flesh. The stone feels hard and unyielding but has the warmth and smoothness of skin.

The far side of the chamber is composed entirely of this fleshy stone. A Wrath Fetish hangs on the wall from a rusty nail. A tiny trickle of a blood-like substance oozes from the wound and trickles down through the cavern toward the Heart Chamber. A ghostly yellow aura surrounds the Fetish, similar to the one around Kantor in Act I.

The Fated should make TN 8 Horror duels upon entering the chamber. It is disturbing in many ways, and if they fail, they are paralyzed during the first round of the upcoming combat.

Three Cursed (see page 84) are here, singing an off-key and offbeat tune, the Ballad of Brianna Boyle. The singing of these warped individuals does not sound natural and is interspersed with bestial growls, inhuman whispers, pathetic weeping, or cackling laughter, as appropriate to the nature of the Cursed. Read (or sing!) the following text to the players:



"On dark nights the lonely mountain sighs,
"Give me a lady to love to nigh"
Brianna Boyle a miner be true
Her hair dust-black, her eyes be blue
"That girl be mine," the mountain did say
Married her quick six feet down today

Brianna Boyle, a drink to your man
Brianna Boyle, you sleep in his bed
O Brianna Boyle, was that your plan?
To work the mines and be Bride to Death?"



These Cursed still carry their workman tools and stare at the Wrath Fetish as if entranced. When the Fated enter the chamber, the Wrath Fetish begins to shake and quiver, causing the Cursed to cease their singing and turn around to attack the Fated.

Any sort of fighting in this room could cause a cave-in. The Fatemaster should consider using the Cave-In Activated Hazard rules from *Into the Steam* during any combat in these areas. If the characters cause a Cave-In, instead of rocks and stone dropping down upon them, it will be chunks of severed flesh and copious amounts of blood. In addition to the normal effects of a Cave-In, the Fated (and only the Fated) will have to make TN 10 Horror Duels.

In the rear of the chamber, a large crate is hidden beneath a tarp (to protect it from the blood). The Fated can easily discover the crate once the battle is over.

The crate is marked with either Guild or M&SU markings (depending on which faction George Blank works for) and has Ridley shipping marks. The half-empty crate holds enough climbing gear (rope, hooks, pitons, hammers, crampons, and fur armor) for six people. An inventory list that has been tucked into the crate suggests that about half the gear is missing; originally there had been enough climbing gear for a dozen people.

Taking advantage of this gear provides the Fated with Fur Armor (see page 102), and the climbing tools give the Fated a  to any Challenges they make as part of the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge in Act III. If the Fated instead decide to sell the crate, it fetches around 10 scrip back in Ridley.

MOUNTAIN? WHAT MOUNTAIN?

It is possible that the Fated will miss the clues on Johan Oster's body, Ambrose's book of sonnets, or even the weird caverns, and thus decide not to trek up the mountain. If this happens and the Fated don't seem intent on exploring any further, just skip to Act IV and have the abandonment of #34 occur shortly after they return to town.

ACT III

Act III has the Fated climbing the Widower Boyle to discover the identity of the "Bride" and to find the source of the curse plaguing #34 (and, indeed, much of the Northern Hills). Between the stories heard from #34's townsfolk and the weird caverns in the mine, the Fated should suspect that there is something about the Widower Boyle that is supernatural.

Climbing the mountain is an exercise in endurance for many reasons. Not only is the mountain locked in a perpetual blizzard, but the influence of the curse seems to shroud the entire mountain peak. The Fated might succumb to their anger and rage on the way, but if they resist the curse, they eventually reach the Frozen Cathedral at the mountain's peak.

Entering the Cathedral, the Fated come across a wretched figure, Ester Ambrose, who is communicating with an unknown co-conspirator through an Aethervox. It is Ambrose who is responsible for the Wrath Fetishes that have plagued Ridley and #34, and here the Fated will learn of the plan to drown Ridley in a whirlpool of madness. The mining towns were merely a test run.

Whether or not the Fated capture Ambrose, they should uncover enough information about the ritual to permanently dispel the curse clinging to the mountain and learn that someone intends to unleash that same madness upon Ridley. With nothing left but desolation on the peak of the Widower Boyle, the Fated have to return to #34.

ACT III, PROLOGUE

When the Fated emerge from the Bloody #4, they encounter the townsfolk, who are armed with pickaxes, shovels, and hunting rifles. They expect the Fated to turn mad and attack them, but when it is clear that the Fated are in control of their own actions, they ask if it's safe to go back into the mines. Even if the Fated assure them that the curse has ended, it will be a few days before anyone from #34 gathers up enough courage to brave the Bloody #4 again.

Ingrid inquires about her son, Johan. If the Fated didn't bring back his body, she descends into the mine alone to retrieve him herself (and is be torn apart if there are still any lingering Cursed). If they bring back Johan's body, she buries his remains in the center of the town square. In either case, Ingrid pays the Fated what she promised (5 Scrip). Any attempt to extract more out of her fails; she has nothing left to give (seriously, stop bothering the poor woman).

As for the Fated, all signs point up toward the peak of the Widower Boyle. Other than what the Fated find in the mines, there is not much in terms of supplies in #34. The general store has closed, and most of the town's supplies have either been stolen by thieves or sold to keep the town fed. If nothing else, they might be able to either give or sell some warm clothing to the Fated, depending on what the town thinks of their presence.

If the Fated are uncertain as to what their next move should be, you could have Gale Sorenson, a local trapper, stumble down from the mountain, near death. Whether or not she survives her injuries - deep claw marks and a bite mark on her arm - she speaks of "madmen" that ambushed her camp and attacked her. She managed to escape but speaks feverishly about the Wrath Fetishes around their necks (though she does not know their proper name). She might even have some climbing supplies that the Fated could "borrow" if they missed the crate inside the mine.

It's possible that the Fated will see no value in climbing the mountain. After all, they have the illiterate words of a dying man, the songs of madmen, the scrawls of a madwoman, and the hiking equipment of mysterious strangers to go on. If the Fated decide to avoid the mountain, just have one of the townsfolk (named Aaron) go crazy and attack his neighbor, which is enough to convince the town to pack up and join the mass evacuation of the other Contract Towns in Act IV.

The weather on the mountain is cold, and it gets worse the higher the Fated get. They can see visible snow on the peaks, and the shadowed parts of the mountain have ice. It will be a dangerous journey, even for the well-prepared.

ACT III, SCENE 1:

CLIMBING THE WIDOWER

The Widower Boyle is sharp and craggy. Miners often hike up the mountain looking for hidden Soulstone veins, but the elements and the strangeness usually chase them back down. As the Fated climb higher, the wind sounds more and more like the wails of the dead.

Nevertheless, several trails wind and crisscross up the sides of the mountain. Every year, some enterprising explorer tries to climb the Widower; the lucky ones lose their lives, each becoming another "bride of the mountain," while the unlucky ones stumble back down to civilization, crazed and mumbling incoherently.

The hike up the mountain is an Ongoing Challenge:

CLIMBING THE WIDOWER

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Navigation, Wilderness.
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 2 hours
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 4

After each Duration, the Fated must check for Hypothermia. The TN of this Ongoing Challenge increases by +1 during nighttime hours.

A Hypothermia check is a TN 9 Toughness Challenge. On a failure, the character suffers 1/1/2 damage. Regardless of whether they pass or fail, once the duel is resolved the character gains the following Condition: "**Frostbite +1:** Whenever this character suffers damage from the cold (such as from Hypothermia or an Ice spell), she suffers +1 damage. Reduce the value of this Condition by 1 for every hour this character spends in warmth."

As the Fated climb the mountain, they encounter a number of events along its slopes, as described in the Trails Up the Mountain callout box on the next page.

On a success, the characters manage to make it to the mountain's peak. On a catastrophic failure, the Fated encounter a sheer cliff face so tall and smooth as to act like a mirror. They must backtrack and start over again.

THE MOUNTAIN CLIMB

There are a few trails leading up the Widower. The man-made trails are marked with piled rocks about a foot high, and tattered bits of bright red or blue cloth help them stand out against the snow. The animal trails are harder to find but more common. At the base of the mountain, the Fated find a little vegetation and a few rocky crags but nothing too difficult.

As the Fated climb the mountain, they might be overcome by the rage curse clinging to the mountain. This should typically occur in times of stress or frustration, such as after the characters experience a catastrophic failure on the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge, after the cave-in at Mineshaft #3, after the Angry Mountain landslide, or after losing sleep at the Glen of the Dead.

When this happens, have the stressed or angered characters make TN 10 Centering Challenges. On a failure, the character gains the following Condition: "**Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

If the Fated are not in Dramatic Time when this happens, it's probably best to drop into Dramatic Time until everyone has finished resolving their attacks.

THE FROZEN CATHEDRAL

When the Fated succeed at the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge, the peak of the mountain is in sight. Between them and the peak, however, lies the Frozen Cathedral (see Act II, Scene 2).

THE BENEFITS OF NOT BEING ALIVE

Some of the hazards climbing the Widower Boyle should only affect Living characters. Invested and Stitched characters (as well as any Construct or Undead companions the Fated might have) are immune to any Condition that would not logically affect them. The Fatemaster is advised to use common sense when deciding what will and will not affect a given character.

TRAILS UP THE MOUNTAIN

As the Fated begin the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge, have a character flip a card off the top of the Fate deck. This flip will determine what trail they are taking up the mountain, and therefore which events they will encounter on their ascent. It is recommended that the Fated encounter the events in the order in which they are presented.

- 📖 The North Trail: Mineshaft #3 and the Expedition
- 🌀 The East Trail: The Expedition and the Glen of the Dead
- ✂ The South Trail: The Glen of the Dead and the Angry Mountain
- 🦋 The West Trail: The Angry Mountain and Mineshaft #3
- Jokers - The Snowman and the Effigy

It is recommended that the Fatemaster present these scenes after each Duration of the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge.

THE EFFIGY

The Fated come across the skeleton of a strange Neverborn, its many arms and wings strapped to the trunk of a dead tree. The branches of the tree create a halo around its remains. One of the hands points to an animal trail leading further up the mountain, while another hand appears to be motioning "stop."

If the Fated follow this trail, it leads them directly to the Frozen Cathedral, effectively allowing the Fated to automatically succeed at the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge. Additionally, the path leads them to a different section of the structure; the Fated only need 4 successes to succeed at the Sneaking Past the Transformed Ongoing Challenge (page 42), should they attempt to do so.

MINESHAFT 3

This short-lived mine collapsed several times before the miners abandoned it. The entrance is supported by cracked and weathered wooden beams, and looking at the entrance reminds one of a scab trying to form over an old wound. In fact, if the Fated attempt to explore this mine, the beams creak, and the ground rumbles in reaction. After about five minutes of exploration, the mine collapses completely on top of the Fated.

Everyone in the mineshaft when this happens must succeed at a TN 14 Evade Challenge or suffer 3/4/5 damage as the cave collapses onto them. There is still enough room to crawl out of the rubble (and the mineshaft) after the cave-in but going any deeper into the mine is simply not possible.

Some equipment can still be found in the mine though it is not in the best of condition. There are old, fraying ropes, some rusty pickaxes, and perhaps some dusty Fur Armor (see page 102).

THE ANGRY MOUNTAIN

As the Fated are crossing a cliff face or ravine, the wind picks up into a gale, and the mountain shakes as if from an earthquake. Rocks and boulders tumble their way toward the Fated, who must succeed on TN 14 Evade Challenges or suffer 3/4/5 damage.

If a character flips the Black Joker on this Evade Challenge, they are knocked over the edge of the cliff and are left hanging from the edge by a single hand. The unlucky character's companions must succeed at a TN 10 Athletics or Labor Challenge within the next two rounds to pull the character up to safety or that character falls, taking an additional 5/7/9 damage.

If this damage would kill the character, the Fatemaster can instead choose to have the character simply fall unconscious. In this case, the character hears the call of December as she lies dying in the snow. This is a good way to introduce the December Acolyte or Silent One Advanced Pursuits (from *Into the Steam*) to your game.

THE EXPEDITION

At this point in the journey, the Fated find the remnants of a previous expedition. Several tents, some torn to shreds, are huddled in front of a natural windbreak. If the Fated investigate these tents, they find an old journal and a tattered map.

The journal belongs to a Colonel Hiram Whittaker and details his group's desolate climb. According to the dates on the journey, the expedition dates back to the first opening of the Breach. The ink is faded, and the journal is in poor condition; reading any further requires a TN 10 Literacy Challenge.

The journal's entries describe how the mountain, which he calls Mount Whittaker, after himself, is unlike anything the Colonel has climbed back on Earth, and how it seems to be sapping the souls out of his companions. They turned morose, embittered, and suicidal, and the expedition was eventually forced to head back down the mountain and camp out in a safer location. The final entry mentions the breakdown of the mechanical Alpinist the expedition brought with them to help with the climb.

The tattered map of "Mount Whittaker" is shockingly inaccurate, as if the expedition was climbing a completely different mountain hundreds of miles distant. Even the location of Malifaux appears incorrect. If brought back to Ridley or Malifaux City, a TN 10 Barter Challenge will allow the Fated to sell the map and the journal to a collector for 5 scrip each.

Alternatively, if the characters have played through the *In Defense of Innocence* Penny Dreadful, they can get three times as much from Tannenbaum, a map collector who calls the isolated Contract Town his home.

A more thorough search of the torn tents reveals the desiccated body of a man, his skin shrunken and his hair like dead grass. He clutches a rusty knife to his throat, and the skin is split there, but his Fur Armor appears to be in decent condition (see page 102). The body belongs to a miner from a neighboring town; he's been dead for months.

The broken remains of the Alpinist are tucked away near the edges of the camp beneath a battered tarp (see the callout box below).

THE ALPINIST

The Alpinist is a pneumatic climbing machine hailing from the first opening of the Breach. It resembles nothing so much as a wide mechanical goat with numerous hitches that can be used to attach rope or saddle packs. It's built for endurance and traction, and its thick iron horns (intended to shatter rock) make a capable weapon in a pinch.

The Alpinist is broken down, but it can be repaired with a TN 12 Artefacting Challenge and an hour of work. Once repaired, the Alpinist will still have to be animated in order to function, either with the Animate Construct Magic, an Engineer's Mechanical Engineering Talent, or a Soulstone (possibly the one retrieved from the Soulstone vein in the Bloody #4).

The stats for the Alpinist can be found on page 82. If used during the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge, the Alpinist grants the Fated one additional Success Requirement per Duration.

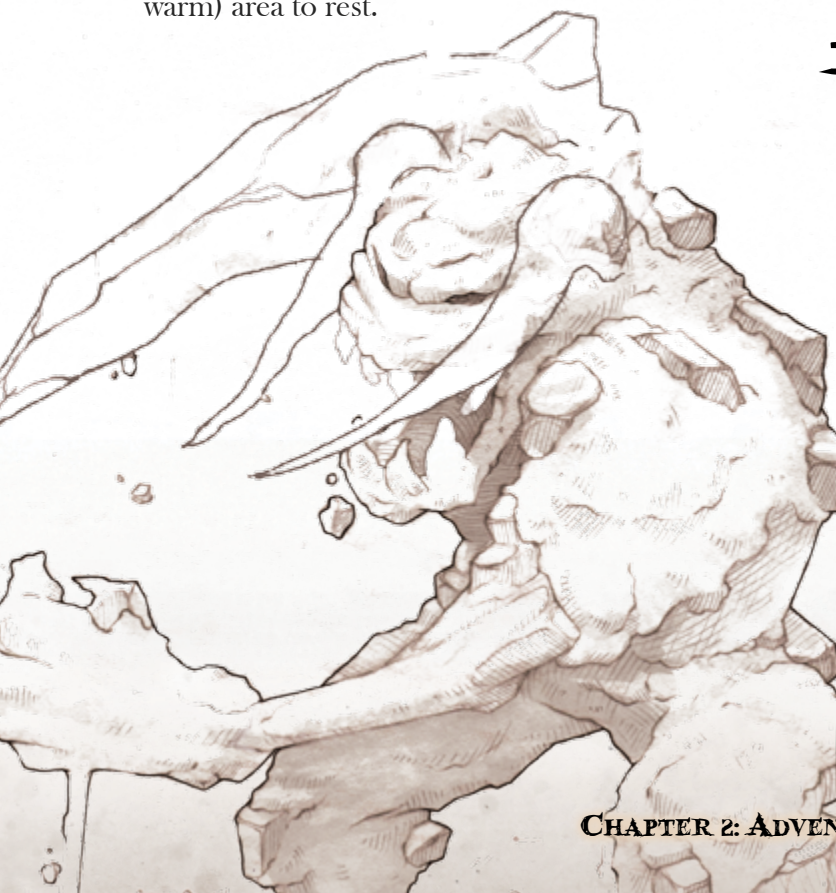
THE GLEN OF THE DEAD

The Fated come across a glen of trees in a misty hollow. The air here is visibly warm; steam billows out from a fissure in the side of the mountain, shrouding everything in a warm mist. If the Fated decide to investigate - it might seem like a good place to rest and recover from their Frostbite - they even see some verdant grass carpeting the uneven ground.

The Fated can attempt a TN 9 Notice Challenge to catch sight of the corpse of a Hoarcat lying in the grass, its small body covered in hundreds of shallow cuts. They also notice that the blades of grass are slowly angling towards them, as are the branches of the trees overhead.

This area is relatively safe, but the grass and the leaves of the trees all have sharp edges like tiny knives. Individually this isn't a problem, but anyone walking across the grass or lying down takes 1 point of damage and gains the following Condition: **"Injured Feet:** This character may not declare Charge Actions or take more than one Move Action per turn." This Condition can be removed with a TN 10 Doctor Challenge.

If the Fated are careful, they can hop from rock to rock (TN 8 Acrobatics Challenge) and avoid the grass, which makes this area a relatively safe (and warm) area to rest.



THE SNOWMAN

Rounding a corner, the Fated come across a snowman. It looks like a child's creation, with three round spheres stacked on top of one another, each smaller than the one below it. Two eyes are carved out of the top sphere, and its wide, grinning mouth is a little reminiscent of a jack-o-lantern.

The snowman is actually a Kaltgeist, a creature made entirely of snow. It only attacks the Fated if they approach it to investigate further.

You may want to add one or two other Kaltgeists to the fight if your Fated are particularly combat-oriented. These Kaltgeists are hiding in the snow and leap out to attack on their initiative.

KALTGEIST

Minion (5), Living, Beast

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 3	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 5 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 6 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Enchanting 4☞, Evade 2, Navigation 2, Notice 3, Toughness 2, Track 3, Wilderness 4

Armor +2: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +2, to a minimum of 1.

Frozen Heart: This character is immune to Horror Duels and the Paralyzed Condition.

(1) Jagged Ice (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 7☞ (12☞) == Rg: ☞ 4 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage from the cold.

☞☞ *Bitter Cold:* After damaging, the target gains the following Condition: **"Frostbite +1:** Whenever this character suffers damage from the cold (such as from Hypothermia or an Ice spell), she suffers +1 damage. Reduce the value of this Condition by 1 for every hour this character spends in warmth."

ACT III, SCENE 2:

THE FROZEN CATHEDRAL

At the peak of the Widower Boyle, the Fated come across a massive stone structure carved directly from the rock, perhaps a temple or cathedral. It's not a building but rather a natural stone structure carved out of the mountain by time and the elements.

The cathedral's entrance is large enough to admit a creature three times the height of a human. A faint yellow aura clings to the temple similar to what the Fated have seen surrounding the Wrath Fetishes in earlier Acts.

The cathedral is surrounded on all sides by sheer cliff face, and it seems unlikely that there is any other avenue of approach.

Near the peak of the Widower Boyle, the air is colder, and the wind blows more quickly and more often. Staying here long isn't be an option for the Fated.

ENTRANCE

The sides of the rock entrance are carved with a massive bas-relief depicting hundreds, perhaps thousands, of figures. The details have been worn down by time and the elements, but with a TN 9 Literacy Challenge, the Fated are able to determine that it is depicting an epic battle. The figures all tear, rend, and bite each other; there are no clear sides in the conflict, just nonstop brutality across the face of the cathedral.

MAIN STRUCTURE

The main structure of the cathedral is a giant volcanic chamber. The top is open to the elements, but the chamber itself is filled with natural steps, overhangs, crags, and tunnels that could easily provide shelter for several hundred people. There is a sense of ancient habitation to the area; the floors are a bit too flat and the natural steps a bit too even to be entirely natural. A strange, bitter scent permeates the air, and some of the stones have a sickly yellow dust covering them.

The cathedral is a maze. On the opposite side from the Fated, a massive staircase of natural stone rises up and curls around the mountain, no doubt leading up to the Widower's peak. While the staircase is visible from just about anywhere in the structure, actually reaching it is another matter. Between the snow and the endlessly winding passages, it is unlikely the Fated will be able to map out the cathedral in advance. They have to try their luck navigating the structure.

As the Fated are getting their bearings, a Transformed stumbles down the staircase and into the cathedral. She doesn't seem to notice the Fated, but they get a good look at her.

Choose the text box matching Blank's chosen Patron and read the following description:



MARCUS

A creature shuffles down the distant staircase, seemingly oblivious to your presence, and it takes you a moment to realize that she was once human. The remains of heavy winter clothing cling to her thick limbs, and a bone necklace hangs loosely around her wide neck. From this distance, her entire body seems to be surrounded in a pale yellow aura.

She's hunched over, and there is a hump growing from her back, reminding you of a wild boar or other wild pig. Indeed, her entire body seems to be stuck partway through a transformation into some sort of pig-thing; her nose has split apart to form a crude snout, tusks have jutted upwards from her lower jaw, and every bit of skin you can see is covered in thick, brownish fur.

Then she's gone, her shuffling descent taking her out of your sight. Whatever is happening to her - whatever she has become or is becoming - she is now in the maze-like chamber with you.





PANDORA

A woman shuffles down the distant staircase, seemingly oblivious to your presence. Despite the distance, it's easy to make out the yellow glow of her eyes, so much brighter than the rest of the yellow aura surrounding her. She's dressed in heavy winter clothing, but it's torn and frayed and splattered with blood in places, as is the burlap doll hanging around her neck.

There's something else about the woman that makes you uncomfortable, but you can't quite...and then it hits you. It's like looking at a person drawn on tissue paper: you can see her, but there's also something else, something *underneath* her, that's far more real and dangerous than the paper-thin visage she's presenting to the world.

Then the woman is gone, her shuffling descent taking her out of your sight. Whatever is happening to her - whatever she has become or is becoming - she is now in the maze-like chamber with you.



SONNIA

A woman shuffles down the distant staircase, seemingly oblivious to your presence. She's dressed in heavy winter clothing, but it's splattered with dried blood and torn in places. It doesn't seem to offer much protection against the cold, but then, from the way she's walking, you not sure if the woman even notices.

There's a gun belt around her hip, and as she slowly makes her way down the steps, you can see the revolver held loosely in her hands. More alarming is her expression; despite the cruel brand that has been burnt into the left side of her face, the woman is grinning widely, her teeth bared in an overly hostile manner.

Then she's gone, her shuffling descent taking her out of your sight. You hear a distant laugh and the sharp crack of a gunshot as a bullet strikes a distant rock. The woman is clearly insane and firing wildly around her...and now she's in the maze-like chamber with you.



JACK DAW

A woman shuffles down the distant staircase, seemingly oblivious to your presence. She's dressed in the tattered remains of heavy winter clothing, but most of the material has been torn away to reveal her bare flesh. Hundreds of cuts - seemingly self-inflicted - criss-cross her body in a horrifying road map of open wounds.

It takes you a moment to realize that she's crying, and as you watch, she lifts the knife in her hand and pulls it across her chest, cutting a new wound into her tattered flesh. For a moment, you can almost imagine a man floating behind her, whispering into her ear from beneath the sack over his head, but then the vision is gone, and the woman is in motion again, tears still streaming down her lacerated cheeks.

Her shuffling descent takes her out of your sight, but now you can hear her mutterings echoing softly through the chamber all around you. "I didn't mean to...should have known better...no forgiveness..."





There are actually two Transformed in the main structure: the female that the Fated just saw and a second male Transformed wandering the steps and ledges between the Fated and the stone staircase leading up to the peak. Make certain that you describe the male Transformed as well; this is the time to really play up that something is fundamentally *wrong* with these poor people.

These two Transformed were once Ester Ambrose's friends and assistants; they discovered the Frozen Cathedral together while researching ancient Malifaux for one of Ester's plays. Ambrose's theater experience allowed her to compartmentalize her rage and anger before the curse could fully take her, and in time she was able to master its power and claim it for her own.

Her friends were not so fortunate.

Out of lingering fondness for who they once were, Ester has allowed the two Transformed to make a lair down in the tunnels. She can't control them, but some last vestige of memory keeps them from attacking Ester or each other. They generally follow her instructions, and she takes them out to "hunt" for food every other day or so.

There's no talking with the Transformed; they're insane and are formidable in combat. If the Fated think of it, they can attempt to use the various tunnels, passages, and steps to sneak past the Transformed. If they decide to try this approach, treat it as an Ongoing Challenge.

THE ASCENDED

The Cursed are violent and dangerous, but for the most part, they are still human. With the appearance of the Transformed, however, the Fated catch their first glimpse at the long-term consequences that the rage curse can have upon humans.

Unbeknownst to anyone, however, is that the Transformed are not the final stage in this process. Given enough time, these poor souls will finish their metamorphosis and become the Ascended. None of the Transformed have started to undergo this final change just yet, but it's only a matter of time...

SNEAKING PAST THE TRANSFORMED

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 1 minute
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

If any characters attempt to teleport onto the staircase, they immediately cause a catastrophic failure unless they are also invisible. The staircase is exposed and the Transformed are sensitive enough to magic that this route of slipping past them is doomed to failure.

On a success, the characters manage to make it past the Transformed and up the staircase, which takes them to the mountain's peak and Scene III.

On a catastrophic failure, the Fated encounter one of the Transformed (see page 86), and a fight breaks out. Once the Transformed is defeated, the Fated may begin this Ongoing Challenge again; on a success they sneak past the remaining Transformed, but on another catastrophic failure, they encounter it as well.

Once both Transformed are defeated, the Fated may continue up the staircase to Scene III without further complication.

ASCENDING STAIRCASE

This natural stone staircase rises out of the Frozen Cathedral and winds up the mountain to the peak. It's about a hundred feet wide and quite solid, and this width provides some protection against the blowing wind.

Near the base of the stairway (near where it connects with the main chamber) there is a small alcove with a sleeping bag, some heavy blankets, and a backpack half-filled with supplies (dried jerky, a few apples, etc.). Scattered around the alcove are the following: A wagon delivery schedule from #34 to Ridley, theater props, several different "villainous" costumes, several tomes of Shakespeare's plays, and a Ridley newsletter clipping announcing the construction of Wesley Aines' Gilded Mandarin theater. A picture of Aines accompanies the article; his eyes have been scratched out with something sharp.

This is where Ester Ambrose sleeps when she is not plotting the destruction of Wesley Aines or the town of Ridley; consequently, it has not seen much use.

ACT III, SCENE 3:

A VILLAIN MOST MISUNDERSTOOD

In this Scene, the Fated encounter one of the conspirators responsible for the Wrath Fetishes that have spread madness across Ridley and #34 (and, unbeknownst to the Fated, all across the Northern Hills).

While they are likely worn out, cold, and exhausted from their journey thus far, the Fated have the opportunity to get a drop on Ester and do some real damage before she or her Cursed have a chance to react.

The Fated also learn that Ester is but one conspirator in a much larger plan to spread the rage curse to Ridley, where it has the potential to destabilize the entire North. The mining towns were just a practice run.

THE CHOLERIC THEATER

After climbing the stone steps, the Fated emerge onto the peak of the Widower Boyle. The top of the mountain is slightly bowl-shaped, and the stone has been carved into a series of steps and concentric rings, giving it the appearance of a Greek theater. From end to end, the peak is about thirty yards across.

From the center pit rises a wooden stake that has been fashioned with several crossbeams. The twisted corpse of some sort of multi-armed Neverborn lies nearby; it had once been crucified upon the wooden stake but has since been pulled down to make room for the current occupant, a frost-bitten trapper who had the unfortunate luck of encountering Ester Ambrose when she was in need of a sacrifice. If the Fated encountered the effigy on their climb up the mountain, the Neverborn corpse clearly belongs to the same strange species.

The trapper's skin has been carved with a number of unwholesome runes, all of which glow with a faint yellow light, and his stomach is slit open. A yellow substance slowly oozes from the wound to fall upon a Wrath Fetish that has been propped up beneath him; when the ichor touches the Fetish, it begins to glow a sickly yellow.

The lower portions of the stake and the stone beneath it are discolored yellow from centuries of use.

Seven objects lie in a circle around the stake: the dried heart of a murderer, a jar of blood, a plate with teeth knocked out from a fight, a used hangman's noose, a rusty set of bloody thumbscrews, a set of shackles, and a chipped knife with several hash marks on the handle. Ambrose used these ritual objects to create the Wrath Fetishes that the Fated have been encountering over the course of this adventure.

Despite being at the top of a mountain peak, the air here is almost entirely still. Not even a single snowflake dares to actually land upon the Widower's peak.

Ester Ambrose (page 72) is here at a makeshift table made from two crates that have been set up near the crucified trapper. She's already in a conversation with someone on the Aethervox as the Fated arrive, and her back is to them. Two Cursed linger nearby, like obedient dogs awaiting their master's attention. Read the following:



"You've done good work," comes the tinny and distorted voice from the Aethervox. "I think [Marcus/Ms. Criid/Pandora/Jack Daw] would be pleased."

The woman by the Aethervox looks like a theater villain. She wears an elaborate, ragged costume, and her long hair is a tangled mess. "I should be the one to tear Aines limb from limb!" she shouts. She wields a rod of metal, a branding iron, and swings it down to punctuate her point. It strikes one of the wooden crates serving as her table, smashing off a section to reveal dozens of glowing yellow objects within.

"Ester, *focus*," comes the voice from the Aethervox. "The Fetish might give you strength, but it's your creativity that makes the scheme work. We still have a bit more planning to do. This is only the third act, and I need you in Ridley when we reach the climax."

Ester laughs and poses dramatically. "Just promise me that I'll be there when the theater goes up in flames! Let me be the instrument of Ridley's demise!"



CONFRONTING ESTER AMBROSE

Once she notices the Fated, Ambrose poses dramatically and sends the two Cursed after them ("Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war!"). Once the Fated are distracted, she attempts to escape down the mountain. ("My villainous intent has not been satisfied!")

Any character that chases after the fleeing Ambrose can catch her with a TN 10 Athletics Challenge, +1 for every round that Ester has been running. On a success, they manage to catch Ambrose and tackle her to the ground. On a failure, she reaches the main structure and loses the Fated among its many twists and turns. If Ambrose escapes, she will return to Ridley, where she will either attempt to kill Aines (if he survived Act I) or join Blank to enact the next step of his plan (to be detailed in *Northern Sediton*, the continuation of this Penny Dreadful).

If Ambrose is killed, George Blank continues on with his plan; Ester's death is a significant setback, but his plans are already in motion and reaching fruition.

If she is captured, Ester proves to be a difficult person to interrogate. The Wrath Fetish gives her incredible strength, and her speech and mannerisms are those of a villain in a stage play (right down to stage whispers as she plots her "secret" escape).

THE AETHERVOX AND OTHER THINGS

Next to the Aethervox lies Ester's Grimoire, a book of Shakespeare's plays. Ambrose has scribbled in the margins, noting details about each spell and the process she used to create the Wrath Fetishes. Anyone could use this information to replicate the process, provided that they had the necessary focusing items (see the Wrath Fetishes on page 104 for more information).

The distorted voice on the Aethervox is George Blank. Because of the distortion (common to all Aethervoxes, but amplified due to interference caused by the Widower Boyle), it's impossible to recognize his voice.

However, this distortion works both ways; if the Fated wait until Ambrose has signed off before attacking her, a female character could contact Blank afterwards and pretend to be Ester asking for details about his plans. Blank is likely to be very suspicious - Ester already knows the plan - so any attempt to draw information out of him in this way requires a TN 16 Deceive Challenge.

On a failure - or if the Fated attempt to speak to the Aethervox after a loud and obvious fight - read this, continuing on to the relevant section, depending upon the identity of Blank's patron:



The distorted voice on the other end of the Aethervox sounds annoyed. "Unlike Ester, I am not much for grand speeches."

[Marcus]: "I am not the villain here. Marcus and I only wish to learn what Malifaux is trying to turn us into. You do not truly believe that the Neverborn were always so twisted of form, do you? Shouldn't we be prepared to become the animals we truly are?"

[Sonnia]: "The Guild is the only thing keeping humanity from falling into chaos. Sometimes you have to exaggerate the symptoms to get people to accept the cure. And believe me, the good people of Malifaux City are going to be lining up for the cure once I'm done with Ridley."

[Pandora]: "I've looked into the Box and seen the truth. When Ridley tears itself apart and cries out in despair, it will be the first note in my lady's great symphony of madness. What we will begin here will wash over Malifaux City, and who knows? Maybe even spread through the Breach and back to Earth."

[Jack Daw]: "I'm purging the guilt from humanity. When I'm done, only the innocent will be left. Won't that be a better world for those that remain?"



George Blank won't wait for a reply and cuts the connection after his speech.

If the Fated attempt to remove the trapper from the stake, he dies in the process. With his death, the tainted aura of rage that clings to the mountain begins to dissipate and weaken.

ACT IV

In this Act, the Fated return to #34 and discover that the survivors of the mining town have decided to pack up and call it quits. As the Fated travel south to Ridley, they encounter other people of the Northern Hills abandoning their towns; the trickle of people soon becomes a river of despair.

Bandits and Cursed hound the refugees until they reach the base of Ridley's plateau, where a camp is starting to form. Ridley's government isn't prepared to let so many refugees into the town, but the displaced settlers are running out of supplies, and the only other shelter is Malifaux City. Few of the refugees would survive the trek across the Footprints, which makes Ridley their only hope.

Here the Fated encounter two key figures: Frank Hopkins, who intends to lead the settlers back to Malifaux, and Miriah Bahur-Garrott, who is one step away from igniting a riot. Meanwhile, the Ridley government declares that the refugees must leave the plateau or be shot.

As tensions increase, the refugees develop a plan to storm Ridley and take it by force. How the Fated act will determine if Ridley withstands the assault and if any of the refugees live to see the end of the Act.

NO SMALL STORY

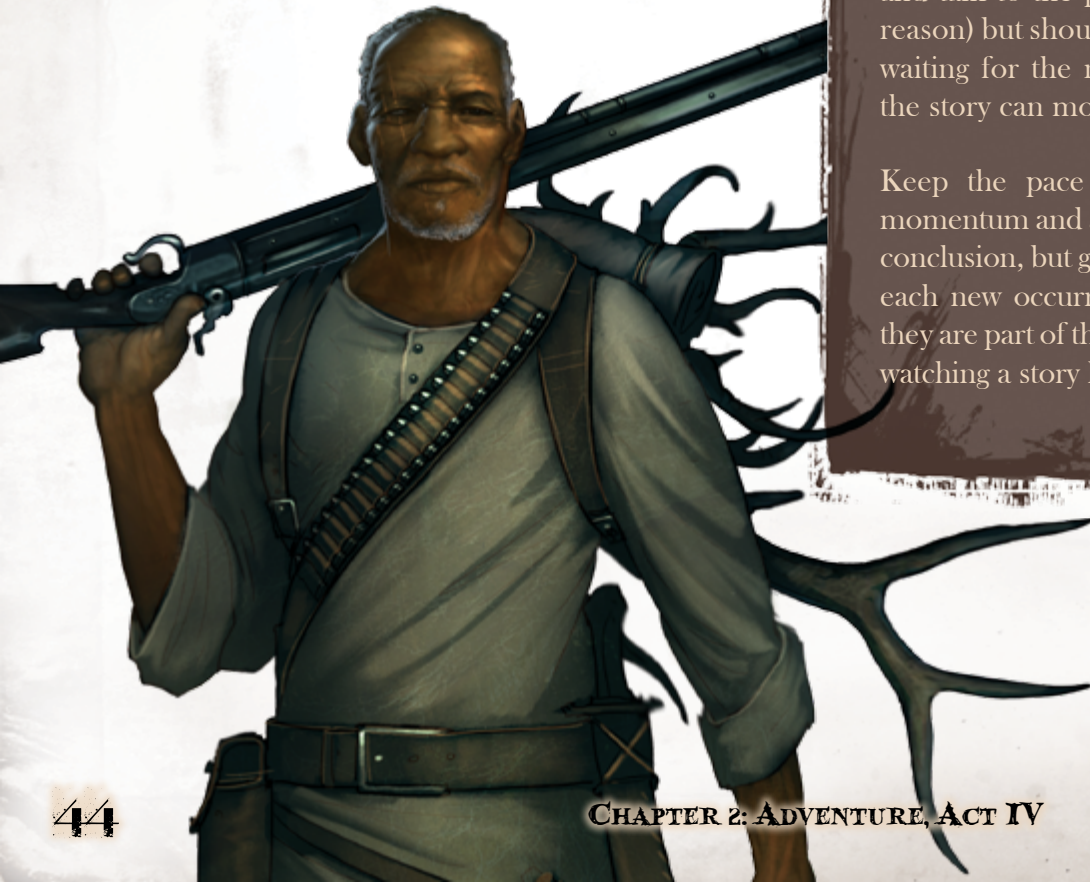
Act IV is, by all measures, gigantic. There are many things happening in this Act, and any of them could easily be expanded into a full session. If the Fatemaster wishes, each individual scene of this Act could be treated as its own session, complete with its own destiny step being resolved.

Fatemasters are encouraged to consider running Act IV in this manner. Giving each scene its own session allows players to roleplay out the smaller stories and allows time for the tension and danger of the situation to really sink in.

In addition to this, there are a few side options that are expanded upon in the "Complications" chapter that can serve as sessions in themselves, should players be of a certain mindset.

Because of all these options, Fatemasters are encouraged to play liberally with the timing of this Act. The Fated should be given time to accomplish all the things they want to do and talk to the people they want to (within reason) but should never be standing around waiting for the next event to occur so that the story can move forward.

Keep the pace steady, as if events have momentum and are moving towards a certain conclusion, but give the Fated time to react to each new occurrence so that they feel as if they are part of the story instead of bystanders watching a story happen to someone else.



ACT IV, PROLOGUE

The Fated return to find #34 in upheaval. An incident has caused the last of the survivors to pack up their things and hitch up any sort of animal they can find to take them back to Ridley.

The exact nature of this incident should depend upon the actions of the Fated; if the Fated stole the miners' explosives, then the townsfolk are distraught over losing the town's last hope at finding the new Soulstone vein. Alternatively, the Fated might have left a Cursed alive within the mine; in this case, it wanders out and attacks the townsfolk, reinforcing their belief that the Fated have brought the curse back down onto the town by opening the Bloody #4.

It is possible, of course, that the Fated have done right by #34. If this happens, one of their own residents (named Aaron) has gone mad, showing that the curse has spread and that the town is doomed.

Regardless of why, the people of #34 find some reason to leave their town behind. If Ingrid Oster is still alive, she is the one to break the news to the Fated. Read the following:



Ingrid sighs in resignation. "Damned mountain took its time, but the Widower finally broke the spirit of #34. Other times, the neighboring towns might have pitched in to help us out, but the word going around is that they've had it almost as bad as us." She shakes her head. "Everyone here's packing up and getting ready to head back to Ridley. The lucky ones will get sent out to a new town, I reckon, but me...I think I'm going to stay here with my son."

She turns and starts heading back to her home. "There's nothing left for you folk here. We appreciate the help, but in the end, you just can't cheat fate."



Ingrid stays in #34 to watch over her son's grave.

The Fated can try to convince her to leave #34 behind, but it is difficult, requiring a TN 16 Convince or Deceive Challenge as appropriate. Most likely, however, she remains behind in #34 and is eaten by a pack of curious Hoarcats in a week's time.

When the Fated decide to head back to Ridley, they soon run into refugees from the other contract towns. Their stories are eerily similar to that of #34: a sudden madness gripped the hearts of the townsfolk, forcing them to fight back against loved ones and leave their towns behind. Many of them are now being hunted by the Cursed, which most of the refugees refer to as "the crazies."

Most of the refugees hope they'll receive help at Ridley, but as more and more people join the exodus, it becomes clear that there might be too many refugees for Ridley to handle. After the second day, there's talk about forcing Ridley to help them, which provides a direction to the impotent rage and loss of the disheartened refugees.



ACT IV, SCENE 1: EXODUS

In this scene, the Fated join the refugees in their journey south to Ridley. More and more refugees show up every day as the group becomes larger and larger, and many of them are low on supplies or fleeing from the Cursed (or "the crazies," as they call them).

The Fated have many opportunities to help the situation of the refugees in this scene and in doing so, to earn the refugees points towards the final confrontation with the Ridley government. If the Fated ignore their troubles, however, the refugees arrive at the outskirts of town in a weary and beleaguered state, making it difficult for them to present a significant threat to Ridley.

DAY 0: HEROES OR TROUBLEMAKERS?

How the Fated treated the people of #34 makes a big difference for the refugees; as more and more settlers join the exodus, they hear stories either praising the Fated for helping the town or grumbling about how they were the heralds of the town's doom.

Results: Johan's body recovered (+5 Refugees), all Cursed in Bloody #4 killed (+5 Refugees), Ester Ambrose killed or captured (+15 Refugees), miner explosives used to open Bloody #4 (-10 Refugees), Fated killed any townsfolk (-15 Refugees).

DAY 1: THE STAGECOACH

On the first day of travel, the Fated catch sight of a stagecoach on its way north to deliver mail. When it reaches the refugees, however, it turns around and starts racing towards Ridley to warn the government about the incoming refugees. Stopping the stagecoach generally requires two TN 12 Challenges of whatever type seems appropriate to the Fatemaster (Longarms to shoot one of the wheels off, Convince after teleporting up to the stagecoach and talking with the driver, etc.). If they succeed, Ridley will be less prepared for the arrival of the refugees.

Results: Stagecoach escapes (+30 Ridley)

RIDLEY AND THE REFUGEES

Throughout this Act, the Fated will encounter many opportunities to help (or hinder) the refugees and the city of Ridley. The choices the Fated make here will have a direct impact upon how well Ridley is able to withstand the attacks of the angry refugees and whether any survive their desperate attempt at a coup.

Each of the encounters in this Act includes a **Results** value, which indicates how many points to add or subtract from the Ridley or Refugee point totals, depending upon the actions of the Fated.

It's also worth awarding points for other actions the Fated take during this Act, if those actions would favor Ridley or the refugees. For instance, if the Fated allow some refugees to learn a few spells from a Grimoire or raise a horde of undead to help defend Ridley, those actions should contribute points to the faction the Fated are supporting.

At the end of the Act, the Ridley and Refugee point totals will be compared to determine the final results of the conflict between the two groups.

It's recommended that you don't share the exact point totals of the two factions with the players; if you keep the exact numbers vague but show the relative strength of the groups through their behavior and actions - the guards on the walls of Ridley become more nervous as the Refugees gain more points, for instance - it will allow the Fated to become more invested in the story, rather than the numbers and math behind it.

At the start of this Act, Ridley has 200 points and the Refugees have 0 points.

Using these numbers and sharing them with the players after the fact can really show just how important the decisions the Fated make can be in the game.

DAY 2: THE BITTER FIREBRAND

On the second day, Miriah Bahur-Garrott (see page 74) begins organizing a ration system to collect and distribute food and water among the refugees. The majority of the refugees cooperate with her, which soon ends up pushing her into the position of leadership.

The Fated should hear about the ration system and maybe even meet Miriah as she makes the rounds on horseback, tallying up their supply totals in a notebook. That night, she moves from camp to camp, collecting and distributing supplies with a half dozen refugee assistants.

If the Fated are well-supplied and resist sharing with the others, she resorts to guilt and insults in an attempt to shame them into cooperation. "I know your type," she says, her voice full of contempt. "You're the sort of people who fight hard to keep what little you have, and to hell with anyone else. Well, take a look around, friends. We've got women and children going without, and you all sitting here growing fat on hoarded supplies."

If the Fated still resist handing over their supplies, Miriah takes stock of the situation; if the Fated seem dangerous and well-armed, she backs off and moves on to the next camp. That night, her assistants sneak into the camp to "liberate" their supplies and spread them to the rest of the camp (TN 8 Notice Challenge for anyone awake; on a success they notice the assistants, who flee rather than risk further conflict).

Should the Fated seem like push-overs, she orders her assistants to take their food, which likely leads to a combat (use Miner stats for the assistants, page 83). The assistants only attack with their bare fists; if any of the Fated draw a real weapon, they immediately back off.

If the Fated are low on supplies, Miriah brings them some bowls of watery stew and a few slices of bread; it isn't much, but they're trying to make due with what they have. Miriah then continues on to the next camp, which refuses to hand over their supplies, prompting Miriah's speech from above. If the Fated decide to intervene, they can attempt TN 11 Social Challenges to get the camp to share its supplies with the others.

Results: Fated hoarded supplies (-10 Refugees), Fated willingly donate supplies (+5 Refugees), Fated talk second camp into donating supplies (+5 Refugees).

DAY 3: THE HUNTER

The rationing prompts the refugees to organize hunting parties on the third day. Frank Hopkins (page 76) winds up in charge of these hunting parties after a few of the refugees brag a bit too much about his hunting abilities. Hopkins would prefer to hunt by himself, but he realizes that people are hurting and steps up to do what he can to help them out.

There are about thirty hunters, all in all. Hopkins has them split off into pairs and take the best horses to help them chase down their prey. Some hunters ride up to the Fated in the morning and ask if they have any hunting skills. If the Fated agree to help out, have each character that tries to hunt make a TN 12 Wilderness or Track Challenge. On a success, the Fated manages to catch and bring down a Moleman (beggars can't be choosers when it comes to food).

The fresh meat goes a long way towards keeping the refugees fed, and any character that catches one gets a visit from Hopkins that night. He simply thanks the Fated for "doing what they can" and then takes his leave.

The Fated can continue to hunt in this way every day until they reach Ridley (on the seventh day). Each Moleman results in more food and points for the refugees.

Results: Fated successfully hunted a Moleman (+5 Refugees per Moleman).

DAY 3: SCAVENGERS

On the third night, at some time past midnight, the Fated will wake to the sound of yelling and gunshots. In a nearby camp, they find a group of five Bandits (use Guard stats, page 84) ransacking the camp and shooting anyone who tries to stop them; the refugees in that camp are already dead.

If anyone attempts to face the Bandits in an actual fight with real weapons, they use (1) Actions to grab sacks of supplies and then mount their waiting horses. The next turn, they flee from the camp at top speed (use the Mounted Bandit stats on page 94 if the Fated pursue).

Results: Bandits escape with supplies (-15 Refugees), Fated drive off Bandits by killing at least one (+5 Refugees), Fated kill all of the Bandits (+5 Refugees).

DAY 3: CHASED BY RAGE

During the fourth day, a commotion begins to spread upwards from the back of the refugee group. There are whispers of "crazies" attacking the people near the rear of the exodus - mostly groups containing the old, infirm, and children - and people are getting a bit jumpy.

If the Fated attempt to calm down the refugees, one of them needs to make a TN 13 Leadership Challenge. On a success, they manage to restore order and keep the refugees moving toward Ridley. On a failure, however, tough miners begin breaking away from their groups, taking makeshift weapons with them as they travel back through the crowds to confront the Cursed.

These miners, already bitter and angry, easily succumb to the power of the Wrath Fetishes, which only serves to swell the ranks of the Cursed. Repeat this Challenge three more times, once each hour, until the Fated either succeed or travel to the rear of the refugees to face off with the Cursed themselves. Each time this Challenge is failed, there are two more Cursed in the eventual battle.

If the Fated travel back past the steadily advancing refugees to face off with the Cursed (page 84), read the following text, adjusting the number of Cursed as appropriate:



You push your way through the refugees, all too aware of the panic in their eyes. You hear the shouts and the crack of gunfire before you can see the fight, but then you push through the last of the stragglers to come upon two madmen.

Both are dressed in the overalls, shirt, and work boots common to many of the refugees and are splattered with fresh blood. They're unarmed, but that doesn't seem to have made them any less dangerous; the first has just finished snapping a woman's neck, while the second is holding up an old man in one meaty fist. As he catches sight of you, he tosses the old man behind him and advances upon you.



The Cursed both have Wrath Fetishes and fight to the death. They chased a group of refugees here from one of the northern Contract Towns (#41).

Unfortunately, the Cursed are a problem that must eventually be dealt with. If they survive the afternoon, the Cursed catch up with the Fated that evening while everyone is making camp. Read the following text, adjusting the number of Cursed as appropriate:



You've just finished preparing your fire for the night when a shout goes up from a camp a bit north of you. There are two rapid gunshots, then a terrible scream that abruptly fades to a choked gurgle.

A moment later, two men storm into the light of your campfire. Both are dressed in the overalls, shirt, and work boots common to many of the refugees and are splattered with fresh blood. In the darkness, you can't help but notice the faint yellow glow surrounding the [Wrath Fetishes] around their necks.

With a terrible cry of rage, the crazed miners fall upon you, clawing at you with hands already red with murder.



The Cursed here fight in the manner outlined above. However, because it is dark, all Ranged Combat attacks made at a distance of more than 5 yards suffer a  to the attack flip.

Results: Each failed Leadership Challenge (-5 Refugees), Cursed are defeated on the road (+10 Refugees), Cursed are defeated in camp (+5 Refugees), Fated flee from the Cursed (-15 Refugees).

DAY 4: WALKING INJURY

By noon of the fifth day, tensions are high and everyone is on edge. Some of the refugees have been forcing themselves onward despite their injuries, and now they're suffering after days of forced marching.

If the Fated have a doctor among their number, they're approached by Miriah Bahur-Garrott and asked if they're willing to help some of the wounded that are starting to fall behind; they need medical attention but are forcing themselves forward out of fear of getting attacked by the "crazies."

If there aren't any doctors among the Fated then they hear rumors of injured people forcing themselves to march forward despite serious injuries. Finding these injured refugees isn't difficult; people are sympathetic toward the wounded and want them to get some medical attention but don't have the skills to do it themselves.

Regardless of how they learn of the injured, the Fated can attempt some first aid with TN 11 Doctor Challenges (which requires the appropriate Doctor tools). On a success, they manage to splint broken limbs, wrap open wounds, and otherwise get the injured patched up. On a failure, however, the wounds have either grown infected or broken bones have started to mend improperly; it's not pretty, and there's nothing the Fated can do to help.

The Fated can make a total of three Doctor Challenges.

Results: Each Doctor Challenge passed (+5 Refugees), each Doctor Challenge failed or ignored (-5 Refugees).

LOOSE LIPS SINK...RIDLEY?

During Act I, the Fated were instructed to keep their investigation quiet. If the Fated paid no attention to this warning (or if they took too long and Gigani's superiors forced him to launch a manhunt), then the rumors of a serial killer have the city distracted and on edge when Act IV begins.

Results: A serial killer stalks Ridley... probably. (-20 Ridley)

DAY 5: THE MAN IN BLACK

The fifth night is surprisingly quiet; despite all of the camps around the Fated - enough to light up the hills like a hundred little stars - everyone is physically exhausted and mentally drained. There's talk of reaching Ridley sometime in the next day, but most people are worried about what will happen when they reach the town.

As the night grows quiet, a man at a nearby camp pulls out a guitar and begins to play. Read the following text to the players:



The relative silence of the night is interrupted by the sound of a guitar from a nearby camp. The music starts slowly at first but then picks up into an unknown song that somehow still seems familiar to your ears.

There are no words to the song, just the music of a single guitar, but it still speaks to your heart, washing away the weariness of the past few days with its simple melody. The music reminds you of the pain of the past but also promises a future filled with hope if you can only hold on for a little longer.

As the song continues, the refugees around you exchange small smiles and a mother leans forward to plant a delicate kiss on the forehead of her sleeping son. For a few moments, at least, it seems like everything just might work out for the best.

The song gradually comes to an end, the last few notes lingering in the air like a fading promise.



If the Fated investigate the sound, they will find a few refugees in a nearby camp who claim the musician was a man dressed all in black. They don't know who he was; he just appeared out of nowhere, asked if he could share their fire, and then played his song before leaving just as quickly.

The man in black - the wanderer known to some as Sue - does not play any further part in this adventure.

Results: +10 Refugees. Don't let the players say you never gave them anything.



DAY 6: ARRIVAL AT RIDLEY

When the Fated arrive at Ridley on the sixth day, they see early arrivals already camped out at the base of Ridley's plateau. Some of them have set up tents while others are creating makeshift stone shelters against the wall of the plateau.

THE REFUGEE CAMP

Both Amina Naidu and Piter Gigani are present when the Fated arrive at Ridley. They're already dealing with the first wave of refugees, taking notes and getting a rough headcount of those present. Neither is particularly pleased to see a new wave of people come to their doorstep.

For Naidu, this is exhausting work. She has been given the bare minimum of the staff she needs to take census of the arrivals, and throughout the day she and her assistants move through the crowds, asking the refugees their names and what town they hail from. She claims that nobody will be allowed entrance into town until the census is complete. Naidu knows that the Ridley government is using her as a stalling tactic.

Gigani and his soldiers, however, seem to be invigorated by the arrival of the refugees. The Guild has provided token supplies in the form of old blankets and stale food, and Gigani draws upon his military training to force organization and routine upon the refugees. People are tasked with putting up defensive barricades and digging latrines, and he provides sincere reassurances that the Guild is doing everything it can to help the refugees. He even pays for a few things out of his own pocket, such as medicine for a child or elderly person. He doesn't realize that the Ridley government intends to ignore the problem until it goes away.

If the Fated attempt to enter Ridley, they find the route blocked by armed Guild, Union, and mercenary forces. If the Fated have a positive reputation with either organization (and succeed on a TN 14 Social Challenge), they can talk the guards into allowing them to enter Ridley. Alternatively, the Fated could press Naidu or Gigani for access to the city, which requires either a TN 12 Social or Bureaucracy Challenge.

Otherwise, the Fated (like the refugees) are barred from entering Ridley. If they want to enter the town, they have to sneak in. Anyone can freely leave Ridley...but it's a one-way trip.

HELPING THE REFUGEES

As the refugees begin to settle into place outside Ridley, the Fated have a number of opportunities to assist them using various skills. A Fated can each attempt two of these options per day.

Results

- * Homesteading (TN 11): The Fated help the refugees build sturdy community housing using scavenged supplies. (+10 Refugees).
- * Husbandry (TN 11): The Fated help care for the few animals the refugees brought with them (mostly horses, oxen, and a few chickens and pigs). (+5 Refugees)
- * Doctor (TN 11): The Fated help tend to refugees that have been wounded or who are suffering from malnutrition or sunstroke. (+5 Refugees)
- * Labor (TN 11): The Fated help dig latrines and clear out paths through the growing camp. (+5 Refugees).
- * Leadership (TN 11): The Fated inspire the refugees and get them working together in groups instead of lurking about sullenly (+10 Refugees)

ORGANIZING THE CAMP

Naidu and Gigani have already begun organizing the refugees, and Miriah Bahur-Garrott isn't likely to stay silent about things, either. If the Fated wish, they can attempt to take control of the camp.

Any attempt to take charge of the camp is met with resistance by Miriah (and possibly Naidu or Gigani, depending on their relationships with the Fated).

In order to combat Miriah's influence, the Fated need to make a TN 13 Barter, Bewitch, or Convince Challenge to undermine Miriah's command, followed by a TN 11 Leadership, Teach, or Bureaucracy Challenge to establish themselves as the leaders of the camp.

This places the Fated in a position of authority, but Miriah still attempts to steal a train and use it to ram down Ridley's barricades (though the planning takes place in secret). If the Fated attempt to seek an audience with Ridley's town council (see page 52), this gives them a  to their Bureaucracy Challenges to do so.

Results: Fated fight Mariah (-10 Refugees), Fated take control of the camp (+20 Refugees or -20 Refugees, depending on desire), Fated take control and then abandon the refugees, leaving them without any leadership (-10 Refugees).

SNEAKING INTO RIDLEY

The city of Ridley still hasn't realized just how bad the refugee situation is going to get, so there are a number of footpaths up the plateau that the Fated can use to sneak into town. Sneaking into Ridley is represented by an Ongoing Challenge.

SNEAKING INTO RIDLEY

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Barter, Forgery, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

On a success, all participating characters slip into Ridley without anyone paying much attention to them. This most likely involves climbing the plateau and sneaking into one of the outer districts without being seen, but a few bribes and some false paperwork (likely "signed" by either Naidu or Gigani) can help as well.

On a catastrophic failure, all participating characters are spotted and captured by the guards. While this doesn't result in their arrest (unless the Guild already has an arrest warrant issued for one of the Fated for some reason), it does result in the characters being detained for a few hours while the Guild takes their pictures and adds them to a watch list. All further attempts to sneak into Ridley via this Ongoing Challenge have their TN increased by +2.

INSIDE RIDLEY

There are a number of actions the Fated can take to help or hinder the refugees from within Ridley.

THE PLIGHT OF THE MERCHANT

The merchants of Ridley are sympathetic to the cause of the refugees but are unwilling to put themselves in any financial jeopardy to assist total strangers. Others are hiking up their prices in order to take advantage of the extra demand. A TN 12 Barter Challenge can swing the opinion of the merchants one way or the other.

Results: Fated lower prices (+10 Refugees), Fated increase prices (-10 Refugees).

SOAPBOX PREACHING

The Fated might choose to take up a soapbox (perhaps literally) and begin lecturing the people of Ridley on the moral issues of the refugee crisis. Each Fated can attempt this once per day, in which case they must make a TN 10 Leadership Challenge. On a success, they manage to sway public opinion either for or against the Refugees, while a failure results in them either being ignored or booed off of the streets by angry dissenters.

Results: The Fated sway public opinion (+5 Refugees or -5 Refugees, as appropriate).

APPEAL TO THE COUNCIL

If the Fated are able to get an appointment to speak in front of the town council (TN 13 Bureaucracy Challenge, resulting in a meeting that takes place in six hours, -2 hours per Margin of Success), they can make an appeal for either refugee relief or better Ridley defenses. This won't sway the council from their eventual decision to get rid of the refugees, but if the Fated succeed on a TN 11 Convince Challenge, the council makes some concessions in the hope of getting the Fated to return to the refugee camp with a feeling of accomplishment.

If Pandora is Blank's patron, then this option is of particular importance to the adventure. See the No Chance For Peace section in the "Complications" chapter (page 100) for more details.

Results: Fated acquired refugee relief (+20 Refugees), Fated gained funding for better defenses (+20 Ridley).

DEALING WITH THE DEFENSES

The Fated are able to take a more active role in the defenses on the Ridley side. They can choose to either assist in bolstering the defenses or work to undermine them. Bolstering the defenses requires Homesteading, Labor, or Engineering duels (TN 11). Undermining the defenses can use a large variety of skills, either social (convincing the guards to be more lenient, poisoning them, or distracting them) or physical (weakening the walls, creating a new path into town, etc.).

Fatemasters are encouraged to let players get creative here and use a variety of methods. Below are suggestions for rewards, but adjust them based on implementation.

Results: Fated bolster the defenses (+10 Ridley), Fated undermine the defenses (-10 Ridley).

ACT IV, SCENE 2:

RISE TENSIONS

After the first night in the growing refugee camp, tensions begin to rise among the refugees. People are angry that Ridley isn't allowing them to enter and (untrue) stories begin to circulate through the camp of jackals attacking and devouring people at the fringes of the makeshift settlement.

If the Fated have been earning steady points for the refugees and helping out as best they can, then they might be seen as competent leaders. If not, they're just faces in the crowd (unless they've been actively working to hinder the refugees, in which case they get a lot of dirty looks and hear mumbled curses as they walk through camp).

The feelings of resentment towards Ridley's government build all through the day, until finally it reaches a tipping point. Somehow, one or more Wrath Fetishes has made it into the camp, whether from Ridley or tucked into the supplies the refugees brought from the Northern Hills. A farm hand succumbs to the curse, and the foul energies within the Wrath Fetish leap from one angry refugee to the next like a wildfire in dry underbrush.

THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE

It is possible that the Fated might sneak into Ridley and choose not to return to the refugee camp. The first section of this scene (the fight against the eight Cursed) should be skipped in this case.

However, the events detailed in that scene still occur, albeit "off camera." The Fated will not be oblivious to what's happening; the sound of gunfire is easy to hear in the morning air, and all of Ridley is talking about what happened after the fact.

If that doesn't compel the Fated to investigate, then either Naidu or Gigani sends a messenger with a note asking the Fated to come assist with the camp. If the Fated still choose to remain in Ridley as the action unfolds elsewhere, skip right to Scene III.

Read the following to the players:



It's been a long day and people are upset that there hasn't been any progress towards getting them into Ridley and settled down. The guards and census workers have plenty of empty promises, but few facts.

The silence is broken by a scream from a few hundred feet away. Someone shouts "Please, no!" and then people are screaming and running in every direction. At the center of the chaos, you see eight farmhands screaming in rage as they attack their fellow refugees in a frenzy of violence.

It's not dark enough to tell if any of them are surrounded with a yellow glow, but judging from the [Wrath Fetish] on the neck of their leader, you don't doubt that it's there.



The eight men are all Cursed, but only the "leader" possesses a Wrath Fetish; the others have been caught up in its corruptive magic and are now venting their anger on their fellow refugees.

The idea of fighting against eight Cursed should be a frightening prospect for the Fated, even those that are specialized in the art of combat. Fortunately for the Fated, only one of the Cursed has a Wrath Fetish; ignore the Fetish Talent on the other Cursed.

The guards on the plateau are watching the disturbance with equal parts confusion and horror. They decide to provide the Fated with assistance in this fight (though the Fated are unlikely to know that until it happens).

At the start of the second round, have the Fated make TN 10 Notice Challenges; on a success, they catch sight of three Guild riflemen setting up atop the edge of the plateau, overlooking the refugee camp.

At the end of the third round and every round thereafter, the riflemen take aim and fire, killing a single Cursed with an expertly aimed headshot. Eventually, the Fated are the only people still alive in a circle of corpses and bloodshed.

If the Wrath Fetish possessed by the Cursed leader is destroyed, the other Cursed return to normal at the end of the round. Killing the lead Cursed also frees the other Cursed from the effects of the rage curse. If the riflemen are in place, however, one of these "rescued" characters might still catch a bullet in the head.

If the Fated find themselves having a hard time with this fight, you can have one of the riflemen take aim at the Wrath Fetish and shatter it with a well-placed bullet, ending the effect as noted above. Of course, if Sonnia is Blank's patron, the Fetish is a brand that is burned into the lead Cursed's flesh, which makes it impossible to destroy.

Should the Fated choose to flee from the Cursed or otherwise decide not to attack them, the Cursed cut a swathe of destruction through the camp before the riflemen eventually put them (and a dozen or so refugees that get swept up in their madness) down.

Afterwards, the talk of the camp will be the Fated (if they intervened) and the Guild riflemen on the hills. The riflemen were excellent shots and the refugees are both impressed and intimidated by their skill.

Regardless of the outcome of the fight, it serves as a wake-up call to Ridley's government. They now know that the rumors of a madness in the northern lands are true and begin taking steps to protect their town from catching it.

Results: Fated jumped in to help the refugees (+10 Refugees), Guild killed the Cursed without the Fated's help (+10 Ridley, -10 Refugees).

SONNIA IS COOOOLD... HEARTED

If Sonnia is using Blank and his Wrath Fetishes to destabilize Ridley and the Northern Hills, the Guild pulls out of Ridley without informing the town council shortly after issuing its ultimatum (see the next page).

The Guild leaves a few infiltrators behind to sabotage Ridley's defenses and stir up passions among the refugees, but the situation really doesn't need much assistance; thanks to Miriah Bahur-Garrot, things quickly escalate into a confrontation. Without the trained soldiers of the Guild manning the barricades, Ridley's defenses are severely compromised.

If the refugees manage to take Ridley, Sonnia plans to swoop in and restore order, allowing the Guild to take control of the town under the pretense of "rescuing" it from the refugees.

If Ridley wipes out the refugees, she will use the massacre as political leverage against the town council and the Union at large, and when the next election comes around, Ridley will fall into her hands by the request of its people.

It's a win/win plan as far as Sonnia is concerned, but then, she also hasn't counted on the interference of the Fated. This could be a good place to pick up the adventure once *Northern Aggression* has finished.

After all, Sonnia is the type to let the fires of a grudge burn for a long, long time.

Results: The Guild's sudden abandonment (and sabotage) of Ridley leaves the city poorly equipped to defend itself against the refugees (-50 Ridley).

THE DEATH OF PEACE

When the Fated wake up the next morning, it's clear that something has changed. The census takers are nowhere in sight, the guards at Ridley's gates have doubled, and there are riflemen placed at strategic points all along the plateau, giving them vantage points across the entire refugee camp.

Around noon, Gigani (or Naidu, if the Guild is about to abandon Ridley) is handed a message by a runner. It is an order for the refugees to disperse...or face a firing line. Ridley is trying to protect itself from the curse. Read the following to the players:



[Gigani/Naidu] sends each of you a message requesting your presence at an emergency meeting. When you arrive at the small tent at the edge of the refugee camp, [Gigani/Naidu] is present, as are a few other key individuals (including Miriah Bahur-Garrott and Frank Hopkins).

"I fear the worst has come to pass," [Gigani/Naidu] says. "The Guild has ordered the refugees to disperse and head home. If they continue to remain in the camp, the Guild will have no choice but to consider them political dissidents, which will result in their execution by firing line."



There's not much to say after that. Miriah feels justified and is ready to leave the meeting to set up her own plans. Frank Hopkins is pensive and withdrawn. Unless the Fated speak, Gigani (or Naidu) shakes his (or her) head and leaves the tent.

If the Fated want to discuss the message, there's not a lot more to be known. Once the meeting ends, it only takes an hour or so for the ultimatum to start spreading through the camp. Action needs to be taken quickly.

Fated who show an interest in returning to Ridley should be made aware that with the doubling of the guard and increased Riflemen on the plateau, sneaking in would be very difficult, and bribery and coercion are out of the question. The Fated are stuck outside the town.

Miriah Bahur-Garrott expected this possibility, and the announcement only serves to give her the final push she needed to transform her into a revolutionary leader. If the Fated have a good reputation among the refugees, she calls them to her tent to share her plan. Read the following to the players:



Miriah Bahur-Garrott is waiting for you in her small tent, along with a dozen other refugees that you recognize as having been instrumental in keeping the refugees safe and supplied during the trip to Ridley.

In the close confines of the tent, Miriah's voice is strong and clear. "The city has issued an ultimatum: either we clear out, or they're going to execute us like criminals. And for what? For setting up camps outside the city?" She jabs a finger in the direction of the city. "If they had let us into Ridley when we first arrived, we wouldn't have this problem!"

From the back of the room, a deep voice provides a counterpoint. "Now hold on up," Frank Hopkins says, one hand raised to implore her to stop. "Ridley's not the only option we have here. The way I see it, a whole lot of these folks could do just fine in Malifaux City."

"Assuming they can make it across the Footprints," Miriah counters, her tone making it clear that this was something she had also considered. "And what if the Guild turns us away from Malifaux?" She shakes her head. "No, we have to make our stand here, now, while we still have the numbers to do something about it. And I know just the way."

Hopkins shifts the rifle on his back and steps out of the tent, along with a few others who want nothing to do with the rest of Miriah's plan. The weight of numbers, though, is still clearly on Miriah's side.

She casts a glance in your direction, as if silently asking whose side you wish to take.



If any Fated leave with Hopkins, read the following text:



Hopkins stops a few dozen feet from the tent to light a cigarette. "Woman's crazy," he says, glancing up as he shakes out the match. "Good to see that not everyone is buying what she's selling."

He takes a long pull from the cigarette, then looks out over the refugee camp, towards Ridley. "I reckon it's time to start gathering up as many people as can listen to reason and start leading them to Malifaux City. The Footprints won't be easy, I ain't gonna lie, especially for the youngins and the old folk...but it's better than catching a bullet from one of them Guild folk with the itchy trigger fingers."

Hopkins looks back at you. "Can I count on your help here? Time isn't on our side, and once things start to go south, we don't want to be anywhere around here."



Hopkins' plan involves gathering up as many people as possible and leading them across the Footprints to Malifaux City. It's a hard journey and the refugees don't have much in the way of supplies, but it's still a viable (if somewhat desperate) plan.

He plans to leave with the refugees shortly after dawn tomorrow but unfortunately is kidnapped a few hours before then by some of Miriah's fanatics (without her knowledge). See the Execution By Dawn section on the opposite page for more details.

If the Fated agree to help him gather up refugees for this second exodus, have each of them make TN 12 Challenge duels with a Social Skill of their choice. With each success, the Fated manage to sway a few dozen refugees to their way of thinking. Unfortunately, while this does save lives in the long run, it also reduces the number of people able to help Miriah Bahur-Garrott storm Ridley's barricades.

Results: The Fated convince some refugees to leave for Malifaux City (-15 Refugees per success).

If the Fated decide to stay in the tent and listen to Miriah's plan, read the following text:



Miriah waits until the last of the dissenters has left before continuing. "Alright, here it is. The town council in Ridley has guards blockading all the gates and entrances, but there's one way in that they can't shut down so easily."

She looks at the faces of the gathered, waiting to see if anyone is willing to hazard a guess. "The railway," she finally says, her voice heavy with implication.

"But," one of the men speaks up, "the railway's already blocked off. We seen them doing that just this morning."

Miriah nods. "Right, some wooden barriers, but nothing strong enough to stop a train going at full steam. I say we head down the tracks towards Hollow Point, hijack one of the trains there, and bring it screaming into Ridley at full speed." She slams her fist into her open palm, making a loud smacking sound. "It'll bust through any barriers they've set up and will scatter the guards long enough for the rest of us to storm into town and take it for our own."

A woman in overalls speaks up, confusion coloring her features. "Take...Ridley? I don't want to run the town. I just want some food for my daughter."

Miriah turns to face the woman, but it's clear that she's still speaking to everyone. "You think they're just going to let us settle down beside them like this never happened? They made their choice, and that choice was to put a gun to our heads. If they were willing to do it once, they'll do it again, and that time, we won't have numbers on our side."

Miriah shakes her head. "No, we have to hit Ridley so hard that they have no choice but to give us a seat - hell, three seats! - on the council. And this is how we do it." There are slow nods of agreement from the other gathered refugees.



Miriah volunteers to lead the hijacking herself but welcomes any Fated who wish to come with (whether sincerely or to put a stop to her plan before it gets out of hand). Word spreads throughout the camp that Miriah is planning "something," and in the evening she and a dozen armed refugees set out to hijack the train. This event takes place in Scene III: The Ridley Massacre.

EXECUTION BY DAWN

After Miriah has left the camp, some of her more bloodthirsty followers (correctly) realize that Hopkins' attempts to lead people away from Ridley and back towards Malifaux City will hinder their attempts to capture Ridley. To make certain that this doesn't happen, they attempt to kidnap Frank and march him out towards the Footprints to be shot.

If the Fated are with Hopkins in the morning, they are there when six miners show up with drawn weapons and likely are taken prisoner alongside Hopkins. The miners flee if the Fated put up any significant resistance; they're willing to kill someone to help their cause, but not in the middle of camp.

If the Fated are not present, then they likely notice that Hopkins is missing after he fails to show up to lead the refugees towards Malifaux City. If they did not attempt to help him gather refugees, then one of the few refugees that joined Hopkins comes to the Fated asking if they have seen him. His disappearance should seem unusual; while a loner, Hopkins didn't seem like the sort of person who would just up and abandon everyone that was counting on him.

Alternatively, Piter Gigani may approach the Fated with the revelation that he was to meet with Hopkins that morning about identifying the violent elements in camp before they did something stupid, but he never appeared. Gigani guesses that Hopkins might have been silenced by those same violent elements and wants to see the old man returned to safety (preferably with the information he was going to share during their meeting).

The miners tie Hopkins' hands and march him out towards the Footprints. They don't have a real plan here; they just want to get him far enough from the camp to shoot him without anyone noticing. Hopkins is playing the part of the old man, stumbling and making as much of a trail as he can, all in the hopes that someone will come looking for him (via an Ongoing Challenge).

SAVE HOPKINS FROM EATING A BULLET!

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Notice, Track
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

If any of the Fated are mounted, they receive a  to any Athletics Challenges made during this Ongoing Challenge.

On a success, the characters manage to catch up to Hopkins and the miners before he is executed. The miners aren't looking for a fight and surrender when the Fated arrive. ("We weren't actually going to do anything... we were just trying to put a little fright into him, see?")

If the characters suffer a catastrophic failure or take more than an hour to reach Hopkins, the sharp crack of a pistol punctuates their failure.

If the Fated rescue Hopkins, he proceeds with his plan to get as many refugees as possible to Malifaux City. If the Fated aren't aware of Miriah's plans to hijack the train, clues them in now. Read the following text:



"Listen, I don't agree with Miriah. That woman's crazy. What're we supposed to do if the coup fails? There's women and children in that camp..."

Hopkins shakes his head. "Hell, what're we supposed to do if she wins? Do you think Ridley is going to take us in with open arms? Are we supposed to sit down at the dinner table, look them in the eye and say, 'Sorry that we killed each other and let's let bygones be bygones?'"

He sighs, suddenly looking like the old man he is. "Miriah's going to hijack the Hollow Point train and use it to force her way into Ridley. It's suicide, but I don't think that woman cares. I'm going to try to get as many people to Malifaux as I can before the shooting starts, but I'm just one man."



Results: Hopkins lives (-10 Refugees), Hopkins dies (+10 Refugees)

ACT IV, SCENE 3:

THE RIDLEY MASSACRE

This is the big, climactic, movie-like battle with swelling music and anguished faces.

Miriah's band of armed refugees are trying to capture a switching station, which they use to bring a train from Hollow Point to them. They then board the train and charge it into Ridley's barricades.

The rest of the refugees are migrating around the plateau to reach the more accessible south side. They are doing this mostly for practical reasons, so they can either march onto Ridley itself or walk along the train line back to Malifaux. However, the hijackers are using them as a distraction to hide the fact that they are taking the train.

The M&SU are torn; there are brother and sister Unionists out there among the refugees. Some want to help card-carrying members. Others are afraid of the curse and talk about only supporting the "local union."

The Guild definitely opposes any refugee immigration. They have barricaded all of the walking trails up the plateau. The northern trails might as well be vertical, and anyone trying walk up the southern trails will find a storm of bullets waiting for them.

It is highly unlikely that the Fated can talk the refugees down from their plan; they are desperate and starving, and if they don't do something, they will die.

This is the final scene in this Act. There are many small events that occur during this scene, each one building up to the final climax. When this climax occurs, the total points for Ridley and the Refugees will be compared to determine the final outcome of the massacre based on what the Fated have accomplished.

Regardless, there are few happy endings in a situation like this, and the Fated should be prepared for the worst.

THE TRAIN HIJACKING

If the Fated have joined Miriah on her mission to hijack the Hollow Point train, play this scenario out in full. Alternatively, if the Fated have decided to side with Ridley, Gigani or Naidu might have an informant among the refugees that tip them off to Miriah's plan. Then the Fated could be assigned to the ambush force at the switching station...or, if they're sufficiently dangerous, they could be the entirety of the ambush force. In this case, you'll have to adjust the text box a bit to reflect the Fated's different allegiances.

If the Fated do not intervene in the hijacking, Miriah's desperate plan succeeds, and she slams the train into the barricades, smashing them aside and allowing the rest of her forces to spill into Ridley's streets. However, if the forces of Ridley have been warned about her plan (and Sonnia is not Blank's patron), then the Guild set up an ambush at the switching station that brutally cuts down Miriah and her cohorts in cold blood.

THE SWITCHING STATION

In order to bring the Hollow Point train to her, Miriah needs to control the switching station located about half a day's walk down the tracks from Ridley. The switching station's controls will let her operate the engine remotely; this is one of the improvements the Union made to cut down on labor hours.

Miriah's group arrives at the switching station a little after sunrise. If the Guild is aware of the plan to hijack the train (likely because the Fated warned Gigani or Naidu about it) and Sonnia is not Blank's patron, then the Guild has prepared an ambush here to stop the plan cold. That ambush consists of eight Guild Riflemen (see page 89) and ten Guild Guards (see page 88), in and on top of the switching station. With the rising sun at their backs, the Guild have the advantage here, and combat begins swiftly and brutally. If there has been no warning of Miriah's attack, then there are only two Guild Guards (page 88) and a tired engineer named Frank McCoy here when her group arrives.

Because of the sun's glare, anyone shooting eastward (i.e., toward the switching station; the Fated are approaching from the west) suffers a  on their Ranged Combat attacks. The Guild forces split their fire evenly between the refugee forces with any left over shots going toward anyone that stands out or looks dangerous.

Read the following text to the players:



The morning is brisk and chilly, and your legs are sore from walking all night long. You can't remember the last time that you were able to take the time to watch the sun rise, but it's a beautiful sight. For all of its horrors, there's still a bit of beauty to Malifaux.

You can see the switching station up ahead, and for a moment, it's possible to believe that Miriah's desperate plan just might be as easy as she made it sound. Then the sharp crack of a gunshot shatters the silence as one of the refugees stumbles backwards, seemingly confused over the appearance of a gaping hole in his chest.

More gunshots ring out as the refugees scatter, looking for any sort of cover in the sparse terrain. Miriah, however, draws her pistol and advances on the switching station, firing wildly at the ambush force within. "You bastards!" she shouts, her lips pulling back in a grimace. "Come out and fight like men!"



This is a tough fight for the Fated. The only real cover is the switching station itself, and the Guild forces have claimed that for their own. If the Fated begin to lose the fight, the commander (Sergeant Emilie Shannon) calls out, offering to let them live if they throw down their weapons and surrender. If the Fated continue to fight past this point, the Guild (try to) fill them full of lead.

Alternatively, the Fated could choose to flee from the fight. For the most part, this is successful (the Guild forces only have orders to hold the switching station and aren't fond of shooting people in the back), but if the Fated regroup and make a second attempt to take the station, they put their moral quandaries aside and take whatever shots they can get.

If the Fated are defending the station, they might have assistance from a few Guild

Riflemen or Guild Guards, depending on their combat skills. In this case, their opponents will be Miriah (page 74) and a dozen Miners (page 83).

Regardless of which side the Fated are on, after their opponents suffer casualties numbering more than two-thirds their original number, the remaining opponents either surrender or flee (whichever seems most likely to guarantee their survival).

If Miriah's forces manage to capture the switching station, she uses it to bring the train from Hollow Point to the switching station. If Miriah didn't survive the fight, a Fated can do the same with a TN 8 Engineering Challenge. The pneumatic engine arrives with four boxcars behind it.

Miriah plans to take control of the train's controls and drive it straight forward into the barricades at full steam, which will certainly be effective... and incredibly dangerous for anyone on board. Someone else could operate the engine, but it requires a TN 8 Engineering Challenge.



Alternatively, the Fated could use the switching station to send the train towards Ridley like a guided missile, which requires a TN 9 Engineering Challenge but is just as effective. Talking Miriah out of her suicidal plan is more difficult and requires a TN 12 Convince Challenge. On a failure, she climbs into the train, and it's full steam towards Ridley. On a success, she can be convinced to use the switching station as above but insists on staying behind to guard the station (especially if any of the Guild forces fled from the fight).

Unless the Fated decide to ride the train back to Ridley, they miss the grand battle that takes place between the forces of the city and the refugees but certainly find its bloody aftermath waiting for them when they return.

THE HOLLOW POINT TRAIN ARRIVES

If Miriah's plan to hijack the train is successful, read the following text (making adjustments as necessary if the Fated are in Ridley and not in the refugee camp):



Some shouts go up from the eastern edges of the camp, rousing the weary refugees from their morning lethargy. "It's here! Get your weapons, the train's coming!"

You raise your hand to shield your eyes from the sun, and then you can see it, too. The steam engine is chugging towards Ridley at full steam, pulling four rattling boxcars behind it. Glancing back at the barricades, you have just enough time to see the guards leaping for cover before the engine plows through the blockade with a great crash of shattering wood and screeching metal. Carried forward by its momentum, the train leaps the rails and disappears into the heart of the city, the plow of the engine carving up the paved streets like a reckless surgeon's scalpel.

"Let's go!" one of the refugees shouts, and the cry is taken up by dozens of others as they rush towards the shattered barricades with weapons raised.

Results: Train smashed through Ridley's barricades (-40 Ridley).

CLIMBING UP THE PLATEAU

The Ridley plateau is not as steep as some of the cliffs in the Footprints, but it's still a dangerous climb. All the trails wind back and forth on narrow paths that challenge even an agile human. Still, they might prove to be a tempting way to sneak into Ridley, especially for those characters who want to speak with the town council one last time.

While the brunt of Ridley's forces have taken to guarding the town's northern gate, a few guards have been spared to guard these footpaths from anyone trying to climb them and thus sneak into the town. Guild snipers have taken the best positions on each trail in order to pick off any refugees hiking up the plateau. While the craggy rocks and winding paths provide some cover, the snipers have both height and maneuverability on their side.

Climbing up Ridley's plateau using the footpaths is handled with an Ongoing Challenge (unless the Guild has abandoned Ridley, in which case the paths are clear).

SNIPERS ON THE PLATEAU

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

Because of the snipers set up on the footpaths, any character that fails a Challenge during this Ongoing Challenge suffers 1/3/4 damage, +1 damage if the suit of the card flipped to determine damage was ♠.

On a success, all participating characters manage to make it to a gun nest, where two Guild Riflemen (page 89) are waiting in hard cover. If these Riflemen are defeated, it opens up a route for the refugees to use to pour into Ridley. There are five teams total, each one guarding a different path.

On a catastrophic failure, the participating characters step out into a kill zone. Each participating character suffers 2/4/5 damage, +1 damage if the suit of the card flipped to determine damage was ♠. After this initial barrage, the characters can flee back to safety but have to choose a different route. All further instances of this Ongoing Challenge have their TN increased by +1.

Results: Each team of snipers defeated (+10 Refugees).

ACTS OF SABOTAGE

There are plenty of ways the Fated can sabotage the efforts of the refugees or Ridley, though they'll need access to either the refugee camp or the town, as appropriate.

AMMUNITION SUPPLIES

The Fated could sabotage either the Guild's or the Union's ammunition supply lines. As per standard procedure, the Guild have established ammunition stores near areas of conflict, and dozens of runners deliver reloads on a continual basis once the shooting starts. Kidnapping, subduing, or killing the runners is one solution, although destroying the ammunition stores is a more permanent one. Waylaying a runner requires a successful TN 10 Athletics Challenge, while destroying the ammunition stores requires a fight with four Guild Guards (see page 88) and then a successful TN 10 Explosives Challenge. Alternatively, the Fated could steal or move the supplies, which has the same effect (and allows them to give the ammunition to the refugees, if they have a route back to the refugee camp).

The Fated might instead choose to sabotage the ammunition stores of the refugees. This is a more difficult task as there is no central place where weapons are being gathered but the Fated could convince people that Miriah has ordered them to round up all the available weapons with a TN 12 Deceive or Leadership Challenge. The weapons are difficult to destroy but can be hidden away with a TN 10 Stealth Challenge. The refugees mostly have refurbished pistols and longarms; if you have access to *Into the Steam*, they are all US&E weapons.

Results: Ridley's ammunition supplies are destroyed or stolen (-20 Ridley), Refugee weapons are gathered up and hidden (-20 Refugees).

PLAYING FAVORITES

The Fated can attempt to leverage their relationship with either Peter Gigani or Amina Naidu into assistance for either Ridley or the refugees. Exactly what they want to accomplish is up the Fated; they could make a TN 12 Convince duel to talk Gigani into relaxing a guard position, allowing the refugees to break through, or feed false information to Naidu with a TN 12 Deceive duel to have defensive forces moved to an ineffective location.

Results: Fated used their relationship with Gigani or Naidu to help one faction (-10 Refugees or Ridley).

RIOTS IN RIDLEY

The Fated could try to start an actual insurrection within Ridley, especially if they have ties to the Slate District. As the town's poorest district, Slate has long watched politically correct M&SU figureheads benefit while their district gets left with the bottom of the slop pile. In a way, the people of Slate district share a certain kinship with the refugees, and all it takes is a few Fated to point that out. If the Fated succeed on a TN 12 Leadership Challenge (taking two hours), they are able to gather enough support to send all of Slate district into a riot.

This doesn't cause much damage to the town, but it does force Ridley to move crucial soldiers and support personnel from the front lines to deal with the chaos.

Results: A riot breaks out in Slate District (-20 Ridley)

RANDOM MAYHEM

Of course, the Fated could just decide to cause a whole bunch of random mayhem within Ridley or the refugee camp that forces the leaders of the respective group to pull people from the front lines to deal with the chaos. This is a catch-all category that covers setting off explosives, fires, kidnapping officials, manipulation of orders, assassinations...just about anything that will destabilize one side or the other.

CHAOS IN THE STREETS!

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Explosives, Forgery, Intimidate, Long Arms, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

The Fated gain a  on any Challenge made as part of this Ongoing Challenge if they have assistance from NPCs (whether refugees or Ridley forces).

Results: On a success, the mayhem and chaos manages to sufficiently destabilize whatever group the Fated are working against, resulting in a -20 point penalty to that group's total.

On a catastrophic failure, however, the Fated come face to face with the authorities: either refugees or Ridley guards, none of whom are happy with what the Fated are doing (use Guild Guards for both, page 88).

FIGHTING IN THE STREETS

If the train smashes through the barricades, the refugees pour forth through the gap. If Miriah was controlling the engine when it slammed into the blockade, there may even be a few cries of "For Miriah!"

FIGHTING AT THE BARRICADES!

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Close Combat Skills, Ranged Combat Skills
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 10
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 4

Any character that fails a Challenge during this Ongoing Challenge suffers 1/3/4 damage.

On a success, the Fated manage to fight back their opponents (whether the Ridley guards or the refugees) and emerge victorious at the smashed barricades. This might not be enough to swing the entire conflict in their favor if the opposition is too great, but if things are close, victory here could easily be the turning point in deciding who controls Ridley.

On a catastrophic failure, a new surge of support (from either Ridley or the refugees, as appropriate) catches the Fated off guard and forces them to retreat as their opponents capture and hold the shattered gates of Ridley.

Results: Whichever side wins the battle at the barricades gains +25 points.

JACK DAW IS JUST HANGING AROUND...

If Jack Daw is using Blank to plunge the Northern Hills into a whirlpool of rage and violence, he becomes personally involved in the massacre. In order to herald his appearance, set the following scene at some location in the refugee camp prior to the massacre:



As you make you way through the camp, you catch sight of a trio of young girls playing near a campfire. Two are holding a clothesline and are twirling it while the third jumps over the rope as it comes around.

"JackyJacky Jack Daw / Hanging on the tree / I asked him for his secrets / But he would not speak to me." It's a common children's rhyme in Malifaux, but something about the words sends chills down your spine.

"Jackky Jacky Jack Daw / See him swing and sway / And once he whispers in your ear / You'll go with him on his way."



Once the massacre begins, Jack Daw makes a more personal appearance. Read the following:



The battle outside of Ridley is a massacre; hundreds of refugees lay dead around their makeshift tents, victims of the [Guild/ Union]'s initial barrage. Those that are still alive are pressing against the barricades, fighting with the town's defenders.

Through the smoke of gunfire, you catch a glimpse of a terrible figure floating over the heads of the combatants; his face is obscured by the cloth sack over his head, and the rope around his neck trails upwards into the air, as if pinning him to the sky.

The vision lasts only a moment, but you can feel the battle shifting in the specter's wake as dozens of people on both sides of the conflict succumb to supernatural rage.



Results: Jack Daw brings chaos in his wake (Flip a coin in full view of your players; on heads, +20 Ridley, on tails, +20 Refugees).

THE RIDLEY MASSACRE

If the train doesn't smash through the barrier - most likely because Miriah was caught in a Guild ambush and killed - then Gigani (or Naidu, if the Guild has abandoned Ridley) gives the refugees one final chance to clear out.

Read the following text:



[Gigani/Naidu] steps up to the barricade and holds [His/Her] hands up to get the attention of the refugees. "Everyone, listen up! Ridley has made its decision; you're not wanted here! Turn around and go back to your homes, or head south towards Malifaux. If you remain camped out here, you *will* be shot! This is your final warning!"

An old man with a bushy beard shouts back from the refugees. "Warn this!" He draws a pistol and points it at [Gigani/Naidu] but never gets the chance to pull the trigger; an expertly placed shot from one of the snipers on the plateau blows a hole through the old man's chest.

"No! Wait!" [Gigani/Naidu] shouts, but it's too late; the spark has been set to the tinderbox, and what follows is a roar of outrage from the refugees as they draw their weapons and charge forward into an eruption of gunfire from the [Guild/Union].



The Ridley Massacre has begun, and the Fated - depending upon where they are located - are likely caught up in the chaos. Feel free to run a few rounds of combat with either the refugees or Ridley's defenders (use the Guild Guard stats, page 88, for either), or just describe the chaos swirling around the Fated if they do not wish to directly participate in the fighting.



THE FINAL OUTCOME

As this act comes to a close, calculate the total points belonging to Ridley and the Refugees; this determines the ultimate fate of the town and the refugees. Even after the dust has settled, canny Fated might remember that the unknown engineer of this massacre is still out there...

EQUAL FOOTING

LESS THAN A 10 POINT DIFFERENCE

The massacre is a bloodbath for both sides. The refugees suffer heavy losses, but they give as good as they get. By the end of the day, the streets of Ridley are drenched in blood and corpses.

Riots leave Ridley unstable for weeks afterwards, and nobody is entirely certain just which side emerged victorious. Gigani and Naidu are killed in the fighting.

RIDLEY ADVANTAGE

RIDLEY 10-60 POINTS OVER REFUGEES

The refugees put up a good fight, but in the end the superior firepower of the Guild (or Union) forces wins out. The surviving refugees are marched out to the Footprints at gunpoint as the town sets fire to their camp.

Abandoned and left to fend for themselves, many of the refugees starve or fall prey to predators, but about a quarter of their starting number manage to make it to Malifaux City with most of their limbs intact. They are a defeated and broken people, and the Fated will see familiar faces staring back at them from the slums for months to come...

RIDLEY VICTORY

RIDLEY 61+ POINTS OVER REFUGEES

The refugees outside the town are massacred in a storm of gunfire. Gigani will eventually receive a promotion to Major, and Naidu will find herself plagued by nightmares and unable to sleep at night.

If any refugees escaped with Frank Hopkins, they will learn of the massacre as they settle into their new homes in Malifaux City. Perhaps some will even seek revenge on the town that murdered their friends and loved ones...

REFUGEE ADVANTAGE

REFUGEES 10-60 POINTS OVER RIDLEY

The Guild (or Union) puts up a good fight, but in the end, the refugees manage to break their defensive lines and make it into the city. Many of the Union defenders ultimately step aside, refusing to fight against their fellow Union members.

The refugees settle in the poorer districts of Ridley, and when the next election comes, many of the current representatives are voted out, giving the refugees (and those sympathetic to their cause) the reins of power within Ridley. If Miriah is still alive, she claims a seat on the council.

REFUGEE VICTORY

REFUGEES 61+ POINTS OVER RIDLEY

The refugees storm Ridley and capture the city. The new leaders of the refugees - including Miriah, if she is still alive - execute the town council (and Naidu) and place themselves in power. Gigani wages a fighting retreat back to the Ridley Station and uses the train to evacuate his men to Malifaux City, where he is demoted to Lieutenant and given Quarantine Zone duty.

Ridley's future is uncertain, and there are plenty of people who aren't happy with the new regime...



PEOPLE

Northern Aggression takes place over a few locales with a variety of Fatemaster characters. The important ones have been noted here for ease of reference, ordered from major characters to minor.

As with any roleplaying game, it is the characters in the story, both player and Fatemaster, that make the story worth telling. Part of that is having complex characters with interesting motivations, but this can also make it difficult to find the right "voice" for a Fatemaster character.

Each of the major characters presented in this section has a quick reference callout box that gives Fatemasters some suggestions on how to portray the character at a glance, which should help to make them really come alive for the players.

Because of this, Fatemasters are highly encouraged to tie one or more of the characters presented here to the Fated. It is entirely possible that an ex-convict might have served time with George Blank or that Miriah is a character's sister-in-law.

These sorts of changes can add complexity and drama to the story and put a new spin on the decisions players have to make throughout the course of the adventure.

It may also be worth drafting up a few additional characters to add to the adventure at places you feel will be extra important to the Fated. If they are members of the M&SU, it's possible that they'll feel the plight of Contract Town #34 more strongly and will wish to do more for the town. This can be easily accomplished by adding a few more NPCs for characters who are likely to spend more time speaking with the townsfolk.

Alternatively, you might feel that a confrontation with George Blank should take place during the Ridley Massacre, rather than in *Northern Sedition*, the sequel to this adventure. In this case, it's a simple matter to add him into the final battle, perhaps with a cadre of loyal Cursed to do his bidding.

Remember that this is your adventure! You should feel free to adapt and add to it as you see fit.

GEORGE BLANK

George Blank wears his hair short, almost shaved; even his face is bare. He wears nondescript clothing - a modest shirt and slacks - and looks like the sort of man who has been down some rough roads in his past. His nose has clearly been broken at least once, and his hands are strong and calloused...and tattooed with the symbol of the Ram, betraying his identity as a criminal that lives only at the Guild's mercy.

Blank is driven and methodical. He gives off an intense aura even if he doesn't say anything, and that intensity can be hard to ignore. While it is sometimes obvious that he is trying hard to suppress his opinions, he remains polite and defers to whatever authority is in the room.

Before he was framed for a murder that he didn't commit, George Blank was a man of letters. He was convicted after a laughably short trial with little evidence, but he still managed to convince the judge that he had skills and knowledge that were useful to the Guild. Rather than the hangman's noose, he was given tattoos on the backs of his hands, marking him as a convicted criminal.

To ensure that he would not use his stay of execution to escape, the Guild used its magic to burn all memory of his past life out of his skull. He still remembered his skills and how to apply them, but every aspect of his past life - including his name, for it was not George Blank - was lost to him. In the long years since, Blank has seen too many lines crossed to retain any illusion that humans are capable of any real ethical or moral strength.

The Guild uses Blank as an academic, letter writer, forensic adviser, and walking library. While they believe him to be harmless, George was recently approached by a patron looking to harness his anger for their own purposes.

This patron gave Blank knowledge of the Frozen Cathedral in the Ten Peaks, and Blank in turn used Ester Ambrose as his proxy to travel there and construct the Wrath Fetishes. He has received regular shipments of the fetishes in the months since she claimed the Widower for her own, and now his plans are coming to fruition.

GEORGE BLANK

Henchman (10), Living, Tormented

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (14)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (14)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (15)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Appraise 2, Bureaucracy 2, Centering 3, Doctor 2, Enchanting 2, Engineering 2, Evade 2, Forgery 1, Mathematics 2, History 3, Literacy 4, Notice 3, Pugilism 3, Printing 2, Scrutiny 1, Stitching 2, Toughness 2

Cynic: This character gains + on all duels made to resist deception.

Frenzied Charge: This character gains + to any attacks it generates due to the Charge action.

Relentless: This character is immune to Horror duels.

(1) Brass Knuckles (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (15) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This attack gains + to its damage flip.

✕ *In The Throat:* After damaging, the target must either discard a Twist Card or become Slow.

(1) Channel Rage (Enchanting)

Until the start of this character's next turn, all Close Combat Attacks made by characters within 6 gain + to their damage flips. This Action may only be taken once per turn.



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Reserved - George says little and offers less.

Angry - Despite his calm appearance, anger seethes behind George's eyes.

Polite - George is civil and rarely resorts to foul language or rude behavior.

Educated - Without a past of his own, George has fallen back on his education to define himself.

Mannerisms

Folded Hands - His hands are often folded in an odd mix of calm and self-restraint.

Slow Blink - George tends to blink slowly, giving him a somewhat skeptical air.

Barely-Contained Scowl - When he thinks no one is looking, his calm expression sometimes slips into an angry scowl.

AMINA NAIDU

Amina Naidu is polite yet sly, with a droll sense of humor. She typically carries a pencil and clipboard for notes and reminders, all of it written in an indecipherable form of personal shorthand. She's always working, talking to M&SU members, debating with Ridley's town council, and writing endless reports for both groups.

Naidu is well aware of the questions surrounding her background. Why settle in Ridley if she had a promising career Earthside? Why become legal counsel and advocate for the M&SU when there were more lucrative positions (and clients) in Malifaux City? No one who looks into Amina's past can find any trauma or scandal attached to her name. In fact, no one can find anything other than her educational credentials.

Born in India but educated overseas, Amina Naidu had a promising career as a barrister but instead was approached by certain economic powers to observe and report on the political situation Breachside. Upon arrival in the alien world, she chose to work for the M&SU because the Union has both reach and membership. She trusts the "voices on the ground" more than the insular and secretive Guild. Her late nights are mostly spent absorbing information from her sources in Malifaux and writing regular reports to her patrons back on Earth.

Wielding law and arbitration as a weapon, Amina has protected M&SU interests (especially against the Guild) tirelessly for almost two years now. The Guild constantly finds themselves stymied on the legal front in Ridley, an area that they should have control over. This frustrates them to no end.

Amina suspects her patrons Earthside of being Arcanists but doesn't yet understand how intertwined they are with the M&SU. At this point, she isn't sure if she would side with her patrons, the M&SU leadership, or the rank and file Union members when pressed. She hopes that she will never be forced to make that decision.

AMINA NAIDU

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> -2	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 1	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 2 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Bureaucracy 4📖. Centering 2, Convince 4🗨, History 2, Literacy 3, Mathematics 1, Pistol 1, Scrutiny 4

Time is Money: When this character succeeds on a Challenge during an Ongoing Challenge, she generates one additional Margin of Success.

(1) Collier Navy (Pistol)

AV: 2 (9) ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Rapidly Negotiate (Convince)

AV: 7🗨 (14🗨) == Rg: 12 ===== Resist: **Wp**
Target character gains the following Condition until the end of Dramatic Time or until this character targets the character or their allies with another Action: **"Coerced:** This character may not target the character that applied this Condition with harmful actions without first passing a TN 10 Willpower Duel."



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Caring - Amina genuinely cares about people (even the ones she doesn't like).

Witty - Her commentary can be sarcastic and dryly amusing.

Busy - Amina might have time for a snarky comment, but she doesn't want to waste time on idle chit-chat.

Professional Distance - She works hard but tries not to think about the greater implications of some of her tasks and duties.

Mannerisms

Bustling - Amina is always moving or busy with something.

Engaged - She's always watching and listening to what's going on around her.

Smirk - A half-smile is often on her face, usually after she's made a witty comment.

PITER GIGANI

Piter Gigani is toned, well groomed, and a soldier through and through. His mustache and goatee hide a youthful face, but he carries an air of confidence far older than his years. Even his casual clothing reflects his military discipline: buttons polished, fabric brushed, and shoes shined so brightly that you can almost see your reflection in the leather.

Gigani speaks in straightforward, clear terms. He is not one for flowery language and often asks for clarification on vague words. Gigani does things by the book because deviancy from established plans gets people killed. He ponders and plans, but once he commits to something, he commits fully and without reservation. Gigani is a man whose ethos and morals have always meshed.

Born in the territory of Georgia, Gigani joined the military and fought in some border disputes. He is relatively young to be a Captain, but the Guild saw his natural talent and recruited him for a position in Malifaux. Gigani has been steadily climbing the ranks since, not out of any great desire to be a leader (though the idea does appeal to him), but because he is competent and effective. His current assignment has him leading the Guild forces at Ridley. It will, in many ways, be a crucible for him; either he will take charge of the situation and rise to a position of prominence in the Guild, or it will destroy him and ruin his career forever.

Since he came to Ridley, Gigani has watched the M&SU constantly skirt the law, or worse, rewrite it in order to benefit their position, and that infuriates him to no end. He often attends town council meetings, where he calls their legal manipulation “blatant disrespect for the law.” He has respect for his counterpart Amina Naidu but finds her frustrating and openly tells her so. She has returned the sentiment many times.

CAPTAIN PITER GIGANI

Enforcer (7), Living, Guardsman

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Bureaucracy 2, Centering 3, Convince 1, Evade 2, Intimidate 3, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Notice 3, Pistols 3, Teach 2, Toughness 3, Track 1

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Confident Authority: Other friendly Guardsmen within 6 yards of this character gain + to all Willpower duels.

Attennnn-Hut! Other friendly Guardsmen within 6 yards of this character are immune to the Slow Condition.

(1) Cavalry Saber (Melee)

AV: 5 (12) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Peacebringer (Pistols)

AV: 4 (11) == Rg: 10 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

Critical Strike: When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each in the final duel total.



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Military Man - Piter's military service shows: he is organized, clean, and reserved.

Straightfoward - He's not a man for embellishment or obfuscation.

Honorable - Piter is a man of his word, and he will keep it whenever he can; he prefers silence to lies.

Competent - He's a man who knows his strengths and how to act on them.

Mannerisms

At Attention - Piter stands stiffly and with good form.

Sharp - His actions and words tend to be very pointed and direct.

Neat - Piter always will take an extra moment to ensure anything he handles is exactly where it should be.

ESTER AMBROSE

Lovely but disheveled, Ester Ambrose possesses the poise of a classically trained actress, but now her small frame oozes rage. She wears a torn and ruined version of one of her theater costumes, a baroque, patched-together (and surprisingly warm) Shakespearean dress.

Ester Ambrose had dreams of setting up a theater. As a writer, poet, performer, stage manager, and costumer, Ambrose has worked for various troupes and companies all across Earth. However, she saw the alien lands of Malifaux as her muse and came Breachside to find inspiration. After a failed audition at the Star Theater (Colette didn't think that Ester would make a good Arcanist operative), Ester traveled to Ridley and found a peer and patron in Wesley Aines.

Ambrose was smitten with Aines, and together they invested in a theater together: the Gilded Mandarin. It wasn't long, however, before she realized that Aines was just using her for her money and that her investments in the theater had been funneled off into his other projects. She confronted him, only for him to laugh and walk away with a witty jibe at how easy she had been to both con and bed. When she returned home that night, a group of thugs ambushed her, beat her up, and left her for dead.

In a twist of fate, it was George Blank who found her. He nursed her back to health and gave her a map to the Frozen Cathedral, promising that she would find her revenge there. She brought a few friends and assistants with her on the trip (the mountains are dangerous, and Ester didn't know anything about climbing) and eventually discovered the crucified Neverborn at the Widower's peak. Following Blank's instructions (given to him by his patron), she sacrificed a trapper they encountered on the mountain and crafted the first of the Wrath Fetishes.

While her companions were strongly affected by the Wrath Fetishes (and have subsequently become Transformed), Ambrose was able to compartmentalize her rage and instead slipped into the behavior and mannerisms of a theater villain. She quotes Iago, Don John, and Lady Macbeth and poses dramatically when the mood strikes her. Ambrose wants revenge, specifically on Aines, but also on the various corrupt powers of Ridley (who looked the other way after Aines mistreated her).

ESTER AMBROSE

Enforcer (8), Living, Showgirl, Tormented

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 4 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (13)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Acrobatics 2, Art 3, Bewitch 3, Carouse 3, Centering 3, Convince 2, Deceive 3, Enchanting 2☹, Gambling 1, History 1, Intimidate 1, Leadership 2, Literacy 1, Melee 2, Notice 3, Prestidigitation 2, Scrutiny 2, Teach 1, Wilderness 1

Relentless: This character is immune to Horror duels.

Fetish: At the start of this character's turn, every character within (X)3 must pass a TN 10 Centering duel or gain the following Condition: **"Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

(1) Branding Iron (Melee)

AV: 5 (13) ===== Rg: ☹ 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

✕ *To the Head:* After damaging, the target gains the Dazed Condition until the end of Dramatic Time.

(1) Heal (Enchanting)

AV: 4☹ (12☹) == Rg: ☹ 3 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target Living character heals 1/2/3 damage. This Action may not target an individual character more than once per day.



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Actress - For Ester, all the world is a stage, and she is playing the part of the misunderstood villain.

Melodramatic - Ester makes everything seem like a life or death situation.

Playacting - She understands consequences but doesn't give them any serious weight.

Boundless Rage - She defaults quickly to anger and never seems to calm down.

Mannerisms

Script - Ester will often obviously quote lines from plays in the middle of speech.

Grand - Ester moves and carries herself as if she was a queen on display, every gesture is extravagant.

Unhinged - When you've done what she's done, you occasionally laugh maniacally.



"But screw your courage to the sticking place and we'll not fail!" -*Macbeth*, Shakespeare

"Come not between a dragon and [her] wrath"
-*King Lear*, Shakespeare

"You must come with me, loving me, to death; or else hate me, and still come with me."
-Carmilla, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

"You know nothing of the world / You would sooner see me dead / But not before I see this justice done!" -*Les Misérables*, Alain Boublil and Jean-Marc Natel



MIRIAH BAHUR-GARROTT

Miriah Bahur-Garrott was once a tall, slim, and regal government official. Now she's more wiry than slim, and her muscles have grown strong from years of labor. She wears her hair short and practical and dresses in similarly spartan clothes.

Mariah Bahur was born in Egypt, a nation undergoing political upheaval from frequent revolts against the Guild's foreign presence. She studied politics and social policy and fought briefly in a political coup. She was fiery and passionate about the politics of her country, her career as a governmental official, and eventually about her marriage to Albert Garrott, her commander.

She only had a few years with her husband before he was killed in another skirmish with the Guild, who had by that point resolidified its hold on Egypt. Miriah's fire dimmed with Albert's death, and the political infighting and corruption among her dwindling cohorts soon soured her on the life of a revolutionary.

Bahur-Garrott traveled to Malifaux for a fresh start and signed up as a homesteader in one of the Northern Hills Contract Towns. She soon found herself at the center of the town's activities, organizing people and offering solutions to make what little they had last as long as possible.

When the refugees reach Ridley, Miriah's previous fire returns, but with more anger than optimism. She takes on the role of refugee leader as if to excise her past failures. Miriah knows that it's just a matter of time before Ridley takes action against the refugees. It's not hard for her to get a small group of violent radicals to back her, and they only serve to push her towards a violent resolution to the camp's problems.

Miriah will lead the team to hijack the train, despite it being dangerous. In truth, a part of her doesn't want to survive. While she understands Frank Hopkins' position, she knows that it's too late for moderation and peace.

MIRIAH BAHUR-GARROTT

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Athletics 1, Centering 2, Convince 3, Evade 3, Homesteading 1, Husbandry 1, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Scrutiny 3, Teach 2, Toughness 2

Frantic: While this character has 3 or fewer Wounds remaining she gains  to Attack flips.

(2) Rapid Fire: This character may discard a Twist Card to take three 1 AP attack actions with a Ranged weapon against a single target.

(1) Collier Pistol (Pistols)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg:  10 or  2 Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. When this character uses the Rapid Fire action, she gains +2 to the attack flips generated by the Rapid Fire action.
✗ *Aim Low:* After damaging, the target gains Slow.

(1) Good Advice (Convince)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg: 8 ===== Resist: **Wp**
Target Living character immediately takes a (1) AP Action of this character's choice. This Action may not cause the target to sacrifice itself or harm its allies but can otherwise convince the target to take actions against its nature.



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Bossy - Miriah acts like she's in charge at all times, even when she's not.

At Any Cost - She has lost much and believes that sacrifices must be made to achieve anything of worth.

Cynic - Miriah expects, and sees, the worst in people and situations.

Atlas - Miriah is happy to enlist aid from others but always acts like the burden of the current situation rests on her shoulders alone.

Mannerisms

Impassioned Voice - Her speech tends to be loud and energetic.

Reluctant Leader - Miriah is hesitant to step forward into a position of leadership, but once she does, she's committed to doing whatever it takes to achieve victory.

Confident - Miriah is very sure of herself and carries herself accordingly.

FRANK HOPKINS

With graying hair and a weatherworn face, Frank Hopkins faces his early 60s quietly and with sadness. His body is lean and gritty, his eyes are clear, and his hands are steady. More than anything, however, Hopkins can still land a rifle shot because he is patient and takes his time.

Hopkins found himself worn out and shell shocked by war at the early age of 20. After experiencing the worst of war and leaving service, he wandered from town to town hunting, doing odd jobs, and generally losing himself. When a chance to go Breachside arrived, he took it. He continued his wandering ways in Malifaux, living off the land, being independent, and making a name for himself as a reliable hunter, trader, and mapper.

Hopkins is pessimistic and too tired to get angry about very much. He tends to remain distant and quiet until someone says something foolish, at which point he speaks his mind. As a drifter, he keeps his rifle and a small travel pack at his side, since he never knows when he will have to pick up and move on.

For the most part, Hopkins just wants to be left alone. He doesn't want to be a spokesperson and takes on the responsibility reluctantly. He highly doubts that Ridley's town council will do the right thing and can see tragedy coming down the rails towards the refugees. Not that they're doing much better for themselves; Miriah Bahur-Garrott is looking to get herself and a whole bunch of other people killed, in his estimation.

His natural instinct is to either disappear into the horizon or to return to Malifaux City. In a way, he and Miriah are both veterans of different wars, and they'll argue with each other when it comes times to decide how the refugees will react to Gigani's order to disperse. Frank Hopkins acts as the voice of peace, only because he is tired of fighting and sees no other way out.

FRANK HOPKINS

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Athletics 1, Carouse 1, Centering 3, Evade 2, Long Arms 4☉, Melee 1, Navigation 2, Notice 3, Scrutiny 4, Stealth 2, Toughness 2, Wilderness 2.

Reading the Wind: The first time that this character takes the Focus Action during his turn he gains an additional Focused +1.

(1) Howles Pattern 1874 (Long Arms)

AV: 6☉ (13☉) == Rg: ⚔24 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 3/5/6 damage. When making an attack with his weapon, this character may ignore one negative Fate Modifier source.

☉ *Critical Strike:* When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each ☉ in the final duel total.



PERSONALITY

Attitude

Old - Frank is an old man, and he acts the part, thinking everyone else is too rash and foolhardy for their own good.

Pessimist - He's a glass-half-empty type of guy.

Quiet - Frank stays silent and mostly keeps to himself.

Charismatic - Despite being a crotchety old man, people are naturally drawn to Frank's side.

Mannerisms

Weary - Frank feels, looks, and acts tired.

Sighful - Listening to others often draws long sighs out of him.

Head shake - Frank will often be found shaking his head no, as if to reject all the terrible ideas around him.

CLEMENTINE HAYES

Clementine Hayes isn't bland, she just blends into a crowd. She's of average height but hunches to avoid being seen. Her hair is frequently a mess, and her clothing is the kind you wear when you don't want to stand out. She's vicious in a hand-to-hand fight, but tries to avoid them when possible; she doesn't want to die for anyone's cause (even her own).

Hayes just follows orders. She has no pretenses of ability or intelligence. She does what she's told and does it...adequately. Right now, she's on Wesley Aines' payroll, and she might be a little sweet on him (who isn't?), but she's not exactly loyal. Aines has her do small, menial, often semi-legal errands, but when he instructed her to dump the two bodies from the boxing match, it was more than she could handle. However, Aines' pretty face and his even prettier money convinced her to ignore her gut feeling and agree to the job.

Clementine Hayes is not a hardened criminal. She steals and pickpockets and sometimes gets into a brawl, but she sticks to petty crimes, earning just enough to keep her fed and drunk (not necessarily in that order). Sometimes she does time in jail or the stockades, yet the Guild doesn't really see her as anything more than a nuisance. They mostly use her as a source of information, and while she's not exactly reliable, she's right more often than she's wrong.

At this point of the adventure, Hayes is afraid of being framed for murder. She may be a thief and a criminal, but she's not a murderer, and that's an important distinction in her mind. The Guild actually doesn't want to pin the murders on Hayes, not because she's beloved in any way, but because it would be aiming too low; if they're going to frame someone, they want it to be someone important...and Hayes isn't.



CLEMENTINE HAYES

Minion (5), Living

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 2 (7)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (6)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Barter 1, Deceive 2, Notice 1, Pick Pocket 2, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 1

Drunk and Reckless: At the start of this character's turn, she may suffer 2 damage to generate 1 additional AP.

(1) Wild Punch (Pugilism)

AV: 2 (7) ===== Rg: fll 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

GABRIEL KANTOR

Stocky and of German decent, Gabriel Kantor has a muscular body and thick hands built for heavy labor. Kantor loves to complain, usually about the M&SU being no better than the Guild. His only real friend in the world was Johan Oster, a fellow miner from Contract Town #34. They made an odd pair, but Kantor's pessimism kept Johan Oster's optimism in check. Under normal circumstances, Kantor would have died before harming Johan.

Kantor didn't really understand what he was doing when he accepted the Wrath Fetish from Ester Ambrose. She told him that it would give him strength and power, and Kantor accepted in an attempt to "show those Union foremen who should really be running the show." The Wrath Fetish pushed his anger into a seething rage, and when it finally took hold of him, Kantor lashed out at the nearest target: his friend Johan.

The rage eventually passed, leaving Kantor overcome with grief over what he had done. He hopped onto the back of a cart and rode it all the way to Ridley, saying little to the driver.

Kantor's brutality proved lucrative for Aines. His first two opponents suffered internal injuries that proved fatal hours later; these are the two men whose deaths Gigani keeps secret in Act I. In his next match, Kantor beat up Cole Reed so badly that he died shortly after the match, before he could stumble away from the theater. Aines had Reed's body put on ice as he debated what to do about Kantor.

Two days later, Kantor tore Gilly Wells in half. The crowd (and Kantor) panicked and fled from the Gilded Mandarin, leaving Aines with the corpse. Aines paid Clementine Hayes to pull Reed out of cold storage and dump both bodies outside of town; she failed.

The rage curse Kantor suffers from is the result of the Wrath Fetish he keeps in his pocket or wears around his neck. Aines liked the look of it - it played into Kantor's heel persona - and bid him to wear it at all of his matches. By the time the Fated encounter him, Kantor is only a vessel for its rage.



GABRIEL KANTOR

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Athletics 2, Intimidate 3, Labor 3, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pistols 2, Pugilism 3, Toughness 3

Fetish: At the start of this character's turn, every character within (X)3 must pass a TN 10 Centering duel or gain the following Condition: **"Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

(1) Meaty Fist (Pugilism)

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

☛ *Knock Back:* After damaging, the target is pushed 3 yards in any direction.

✕ *Rip Apart:* Any Critical Effect generated by this attack is a Severe Critical Effect.

WESLEY AINES

Wesley Aines is tall and lovely. Not just handsome, but lovely, like a Renaissance painting or sculpture. Always dressed in the best and flashiest clothes, Aines wants to be seen. He's always clean, has perfect posture even when slouching, and always has perfect hair. When he dies, he'll make the most beautiful corpse.

Wesley Aines speaks in perfect, manicured English, even when what he says means nothing (which is often). He's charming and always seems amused, seeing life as one big party. This isn't an act. Most of the time, Wesley's too dim to realize just what's going on around him, so he just laughs, tells a joke, and flashes a beautiful smile. He always has a vice in his hands, be it a cigarette, a drink, cards, dice, or the attractive person of the day. If he survives this adventure, even his bruises will give him a Byronesque look. Aines has no ability to reflect upon himself unless it's through an expensive mirror.

Aines is an heir to a small fortune. Unfortunately for him, he has no sense of accounting. The one smart thing he's done was to fire his staff, sell his estate, and move Breachside in order to stretch his money out and be a big fish in a little pond. Unsatisfied with Malifaux, he moved to the smaller Ridley to be an even bigger fish.

Everyone with power or influence in Ridley knows that Aines is good for two things: trouble and money. Many people use the first against their enemies and the second for themselves. Wesley is too full of himself to realize that he's eventually going to get into real trouble; he assumes that his pretty face and fat pocketbook will get him out of danger.



WESLEY AINES

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> -2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Art 3, Barter 2, Bewitch 3, Bureaucracy 2, Centering 3, Convince 4, Deceive 2, Evade 1, Forgery 1, Gambling 3, History 1, Notice 2, Literacy 2, Pistols 2, Stealth 1

Governor's Gift (Female): This character gains + on any Bewitch or Scrutiny duels made against women.

Grace Under Fire: This character uses Grace instead of Speed to derive his Defense Aspect.

(1) B&S Pocket (Pistol)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg: 6 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

INGRID OSTER

A sunburnt Dutch woman, Ingrid Oster's back is bent over from heavy labor. Despite being in her 40s, her wrinkled face makes it look as if she's in her 60s.

Ingrid Oster has always been a woman of few words. She is not the sort of woman who easily expresses empathy, but she was always warm and loving to her son, Johan. Ingrid believes in work, be it knitting, whittling, or tending the stove; if you're not doing something, you're wasting time in her eyes. She's lost children before, back on Earth (both to war and accidents), but Johan was her favorite. She's taken his death hard.

Hardened by life and tough as nails, Ingrid moved to Malifaux and #34 with her son, Johan. She quickly became the backbone and heart of the town, and her son's optimism and friendly nature made the two of them popular with everyone. Johan's death struck the entire town a hard blow, and Ingrid's presence is a constant reminder that prevents that wound from healing.

In many ways, Ingrid is waiting to die. All she needs is confirmation about when and how Johan died, and a grave that she can call his own, and she'll be ready to follow him into the afterlife. Ingrid isn't a woman of vengeance, so killing Kantor or bringing Ambrose or Blank to justice won't make her son's death any easier.



INGRID OSTER

Peon (4), Living

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 2 (6)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 1 (5)
<i>Willpower</i> 3 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 1, Culinary 2, Homesteading 2, Husbandry 2, Labor 3, Melee 1, Notice 1, Teach 1, Toughness 1

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this character suffer $\square$.

(1) Fryin' Pan (Melee)

AV: 3 (7) ===== Rg: fll 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

fll **SMACK!**: After damaging, push the target up to 4 yards in any direction.

DIMITRI LIAKOS

Dimitri Liakos was drunk when he first came through the Breach, and he's only been sober three or four times since that fateful day. He makes what little cash he needs to survive from selling his moonshine in Ridley's Bronze district, and for the most part, the Guild are content to leave him to it.

Back on Earth, Dimitri was an influential politician in Palermo, Italy. Flush with a number of political victories and a high popularity rating, he railed against the Guild's execution of striking workers in Milan and called for the fragmented government to oust the Guild from Italy. The Guild responded by forcing the Italian government to revoke his citizenship and deport him, which left Liakos a broken man without a home.

He eventually found his way to Malifaux as a dock worker but quickly lost his job due to excessive drinking. For the most part, Liakos hasn't stopped drinking since, and when his money ran out, he turned to moonshining and hasn't looked back.

ANNE SEELY

Anne Seely came to Malifaux hoping to set up a ranch in the Northern Hills. The cost of bringing her horses Breachside was high, but she guessed (correctly) that most of the ranchers coming to Malifaux would focus on cattle, which allowed her to corner the early horse market and recoup her losses. Unfortunately, something got into her horses last year and made them go bad; they developed a taste for human flesh.

Anne managed to fight off her carnivorous steeds, putting down about half of them before the rest of the herd broke through her fences and fled into the wild. Never one to easily admit defeat, Anne sold her land to the railroad and used the money to move to Ridley, where she opened up a smaller stable of horses within the Ivory district.

Now, she keeps an eye on her horses and tries not to keep any one horse for too long before selling it and bringing a replacement over from Earthside. She does well for herself but saves much of her money; Anne figures that whatever happened to the horses at her ranch was a fluke, but if it happens again, she's going to cut her losses and return to Earth for an early retirement.

ALPINIST

The Alpinist is a pneumatic climbing machine hailing from the first opening of the Breach. It resembles a wide mechanical goat, with numerous hitches that can be used to attach rope or saddle packs. It's built for endurance and traction, and its thick iron horns (intended to shatter rock) make a capable weapon in a pinch.

Few people have much interest in exploring the Ten Peaks, and those that do can usually track down an Alpinist without too much work. Though quite old (each one is over a hundred years old), Alpinists were intended to withstand the harsh climate of Malifaux's mountains, a trait which has seen many of them through to today.

A few aspiring artificers have used the design as a template to create their own versions of the study machines, often with only a few minor adjustments (such as swapping their legs out to make them into sturdy beasts of burden).

ALPINIST

Minion (5), Construct

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> +1
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -5	<i>Cunning</i> -5	<i>Tenacity</i> -5
<i>Defense</i> 2 (7)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -1 (4)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 2, Melee 2

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

(1) Headbutt (Melee)

AV: 3 (8) ===== Rg:  1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

❖ *Knock Over:* After damaging, if this attack dealt Moderate or Severe damage, the target immediately takes the Drop Prone Action.

MINERS

Miners are the lifeblood of the Northern Hills; without their constant work within the Soulstone mines of the North, there would be no reason for anyone to live within the region (or, indeed, anywhere in Malifaux). Because of how important Soulstones are to the Guild, most miners spend their waking hours in a mine, steadily toiling away under frequently unsafe working conditions.

The miners presented here are members of the Miners and Steamfitters Union, which means that they're better trained and have better equipment than their non-Union counterparts. Because of this, it's usually in the Guild's best interests to work with the Union to make the life of a miner as safe as can be reasonably expected, though exactly what constitutes "reasonable" is a matter of constant debate between the two factions.

For the most part, miners are content to let other people go about their business, but there are limits to just how much they're willing to let slide. Most miners are fairly protective of their comrades and their towns, so if strangers from out of town start a fight with a miner, they're usually starting a fight with his or her friends as well. Usually this will just be a fight with bare fists, but if push comes to shove, most of the tools a miner uses in his or her day to day work can be employed to deadly effect.

A BETTER CLASS OF WORKER

The Miners here are presented as Peons. Though M&SU Miners are better trained and equipped, for the most part Miners are undernourished and overworked.

If the Fatemaster feels that the Fated could use a bit more of a challenge, she could increase the rank value of the Miners in the adventure even beyond the standard M&SU level. Some towns are a bit better off, and some Miners are a bit more motivated.



MINER

Peon (4), Living

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 2 (6)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (7)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (8)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Athletics 2, Carouse 1, Heavy Melee 2, Labor 3, Notice 1, Pugilism 1, Teach 1, Toughness 1

Union Dues: Some miners are members of the Miners and Steamfitters Union, or M&SU. These miners are better trained, have better equipment, and are considered to be Peon (4) rather than Peon (3).

(1) Bare Knuckles (Pugilism)

AV: 3 (7) ===== Rg: $\frac{1}{1}$ ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

(1) Mining Tools (Heavy Melee)

AV: 4 (8) ===== Rg: $\frac{2}{1}$ ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

CURSED

Cursed are those unfortunate people who have come into contact with a Wrath Fetish and been corrupted by its rage. While the Cursed suffer no penalties for being apart from the Wrath Fetish - indeed, even its destruction does not harm them - they are comforted by its presence, much in the way that a thirsty man is comforted by a barrel of water.

Most Cursed tend to remain near the Wrath Fetish that corrupted them, forming small groups of Cursed that worship the Fetish like an idol. Sometimes, one of the Cursed will wear the Fetish around its neck, which causes the others to follow after their "leader" wherever he or she might wander.

For the most part, Cursed are creatures of mindless rage; if they sense someone in their vicinity (sometimes even another Cursed), they will attack without thought or reservation. The curse that grants them their rage also imbues them with great strength; a Cursed can batter down a bolted door in only a few swings.

For the most part, Cursed still look human. When not agitated by the presence of other creatures (which is almost always the case), a Cursed might recall memories of its former life and even feel sorry for the things it has done, but these memories begin to fade with each new outburst of rage.

Most Cursed prefer to attack with their hands and teeth, punching or clawing at their victims until there's nothing left. Others still retain some semblance of tactical thinking and are able to utilize improvised weaponry, often in the form of a shovel or mining pick. After felling an enemy, a Cursed with a weapon will often continue to hack away at the corpse long after it has ceased to be a threat, venting their rage as they scream incoherently and froth at the mouth.

If a Cursed survives long enough (typically a few months), the rage curse simmering in its veins will eventually remake it into a Transformed (see page 86). Most Cursed, however, never reach this phase; their mindless rage all but forces them to throw themselves at any enemy that comes their way.

CURSED

Minion (6), Living, [Beast / Woe / Tormented]

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (10)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Athletics 1, Intimidate 1, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pugilism 2, Toughness 2

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this character suffer .

Variable Origin: This character gains the following Characteristic, depending upon the identity of Blank's patron: Beast (Marcus), Woe (Pandora), or Tormented (Daw or Sonnia).

Fetish: At the start of this character's turn, every character within (X)3 must pass a TN 10 Centering duel or gain the following Condition: **"Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

(1) Improvised Weapon (Melee)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg:  2 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Punch and Claw (Pugilism)

AV: 5 (11) ===== Rg:  1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

 **Bite Throat:** When damaging, this damage flip gains .



TRANSFORMED

While it might seem as if the Cursed have been transformed into maddened wretches with no control over their own anger, the truth is far worse: they are in the process of becoming something terrible. That something is the Transformed, the instruments of Blank's patron's vengeance upon Ridley.

The exact form of the Transformed varies depending upon the nature of Blank's patron.

If Marcus is his patron, the Transformed are half-human, half-bestial creatures of animal instinct and rage. With their hunched backs and bristling fur, they resemble nothing so much as a human in the process of becoming a beast (which is not that far off from the truth).

If Sonnia is his patron, the Transformed bear no outward physical changes to set them apart from other humans...save, perhaps, for the crazed look in their eyes and the permanent lunatic's grin on their lips. As most of the Cursed were miners and other northerners, the psychotic rampages of these Transformed will give the Guild all the reason it needs to take Ridley under its protective custody.

If Pandora is Blank's Patron, the Transformed are those Cursed who have put their humanity behind them and become Neverborn. These fell creatures move with unnatural grace, and their bodies (especially their eyes) glow with a sickly yellow color. Looking at these Transformed is difficult, and one gets the impression that they are merely a thin humanoid disguise being poorly worn by something alien and terrible.

If Jack Daw is Blank's Patron, the Transformed are still human, but they have lost themselves to their guilt and madness. These Transformed are frequently clad in torn clothing, and their skin is etched with open wounds, all done by the Transformed's own hand in an attempt to punish themselves for their crimes. They constantly mutter apologies to the dead and details of their crimes as they stalk their prey, equal parts pitiful and deadly.

TRANSFORMED

Enforcer (7), Living. [Beast / Woe / Tormented]

<i>Might</i> 4	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 5 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 9	

Skills: Athletics 1, Enchanting 3, Intimidate 1, Melee 2, Notice 2, Pistols 2, Pugilism 2, Toughness 3

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this character suffer ☐.

Variable Origin: This character gains the following Characteristic, depending upon the identity of Blank's patron: Beast (Marcus), Woe (Pandora), or Tormented (Daw or Sonnia).

Fetish: At the start of this character's turn, every character within (X)3 must pass a TN 10 Centering duel or gain the following Condition: **"Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

(1) Tooth and Claw (Pugilism) [Marcus only]

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: ☞ 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

☞ *Bite Throat:* When damaging, this damage flip gains +.

(1) Collier Army (Pistols) [Sonnica only]

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: ☞ 1 or ⚔ 12 Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

(1) Self Loathing (Enchanting) [Pandora only]

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: ☞ 3 ===== Resist: Wp

Target suffers damage from a readied weapon in their possession (or 1/2/3 damage, if no weapons).

(1) Murder Weapons (Melee) [Jack Daw only]

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: ☞ 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.



Transformed (Jack Daw)



Transformed (Pandora)



Transformed (Sonnia)



Transformed (Marcus)



GUILD GUARD

Minion (5), Living, Guardsman

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> -1	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (7)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Athletics 1, Evade 2, Melee 3, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Toughness 1, Stealth 1

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

(1) Refurbished Infantry Sword (Melee)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

Critical Strike: When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each in the final duel total.

(1) Refurbished Collier Army (Pistol)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. The target gains the following Condition until the end of this turn:
"Arrest: This character must discard a card to perform a movement action."

GUILD GUARD

Guild guards are the men and women who protect Ridley from its own residents and other domestic troubles. Typically traveling in pairs, they patrol the streets of the town, looking for trouble and enforcing (or not enforcing) the laws made by the city council. The Guild has been authorized to make arrests and bring criminals in to face justice, but in actuality, there is a great deal of discrepancy in just how much justice one receives, depending upon one's allegiances.

Dressed in their distinctive red and gray uniforms, Guild guards are well-armed and well-trained. While this makes them easy to spot in a crowd, the Guild

believes that this conspicuousness serves a purpose and helps to deter crime, though some might argue that it just encourages criminals to practice their activities in areas the Guild doesn't care about (and thus, doesn't patrol).

Most of the Guild guards in Ridley are drawn from Malifaux City. While nobody can truly be called a lifetime resident of Ridley - the Breach has only been open a few years, after all - the Guild prefers to have guards that don't have personal connections to the people they are policing. In their reasoning, this will make it easier for the guards to remember their duty if the Guild ever decides it has to take Ridley by force.



GUILD RIFLEMAN

Riflemen are selected from the best that the Guild guard have to offer. Their advanced training in marksmanship and target selection makes them experts with their custom rifles, and they are used by the Guild both as snipers and as support for their other troops.

Riflemen are elite troops, and the Guild treats them as such. They're often brought in as symbols of intimidation when a situation seems as if it might escalate into violence; more than one miner's strike has ended upon sighting a Guild rifleman setting up a sniper's nest atop the building

GUILD RIFLEMAN

Minion (6), Living, Guardsman

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 0	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Athletics 1, Centering 3, Evade 2, Long Arms 3, Melee 3, Notice 3, Teach 2, Toughness 1, Track 3, Stealth 2

Taking Aim: When this character gains the Focused Condition, it lasts until the start of his next turn.

Stand and Fire: When an enemy character declares a Charge Action within line of sight of this character, this character may reduce its Focus Condition value by 1, to a minimum of 0, to immediately deal 2 damage to the character that declared the Charge.

(1) Knife (Melee)

AV: 4 (10) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.

(1) Guard Rifle (Long Arms)

AV: 6 (12) ===== Rg: 14 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/2/4 damage. When this Attack Action gains the benefit of the Focused Condition, it gains + to the final duel total.

Critical Strike: When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each in the final duel total.

across the street. In combat situations, riflemen typically focus on high profile targets like command squads or small groups of flanking troops.

Riflemen often work in groups of two or three, setting up on high ground as they survey the field for the most effective targets. Even when caught off-guard, however, they are formidable adversaries; their training emphasizes mobility and flexibility, and they are perfectly capable of firing brutally accurate shots while moving.

COMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides you with some extra plot hooks, arranged by Act, for *Northern Aggression*. They are intended to add time, difficulty, and interest to certain elements of the adventure

Each section includes a summary of the complications within it and an example of when they can be used. The Fatemaster can use this summary to quickly peruse what complications are available to them.

The Fatemaster is encouraged to review these complications before running an Act in case she needs to add one to the session (either to make the session longer or just because it sounds like fun).

Beyond these, there are many other potential plot hooks that can be used to provide interesting scenarios for the Fated, and Fatemasters are encouraged to take advantage of whatever opportunities they see.

ACT I

Below are a few options to spice up Act I for the Fated.

- *Coughin' Up Lies* - Use this complication to add a bit of a red herring into the adventure. It extends the length of Act I and can be particularly compelling if any of the Fated has strong feelings (whether love or hatred) for the Resurrectionists.
- *Love Is Blind* - Use this complication when the Fated are being too trusting of Gigani, or when you want to throw a bit of (perhaps misplaced) suspicion onto the Guild.
- *You Do Not Talk About the Pugilist's Theater* - Use this complication to add some fighting and to more directly tie the Fated to Aines. It is useful for any Fated that like a bit of a street fight as it will allow them to show off their bare-knuckled fighting skills. Conversely, throwing this complication at a non-combat group could provide them with an interesting dilemma.



COUGHIN' UP LIES

When Clementine Hayes confesses, she doesn't name Aines. Instead, she names Ohana Yoshino, a local weaver. If Peter Gigani is present, he nods sagely and notes that the Guild has a file on Ms. Yoshino, and that she might be a Resurrectionist. Furthermore, she lives slightly apart from the rest of Ridley, and her shack is near where the bodies were found (east of the Quartz District).

Yoshino is old and a little eccentric. She keeps to herself, only interacting with the other residents of the city when it comes time to sell her clothing and rugs (which are of decent quality but not particularly noteworthy).

She's also not a Resurrectionist. Yoshino has a side business selling wigs, the hair of which she takes from dead bodies. She goes through a few different intermediaries to obtain this hair (no questions asked), and Clementine Hayes is one of them. The two of them have been at odds for awhile; Hayes claims that the weaver shortchanged her, while Yoshino claims that the sneak thief never brought her any hair of quality.

If the Fated investigate Yoshino, they are confronted with a Death Marshal who has decided to take matters into his own hands. Read or paraphrase the following:



As you approach the old, weatherworn shack of Ohana Yoshino, you hear a woman cry out something - presumably a curse of some kind - in the language of the Three Kingdoms.

Her voice is suddenly cut off, and before you can make it to the house, the door opens, and a Guild Marshal with a large coffin strapped to his back steps out.



The Death Marshal, unbeknownst to the players, has just captured Yoshino in his coffin. His name is Justin Hummel, and he is at Yoshino's shack to investigate her out of suspicion that she might be a Resurrectionist; he read the same files as Gigani and came to many of the same conclusions. When Yoshino was less than helpful and forthright in answering his questions, Hummel decided a proper interrogation was in order and locked her up in his coffin.

Upon exiting the shack and seeing the Fated, Hummel is on edge. He is not there on any specific orders, and he's not sure just whose side the Fated are on. This is true even if the Fated are wearing Guild uniforms; he's been reprimanded for these sorts of 'investigations' before and doesn't want to get written up again.

There are three ways this is likely to go down:

First, the Fated may convince Hummel they are on trustworthy and looking for Yoshino on official business. If they can successfully do this (requiring a TN 11 Bureaucracy, Convince, or Deceive Challenge), Hummel allows Yoshino out of the coffin to be questioned. She is, unsurprisingly, angry and unhelpful.

Second, the Fated may have strong opinions about shoving old ladies into coffins, and there might be a fight. Suffice it to say, a group of Fated will probably make quick work of a lone Death Marshal (*Fatemaster's Almanac*, page 153), and once defeated, Yoshino stumbles out of his coffin. If Hummel is killed (as opposed to incapacitated), word eventually reaches Gigani, and there will be an investigation (which can be as involved as the Fatemaster wishes).

Third, it is possible for the situation to reach a stalemate if the Fated are unwilling to fight or unable to convince Hummel to help them. In this situation, Hummel should offer up that Yoshino is to be questioned at the Guild Offices in the Ivory District. If they ask Gigani, he grants them access to her without protest.

QUESTIONING YOSHINO

Yoshino, for her part, doesn't know anything. She's not a Resurrectionist, just a stubborn old woman who has been harassed because Clementine Hayes was trying to steal from her. It quickly becomes clear that she has nothing to do with the deaths of the workers.

LOVE IS BLIND

Gigani is a good and honorable man. He is also a devoted man, even to those who might not deserve his devotion. In this complication, Gigani is in love with a dilettante associated with Wesley Aines, and he will do what he can to protect her.

Because of the nature of the situation, Gigani becomes very tight-lipped and unwilling to share any information once Aines comes into the picture, which likely makes him look highly suspicious. It is unlikely the Fated will ever get him to explain his reasoning (TN 17 Bewitch, or TN 13 if they catch him red-handed), so this shift in personality may lead to suspicion and tension whenever the Fated interact with Gigani.

The moment Aines' theater is mentioned in questioning Clementine, Gigani attempts to take over the investigation. He takes measures to hinder the investigation and personally accompanies the Fated to the Gilded Mandarin. Once inside, he orders them down to the basement while he checks the offices... alone. Any attempts to argue with him or question his actions cause him to pull rank, and if matters escalate, he draws his pistol (and might even be willing to use it, depending on his relationship with the Fated up to this point).

Gigani's love is Betsy Rosemaunt, an upper-class, well-respected dilettante. She's been keeping company with Wesley Aines, and Gigani is worried that her reputation will be ruined if Aines is arrested. He's taking steps to protect her and removes any proof of her presence from the theater, including letters, family jewelry, and even some undergarments.

Once the evidence has been disposed of, Gigani returns to his usual by-the-books self. He offers no explanation for his actions, but if the Fated decide to rough Aines up a bit after he's been arrested, Gigani will find some paperwork that desperately needs filing while they have a go at him.

While this complication ends here, any suspicions aroused by Gigani's actions may rear back up during Act IV, when the Fated must work with Gigani again.

YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT PUGILIST'S THEATER

Kantor might wait to confront Aines at the Gilded Mandarin, giving the Fated more time to investigate Aines and his boxing club. In fact, this might be the only way the Fated can contact Aines; if they approach him in any other setting, he's protected by layers of employees and scheduling concerns, but at the fights, anyone can walk up and talk to him.

With the recent murders at the Gilded Mandarin, Aines has moved the fights to a warehouse in the Jade District. If the Fated make inquiries of Union workers (from whom Aines pulls his fighters), a TN 8 Barter Challenge (costing the Fated 2 scrip) gets them the location of the warehouse, as does a TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, Deceive, or Intimidate Challenge.

Aines is desperate for fighters, and the workers inform the Fated that he's offering good money to anyone willing to fight (2 scrip for each fight the character wins and 1 scrip for each fight they lose). Despite this, the workers attempt to discourage the Fated from attending, claiming that "they're not safe fights." The workers have only heard rumors about fighters getting killed; the Fated know more than they do by this point.

Alternatively, if one of the Fated is particularly well-known as a pugilist (3+ ranks of Pugilism), one of Aines' lackeys might reach out to them and invite the character to participate in the fights. The rates are as noted above, but with a TN 10 Barter Challenge, they can talk Aines up to 4 scrip for a win and 2 scrip for a loss.

The fights at the warehouse are one-on-one tournament matches with a preset time limit (typically around three minutes). If any of the Fated stand out in any particular way - abnormally tall or short, or exceedingly pretty or ugly - the fight announcer will play up that aspect, perhaps even giving the Fated a colorful nickname to make the fight more interesting.

Aines has rounded up enough fighters for any competing Fated to face off against five opponents each. If multiple Fated are participating in the bouts, consider allowing them to fight the same opponents multiple times.

The fights are handled via an Ongoing Challenge. Unlike most Ongoing Challenges, only the character that is actively fighting can participate; if any other characters attempt to "storm the ring," Aines' lackeys immediately end the fight and force the interfering characters to leave.

I WANT YOU TO HIT ME AS HARD AS YOU CAN

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Pugilism, Martial Arts.
- **TARGET NUMBER:** Varies by opponent (see below)
- **DURATION:** 30 seconds
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 5
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

Each time a character fails a Challenge made as part of this Ongoing Challenge, they suffer 1 damage.

On a success, the character knocks out and defeats their opponent.

On a catastrophic failure, the character gets knocked out by their opponent and passes out, which eliminates them from the tournament (though they may still participate in exhibition fights if they wish).

A list of the fighters are as follows:

- Carlos "The Emperor" Green (TN 8)
- John "The Doctor" Walker (TN 9)
- Randy "The Badger" Hamilton (TN 10)
- Thomas "The Boston" Murray (TN 11)
- "Desert" Rose Gordon (TN 11)

Aines' lackeys make a big deal about the winner of the tournament facing off against Gabriel "The Beast" Kantor in a final prizefight, but Kantor doesn't show up for the fight (he's waiting for Aines back at the Gilded Mandarin).

The Fated should have an opportunity to speak with Aines during the fights (possibly between their own matches, if they're fighting), but a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that he's distracted and not paying much attention to the fights. He's surrounded by attractive socialites and gamblers, and he tries to keep the conversation on the fights and how much everyone is enjoying them.

If the Fated are participating in the fights, they receive a bit of special treatment: Aines and his groupies are complimentary and friendly as long as the character is winning but turn mocking once they've lost; their attention is fickle and fleeting. If the Fated mention anything about the dead fighters to Aines, he claims ignorance (a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that he is lying, but calling him out on it only earns his annoyance).

Half way into the night, Aines is approached by a lackey, and they begin talking in not-so-quiet whispers. If the Fated attempt to overhear (TN 9 Notice), they learn that Kantor is waiting for Aines at the Mandarin, and it looks like he's out for blood.

If Aines notices the Fated listening (TN 13 Stealth for those characters who attempted the Notice Challenge above), rather than be upset, he hires them to accompany him to meet with Kantor to make sure "nothing uncouth" happens. The Fated are, after all, trained fighters.

If the Fated agree, the scene with Kantor transpires a little differently. Replace the first dialogue box on page 19 with the following text:



Kantor stands before you, a large man dressed in the garb of a miner, all hard muscle and grit. He addresses Aines in a growling, angry voice. "You bringing more honest people here to protect you, Aines? Spending their lives like they were scrip in your bank account? They ain't going to keep you safe."

Aines goes pale next to you, his voice dropping to a whisper. "You can't fight them all, Gabriel."

You notice a ghostly yellow aura forming around Kantor as he becomes more upset. "You're gonna pay for what you've done, Aines. And I'm gonna be the man to make you." He raises his meaty fists. "I'll get vengeance for all us workers, even if I have to kill a few of your dogs in the process!"



ACT II

Here are some suggestions to flesh out Act II a little more.

- *Stagecoach Heist* - Use this complication to add an additional combat before the Fated arrive in town, as a part of the journey north.
- *Take My Child* - Use this complication to add some roleplaying fun to encounters with the townspeople.
- *The Little Engine that Hates* - Use this complication to add an additional combat while inside the mines.

STAGECOACH HEIST

If the Fated take the stagecoach to #34, they might be ambushed by four mounted bandits. The driver picks up the pace as soon as he notices the bandits behind him.

The bandits are armed with carbines, and the first shot catches the driver in the shoulder. He cries out in pain and tumbles from the driver's seat, leaving the stagecoach uncontrolled as it bumps and jumps across the hills.

If there are any Fated riding up front alongside the driver, they can grab hold of the reins then and there. If not, the characters have to climb outside and carefully crawl along the outside of the carriage to reach the front (three TN 10 Athletics Challenges), all while being fired upon by the bandits (one attack aimed at each such character per round). Once they reach the front, the character can take control of the reins.

Characters inside the stagecoach have hard cover against the attacks of the bandits, which makes them fairly well protected... but it also means that nobody is controlling the stagecoach.

Controlling the carriage is important as the bandits are trying to maneuver it off a cliff (they figure they can just ride down and pull any scrip or valuables out of the wreckage). At the start of the fourth round of Dramatic Time (and every round until they succeed), have the Fated make a TN 9 Notice Challenge to notice the cliff ahead of them.

A character in control of the reins can use a (2) Action to make a TN 10 Husbandry Challenge. On a success, the character is able to either stop the horses or divert them to the side so that they won't careen off the cliff.

At the end of the tenth round, if the horses have not been reined in, the stagecoach charges off the edge of the cliff. Characters riding in or on the stagecoach may attempt a TN 12 Evade Challenge to leap to safety before it plummets off the edge. Characters on the outside of the stagecoach gain a + to this Challenge.

Any characters that follow the stagecoach over the edge are probably in for a messy end. They have one round of "freefall time" where they can attempt to use some sort of magical effect (such as a teleport spell) to save themselves (it's about forty feet from the cliff edge) or make peace with the powers that be, and then the stagecoach crashes into the ground, dealing 4/7/10 damage to anyone tagging along for the ride.

The bandits break off their attack if the stagecoach avoids the cliff; they're ex-miners from nearby towns who are just desperate for some form of income.

MOUNTED BANDITS

Minion (5), Living, Mercenary

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 3	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 5 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 3	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (10)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 10	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Centering 2, Evade 3, Husbandry 3, Melee 2, Long Arms 2, Notice 3, Toughness 1, Track 2

(1) "Sharpshooter" Carbine (Long Arms)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg: 12 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

✱ *Blown Off:* After damaging a target on the stagecoach (but not inside it), the target must succeed at an Athletics Challenge (TN 7 + damage dealt) or fall off (taking 1/2/3 damage as she lands).

TAKE MY CHILD

If the Fated spend any time in #34, they will come across a man named Nestor Davies. Nestor is a drunk, but he manages to mostly keep it together. He's barely able to care for his child, Leslie, but still has the faculties to realize this. He loves his child and wants to get him or her (it could be either!) out of town before everything falls apart around him. Nestor will do whatever it takes to make this happen.

Nestor is surprisingly clever; he's good at figuring people out and approaches the Fated with one of the following options in an attempt to get them to take his child away from #34 (and, ideally, back to Earth, but he's not hanging his hat on that hope). He's not above getting the Fated drunk and trying to talk them into something when they're thinking less than clearly.

- **Marriage** - Leslie is fairly attractive and old enough that there's nothing wrong with this option. So why not get hitched? Leslie's been raised right and will make sure the Fated in question is well cared for.
- **Apprenticeship** - The life of a miner is hard, but the Fated (presumably) seem to be doing well for themselves. Why not take his kid on and teach Leslie a more valuable skill than digging in the dirt?
- **Empathy** - #34 is clearly on its last legs, his child is starving, and Nestor is a drunk that can't care for him/her. If the Fated were to take the kid with them when they leave, Leslie would be much better off for it. The child, when presented, will be in tattered clothes and covered in dirt (generously smeared on by Nestor).
- **The Law** - If push comes to shove, Nestor has Leslie ineffectually attack or steal from the Fated and then insists that he/she be taken to justice (waaaay back in Ridley) once Leslie is inevitably caught. Leslie clearly needs some good role models (like the Fated) in his/her life to save him/her from "a life of delinquent crime."

Nestor is very insistent and will try just about anything to save Leslie from a depressing (and likely short) future. If the Fated do end up taking Leslie with them, the child proves to be a (minor) burden throughout the rest of the adventure. For quick reference, use the Household Servant stats on page 132 of the *Fatemaster's Almanac* for Leslie.

THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT HATES

A mechanical Soulstone Miner has somehow become influenced by a Wrath Fetish! The Fetish has gotten caught up in its gears, and with nowhere else to go, the Fetish has possessed the machine and is now manipulating it like a puppet master.

The machine isn't very happy and has been taking its anger out on the walls of Side Shaft A. When it catches sight of the Fated, it turns its long, serpentine body towards them and attacks.

DRILLER KILLER

Minion (5), Construct

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> -1	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -5	<i>Cunning</i> -5	<i>Tenacity</i> -5
<i>Defense</i> 5 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -1 (4)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Centering 3, Evade 3, Heavy Melee 3, Labor 2, Toughness 1

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Fetish: At the start of this character's turn, every character within (X)3 must pass a TN 10 Centering duel or gain the following Condition: **"Enraged:** On this character's turn, it must spend its first AP to attack the nearest character. If none are in range, it must declare a Charge (if possible). Then end this Condition."

(1) Rock Drill (Heavy Melee)

AV: 6 (11) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage, ignoring Armor.

☛ *The Drill That Kills!* After damaging, take this Action again against the same target.

ACT III

If the adventure feels too straightforward or if the Fated are breezing through the encounters, consider adding the following complications.

- **Lost For All Time** - Use this complication to add some combat to the mountain journey.
- **Shivering** - Use this complication to add a human element to the mountain climb and to remind the Fated that they are good (or bad) people.

LOST FOR ALL TIME

This encounter works best if it takes place either before or after the Fated encounter the Expedition on the side of the mountain.

The undead Whittaker Expedition of 1789 still roams the mountainside, looking for new recruits to bring into their ranks. The Colonel has spent the past 100+ years trying to reach the peak of the mountain and plant his flag but hasn't made much progress during that time.

The rest of the Colonel's expedition travels alongside him. Thanks to the perpetually cold weather, they're all remarkably well preserved. A TN 12 Scrutiny Challenge is needed to recognize them as undead (instead of just very pale living people). Their clothing can provide a few further hints to the unwary; it's over a hundred years old and looks decidedly "old-timey" on their thin frames.

The expedition consists of Colonel Whittaker, his second-in-command, Meriwether, and twelve Expedition Members. Only the Colonel is sentient; the others merely follow his lead in their endless marching and climbing along the mountain's frozen paths.

The Colonel might make for a pleasant enough conversationalist at first, but once someone brings up his undead nature, tries to convince him that it's not 1789, or mentions that they are traveling to the peak, he grows angry and orders a full attack, claiming that he will be "the first to the mountain's peak!"

WHITTAKER / MERIWETHER

Enforcer (7), Undead

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 1
<i>Defense</i> 5 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

Skills: Centering 2, Evade 2, Long Arms 3☉, Melee 1, Navigation 2, Notice 3, Toughness 3, Wilderness 2

(1) Blackpowder Rifle (Long Arms)

AV: 5☉ (12☉) == Rg: ⚡ 12 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.

☉ **Critical Strike:** When damaging, deal 1 additional damage for each ☉ in the final duel total.

EXPEDITION MEMBER

Peon (3), Undead

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> -3	<i>Speed</i> -3	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> 5	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 0
<i>Defense</i> 2 (5)	<i>Walk</i> 3	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -3 (0)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (5)	<i>Charge</i> 3	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Pugilism 2

Shambling: This character gains the Slow Condition at the beginning of its turn.

(1) Gnashing Bite (Pugilism)

AV: 3 (6) ===== Rg: ⚡ 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/1/3 damage.

SHIVERING

There are two branches for this complication. The first involves the Fated finding a half-dead hunter trying to find some warmth up on the mountain, and the second has the Fated come across Leslie, Nestor Davies' child (see *Take My Children* on page 95), whom he sent up the mountain after them.

Regardless, the Fated come across someone on the verge of freezing to death. The climate is unforgiving, and there is no way that the chosen person will survive the rest of the day without assistance.

If the Fated decide to help the person, they need to succeed on a TN 12 Doctor or Wilderness Challenge to prevent them from dying, followed by a TN 14 Wilderness Challenge to provide them with enough supplies, directions, and warm clothes to get them home without dying. Any supplies that the Fated provide (such as a fur coat, food, or a fire) lower the TN by 1 point per helpful item.

If the Fated pass the first Challenge but not the second, the person is prevented from dying but must accompany the Fated either up the mountain or back down to #34. If they decide to leave the person on the mountain, there's not a lot more to say; the person freezes to death within a few hours.

ZANE WERNOK

Zane is a hunter from one of the Contract Towns who traveled up into the mountains in search of food. The conflicts due to the Wrath Fetishes in the North have caused many supply issues, and Zane wanted to help his town survive. Unfortunately, he was not prepared for the weather and got turned around; he doesn't have enough supplies to safely make it back home.

Zane, once rescued from death's doorstep, is personable and grateful. He doesn't have much to offer but is at least committed to not getting in the way. If the Fated try to send him off with some supplies, he insists on repaying them for their kindness by accompanying them up the mountain.

Zane sticks with the Fated for as long as he can. He essentially acts like a little brother, a bit awed by what they are capable of doing even as he tries his best to prove his worth to them.

LESLIE DAVIES

This option should only be used if the Fated encountered Nestor Davis in the "Take My Child" Complication in Act II.

Once the Fated begin climbing the Widower, Nestor gives his child a warm hat and a few pieces of jerky and sends him/her up the mountain after them. It's actually sort of amazing that Leslie made it as far as he/she did, but it's obvious that the poor child is entirely unprepared for the mountain climate.

Leslie is mostly quiet and does little things to aid the Fated, such as cooking or cleaning up if they set up camp. Attention and encouragement might eventually cause Leslie to warm up to the Fated, but at first he/she is quiet and reserved (and nearly freezing to death sure didn't help much).

If the Fated keep Leslie with them and he/she witnesses what happens at the end of Act III, he/she latches onto the Fated, feeling they are the only ones who can keep him/her safe. Leslie is a trustworthy and loyal companion, assuming the Fated don't try to ditch the kid the first chance they get.

DECEMBER

Particularly vindictive Fatemasters may wish to have a character that was not saved by the Fated in this complication join up with the Cult of December instead of dying on the mountain.

In this case, the new-found Acolyte will bear a lasting grudge against the group and may eventually turn up in unexpected places to harry them and cause problems. They'll go out of their way to bring harm and misfortune to the Fated, but only after enough time has passed for them to recover and become initiated into the Cult's mysteries.

Decisions have consequences, and this is a good way to show that to the players.

ACT IV

There's already a lot going on in Act IV, but if you wish, here are some events that you can use to add a bit more conflict to the story. They can be particularly useful if you decide to divide Act IV into multiple gameplay sessions.

- *The Call of the Wild* - Use this complication only if Marcus is Blank's patron. It makes the adventure feel more connected to him.
- *The Ridley Council* - Use this complication to make the discussion with Ridley's council more interesting and to give social Fated the chance to resolve the adventure peacefully.
- *No Chance for Peace* - Use this complication only if Pandora is Blank's patron. It makes the adventure feel more connected to her.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

Use this complication only if Marcus is Blank's patron. As the refugees migrate south towards Ridley, Marcus herds them onward like sheep. He has enlisted the aid of a few Sabertooth Cerberuses and is using them like sheep dogs to ensure that the refugees keep moving toward Ridley and don't break away from the flock.

If the Fated are hunting in small groups, they can attempt a TN 7 Notice Challenge to catch sight of a Cerberus stalking at the edges of the refugee groups. The Cerberus isn't trying very hard to remain hidden. There are two other Cerberuses stalking the group, one on the far opposite side and another in the back, urging the refugees forward at a hurried pace.

So long as nobody ventures too far from the rest of the group, the Cerberuses growl and look menacing but don't take any actual action against the refugees. Fated that observe this behavior or hear about it from the terrified refugees can attempt TN 10 Husbandry or Wilderness Challenges to realize that this is not natural behavior for these creatures. If the character scores a Margin of Success on their chosen Challenge, they come to the conclusion that someone is using the beasts to herd the refugees forwards..probably to Ridley.

There's not a whole lot that can be done to change the momentum of the refugee exodus - there's no definitive leader yet - but that knowledge should cast the rest of the adventure in an ominous tone...particularly if the Fated encountered Ambrose on the mountain peak.

If someone attempts to break away from the refugee group - which includes approaching any of the Cerberuses - or takes hostile action against them, the hulking beasts immediately attack.

SABERTOOTH CERBERUS

Enforcer (8), Living, Beast

<i>Might</i> 4	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 3
<i>Charm</i> -3	<i>Intellect</i> -4	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 5 (13)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (13)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 10	

Skills: Acrobatics 2, Athletics 4, Centering 3, Evade 3, Melee 2, Notice 2, Stealth 3, Toughness 4, Track 4, Wilderness 2

Three Headed: This character gains + to Attack and damage flips it makes when it has half or more of its Wounds remaining.

Unimpeded: This character ignores penalties for terrain while taking Movement Actions.

Terrifying (Living) 11: Enemy Living characters must pass a TN 11 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this character's engagement range or target this character with an Action.

(1) Bite (Melee)

AV: 6 (14) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.

📖 *Maul:* After damaging, take this Attack Action against the same target.

(0) Leap (Athletics)

This character immediately moves up to its Charge Aspect, ignoring intervening terrain and characters during the move.

THE RIDLEY COUNCIL

This complication should not be used with the No Chance for Peace complication (page 100). It is important to describe this scene and play it out as much as possible as this is essentially a replacement for the end of Act IV.

If the Fated attempt to Appeal to the Council (page 52), this adventure grants them a chance to earn a few concessions but usually assumes that the council stands aside when the Guild issues the ultimatum that eventually leads to the Ridley Massacre.

However, the Fated might choose to return to the Council to convince them to stand up to the Guild and allow the refugees to peacefully settle in the town. This requires another TN 13 Bureaucracy Challenge to arrange a meeting, which will happen just as tensions outside are coming to a head. The Fated should feel as if they're trying to arrange an eleventh-hour peace treaty; every minute counts and fighting could break out at any moment.

The council is reluctant to counteract the Guild's ultimatum (they agree with the reasoning behind it, if not with the ultimatum itself), but the Fated could engage in some tense negotiations and debates with the council to find a solution that works for everyone. This is handled with the following Ongoing Challenge:

A PLEA FOR PEACE

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Barter, Bureaucracy, Convince, Leadership
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

If either Ridley or the refugees are in a clear position of strength over the other, the council is more difficult to sway into action. The TN of this Ongoing Challenge is increased by +1 for every 10 points of difference between the Refugee's point total and Ridley's point total (in either direction).

If the Guild has abandoned Ridley, characters participating in this Ongoing Challenge gain  to their duels; the council is panicking and is willing to listen to any reasonable suggestions.

The Fated have a limited amount of time; if the talks take longer than one hour, this Ongoing Challenge immediately ends in a catastrophic failure.

Feel free to add as much or as little description to this scene as you wish. It's an important, last-minute attempt to grasp at straws and save lives, so the mood should be tense, with arguments and disagreements springing up for the Fated to solve; this representative doesn't want the refugees in her district, while another is concerned about the rage curse spreading into the general populace and sparking riots and chaos, etc.

On a success, the characters manage to work out an arrangement that allows the refugees to settle in Ridley after being screened by the Union's Steamfitter (read: Arcanist) inspectors to make certain they do not carry the curse with them. Additionally, the refugees will be denied voting privileges for the first year of their settlement, as a measure to both protect the seats of the council members and to encourage them to eventually relocate to other towns.

This effectively prevents the Ridley Massacre from occurring; the Guild (if still present) stands down, runners are sent up the tracks to flag down Miriah before she can crash the train through the barricades, and the council calls upon the Union (and the Arcanists) to help them begin setting up the necessary procedures to process the refugees.

The Fated should feel as if they have barely managed to divert a terrible calamity from happening...which is exactly what has happened.

On a catastrophic failure, the negotiations come to an abrupt halt as one or more of the council members storm out of the room and refuse to return. The talks fall apart in petty bickering, and the Fated are forced to use what little time they have left to prepare for the coming chaos. They can almost feel it in the air.

If the catastrophic failure was caused by the Fated running out of time, negotiations come to an abrupt end as the Hollow Point train crashes through the barricades with an earth-shaking smash. Gunshots follow, refugees pour through the breach, and the council flees to safety.

NO CHANCE FOR PEACE

Use this complication only if Pandora is Blank's patron.

If the Fated attempt to Appeal to the Council (page 52), they will have an unexpected (and likely very one-sided) encounter with Pandora as she arrives to remove the Ridley Council from the picture. After the Fated have managed to obtain an appointment with the council, read the following text to the players:



You've just started to make your opening arguments to the Ridley council when you're interrupted by the sound of high heels clicking loudly against the floor in the adjoining hallway. A few of the council members glance towards the room's double doors in annoyance, and a moment later one swings open to admit a young woman.

Her red hair swishes behind her in a long ponytail as she walks to the center of the room, ignoring the protests of the council members, some of whom rise from their seats in anger. "This is a closed meeting!" one shouts.

"Not too closed," the woman replies with a giggle. For the first time, you notice the ornate box clutched in her hands, and something about its appearance - or maybe it is the manic gleam in the woman's eyes - immediately puts you on edge and sends a shiver up your spine.

A dour, barrel-chested man slams his fist onto the table. "You're not allowed to be in here!" He looks towards the doors, as if expecting a guard to rush in at any moment. "Where is our security? This is madness!"

The woman's giggles again and holds the box out in front of her, her lips pulled back in a manic grin. "No," she corrects him. "This is madness."

Then she opens the box, and all hell breaks loose.



When Pandora opens the box, twisted spirits known as Sorrows spill out and begin to attack the council representatives, who go crazy and begin attacking themselves with any weapons at hand (a few representatives have pistols, which is the fast way out, while others throw themselves from windows or claw at their faces). There are initially three Sorrows in this fight.

The Fated should also be able to feel the madness beginning to grip them. The full force of the madness seems to be focused upon the council, but the Fated can feel their sanity slipping away from sheer proximity to the woman. There's no need to make any duels here, unless you want to add some dramatic tension to the scene.

The council chamber should be played up as swirling chaos; about half of the eight representatives finish themselves off in the first two rounds, while the others stumble around, screaming and flailing as the Sorrows chase them around and feed on their fears.

Pandora stands at the center of it all, her box open as more and more Sorrows spill out of it (at a rate of two Sorrows at the end of each round) and begin attacking everyone (including the Fated). Her expression is gleeful, but she doesn't hang around for a fight; she's already accomplished what she came here to do.

If the Fated attack Pandora - she has an effective Defense and Willpower of 7 and Rank Value 13, meaning that they'll need to score a 20 to actually hit her - read the following (adjusting as necessary if the attack hits):



The woman lifts a hand, stopping the attack an inch from her face through sheer force of will. You catch her gaze, and for a moment, you can feel the sheer futility of the situation overwhelm you. Then she slams the box's lid shut with an audible clap and vanishes, not just from the room, but from your memory as well. You can remember her eyes, and the strange box in her arms, but everything else is fading like an old memory.



After 6-10 Sorrows arrive (depending upon the Fated's numbers and strength), Pandora grows bored and gives up the fight. Read aloud the following:



Just as you're beginning to contemplate surrender, the woman slams the lid of her box shut with an audible clap and vanishes. You're uncertain what sort of magic could enact such a sudden disappearance, but it seems to be affecting your mind as well: You can remember her eyes, and the strange box she held in her arms, but everything else about the woman is starting to fade like an old memory.



After the Fated have finished dealing with the last of the Sorrows, they're left standing in the destroyed remains of the council chambers, most likely surrounded by the bodies of the representatives. If the Fated managed to save any of the council members, it is a hollow victory: their minds have been shattered, and they will never fully recover. Ridley's town council is effectively destroyed.

Results: Pandora murders the council (-30 Ridley).

RUMORS OF MADNESS

If the Fated don't seem interested in the council, there are a few ways you can still use this complication. The council might be gathering in a special session to discuss the matter of the Guild ultimatum, in which case Naidu could ask them to attend the meeting as representatives of the refugees (or to provide the council with information about their defenses and leaders, if the Fated are siding with Ridley).

Alternatively, if the Fated are in Ridley but not attending the meeting, they might encounter Pandora's handiwork first hand as one or more of the council members leaps from the window...and lands right in front of them. Looking up, green and purple light pulses in the windows of the council chamber, and ghosts swirl around it ominously. If the Fated investigate, they arrive just in time for Pandora to wink at them before disappearing and leaving them to her Sorrows.

Apply the result listed above to Ridley's points total.



SORROW

Minion (5), Spirit, Woe

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 0	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3 (8)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> -1 (4)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (9)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 4	

Skills: Evade 1, Intimidate 2, Pugilism 2

Misery: When an enemy character within 6 yards of this character fails a Willpower duel, it suffers 1 damage after resolving the current action.

Life Leech: Enemy characters beginning their turn within 1 of this character suffer 1 damage.

Incorporeal: This character ignores, and is ignored by, other characters and terrain during any movement. Reduce all damage this character suffers from Ranged and Close Combat attacks by half.

(1) Doleful Grasp (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/1/4 damage.

(2) Doldrums (Prestidigitation/Tenacity)

AV: 5 (10) ===== Rg: 6 ===== Resist: Wp
Target gains the Paralyzed Condition.

(1) Misery Loves Company

This character disappears and appears within the engagement range of another target character within 8 yards.

APPENDIX

This Appendix provides numerous rules and options to assist Fatemasters in running *Northern Aggression* and is divided into three sections.

The first section includes some Tarot Tie-Ins for the Cross Roads Tarot (*Fated Almanac*) and Assembly Line Tarot (*Into the Steam*), which should help Fatemasters tie characters created using those books to the events that unfold in each Act.

The second section of this Appendix deals with supporting materials for the book's villains, George Blank and Ester Ambrose. While Blank will not have a direct role in the events unfolding in the north until the next Penny Dreadful in this series, we've included his information here in case a Fatemaster wishes to continue to use him as an antagonist for the Fated after *Northern Aggression* has come to an end.

Ester Ambrose's and George Blank's Grimoires are detailed in this section. Fatemasters can either use these Grimoires as rewards for the Fated who defeat these characters or can increase the difficulty of any fights involving these characters by allowing them to use the Magia and Immuto mentioned in their respective Grimoires.

This section also goes into a bit more detail about the Wrath Fetishes and how they're created. Most Fated probably won't attempt to create their own batch of Wrath Fetishes to spread corruption across the world of Malifaux, but we like to keep an open mind when it comes to spreading insanity and chaos, so the tools are there if you need them.

Finally, this Appendix includes the Rampager Advanced Pursuit, for those characters who have succumbed to the influence of a Wrath Fetish and wish to fully embrace their rage and anger. This can be a really fun way to tie a character's progress to the overarching story of *Northern Aggression* and its sequels, but the rules are still broad enough to allow Fatemasters to offer it to players whose characters have serious anger management issues.



FUR ARMOR

Northern Aggression takes place largely in the north, and Act II involves a climb up a mountain in an extremely cold climate. There are a few sets of Fur Armor scattered throughout the adventure that could help the Fated avoid being frozen to death as they attempt to scale the mountain.

Characters may wear up to four pieces of armor at one time (on their hands, feet, chest, and head). Each piece of Fur Armor grants the character the Protected special ability for the suit matching the location on which it is worn (crows, masks, ramis, and tomes).

In addition, each piece of Fur Armor a character wears grants them a +1 to Toughness duels made to resist Hypothermia (as noted in the Climbing the Widower Ongoing Challenge).

TAROT TIE-INS

Below is a list of possible Tarot Tie-Ins for each Act, pulling from the Tarots of the *Fated Almanac* and *Into the Steam*. Use these as ideas to help fuel your players' Destiny Steps.

The first two letters of a Tie-In stand for the Tarot used. In this case, CR stands for Cross Roads Tarot, and AL stands for Assembly Line Tarot.

The next two letters indicate the card's position. For the Cross Roads Tarot, St is Station, NC is Northern Card, and so on. For the Assembly Line Tarot, Al is Allegiance, Ro is Root, etc. Finally, the final two values - the number and suit - indicate the specific card tied to that destiny step.

ACT I

CRSt 7♠: "When your shadow is cast upon the wall" could come up during the fight with Kantor, as the theater's lights give the Fated's shadow a hulking, bestial appearance, foreshadowing the events of the adventure.

CRSt 9♠: "When you open the dead man's eyes" could refer to the autopsy of the dead workers and the subsequent investigation of their deaths.

ALAl 11♠: "As the dead cry out for bloody justice" could refer to the investigation and how it will likely end in the Fated killing the murderer of the dead workers.

ALAl 6♣: "If you pledge your loyalty to coin alone" could easily come into play if the Fated are working as paid mercenaries or neutral third parties.

ACT II

CRSC 7♠: "If you open the box best left closed" could refer to the Bloody #4, which the Fated have to blast open to enter.

CREC 2♠: "You will be bold when it is needed most" could refer to the Fated taking action and opening the Bloody #4 to retrieve Johan's body for his mother.

ALRo 12♠: "And you will descend into the mine" is easy here as much of this Act revolves around the Bloody #4 and the Fated's attempts to enter - and then their adventures within - the cursed mine.

ALBo 11♠: "The guilty ones will circle you like the hours of a clock" is very appropriate if Jack Daw is Blank's patron and the Cursed within the mine are being punished for their crimes.

ACT III

CRNC 7♠: "For the coldest court will bow to their king" could describe the Cursed and Transformed that gather around Ambrose atop the mountain's frozen peak...or even hint that all those present on the peak owe allegiance to a male superior: their "king," George Blank.

ALMi 12♠: "The frozen peaks beckon you onward" might be a clue to the Fated that their destiny awaits them on the peak of the Widower Boyle.

ALEn 8♠: "For the treasures of the mountain will be as venom" aptly describes the Wrath Fetishes that Ambrose is creating at the mountain's peak and also serves as a warning to Fated who might be tempted to use the Wrath Fetishes for their own gain.

ACT IV

CRNC 4♣: "For new enemies are made from old allies" could apply if the Fated sides with the refugees and against Ridley (and thus, Gigani and Naidu).

CREC 8♠: "The sting of a single wasp will light the agony" could refer to the man who attacks Gigani or Naidu and sparks off the Ridley Massacre, or even Miriah's plan to hijack the Hollow Point Train to do the same.

ALBo 2♠: "The eleventh hour will hold no hope" could refer to the Fated's attempts to prevent the Ridley Massacre through peaceful talks with the council and how difficult that is to accomplish. This takes on additional meaning if Pandora is Blank's patron.

ALEn 9♠: "But in the hour of peace you will find only treachery" is appropriate here if Sonnia is Blank's patron as it's the Guild's ultimatum and betrayal that throws Ridley and the refugees into conflict.

THE WRATH FETISHES

The Wrath Fetishes are an important element of this adventure and will appear again in later supplements. It might never be necessary to know the exact details of how the Wrath Fetishes are created, but in the event that it does become important (or if the Fatemaster wishes to make them play a larger part in this or other adventures), this section provides further details.

THE RITUAL OF BILE

The Ritual of Bile is the ritual that creates Wrath Fetishes. George Blank learned the ritual from his Grimoire and then taught it to Ester Ambrose, who made the Wrath Fetishes that appear in this adventure. The Ritual is not particularly complex, but it could take some time to gather the materials it requires.

The ritual isn't exactly a recipe or a set of assembly instructions but rather a method by which the caster is able to focus their anger and bind it within physical form. The Ritual's exact form depends on the identity of Blank's patron:

- **Marcus** - The ritual draws primal power from the land and imbues the rage and fury of the beast into a necklace of human bones. The longer one wears the necklace, the more bestial and feral one becomes.
- **Sonnia** - The ritual is an arcane formula involving mystical runes and the chanting of esoteric verses to enchant a branding iron. The iron can then be used to brand a victim's skin, which burns the magic of the ritual into their body and soul.
- **Pandora** - The ritual summons an Insidious Madness and binds it within a small cloth doll. The bound Madness whispers to those near the doll, eroding their sanity and pushing them deeper and deeper into a psychotic rage.
- **Jack Daw** - The ritual binds a small portion of Daw's ancient magic into an item tied to a betrayal or crime, and in doing so draws Jack's attention to the item's owner. As their guilt becomes unbearable, the owners descend into madness.

THE RITUAL

To learn the Ritual of Bile, the caster will need access to either Ester Ambrose's or George Blank's Grimoire. The ritual is represented by the following Ongoing Challenge:

THE RITUAL OF BILE

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Centering, Enchanting
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 1 day
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 7
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

This ritual requires the caster to gather seven symbols of her own rage in a circle around a helpless sacrifice who must be restrained in some manner.

On a success, the ritual is completed and remains active so long as the symbols of rage remain in place. If the sacrifice's belly is sliced open, it drips bile onto any object placed within the circle, which transforms the object into a Wrath Fetish over a period of 24 hours.

Each day the sacrifice is kept immobile, it suffers 1/2/3 damage. The sacrifice cannot heal through natural means, but magical healing is still effective.

On a catastrophic failure, the sacrifice dies and the objects of rage are destroyed, forcing the character to begin all over again. If a character flips the Black Joker during this Ongoing Challenge, they are consumed by the ritual's fell energies and become a Cursed who immediately attacks anyone else that is present, ruining the ritual and ending their career as a Fated.

It is not a ritual for the faint of heart.

THE FETISHES

Depending upon the identity of Blank's patron, the appearance of the Wrath Fetishes will vary throughout this adventure. Regardless of their form, Wrath Fetishes each glow with a faint yellow light.

Some of these Fetishes carry additional game rules with them; see the Wrath Fetishes callout box on page 20 for more details.

- **Marcus** - The Wrath Fetishes take the form of a necklace carved from human bones.
- **Sonnia** - The Wrath Fetishes are either a brand of six claws pointing downward in a semi-circle (if found on a character) or a branding iron with a similar design (if found elsewhere). Characters may not directly attack Wrath Fetish brands possessed by a character; the Fetish only ceases to function when the character possessing the brand is killed.
- **Pandora** - The Wrath Fetishes take the form of a small rag doll with a hemp loop, allowing it to be worn like a necklace. Faint whispers of madness can sometimes be heard in its presence.
- **Jack Daw** - The Wrath Fetishes are all different, as they are objects that were used in or played some part in the owner's crimes. Murder weapons are common, as are small trinkets like a locket belonging to a murdered wife. Character must make Evaluate duels to identify these Fetishes.

THE BARD'S BOOK

Ambrose's Grimoire is an annotated book of plays by William Shakespeare. She's scrawled commentary in the margins and underlined certain passages. In order to cast a *Magia* from this Grimoire, the caster must recite the necessary phrase as part of the spell.

- *Magia*: Heal (Enchanting, "How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?") and Invisibility (Prestidigitation, "Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires")
- *Immuto*: Alter Range, Increased Duration, Increase AP (dramatic posing).

ROCKFURY

Rockfury is George Blank's Grimoire. It is a deep red rock worn perfectly smooth from being carried in many different hands, all of them clenched in anger. Despite its smoothness, a casual inspection of the stone will reveal letters that seem to be etched just beneath its surface.

The unfortunate thing about this Grimoire is that studying it, unlike most other Grimoires, is a waste of time. The letters that can be seen beneath its surface are entirely indecipherable *no matter what the character does*.

Furthermore, the stone almost seems to taunt those trying to unlock its secrets: anything the possessor does to make the letters clearer *almost* seems to work. It responds to every stimulus in a way that seems at first promising... however, nothing anyone tries will ever make the letters clear enough to make out.

It is only after the possessor of the stone gives up in anger and frustration that the letters flare to life and reveal their knowledge. The arcane lore stored within Rockfury hits them in a wave of comprehension, and they are able to immediately access the Grimoire and all its contents.

It is worth noting that whoever possesses the Grimoire will not gain access to it unless they experience anger and frustration in trying to decipher it. Because of this, anyone who has felt that particular frustration is unlikely to easily divulge the secrets of its understanding to another. In fact, doing so makes the Grimoire almost impossible to access; it's difficult to become frustrated at the rock if you know its secret.

- *Magia*: Unnatural Shifting (Enchanting), Physical Enhancement (Enchanting), and Mind Control (Necromancy).
- *Immuto*: Focus Object (Rockfury, -4 TN), Combined Spell, Alter Range, and Pulse.
- *Special*: Accessing this Grimoire grants the character access to the Ritual of Bile (and they can freely teach the Ritual to others after learning it).
- *Special*: This Grimoire can be used as a weapon with the Melee skill. In this case, it deals 1/3/4 damage.

RAMPAGER

The Rampager is an Advanced Pursuit available to anyone who gains the Enraged Condition from the Fetish Talent. It can only be taken with Fatemaster approval but provides an interesting roleplaying opportunity for characters with anger management issues.

Malifaux is a place where extreme emotions can produce dark manifestations, and the Rampager is a prime example of this process at work. The Rampager draws upon the simmering anger within her, becoming stronger and faster as her anger grows, but at the cost of her reason and self-control.

Most Rampagers have lived with their anger for years, allowing it to guide their actions and chase away friends and loved ones. All it takes is a bit of a magical push to send them over the edge and into an endless ocean of violence and brutality.

Some Rampagers fight against the anger within them, using the focus and drive it provides to push themselves to greater accomplishments and achievements. Others revel in their newfound power, becoming bullies and thugs who only feel truly alive when they are in the middle of a melee, bashing in skulls and screaming at the world around them.

While the power granted to a Rampager is great, the magic within them is raw and unchained, a perfect compliment to their anger. As the Rampager succumbs to her temper, the two grow and entwine, like two fires burning from the same fuel, until they eventually become one and the same.

Rampagers pay a high price for their supernatural strength. Each time they lose control, each time they dip into that unending well of pure fury, they lose a little bit of whatever makes them who they are, until finally, there's nothing left but an embodiment of pure rage.

Most Rampagers are the result of the Wrath Fetishes created by George Blank and Ester Ambrose, who used the magical trinkets to spread chaos throughout the Northern Hills. However, there have been others who have succumbed to their anger in a critical moment, only to find that their fury never quite went away...

REQUIREMENTS

To become a Rampager, the character must become corrupted by a Wrath Fetish, which typically means gaining the Enraged Condition from another character's Fetish Talent. The twisted energies of the Fetish settle in the character's bones like a sleeping dragon, waiting for the opportunity to rise up and force her to lash out at those around her.

Alternatively, a character might be offered an opportunity to take up this Advanced Pursuit after succumbing to her rage in a gloriously stupid moment of pure roleplaying. In general, this should be an act that goes beyond general anger and into the realm of truly self-destructive behavior (for the character; this isn't intended to be a reward for disruptive players).

ADVANCEMENT

At each rank, a Rampager gains the Talent listed below:

STEP	TALENT
1	Driven by Rage
2	Past the Point of Reason
3	Seeing Red
4	Blood in the Water
5	Reckless Assault

"ANGER MOTIVATES US
ALL. I'VE JUST LEARNED
TO EMBRACE IT."

-GABRIEL KANTOR

DRIVEN BY RAGE

As the character first succumbs to her rage, she finds herself gaining great power at the cost of her self-control.

Whenever this character suffers damage, she gains the following Condition with a value equal to the amount of damage suffered: **"Fuming +1:** This character suffers a penalty on all Social Skills and Intellect-based Skills equal to this Condition's current value. This penalty instead applies as a bonus to the Intimidate Skill. Reduce this Condition's value by exactly 1 for every minute that passes without this character suffering damage."

The character also gains the following Tactical Action:

(0) **Rage Unleashed:** This character may lower her Fuming Condition by any amount, up to the number of steps she has completed in this Advanced Pursuit, to gain the appropriate bonus listed below. She may not lower her Fuming Condition below 0 in this way.

- **Speed of Rage (1 Fuming):** Before lowering your Fuming Condition Value, move a number of yards equal to your current Fuming Condition Value.
- **Intense Focus (2 Fuming):** Gain the Focused +1 Condition.
- **Enraged Fate (3 Fuming):** Draw a Twist Card.
- **Relentless Assault (4 Fuming):** Make a single Close Combat attack against a character within range.
- **Endless Rage (5 Fuming):** Heal 2/3/4 damage and gain the Reactivate Condition.

PAST THE POINT OF REASON

The character has become so lost within the deep wells of her anger that it is difficult to focus on anything other than her rage.

While this character has the Fuming Condition, she gains a **+** on her Willpower duels.

SEEING RED

The unnatural rage within the character grows stronger until even the smallest slights and annoyances are enough to throw her into a violent rage.

Whenever this character misses with a Close Combat attack, she gains the Fuming +1 Condition.

BLOOD IN THE WATER

Eventually, the character's rage overtakes her, and she becomes a seething whirlpool of barely constrained violence. It becomes difficult to think of things other than lashing out at everyone and everything around her, but this same focus on violence makes the character a true terror on the battlefield.

When the character declares a Charge Action, she may discard a Twist Card. If she does so, she may take one additional **///** attack with an AP cost of 1 against the target of her Charge.

RECKLESS ASSAULT

There is no longer anything separating the character from her anger. When in combat, she grows increasingly reckless as her bloodlust forces her to abandon any pretense of self-preservation in the interest of destroying her enemies.

When this character deals damage with a Close Combat attack, she gains the following Condition until the end of Dramatic Time: **"Total Attack +1:** This character deals +1 damage with her Close Combat attacks and receives a **□** to her Defense duels. Lower this Condition's value by exactly 1 at the end of this character's turn."

CAN'T HANDLE IT

The Rampager is a self-contained Advanced Pursuit, but it is also a mindset. The Fatemaster should strongly consider giving anyone with ranks in Rampager the Fuming Condition whenever they become frustrated in social situations (and not just during Dramatic Time).

An easy method is to have a new Rampager pick one to three situations (Fatemaster's discretion) that make her angry. When these situations arise, the character automatically gains Fuming +1 to +3, based on the severity of the occurrence.

Wyrd



THROUGH THE BREACH

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looking into the Resurrectionists
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— NORTHERN —
AGGRESSION

Wyrd

THE FIRST SHOTS HAVE BEEN FIRED

...

Northern Aggression takes players on an epic adventure across Malifaux's Northern Hills, from the boomtown of Ridley to the frozen Ten Peaks and back again. Along the way, the Fated will have to contend with surly miners, ancient magics, and a sweeping conspiracy that could bring the entire Northern Hills to its knees.

...

Northern Aggression is the first in a three-part series of adventures for the Through the Breach roleplaying game. It can be played either on its own or as part of an epic campaign that will change the Northern Hills forever. It requires the Fated Almanac to play.



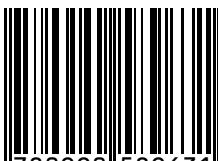
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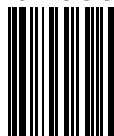
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